

# Southern Catalonia, Knowledge Region

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# The importance of internationalization on the global scenario

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## Editorial of the Chair for University and Knowledge Region

In a global, competitive and hyperconnected world, institutions have oriented their activities towards internationalization, a transversal practice that provides a wide range of perspectives and defines the values and challenges to face the future.

In the Europe of knowledge, regional trends in internationalization have taken different forms. The best known of those trends it is the internationalization of higher education. However, internationalization of the regions goes beyond higher education and its institutions and shows a tendency towards strategic alignment between the different agents of the quadruple helix (government, academia, industry and civil society) to guarantee the internationalization process. In the end, internationalization is synonymous with competitiveness, innovation and regional development.

This edition highlights the importance of internationalization for Southern Catalonia according to an article signed by Dr. Uwe Brandenburg (director of the Global Impact Institute). In addition, Ms. Marina Casals, head of the URV's International Center, brings us closer to the international reality of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. In the section, good practices, we discovered Skåne located in the south of Sweden, which illustrates the importance of the alignment between regional development and internationalization in order to become a leader in knowledge and innovation. Finally, in the section *Discovering Southern Catalonia*, we show a regional example, Lear Corporation a global company that works for the regional integration of their employees.

**How can you contribute to the internationalization of Southern Catalonia?** We invite you to give us your opinion on how we can all help to make a region and society of knowledge.

**Manel Vallès Rasquera**

Director of the Chair for University and Knowledge Region

# Internationalization of Higher Education and the Regions – a new and important paradigm

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## INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE REGIONS



This article wants to introduce you to the basic ideas and concepts of internationalization in Higher Education (HE) in order to show why the Chair in general and me personally consider it absolutely vital to introduce a new and much needed perspective into the debate: the relevance of HE Internationalization for the region and community.

Internationalization in Higher Education has moved from the fringe to the core of strategies in universities in the last 30 years [1]. What is HE internationalization? Hans de Wit and others have published a refined definition in 2015:

[...] the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (de Wit et al. 2015; based on definition by Knight 2004, 2012)

Today, 39% have a standalone internationalization strategy and 39% have internationalization integrated into the overall institutional strategy. However, that still leaves 22% without an institution-wide approach to internationalization which nowadays is a pitiful sight. Because in the global climate and the upcoming major global trends, universities cannot survive without a strategy.



What are then the goals that the, roughly, 80% who have some strategy to approach internationalization pursue? The goal matrix used by EAIE strongly builds on the IMPI (Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalization) goal dimensions developed in an EU-funded project between 2009 and 2012 [2] as does de Wit's definition. Both use the five IMPI dimensions:

G-01: to enhance the quality of education

G-02: to enhance the quality of research

G-03: to well-prepare students for life and work in an intercultural and globalising world

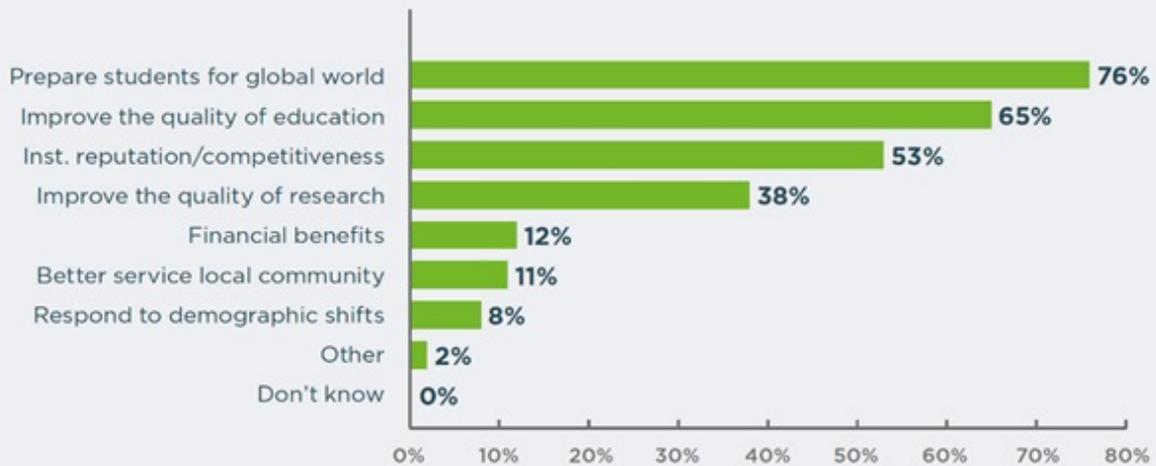
G-04: to enhance the international reputation and visibility of the unit

G-05: to provide service to society and community social engagement

As you can see, goal dimension G-05 is the one that is most relevant for the regions: the engagement with society. So how relevant is that really to universities in the context of internationalization?

**Figure 5**

**Main goals of internationalisation\* (n=2317)**



\* Respondents were able to select up to three answers

Source: EAIE Barometer, 2018

The EAIE Barometer shows that while 76% want to prepare students for a globalised world and 65% want to improve the quality of education, a meagre 11% (!) cares about better service for the community. If you consider that it was possible to choose three out of those dimensions, the society does not even feature among the top 3 goals for internationalization in 89% of all European universities! This is due to not only the many myths and misconceptions that still exist in universities around the concept of internationalization [3]; it is mainly the result of two major shortcomings of internationalization in HE today. Firstly, practically all international offices in universities focus on mainly students going abroad or coming to their university or – to a much lesser degree – staff but totally ignore the world outside the university. Secondly, most of today’s internationalization is still very traditional and either focused on exchange programmes or -in tuition-fee charging HE systems- on student recruitment, while the relevance for the wider public is gratuitously ignored.

On the other hand, our world faces major challenges:

- climate change including sea-level rise
- threats to democracy (populism, anti-intellectualism, xenophobia, radicalisation)
- major economic shifts from West to East, ageing societies.

These are challenges that afflict regions just as much as the society. In addition, why is internationalization relevant for Catalonia? In the Erasmus Impact Study Regional Analysis (2016) [4], which I headed, we showed among other results the immense economic effects from mobility. Especially internships abroad boost employment, entrepreneurship and career, two things that Catalonia and Spain in general desperately needs.

## Long-term unemployment and mobility

Figure 5-4 Long-term unemployment (more than 12 months) after graduation, Erasmus and non-mobile alumni compared to youth long-term unemployment (Eurostat 2011), by region<sup>32</sup>

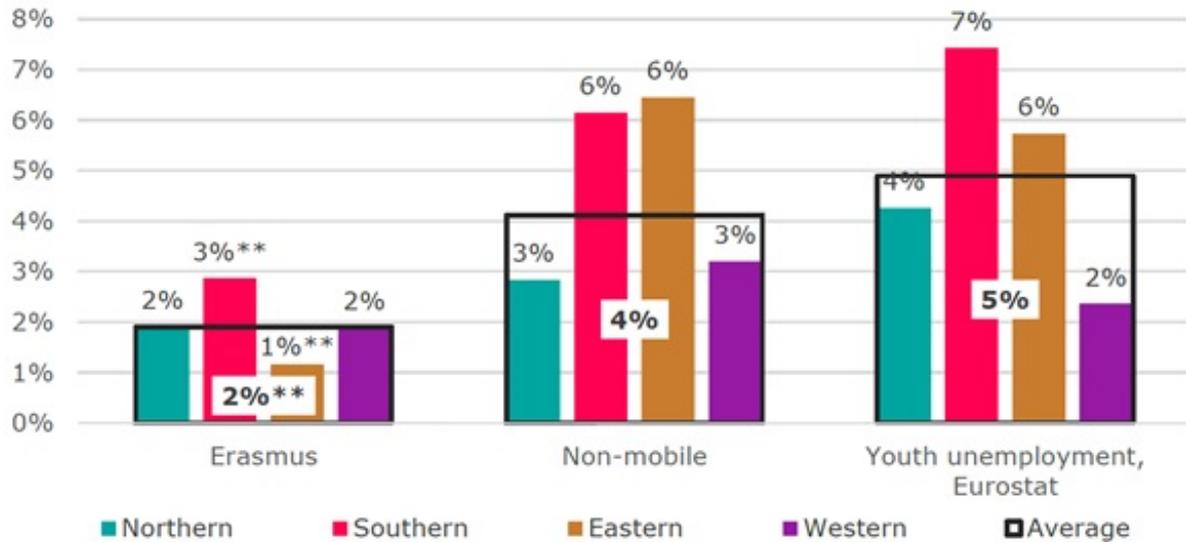
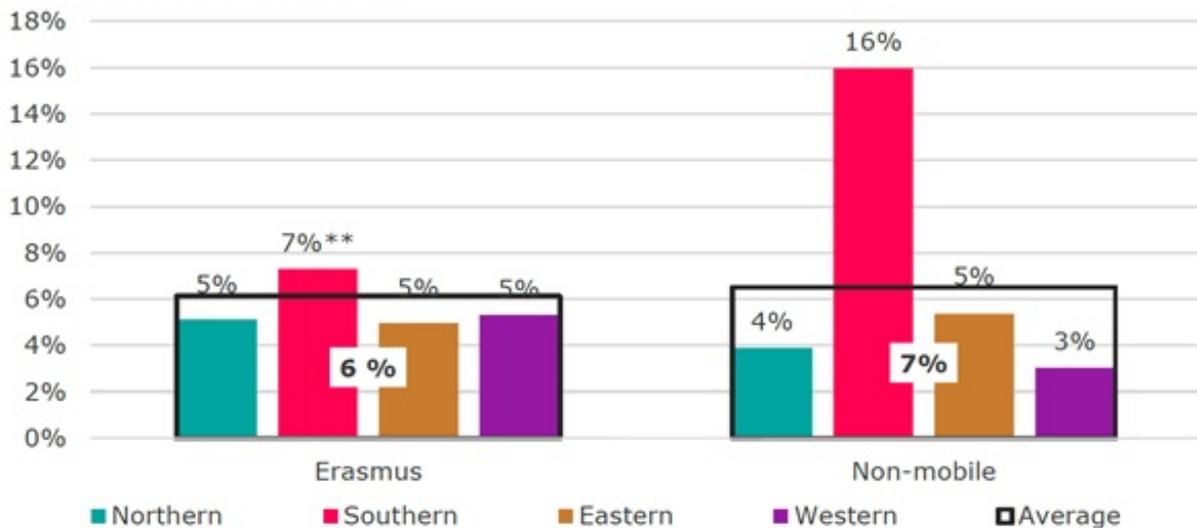


Figure 5-7 Share of unemployed alumni 5-10 years after graduation, Erasmus and non-mobile alumni, by region



## Job offer during mobility

Figure 5-9 Job offer through a work placement abroad, Erasmus alumni, by region

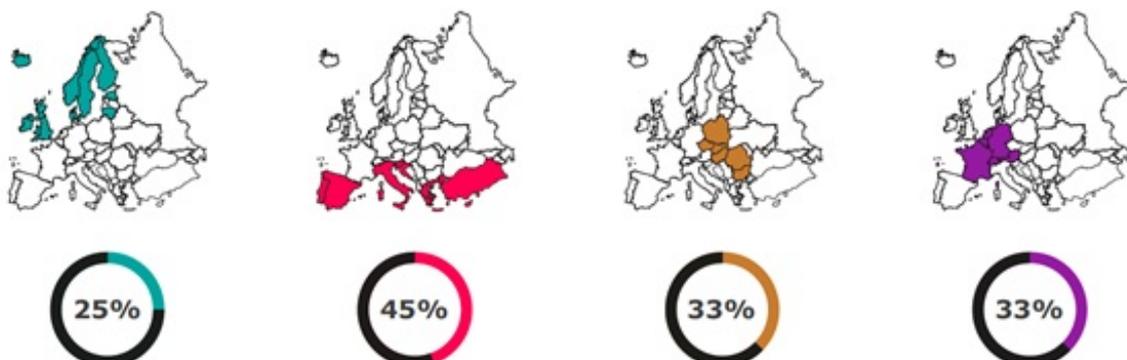


Figure 5-26 Higher professional responsibility for internationally experienced higher education graduates, perspective of employers, by region

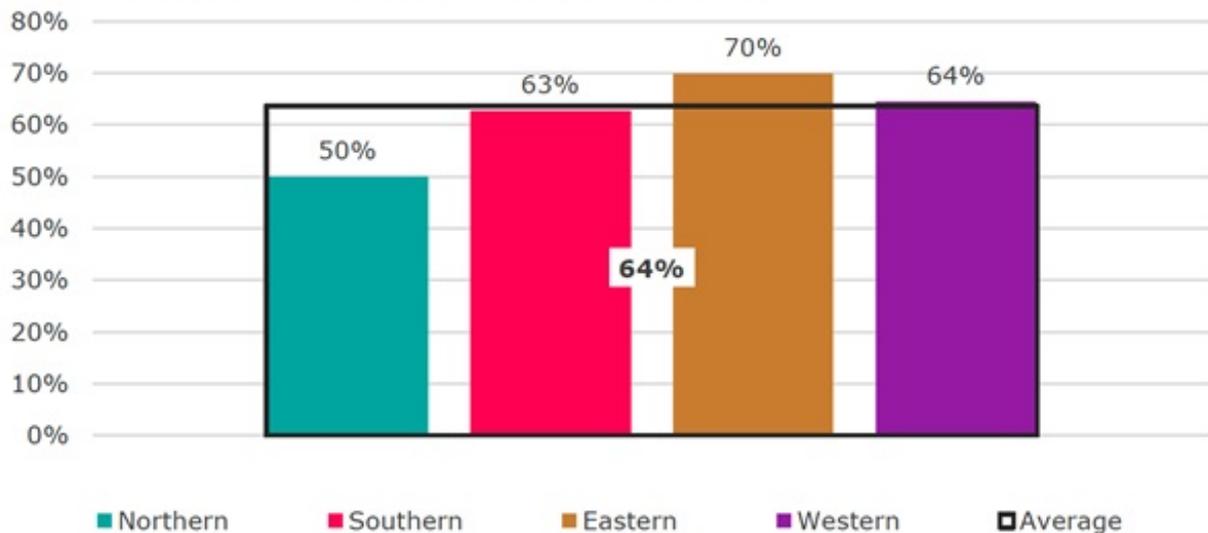
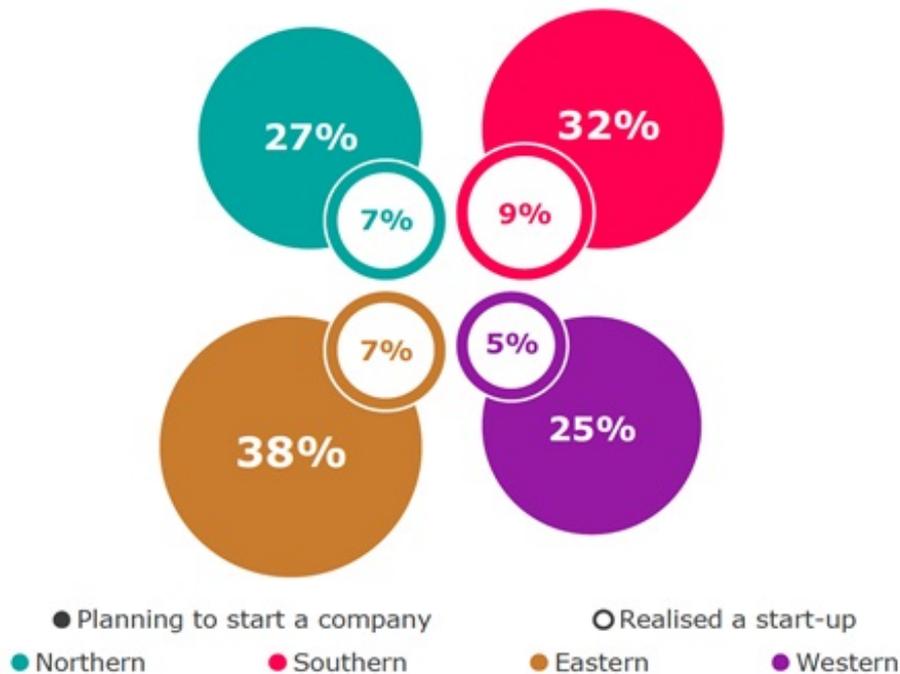


Figure 5-35 Start-ups realised by Erasmus alumni and their plans to start a company, by region



Much less unemployment, nearly every second intern abroad receiving a job offer, higher responsibilities and thus usually better paid jobs, and huge percentages of entrepreneurs: these are measurable results of internationalization and in a shaken economy like Spain and in Catalonia, this is what matters and what all pupils and parents should know about.

Additionally, like all regions in the developed world Catalonia faces serious ageing issues, populism raises its head, radicalisation among young population grows, as does a trend towards anti-intellectualism. Moreover, we are facing consequences of the climate change and as a heavily economic-based region; Catalonia will be strongly afflicted by the economic shifts to Asia, which already started.

So, if we see that regions are much affected by global trends, how can internationalization be of use? Here are some ideas:

A) A region such as Catalonia will need substantial influx of skilled workforce from abroad. This has two major conditions: such highly skilled staff needs to feel attracted to the region and it has to feel welcome, and secondly especially administrative staff in the region needs to understand the needs and demands of such staff. For this, there are already innovative schemes and projects developed which the region of Catalonia should use.

1. The Universitat Rovira i Virgili is heading the EU-Project SUCTI in which non-academic staff is trained in internationalization and intercultural-competences. These trainings can be easily adapted and provided for staff of the region.
2. The University of Göttingen in Germany is running a Welcome Centre for international staff of companies of the region. I am running the impact study for this project. This would be a fantastic concept to be implemented in Catalonia.

B) Ignorance is usually the basis for stereotypes and fear. Nothing helps better than training and education of the public. I just finished a first experimental design study on the effects of internationalization in educating the public in Swansea (United Kingdom). We show that it has significant impact to teach the public using international experience and staff. So this is what should be done in Catalonia:

1. Again, use SUCTI to educate the wider regional staff.
2. Run open seminars to educate the public on global trends, chances of internationalization and the (economic) benefits of a global mindset.
3. Send Erasmus students also from abroad into the schools of the region and show your kids what it means to have an open global mindset. The DAAD in Germany is running a fantastic project in this respect and Germany has much more mobility than Spain, so the need in Spain is much greater.

Thus, internationalization in Higher Education has to focus much more in the future on the needs and demands of the region and use the international potential of the universities to help the region and society. On the other hand, the region has to acknowledge the vast potential the internationalization in universities can offer to solve its problems. Also, the region has to internationalise if it wants to stay competitive in the world: every Catalan should be able to speak English, every administrator should have received intercultural training and every citizen should know about the values that international experience of Catalans as well as international citizens coming to Catalonia bring to the region. Today, a region is always and constantly in global competition, there is no purely local anymore. It is the task of the internationalization in HE to help the region in becoming and staying globally competitive.

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[1] On a comprehensive history of internationalization in Higher Education from the Middle Ages until today, see de Wit, H.; Merckx, G. Chapter 3: The History of Internationalization of Higher Education. in: The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education. Edited by: Darla K. Deardorff, Hans de Wit, John D. Heyl & Tony Adams. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218397.n3>

[2] You can look at the toolbox of 500+ indicators at <http://www.impi-toolbox.eu>

[3] For details see Hans de Wit: de Wit, H. Internationalization of Higher Education: Nine Misconceptions. In: INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION – NUMBER 64 SUMMER 2011 Pages 6-7.

[4] This information is available online. See: <https://ec.europa.eu/education/>

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de Wit, H. et al. (2015) Internationalization of Higher Education – What Can Research Add to the Policy Debate in The European Higher Education Area. DOI: [10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_1)

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**Dr. Uwe Brandenburg** Academic staff of the Chair for University and Knowledge Region

## When the internationalization of the URV goes hand in hand with that of the region

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It is in our hands to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits of this process.

The Universitat Rovira i Virgili works towards the internationalization of its entire university community, that is, for its students, teachers, and administration and services staff and others. If we only focus our efforts on internationalizing the URV community, we will overlook our duty to wider society. Our students, our teachers and all URV staff have families, friends, neighbours and therefore the URV's mission to internationalize should serve society in best possible way.

This vision led to the URV's first *Strategic Plan for Internationalization*, whose proud subtitle was "Opening doors to the world and the region". In its introduction, the then rector Francesc Xavier Grau stressed out that internationalization and regional development are not exclusive, but rather can dovetail perfectly with one another:

The internationalization of the university is not only fully compatible with its regional impact, it is also one of its principal benefits.

(...)

The URV has committed itself to becoming a more international institution both in research and in teaching by means of the internationalization of its staff and students. That is, the university is seeking to increase its international visibility and impact whilst maintaining an identity that is strongly rooted in its region, convinced that the international nature of its activities also contributes decisively to the development of the region. This strong territorial base provides us with an academic activity that is unique and that reinforces society and the economy, and this in turn means that as a university and as a region we can occupy a prominent position in the global knowledge society.

Consequently, we agree that internationalization is as much for our university as for our society. However, it is important to make a couple of observations. The first is that internationalization is not an objective in itself, but rather it is a means to achieve higher quality teaching, research and transfer. The second observation is a question of semantics: is it better to say internationalization OF, WITH or TO instead of internationalization FOR?

**OF:** Global internationalization of the URV is not only a part of our institution. As John Hudzik, the father of global internationalization theory, says:

Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility.

Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalization and the motivations and purposes driving it.

**WITH:** Everyone must be involved, since the process of internationalization, as we have just seen is an international process. At the URV we want all our members to be involved in the process and from this desire has emerged the SUCTI project ([www.suctiproject.com](http://www.suctiproject.com)) [1], an acronym of Systemic University Change Towards Internationalization. The SUCTI's goal is to train community members to understand what internationalization is, what the URV is doing about it, what the global trends in Higher Education are and how can they participate from their worksite in this process. Through these trainings, we would motivate internal change to internationalization providing as well communication and informative action that can show what is already done, which is a lot. For this reason, we launch a newsletter that includes a large part of internationalization activities ([http://www.urv.cat/international/vivir-urv/en\\_urvinternationalnewsletter.html](http://www.urv.cat/international/vivir-urv/en_urvinternationalnewsletter.html)) along with other activities such as the publication of *Comprehensive internationalisation at the URV: Examples of good practices at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili* [2], edited on the occasion of

25<sup>th</sup> URV's anniversary.

**FOR:** For the benefit of the URV and beyond. That is, for the benefit of our entire society.

To illustrate what internationalization really is, the image of the *castellers* (*human towers*) was chosen, which is a traditional activity from the Southern Catalonia Region and which is accompanied by the phrase "Internationalization for everyone". The reason why this image was chosen is that the success of a human tower depends on the contribution of each *casteller*. Likewise, the contributions of each member of a university are essential to its internationalization process.

While it is true that internationalization is not free of difficulties, what is the alternative? Is it possible not to internationalize? The reflection I would like to make about this is: can we live in isolation? Our world is increasingly global, our students work in international contexts, mobility increases as travel becomes easier and distances are reduced. Everything goes faster and is more interconnected and it would be futile to try to stop this train.

Indeed, we have integrated into our region the benefits and challenges of tourism, but perhaps we do not see the impact of international students that visit us from all over the world. Moreover, the impact of their families who may visit them or who just look on from the distance, the visiting professors who come a few days to teach, researchers who collaborate in projects, institutional visits...all of them absorb a small part of our region into their life experiences.

Consequently, it would not make sense to oppose the unstoppable progress of the internationalization of our institution and our region, and, of course, of the world. However, it is in our hands to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits of this process.

The internationalization of the URV must go hand in hand with that of the region so that both can advance together and build a fabulous *castell* that contributes to the social development that we want.

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Hudzik, John K. (2011). *Comprehensive Internationalization. From Concept to Action*. NAFSA.

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[1] For more articles and information on the SUCTI project, see:  
<https://suctiproject.com/events/articles-and-publications-2/>

[2] VV.AA., *Comprehensive internationalisation at the URV: Examples of good practices at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili*, Publicacions URV, 2017  
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[3] Strategic Internationalization Plan 2009-2013, Universitat Rovira i Virgili  
[http://www.urv.cat/media/upload/arxiu/pei/pei\\_en.pdf](http://www.urv.cat/media/upload/arxiu/pei/pei_en.pdf) . Strategic Internationalization  
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# Best practices and knowledge regions: Skåne, Sweden

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Located in southern Sweden is a space for innovation, research and opportunities. With a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a mix of urban and rural environments, internationalization is one of the main goals of the region, which it intends to use to attract and retain talent.

Studying other knowledge regions enables us to identify good practices. In this issue, we introduce Skåne in Sweden as an example of a region where internationalization is directly related to regional development.

## Some geographic data

The region of Skåne is located in the south of Sweden. Its strategic location gives it a privileged position near the Danish border and the Swedish islands to the east.

Skåne is one of Sweden's administrative provinces, also known as län, and has 33 municipalities. Under the European classification system, it is considered an NUTS3, which in turn forms part of the national area of Sydsverige (Southern Sweden) classified as an NUTS2 and comprising Skåne and Blekinge.

Skåne has 1,344,689 inhabitants [1] (2017) in an area of 11,302 km<sup>2</sup> with a population density of 120 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. The main population centres are the cities of Malmö (333,633 inhabitants, 2017), Helsingborg (14,304 inhabitants, 2017) and Lund (121,274 inhabitants, 2017) [2], which represents 13.82% of the population of Sweden. It is a mixture of highly urbanized areas and rural land that is considered the most important agricultural area in the country.

## Economic and sector considerations

According to *Statistics Sweden*, GDP per capita at current prices and purchasing power parity is 375,000[3][4] in SEK, 2016. With a strong industrial and rural character, during the 1970s the region changed its economic model towards research and development.

Its strategic location gives it a privileged position regarding foreign trade because it is the gateway to northern Europe and thus highly accessible for international markets. Other important sectors are agriculture, the pharmaceutical industry and health. In addition, nowadays there is an important industry dedicated to services, as well as an important presence of technology companies, in particular in mobile telephony and the entertainment industries.

More specifically, the video game industry is strongly rooted in the region, with Malmö and Helsingborg being two of the cities with the greatest presence of videogame developers. Around the sector have emerged networks, clusters and internationally recognized events have been created and held annually in the region.[5]

## Educational system

Skåne has four excellent higher education institutions specialized in different areas of knowledge.

Lund University is the second oldest in Sweden after Upssala. It offers 7 bachelor's degrees and more than 100 master's degrees. According to its figures, the university receives 40,000 students per year, of which 20% are international. It is one of the top universities in Sweden, and is placed in 92<sup>nd</sup> position by QS Ranking 2019 and 98<sup>th</sup> by the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2019. Malmö University is a young university (1998) each year receives about 24,000 students. We also found the Kristianstad University College, which was founded in 1977 and welcomes 14,591 students annually. Finally, there is the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) with its campus in Alnarp, which offers higher education in Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences and receives 3,737 students annually.

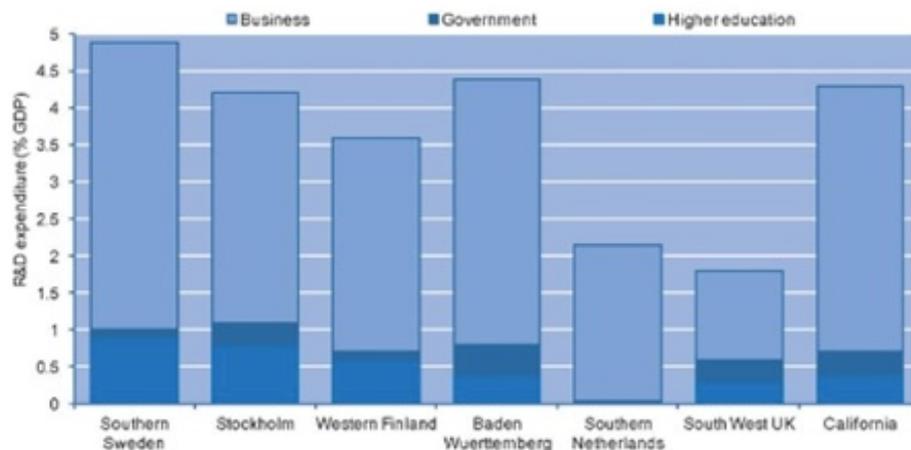
In Skåne, all universities have an international character that can be observed through their cooperation with other international universities, their cooperation in international programmes, their membership of the main global networks and their ability to attract talent from more than 130 countries. [6]

There is also highly regarded and widespread vocational training that helps individuals to enter the labour market, although it should be pointed out that the OECD has advised the region that it "should work to enhance the role of the private sector in vocational training in order to increase the job readiness" [7].

## Research and development

Skåne is a renowned scientific and technological hub. An OECD study places Southern Sweden's R&D expenditure (Sydsverige) at 4.9% of GDP, which when combined with the presence of 4 leading higher education institutions gives Skåne a significant research structure. The Max IV LAB and the European Spallation Source (ESS), due to open in 2019, are also important research centres.

Figure 1.44. R&D expenditure in knowledge hubs, 2008



Source: OECD Regional Database, selection of peer regions in knowledge and technology hubs category.

The Max IV Lab is a national laboratory recently opened and jointly managed by the Swedish Research Council and Lund University. It supports different areas of research: physical research based on the radiation of a synchrotron and nuclear physics using energetic electrons.

The European Spallation Source (ESS) is the result of collaboration between 17 European countries. It will be a multidisciplinary centre in the field of neutron research. The results of this research will be used in different scientific experiments in the fields of health, materials, sustainable energy, quantum physics and nanoscience. The centre will be operational at the end of the following year and is designed to accommodate 4,000 researchers from different countries.

In the future, these two research centres will produce world-class research. Moreover, they will provide an excellent environment to lead innovation and to launch new services and products.

Parallel to these scientific infrastructures are initiatives such as the Open Lab Skåne project, in collaboration with Malmö University, Lund University and the Smile Incubator, which aims to open laboratories and provide scientific equipment to guarantee specialization in society. The three research areas are food engineering, scientific materials and chemistry.

### Smart specialisation strategy

Like all smart specialization strategies, Skåne focuses on guaranteeing economic development based on research and innovation. The objective of the International Innovation Strategy for Skåne 2012-2020 is for the region to become the most innovative region in Europe by the year 2020 [8]. To boost innovative capacity at the regional level, six lines of action are implemented and accompanied by collaboration between different stakeholders (higher education institutions, open innovation arenas and economic and business sector). The main sectors identified in the smart specialization strategy are smart materials, health and sustainable cities [9].

## Governance

During the 1990s, the constant demands from different stakeholders led to the implementation of regional development policies that promoted changes in the structure of governance. This led to the development of the Skåne region and its Regional Development Council, which has 149 elected members. The figure of a Regional Board that has the functions of regulating, developing and coordinating the administration of different activities in the region is also interesting. “The political mission is focused on creating good conditions and opportunities for Skåne Region to become an attractive and competitive region” [10] and, above all, it must promote regional development by representing the interests of its inhabitants and local authorities.

In the following figure, we can see the distribution of competences:

National level	Regional level	Municipal level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security, police</li> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Civil status register</li> <li>• Statistical office</li> <li>• Electoral register</li> <li>• Higher education</li> <li>• National cultural institutions</li> <li>• Non-urban roads</li> <li>• Rail transport</li> <li>• Ports and airports</li> </ul> <p><i>Tasks carried out by the county administrative board</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional planning</li> <li>• Nature and environmental protection</li> <li>• Monitoring and supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health services (including dental)</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Upper secondary education (some)</li> <li>• Regional culture</li> <li>• Public transport</li> <li>• Regional tourism</li> <li>• Regional development (pilot regions and regional development councils)</li> <li>• Regional transport and infrastructure (pilot regions and regional development councils)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rescue services</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Child care</li> <li>• Family welfare services</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Town planning</li> <li>• Water and sewage</li> <li>• Refuse collection and disposal</li> <li>• Environmental protection</li> <li>• Consumer protection</li> <li>• Cultural establishments</li> <li>• Urban roads</li> <li>• Gas, heating, water supply</li> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Local tourism</li> </ul>

Source: SALAR (<http://english.skl.se>)

Skåne has responsibility for health care and public transport, business promotion and development, culture and tourism, infrastructure and social planning and the environment.

The municipalities, higher education institutions and business and industrial associations and trades work in the same direction to guarantee “development and sustainable growth” [11].

Business Region Skåne is the regional brand created to institutionalize the regional message and to make attractive the regional potential. It is organized into four major areas, these being:

Tourism in Skåne, Invest in Skåne, Event in Skåne and Film in Skåne that work together on international promotion.

## Internationalisation

Internationalization is a key factor for regional development in a globalized world. According to the objective established in the smart specialization strategy to become the most innovative region in Europe in 2020, the two entities that drive the strategy, the Skåne Research and Innovation Council (FIRS) and the Sounding Board for Innovation in Skåne (SIS) detected the need to elaborate a complementary international action plan [12]. The plan provides a strategy for developing the international environment and position of Skåne

as an attractive region full of opportunities. The innovation capacity happens when creativity and links are developed. In this sense, Skåne has known how to work to its own strengths and develop networks and links with countries around the world. In addition, to improve its international position, Skåne region has a representative office in Brussels that works to promote the region in the European sphere. [13]

The higher education institutions of Skåne as well as research infrastructures are internationally renowned and attract talent from all over the world. At this point, it is necessary to highlight Skåne's Regional Government work-plan to facilitate the integration of talent in terms of accommodation, international schools, standardization of tax systems and other administrative procedures. [14]

### Comparison to Southern Catalonia

Skåne's population is only slightly higher than the region of Southern Catalonia. Moreover, both regions are located in strategic positions, one in the Mediterranean and the other in the Baltic. In addition, their proximity to large metropolises such as Copenhagen and Barcelona increase their capacity to attract talent and investment.

Regarding economic considerations, it is necessary to point out the disproportion in terms of GDP per capita and sectoral differences. Despite the high presence of a service industry, the economic fabric is oriented towards technologies and promotes an entrepreneurial fabric that facilitates hubs and clusters of different branches of knowledge. The rural dimension of the region means that agriculture is important to the whole country, just as in the case of Southern Catalonia. It is interesting to see how, from investments and infrastructures; they try to maintain the connections between rural and urban areas to prevent depopulation of rural areas.

The education system has internationalised world-class universities and a commitment to contributing to regional development. In this sense, the University of Lund is especially paradigmatic. In the same way, the Universitat Rovira i Virgili through the third mission has worked for the development of the southern regions of Catalonia through its Strategic Internationalization Plan with the slogan "Opening doors to the world and the region". The Plan has guided the internationalization of the institution and the society that it services, becoming what the former rector Xavier Grau (2012) defined as a "Glocal university" [15].

Skåne has oriented its model and investments towards R&D&I. It is significant that investment reaches 4.9% of GDP per capita, far above the figures for the whole of Catalonia and, more specifically, Southern Catalonia. On the whole, Skåne is an example of how investment in R&D and scientific infrastructures attract and create talent and investments.

Skåne was constituted after the successive demands from different local stakeholders who wanted more competences in the field of research and innovation. Therefore, a bottom-up process has led to a new decision-making system that is currently managed by the Regional Development Council. In addition, it is important to highlight the role of external agencies like Business Skåne, which is responsible for managing the regional brand and promotion by capturing the resources needed for each action.

Skåne certainly differs from Southern Catalonia in some respects. It is a paradigmatic

example of the Nordic countries since it has taken full advantage of its potential over a long period whilst ensuring regional, international, intelligent and sustainable development, which is the future of the regions of Europe.

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[1] Source: Statistics Sweden. This information is available online: <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/yearly-statistics-municipalities-counties-and-the-whole-country/population-in-the-country-counties-and-municipalities-on-31122017-and-population-change-in-2017/> [Last consultation: 21 November 2018]

[2] Ibid

[3] Source: Statistics Sweden. This information is available online: <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/national-accounts/national-accounts/regional-accounts/> [Last consultation: 21 November 2018]

[4] The exchange rate on 23th November 2018: 375,000 SEK is 36,712€. Tool used: <https://themoneyconverter.com/US/SEK/EUR.aspx> [Last question: November 23, 2018]

[5] This information is available online: <https://www.Skåne.com/en/nordic-game-resources-europes-biggest-event-for-game-developers> [Last consultation: 19 November 2018]

[6] For more information, go to:

- <https://www.Skåne.com/en/business-region-Skåne-we-market-Skåne>
- <https://www.mah.se/english/About-Malmo-University/International/>

[7] OECD (2012), *OECD Territorial Reviews: Skåne, Sweden 2012*, OECD Territorial Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264177741-en> p. 105

[8] Skåne Research and Innovation Council, Sounding Board for Innovation in Skåne (2011 ) *An International Innovation Strategy for Skåne*. This information is available online. [http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/232763/SE\\_Sk%C3%A5ne\\_RIS3\\_2011\\_09\\_Final.pdf/672786c5-8ef7-4935-aa8b-7429a32a8aa2](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/232763/SE_Sk%C3%A5ne_RIS3_2011_09_Final.pdf/672786c5-8ef7-4935-aa8b-7429a32a8aa2) [Last consultation: 23 November 2018]

[9] This information is available online. [http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/map?p\\_p\\_id=captargmap\\_WAR\\_CapTargMapportlet&\\_captargmap\\_WAR\\_CapTargMapportlet\\_non-eu-country=true&\\_captargmap\\_WAR\\_CapTargMapportlet\\_non-eu-region=true&\\_captargmap\\_WAR\\_CapTargMapportlet\\_regionids=364](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/map?p_p_id=captargmap_WAR_CapTargMapportlet&_captargmap_WAR_CapTargMapportlet_non-eu-country=true&_captargmap_WAR_CapTargMapportlet_non-eu-region=true&_captargmap_WAR_CapTargMapportlet_regionids=364) [Last consultation 30 November 2018]

[10] OECD (2012) *Public Investment across Levels of Government: The Case of Skåne, Sweden* [http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/Skåne\\_edited.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/Skåne_edited.pdf) [Last consultation: 30 November 2018]

[11] This information is available online: <https://www.Skåne.se/en/politics-and-organisation/about-region-Skåne/> [Last consultation: 23 November 2018]

[12] Skåne Research and Innovation Council, Sounding Board for Innovation in Skåne (2011) *An International Innovation Strategy for Skåne*, p. 9. This information is available online

[http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/232763/SE\\_Sk%C3%A5ne\\_RIS3\\_2011\\_09\\_Final.pdf/672786c5-8ef7-4935-aa8b-7429a32a8aa2](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/232763/SE_Sk%C3%A5ne_RIS3_2011_09_Final.pdf/672786c5-8ef7-4935-aa8b-7429a32a8aa2) [Last consultation: 23 November 2018]

[13] This information is available online. <https://www.Skåne.se/en/politics-and-organisation/about-region-Skåne/transborder-collaboration/> [Last consultation: 23 November 2018]

[14] This information is available online: <https://www.Skåne.com/en/construction-of-ess-has-begun> [Last consultation: 23 November 2018]

[15] Grau, F.X., "The Glocal University", GUNi Network, 2014. This article is available online: [http://www.guninetwork.org/files/glocal-university\\_fx\\_grau\\_2014.pdf](http://www.guninetwork.org/files/glocal-university_fx_grau_2014.pdf) [Last consultation: 23 November 2018]

# Discovering Southern Catalonia: Lear Corporation

[diaridigital.urv.cat/en/discovering-southern-catalonia-lear-corporation/](https://diaridigital.urv.cat/en/discovering-southern-catalonia-lear-corporation/)



In this section, we present those areas that are good examples of Southern Catalonia's status as a knowledge region. We discuss the economic, social, cultural and natural spaces whose peculiarities and characteristics constitute a social model based on knowledge, the objective of which is to help improve the quality of life of the people living in the region.

## History, mission and values:

Founded in 1917 in Detroit (Michigan, USA), the Lear Corporation is a supplier of seats and electrical distribution systems for cars. Globally, it has 165,000 employees in 39 countries. In the Southern Catalonia region are the main headquarters of the holding in Europe and Africa.

It offers the most complete solutions and experiences in the market as a supplier of car seats. Moreover, the segment dedicated to E-systems is a world leader in energy management and electrical distribution (electrical distribution, connectivity and autonomous efficiency). They design, validate and produce for Renault and other brands. Among its products are low-consumption batteries, networks for electric vehicles and connectivity systems such as the emergency e-call system. Currently, they produce 5 million products for 140 destinations. Their capacity for mass-production means it takes them less than ten seconds to make an engine.

The values of the company are quality, innovation, efficiency, customer, diversity, teamwork, integrity and community. Excellence as a continuous improvement, fight with integrity and the diversity of the communities that welcome them. Specifically, one of the strengths of its global strategy is to support the various communities that work for it in a wide range of support services and organizations. In particular, in the South Catalonia region they promote education, health, sports, art, culture, and the environment thanks to the active participation of their workers. Other examples include cyclist clubs, Lear Valls Community Race, football competitions, a Lego League, donations, URV Girls Day, URV MBA, Innovation Awards and social activities.

### Investment in innovation

The productive specialization of the headquarters of South Catalonia made the factory a technological center in electrical distribution systems. This was a result of an investment of five million euros in the Valls Campus, which was repeated in 2014 and 2015 with the investment of more than 15 million in projects for research, development and innovation.

### Recruiting and developing talent

The company employs 1,200 workers, most of whom come from the Southern Catalonia region. At the Valls Campus they develop talent and look for it in nearby universities. The URV is identified as the first university in which talent is sought, followed by the UPC of Catalonia and other universities. It is important to highlight the annual participation of the company in the URV Job Fair, where it establishes contact with students studying any of the URV's engineering degrees, in particular the mechanical, electrical and telecommunications specializations. According to figures, a high percentage of students consolidate their careers at the company after completing internships there.

Lear captures and develops talent. Thus, the company develops specialized training plans suitable for different profiles of their Campus in Valls. All workers carry out at least one training course per year. These formations are organized according to the needs of the different departments.

A global company has workers from eighteen different nationalities, which is why the company promotes the commitment of workers to the region through the organization of various social and recreational activities that are widely accepted. In line with its values and mission, the company promotes integration in the region and has a positive impact on society.