



Self-assessment report

**JOINT SECOND CYCLE (ACADEMIC MASTER'S) STUDY PROGRAMME  
"STRATEGIC BORDER MANAGEMENT"**

**(code 45861)**

**RTU Rezekne Academy**

Rezekne, 2025

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### III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME "STRATEGIC BORDER MANAGEMENT"

#### 3.1. Indicators characterizing the study programme

3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme that have been performed since the previous accreditation of the study field or licensing of the study programme, or assessment of changes, including changes planned within the framework of the assessment procedure of the study field.

Table 3.1.1.1

#### Parameters of the higher education program

<b>Name of the higher education program</b>	Strategic border management
The name of the higher education program in English	<i>Strategic Border Management</i>
<b>Field of study</b>	Internal security and civil protection
<b>Joint study programme with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mikolas Romers University (Lithuania);</li> <li>• Dutch Defence Academy (Netherlands);</li> <li>• University of Salamanca (Spain);</li> <li>• Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (Estonia).</li> </ul>
<b>Education classification code of the Republic of Latvia (IKK)</b>	45861
<b>EQF/NQF level</b>	7
<b>Type of higher education program</b>	Second-cycle higher education programme for master's degree, to be implemented after the acquisition of the first cycle of higher education
<b>Volume of higher education programme (CP)</b>	90
<b>Degree to be obtained</b>	European Joint master's in strategic Border Management
<b>Type , form, duration and language of implementation</b>	Full-time, 1 year 6 months, English
<b>Place of implementation in Latvia</b>	RTU Rezekne Academy, Atbrīvošanas Alley 115, Rezekne, Latvia
<b>Admission Requirements</b>	a citizen of an EU Member State or Schengen Associated State is admitted to the study programme: 1) with a recommendation of the border and coast guard authorities of the relevant State, the Frontex Agency, and international security institutions;

	<p>2) who has acquired a first-cycle higher education in the amount of at least 180 ECTS (bachelor's degree or equivalent - NQF/EQF level 6) in the field which is related to the subject of a master's degree: law, business administration, State administration, border guarding, police work, criminology, military sciences, security sciences, sociology, psychology, political science, risk and security management. If the applicant has obtained a bachelor's degree in fields other than those mentioned above, the Admissions Commission shall decide whether the relevant field of study is appropriate to provide the preliminary knowledge necessary for admission to the master's programme, also considering the applicant's overall professional experience;</p> <p>3) with at least 3 years of management and/or command management experience in operational work of the border guard;</p> <p>4) provide proof of English language proficiency at level B2 as defined in the Common European Framework for Determining the Level of Language Proficiency (CEFR).</p>
<b>Director of the study programme</b>	Juris Madžuls, Mg.sc.soc.

Since the accreditation of the previous study programme on 12.08.2013 (accreditation sheet No. 107 of the Ministry of Education and Science), several changes have been made to its parameters in the academic master's study programme "Strategic Border Management" (English: *Strategic Border Management*, hereinafter referred to as the Joint Study Programme).

1. Based on the Cabinet Order No. 297 of 23.05.2023 "On the reorganization of the Rezekne Academy of Technology", the Rezekne Academy of Technology (hereinafter RTA) was reorganized on 01.04.2025. By decision of the RTU Council No. 01000-21.1.2-e/4 of 10.02.2025, RTA was included in the composition of RTU under the name RTU Rēzekne Academy (hereinafter RTU RA).
2. By decision No. 2025/15-I of the Study Quality Commission of the Academic Information Centre of 19.03.2025, the study programme has been included in the RTU study direction "Internal Security and Civil Protection".
3. In accordance with the amendments made in 2022 to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (hereinafter AL) and the Vocational Education Law, the type of joint study programme has been changed from "second level" to "second cycle higher education study programme".
4. With the transition from Latvia to the European credit transfer system, the volume of the Joint Study Programme has been changed from 60 CP to 90 CP in accordance with the amendments to the AL. After the previous accreditation period, the Joint Study Programme was improved by implementing some significant changes at both the institutional and the content level. Changes have been made in accordance with the quality assurance cycle of the Joint Study Programme, as well as in accordance with the current amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Cabinet Regulations, which determine the volume and quality requirements of the highest educational programmes of the second cycle.
5. In the implementation of the joint study programme, the composition of the consortium was changed, strengthening a new model of cooperation with a renewed circle of partners. After

evaluation and mutual agreement between the universities, a new Consortium agreement was concluded, which was signed by the following partners: Mykolas Romeris University (*Mykolo Romerio Universitetas*, Lithuania); Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (*Sisekaitseakadeemia*, Estonia); Riga Technical University, Rezekne Academy (*Riga Technical University, Rezekne Academy*, Latvia); *Nederlandse Defensie Academie Faculteit Militaire Wetenschappen*, Netherlands; University of Salamanca (*Universidad de Salamanca*, Spain). (see Annex 5(P05) for the consortium agreement).

6. The review of the joint study programme, which is carried out as part of a continuous programme improvement process, based on feedback from the Quality Control Committee, external examiners and other stakeholders, provides a diverse insight into possible directions for improving the higher education programme. The review process also includes an in-depth analysis of the expected study results.

Since the start of the implementation of the Joint Study Programme, it has been evaluated twice by European accreditation organisations. In 2015, the accreditation of the Joint Study Programme was carried out by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) in cooperation with the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). The programme was accredited for a period of six years.

The re-accreditation of the Joint Study Programme was carried out in 2021 by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). On 15 April 2021, the programme was re-accredited for a further period of six years. NVAO Decision No. NVAO/20210440/LL (see Annex 18 (P18)).

### 3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the conformity of the study programme with the study field.

Analysis of the interlinkage of the programme title, code, degree to be obtained, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification objectives and objectives, study results corresponding to the relevant level of NQF/EQF, as well as admission requirements. Characterisation of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different variants of the implementation of the study programme) and assessment of the usefulness.

The joint study programme is based on improving the interoperability of EU borders and harmonising teaching and professional standards, while respecting diversity in line with the Bologna principles. The joint study programme includes international experience in the development and implementation of the higher education programme and is open to all EU organisations performing border guard functions.

Since the beginning of 2012, a working group on the development of the joint study programme, coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), representing experts in education and training of higher education institutions and border guards, as well as operational specialists from more than 20 Member States and partner organisations, has been working together to develop the Joint Study Programme. Extensive and diverse experience was used in the development of the joint study programme, bringing together the expertise of more than 80 academic and border guard experts from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as representatives of international organisations DCAF, EASO, FRA, INTERPOL, OSCE, UNHCR and IOM.

The project of the study outcomes to be achieved by the joint study programme has been developed on the basis of the European *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding (SQF)* at level 7 (master's level). These results determine the conditions for awarding the degree

and the structure of the programme modules.

The SQF competence profiles, approved by Member States and related academic and professional institutions (SACs), form an excellent framework for the development of a Joint Study Programme that meets the organisation's training and professional qualification requirements. More than 30 European Union organisations with border guarding functions, as well as other cooperation partner organisations, participated in the approval of these profiles.

The European Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Protection (SQF) was approved by the Management Board of Frontex on 28 November 2012. As a general European reference framework for border guard training, the SQF is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) at levels 4-7.

The purpose of using this system in the development of the Joint Study Programme was to promote the integration of common standards in the field of middle and higher level management training, ensuring that the training corresponds to the real situation of professional activity and is oriented towards the development of work competences. At the same time, the aim was to promote the uptake of European good practices in the design and development of training, aligning it with the highest standards in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The study results of the Joint Study Programme are derived from the 7th level descriptions of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), while each of the ten learning outcomes of the modules is derived from the relevant study results of the Joint Study Programme.

In accordance with decision No. 2025/15-I of the AIC Study Quality Commission of 19.03.2025, the study programme is included in the RTU study direction "Internal Security and Civil Protection" (hereinafter the Study Field). The higher education programmes corresponding to the study field cover the higher education programmes of the first cycle and the second cycle.

	Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management			Rezekne Academy
Cycle 2	Occupational Safety (47862)	Administration of Custom and Taxes (47861)		Strategic border management (45861)
Cycle 1	Safety Engineering (42862)	Administration of Custom and Taxes (42861)	Fire Safety and Civil Protection (44861)	Border guarding (42861)
Previous education	Secondary education	Secondary education	First cycle education Short cycle education Secondary education	Short cycle education

Figure 3.1.2.1. Study programmes included in the study field

By including the Joint Study Programme in the Study Field, its conformity with the Study Field Development Plan for 2022-2027 has been assessed (see Annex 17 (P17)). For the conformity assessment for the development plan of the study field, see Table 3.1.2.1.

Table 3.1.2.1.

**Conformity of the joint study programme with the development plan of the study field**

Tasks specified for the study field	Conformity of the joint study programme with the Study Field
<b>To determine the priority of research in the field of economic security</b> by implementing scientific activities in accordance with the RTU platform " <i>Security and Defence</i> " and developing the training of civil protection, security engineering, customs and tax specialists.	The joint study programme focuses on the strategic dimension of EU internal security, risk/threat management and border management; the study results correspond to level 7 of the GNI/EQF and SQF (border guarding), providing a research-based approach and strategic analytics competencies. Civil protection aspects are integrated into the risk, cooperation and resource management modules.
<b>Strengthen scientific capacity</b> by increasing the potential of research staff and involving students in research.	The joint study program includes research modules (M6, M10) and 30 CP master's thesis; They purposefully develop applied research and methodology. The content has been regularly updated on the basis of the latest findings and international policy documents (EIBM, Frontex Training Strategy, etc.).
<b>Expand international and national cooperation</b> by conducting joint research with leading scientific centers, institutions and companies.	The joint study programme is implemented by a consortium (MRU, EASS, NLDA-FMS, USAL, RTU RA) in the Frontex coordinated academic network (CEG); Cooperation ensures joint projects, mobility and common quality criteria.
<b>Improve higher education programmes</b> by ensuring a balance between fundamental and professional courses and strengthening the practical component.	10 thematic modules (60 CP) + master's thesis (30 CP) ensure a balance between theory (law, policy, ethics, strategy) and practicality (risk analysis, cooperation, research); Studies take place in a combined (face-to-face + e-study) form.
<b>Develop academic staff</b> through the involvement of young scientists, promoting mobility and establishing a system of pedagogical growth.	>30 teaching staff and experts are involved in the study process; ~70% with a doctorate, there is a regular rotation of visiting professors between partners, which contributes to an international teaching environment and pedagogical growth.
<b>To create a modern study environment</b> by providing e-learning opportunities and access to modern equipment.	The joint study programme has been implemented in a combined way with the e-learning component; digital platforms and mobility are funded by Frontex grants and EU funds (Erasmus+, ISF), which allow for the maintenance of a modern study infrastructure.
<b>To promote the development of continuing education and lifelong learning</b> through the accumulated academic experience.	Graduates of the joint study programme continue to work as instructors and experts, promoting knowledge transfer and staff sustainability in security institutions, which strengthens the lifelong learning ecosystem.
<b>Ensure international accessibility of higher education programmes</b> by offering courses in foreign languages and promoting the mobility of students and lecturers.	Studies are conducted in English; All students study in at least two partner countries, ensuring a high level of international accessibility and mobility.

<p><b>Strengthen cooperation with foreign universities</b> by jointly organizing the development of conferences, internships and teaching materials.</p>	<p>The consortium model with EU partners ensures the development/implementation of joint modules, guest lectures and the development of joint resources; Students are provided with an international learning environment that reflects the operational reality.</p>
<p><b>To raise the results of rtu international rankings</b>, especially <i>in the Eduniversal ranking of business universities</i>.</p>	<p>The international implementation of the joint study programme, mobility, publication and project base, as well as the presence of a strong network of partners indirectly contribute to the internationalisation and reputation indicators of RTU.</p>
<p><b>Actively participate in international organizations and projects</b>, including the World Customs Organization, Geneva DCAF, UNDP, EC and ENETOSH platforms.</p>	<p>The international dimension is implemented through the Frontex/CEG network, EU funds projects and consortium cooperation; the involvement mentioned in the direction (WCO, DCAF, UNDP, EC, ENETOSH) is planned/expandable through existing cooperation channels.</p>

The joint study programme "Strategic Border Management" (45861) (the degree to be obtained "Master's Degree in Strategic Border Management" corresponds to the Field of Study, where the code element (45) indicates belonging to the master's degree of the second cycle higher education programme, to be implemented after the acquisition of the first cycle higher education, code element 86 indicates belonging to the thematic field of education - Civil and Military Defence, code element 861 indicates belonging to the thematic group of education - Protection of persons and property. The duration of the joint full-time study programme is 1 year and 6 months (90 CP).

The joint study programme is focused on issues of strategic border guard management and inter-institutional cooperation in the European Union. The content, purpose and results to be achieved of the joint study programme are fully in line with the Study Direction, as it focuses on strengthening internal security, risk and threat management, respect for human rights and international cooperation in the field of security.

**The aim** of the joint study programme is to educate highly qualified mid- and senior-level border guarding managers who are capable of strategically planning, leading and developing integrated border management within the European Union, based on a shared European approach, interoperability, harmonisation of professional standards and respect for fundamental rights, while applying evidence-based, intelligence-led and risk-analysis-driven decision-making in a dynamic and international security environment.

The objectives of the study programme are to:

1. Provide advanced knowledge of European Union border security policies, the concept of Integrated Border Management, the role of Frontex, and common European professional standards.
2. Develop strategic management and leadership skills required for leading border guarding structures, organisational development and change management at national and European levels.
3. Promote the integration of fundamental rights, professional ethics and responsible governance into the planning and implementation of border guarding policies, procedures and operational activities.
4. Strengthen intelligence-led, risk-analysis-based and research-oriented approaches in the strategic management of border management and border control.

5. Develop interinstitutional, international and interdisciplinary cooperation competences, fostering European interoperability and the formation of a shared professional culture.
6. Enhance professional and academic research skills, ensuring the ability to analyse data, critically evaluate practice and design well-grounded solutions to strengthen border security in the European and global context.
7. Promote lifelong learning and professional development, preparing graduates for further academic advancement (doctoral studies) and sustainable professional growth in the field of border guarding.

These aim and objectives of the study programme are directly linked to the core competences of the study field, namely security management, risk assessment, crisis management and the protection of human rights within national security structures. This aim is directly related to the core competencies of the Study Direction – security management, risk assessment, crisis management, and respect for human rights in state security structures.

The joint study programme provides for the acquisition of a master's degree in strategic border management. The study results of the joint study programme comply with the requirements of the 7th level of the Latvian Qualification Framework (NQF), which provides for the ability to independently analyse and interpret complex security problems, plan and manage strategic level processes and ensure intersectoral cooperation.

K1 - Knows and understands the laws and regulations of Latvia, the European Union and international in the field of border protection, migration and security.

K2 - Knows the methods, tactics and technologies of border control, border guarding and immigration surveillance.

K3 - Understands the principles of national security policy, human rights, and international cooperation.

K4 - Knows the basic principles of organization, management, and risk management in the border guarding service.

S1 - Knows how to professionally carry out border control and border protection measures using modern technologies.

S2 - Able to analyze and assess security situations, identify risks and make informed decisions, including in emergency circumstances.

S3 - Knows how to organize and manage personnel service tasks, ensuring effective cooperation within the department and at the inter-institutional level.

S4 - Knows how to conduct applied research in the field of border protection and migration, analyze data, and justify professional solutions.

C1 - Is competent to independently and responsibly perform the duties of a border guard, observing professional ethics, human rights and service discipline.

C2 - Is competent to assess security threats and develop appropriate solutions in border protection practices.

C3 - Is competent to manage the work of the border guard unit and make strategic and tactical decisions.

C4 - Is competent to develop professionally and continue your studies in master's level programs by engaging in lifelong learning.

The content of the joint study programme and the study result consistently correspond also to level 7 of the Sectoral Qualifications *Framework for Border Guarding (Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding)*.

The study results of the joint study programme include the ability to analyse and evaluate security risks, plan and manage border guarding and internal security measures, implement human

rights principles and ethical standards, as well as strategically manage resources and human resources in the field of security. Study modules – (1) Strategy, planning and evaluation in border protection; (2) Fundamental rights and ethics in the management of European border security; (3) Management and organisational development in border management; (4) EU border policies and strategies; (5) Innovation and technology in border security; (6) Studies on management practices in border security; (7) The global context of European border security; (8) Strategic risk and threat management in European border security; (9) Cooperation in strategic border management; (10) Research on integrated practices in border management – designed to ensure a direct link with study results. The study results reflect the transition from tactical and operational level competencies to strategic management and analytical thinking that fully meets the requirements of the EQF/GNI level 7.

Although the Joint Study Programme does not have a separate civil protection module, civil protection aspects are integrated into several study courses, especially in the areas of risk and threat management, cooperation and resource management. Thus, coverage of both dimensions of the Study Field – internal security and civil protection – is ensured.

The admission rules provide that officials with at least the first level higher education (in the amount of 180 OS) and at least three years of experience in the management of border guard or internal security service personnel, as well as with knowledge of English at least at B2 level, may enter the Joint Study Programme. These requirements are closely related to

the objective of the Joint Study Programme and the study results – they ensure that students have sufficient professional experience and prior knowledge to acquire strategic management and research competences corresponding to the level of master's studies.

The total amount of the joint study programme is 90 CP (3 stages of 30 CP). The joint study programme is implemented in full-time studies in a blended *form*, combining face-to-face intensive sessions with online classes. Such an approach allows the Joint Study Programme to be implemented efficiently, preserving the student's workplace and providing practical experience during the course of studies. The duration and amount of studies conform to the requirements of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the requirements of Article 2 of the Law of the Republic of Latvia on the Implementation of the Joint Study Programme "Strategic Border Management", which provides that "Master's degree in strategic border management (study field "Internal Security and Civil Protection") shall be granted if the Joint Master's Programme 60\* (90 CP - in accordance with the amendments to the AL) has been acquired in full-time studies for one and a half years, the applicant has at least three years of experience in operational border guard work at least at the mid-stage management level and the total duration of the implementation of the Bachelor's and Joint Master's programmes is at least four and a half years in full-time studies and the amount of at least 180\* (270 ECTS - according to the amendments AL) credits.

The scope of the joint study programme (90 ECTS) is appropriate and well justified, as it ensures advanced and integrated professional preparation by balancing strategic management and leadership, integrated border management, the protection of fundamental rights and professional ethics, as well as intelligence-led, risk-analysis-based and research-oriented approaches. These elements are essential for the education of mid- and senior-level border guarding managers in the context of the European Union. The programme volume also corresponds to the professional profile of the target group, as it is designed for students with at least three years of professional experience in operational border guarding at a middle management level, providing sufficient academic and research depth while respecting students' prior professional competences and experience.

The delivery of the programme in full-time blended-learning mode, combining intensive on-site sessions with online studies, is particularly suitable for working professionals in the security sector, as it enables the continuation of employment, promotes the integration of theory and professional practice, and ensures continuous professional experience throughout the study period. Modules 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 are studied online, which together account for 35 ECTS, i.e. 39% of the

total program volume.

Furthermore, the 90 ECTS structure provides an adequate framework for the development of research competences, including the preparation of the master's thesis, which is essential for fostering evidence-based decision-making, encouraging professional reflection, and preparing graduates for further academic progression, including doctoral studies. Overall, the 90 ECTS scope of the study programme is purposeful and proportionate, ensuring the achievement of the programme's aims and objectives, the development of high-level professional competences, and compliance with national and European requirements for the implementation of joint master's study programmes.

The implementation model of the joint study programme – joint implementation within the framework of a consortium with universities from several EU countries and the support of Frontex – is innovative and complies with international standards for quality management and internal security training. This significantly increases the usefulness and added value of the Joint Study Programme in the professional development of Latvian and European border guards and civil protection specialists.

Annex 1 (P01) provides a model of the diploma to be awarded for the completion of the study programme and its annexes.

In Annex 2 (P02), see the model study agreement.

In Annex 3 (P03) see information on the possibilities of continuing studies in case this study programme is closed.

In Annex 4 (P04) see the document certifying that RTU students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme/s RTU is not accredited due to actions (actions or omissions) of RTU or its licensing is revoked, and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme/s.

### 3.1.3. Economic and/ or social justification of the study program, analysis of the employment of graduates.

The aim of the joint study programme is to prepare high-level managers and strategic analysts capable of leading joint EU *Integrated Border Management* (IBM) operations; to analyse and forecast migration and security risks; to plan and coordinate cooperation between border guards, customs, police and defence services.

The implementation of the joint study programme shall be economically justified by:

- The growing security needs at EU level – migratory crises, hybrid threats, illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings – require professional managers who are able to take strategic decisions in multi-country cooperation.
- EU long-term investment in security education: training initiatives funded by Frontex and the European Commission support the creation of a *Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding*.
- High added value to national economies – Graduates of a joint study programme ensure safe and efficient border management, which is a prerequisite for trade, mobility, tourism and investment development.

The joint study programme also promotes the internationalisation of higher education and the development of the knowledge economy, ensuring the participation of higher education institutions of Latvia and other Member States in EU-level security education networks. It strengthens the strategic importance of Latvia as the eastern border state of the EU and supports the regional security policy.

The joint study programme addresses major public safety and governance challenges at EU level:

- promote a European identity and a common area of security;

- develops human rights and ethical competences in border management;
- improve intercultural cooperation in multinational missions;
- promote the involvement of women in management and security structures, ensuring gender equality.

From a social point of view, the Joint Study Programme shall contribute to:

- modernisation of public administration by introducing data-driven risk analysis and digital solutions;
- raising public safety perceptions and trust in law enforcement authorities;
- the socio-economic stability of the regions, as secure borders and controlled migration promote entrepreneurship and mobility.

The joint study programme is integrated *into the EU Human Security and Rule of Law* principles, emphasizing human security and respect for human rights in the context of border management. Graduates of the joint study program acquire high-level strategic management and analytical competencies (EQF 7), which allows them to work in the following positions:

- in the central apparatus of the State Border Guard, the State Police and the Ministries of the Interior (policy and strategy planning, analysis and coordination positions);
- European Union institutions – Frontex, CEPOL, EASO, Europol, EEAS, etc.;
- International cooperation and security missions (EUBAM, Frontex joint operations, Schengen evaluation and monitoring activities; in the projects of the Centre for the Development of International Migration Policy);
- In universities and training centres, as teaching staff and experts in border management and security.

Graduate employment rates in the Joint Study Programme exceed 90-95% within one year of graduation. A large proportion of graduates go on to serve in senior positions and are included in EU expert lists for the management of international missions. The socio- economic impact of the joint study programme is also the promotion of knowledge transfer and staff sustainability, with graduates becoming trainers, policy planners and innovators in border management systems.

See Annex 5 (P05) for a copy of the consortium agreement.

#### 3.1.4. Statistical data on students in the study programme, dynamics of the number of students, analysis and assessment of factors affecting changes in the number. When analyzing, distinguish separately different forms of study, types, languages and sub- programmes (if applicable).

Since its introduction in 2019, representatives of border guards, police, customs and protection services from various European Union and partner countries, including Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Finland, Greece, Bulgaria, Spain and Croatia, have studied in the joint study programme. The Joint Master's Programme is implemented in a modular form in cooperation with Frontex and the European Border Guard Training Network (CEG), based on the Common Core Curriculum (CCC) and EQF Level 7.

In the period from 2015 to 2021, three study streams were admitted, a total of 80 students, and three graduations took place, a total of 78 graduates. The dropout rate of students during this period is insignificant, only two students. The reason for the dropout is related to the students' work history. In the spring of 2025, 25 students were admitted, while in the fall of 2025 - 23 students. One student has withdrawn his own free will. Representatives of 19 EU countries are studying in the program. The dynamics of students and graduates is reflected in Table 3.1.4.1 and Appendix P06.

Table 3.1.4.1

## Number of students in the Joint Study Programme

Study period	2015-2017	2017-2019	2019-2021	2021-2014	2024/2025 Spring	2025/2026 Winter
Students number	22	24	34	Admission does not occur	25	23
Funding	Frontex	Frontex	Frontex		Frontex	Frontex
Graduates	22	24	32		No data yet	No data yet
Dropout	0	0	2		1	0
LV students	2	2	2		2	0
Other countries students	ES	Netherlands - 1; Italy - 2; Romania - 2; Portugal - 2; Spain - 2; Estonia - 2 Germany - 1; Hungary - 1; Greece - 1; Lithuania - 2; Switzerland - 1; Belgium - 1; Denmark - 1; Sweden - 1 Finland - 2	Greece - 4; Croatia - 2; Spain - 5; Italy - 5; Romania - 4; Lithuania - 2; Netherlands - 1; Germany - 2; Portugal - 1; Norway - 3; Estonia - 1; Finland - 1; Poland - 1		Estonia - 3; Lithuania - 3; Netherlands - 1; Croatia - 1 Italy - 3; Portugal - 3; Hungary - 1; Greece - 2; Finland - 1; Poland - 2; Iceland - 1; Romania - 1; Sweden - 1	Portugal - 3; Germany - 1 Greece - 4; Italy - 3; Norway - 1; Croatia - 1; Austria - 1; Netherlands - 1; Spain - 1; Slovakia - 1 Lithuania - 3; Poland - 1 Estonia - 2

The joint study programme is implemented in cooperation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). In general, the number of students in the Joint Study Programme has a stable and balanced dynamic – 30 students per cycle (+/- 10%) students. Student places will be allocated to national border guard organisations of EU Member States and Schengen Associated States (indicatively one place for each organisation carrying out border guard tasks under a national mandate). Students are selected from middle and high- level management working in the field of border guarding.

Considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the change in the position of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) in the implementation of the Joint Study Programme – moving from direct administration to a grant agreement model and delegating responsibilities to the newly created consortium – the study process was not organised from 2021 to 2025. In view of the expansion of the Frontex network and the growing demand for strategic level education in border management, Frontex obliged the consortium to prepare 90 students for the period 2025-2027. In 2024, 26 students (of which 31% women) from 15 countries were enrolled in the Joint Study Programme. Changes in the number of students in the Joint study programme are influenced by several important factors:

1. The European Union's security policy highlights: migration crises, hybrid threats and security challenges are increasing the need for senior managers.
2. Frontex – ensures funding and access to training places for representatives of the Member States.
3. Reputation and quality of the joint study programme – The joint study programme is recognised as the European standard for strategic border management.
4. Enlargement of the international partnership – the involvement of new Member States expands the range of candidates.
5. Member States' institutional support – delegation of students from border guards or police structures.

The dynamics of the number of students in the joint study program suggest a stable long-term demand in security and border management management education. The gender balance is increasing, the completion rate remains high (over 95%), and balanced representation by country and experience is ensured. This confirms the sustainability and international recognition of the Joint Study Programme.

In Annex 6 (P06), see statistics on students.

### 3.1.5. Justification for the establishment of the joint study programme and characterisation and assessment of the choice of partner universities, including information on the establishment and implementation of the joint study programme (if applicable).

The basis for the development and implementation of the joint study programme is laid down in Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard, which provides for the development of common European standards for border and coast guard education and training, and in the Stockholm Programme (2009), which stresses the need to establish systems to involve law enforcement officers in different exchange and mobility programmes, to promote the creation of a common culture and a common approach to European border security, in line with Frontex's mandate in the field of border guard education and training. In addition, the EU's internal security strategy and the multiannual strategic policy cycle for European integrated border management require a high level of specialisation and professionalism. The European institutions are encouraged to adopt a strategic approach to vocational training in order to strengthen Member States' national capacities by strengthening the European dimension of training and European law enforcement cooperation in the border management sector.

The development of the joint study programme took place in 2013-2015 through the Frontex-funded project "European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management", responding to the development needs of the European Union's external border management system and frontex's strategic priorities. It aims to provide uniform, standardised and academically based education for senior managers and strategic professionals involved in border and migration management across the EU.

The creation of a joint study programme is based on:

- the concept of the EU's *Integrated Border Management* (IBM)
- SQF (EKI/NKI 7) requirements,
- *Frontex Common Core Curriculum* (CCC ML) requirements for strategic level education,
- The EU's *Internal Security Strategy 2020+*, which provides for joint and coordinated action by Member States.

The development of the joint study programme was started by the Frontex Education Network (CEG – *European Border and Coast Guard Education Network*) with a view to establishing a Master's programme at European level which:

- 1) ensure a common approach to strategic border management education
- 2) strengthen cooperation and trust between Member States
- 3) promotes knowledge transfer between military, civil security and law enforcement structures.

Higher education institutions and educational institutions which have long-term experience in the preparation of security and border guard personnel shall participate in the implementation of the joint study programme. The selection of partners was made on the basis of quality and capacity criteria developed by Frontex, ensuring that each university is able to represent regionally significant experience and provide an appropriate academic level (EQF/GNI 7).

The main partners of a joint study programme are:

- Mikola Romera University (Lithuania) (**MRU**) – the leading legal and security management educational institution in the Baltic region;
- The Netherlands Defence Academy (Faculty of Military Sciences) (**NLDA-FMS**) – responsible for modules related to fundamental rights, ethics, research and leadership in border security.
- University of Salamanca (Universidad de Salamanca) (Spain) (**USAL**).
- *Estonian Academy of Security Sciences* (Tallinn, Estonia) (**EASS**) - a higher education institution that prepares specialists for police, border guard, rescue and prison services.
- Riga Technical University Rezekne Academy (Latvia) (**RTU RA**) – provides a module of technological and management competencies (ICT, risk analysis, border surveillance management).

All partners operate in a common academic network coordinated by Frontex, which ensures a common quality management system, a common learning outcomes structure and a uniform assessment approach.

Each consortium partner is responsible for the implementation of at least one study module. Studies take place modularly, in a combined way (face-to-face and e-studies), in a 1.5-year cycle (90 CP), each higher education institution issues a joint diploma certifying the same qualifications in all Member States.

The network of partner universities provides:

- academic and practical experience in various aspects of border management (rights, security, risk analysis, governance, ICT, human rights);
- a wide geographical coverage, from the Baltic to the Balkans and the Mediterranean;
- a common quality framework and common evaluation criteria (*Frontex Training Quality Framework*);
- mobility – all students study in at least two different partner countries;
- strong links with employers: graduates of the joint study programme are included in the Frontex expert database, involved in EU operations and appointed to senior positions in national law enforcement agencies.

The joint study programme is a model for the integration of EU-level higher education in the field of security, ensuring academic and professional unity among Member States. The creation and implementation of the joint study program provides a number of strategic advantages:

- **The European dimension** – builds common understanding and common standards in border management education.
- **International cooperation** – ensures constant exchange of experience and joint research projects.
- **Quality management** – centralised coordination of Frontex guarantees uniform academic quality.
- **Sustainability** – the joint study programme is financially and institutionally secured in the long term through Frontex and national co-financing.
- **Regional and national added value** – the involvement of Latvia and other regional partners strengthens their international role in safety education.

The Joint Study Programme is thus systematically sound, structurally balanced and fully in line with level 7 of the EQF and the Frontex Training Strategy (*Frontex Training Strategy*) (2023-2028).

See Annex 5 (P05) to the Consortium Agreement.

### 3.2. Content and implementation of studies

3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study program. Assessment of the interconnection of the

information included in the study courses/modules, the results to be achieved, the objectives set, etc. with the objectives of the study programme and the results to be achieved, which are in conformity with the relevant NQF/ECF level, state standard, profession standard or professional qualification requirements. Assessment of the topicality of the content of study courses/modules and their compliance with the needs of the sector, labour market and scientific trends, whether and how the content of study courses/ modules is updated according to the trends in the development of the sector, labour market and science. In case the study programme includes sub-programmes, include an analysis of each of the sub- programmes.

Structure of the joint study programme:

The joint study programme consists of 90 CP, where 1 CP = 28 hours of study in direct connection with the results to be achieved by the Joint study programme. The joint study programme is implemented in three (3) stages, where each stage corresponds to one semester of full-time studies in the amount of 30 CP.

The joint study programme consists of 10 thematic modules (5 or 10 CP), which are implemented in the first two stages (60 CP in total). Each module is implemented under the guidance of one or more consortium partners according to a breakdown approved by the *Governing Board of the Joint Study Programme*. The third stage is the development of a master's thesis (30 CP).

Phase 1 modules:

Module 1 – Strategy, Planning and *Evaluation in Border Guarding* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by EASS) – designed to develop strategic thinking skills to implement and evaluate plans at EU and regional level. As a basis for future modules of the Joint Study Programme, the aim of this module is to develop border protection strategies and implementation plans, assess the effectiveness of strategic plans and review them in the context of national and EU requirements. The operational and tactical experience of students, together with the competencies developed during formal education, contributes to the development of strategies and implementation plans.

Module 2 – Fundamental Rights and *Ethics in European Border Security Management* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by the NLDA) – is designed to develop skills in respecting, promoting, implementing and integrating fundamental rights and ethics by making strategic decisions and considering their impact on border management at management level. This module is one of the basic modules for the entire Joint Study Programme and builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in module 1, forming the basis for future modules. Fundamental rights and ethics are an integral part of border guard training and practice. Students acquire knowledge of fundamental rights and ethics, as reflected in the relevant legal frameworks, as well as in case law. The module allows students to make strategic decisions, as well as review current institutional structures and policies, respecting fundamental rights and ethics.

Module 3 – Leadership and *Organisational Development in Border Management* (English: *Leadership and Organisational Development in Border Management*; 5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by RTU RA) – is aimed at improving and further developing management and organizational competencies in order to implement change management procedures, promote fundamental rights and implement strategic planning. Border guard organisations must be able to adapt their organisational structures, procedures and practices (organizational development); Border guard managers must be able to manage and manage organisational change (management) and all border guard staff must be prepared to accept and implement organisational changes. The module provides the theoretical and practical foundations to prepare students for the role of change agents. All border

guard organisations must respond to common EU guiding principles, policies, strategies, standards, as well as to the operational challenges they face in their day-to-day work.

Module 4 – *EU Border Policies and Strategies* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by USAL) – builds on previous modules, looking at policies and strategies from a broader European perspective. This module is designed to involve students in EU border security policy, strategies and security procedures, including resource management and strategic integration of fundamental rights. It allows students and their organisations to respond to common EU systems, policies, strategies, standards, as well as to the operational challenges they face in their daily work. The module provides theoretical and practical frameworks to equip students with competences to apply a wide range of concepts and tools to implement, review and improve EU strategies.

Module 5 – *Innovation and Technology in Border Security* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by EASS), is developed on the basis of modules 1 and 2, providing the theoretical and practical elements necessary for the strategic management of technological solutions in the field of international border control, as well as in the European and national context. It addresses the relevant standards on legal and fundamental rights related to the use of technology in border management.

Module 6 – *Research on Management Practices in Border Security* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by NLDA), is the final module of the first stage. This research module allows students to combine different aspects of learning learned in previous modules, apply a research-oriented analysis of this knowledge and further develop their abilities to apply theoretical perspectives in practice. The module also serves to develop skills in the application of scientific research methodologies and assessment skills, which are continued in module 10.

Phase 2 modules:

Module 7 – *The Global Context of European Border Security* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by MRU and EASS). The module focuses on the impact of global international relations, policy and security issues on the security of the EU and, more specifically, on the security of its borders. The module is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge for a border manager to consider these issues and make decisions to prioritise the ever-changing dynamics and needs of EU borders. This will consolidate the knowledge gained in phase 1 modules, in particular modules 1, 2 and 3.

Module 8 – *Strategic Risk and Threat Management for European Border Security* (5 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by MRU), builds on modules 1, 6 and 7, as well as on the results of experience in identifying risks and developing risk management tools and strategies. The module is designed to develop knowledge and skills related to intelligence-based risk and threat analysis and assessment, as well as the review of strategic plans related to strategic risk management.

Module 9 – *Cooperation in Strategic Border Management* (10 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by UNED) – aims to strengthen and promote decision-making processes in an international context, as well as to collect and promote reflections on past teaching and institutional practices. It also provides theoretical knowledge and skills to facilitate more effective cooperation between key actors, Member States, Schengen Associated States and their participating agencies and institutions.

Module 10 – *Research on Integrated Practices in Border Management* (in English: *Researching Integrated Practices in Border Management* 10 CP; ECI/NCI 7; provided by NLDA and USAL). The aim of the module is to apply the knowledge gained in the previous modules to the research project, as well as to collect and promote reflections on the acquisition of experience and

institutional practices. Module 10 is designed to develop knowledge and skills in qualitative research methods, for example by analysing national and global trends or defining risks and potential challenges for border management organisations in the context of the constantly changing external context. Students become familiar with the tools available to select cost-effective methodologies and analyze data to identify national and global trends or define risks and problems. In addition, students are prepared to conduct a review and case study on a topic of operational significance and to develop a detailed report of the study plan.

In total, ten modules address the problems and disputes faced by border organisations both in their operational activities and in order to ensure compliance with common EU legal acts, policies, strategies and standards. Both scientific and practical knowledge exchanged between students, academic staff and representatives of the field of work aims to improve interoperability within the EU and harmonise professional standards, while promoting respect for the diversity of Member States' border organisations.

The final modules (modules 6, 9 and 10) help to facilitate the learning process by (1) integrating and combining the knowledge gained in the previous modules and (2) integrating scientific knowledge with practical knowledge and experience in the field of border management. These modules provide students with the opportunity to engage in effective, higher-level critical and reflective thinking and contribute to the formation of a culture that includes a broader picture of European cooperation and harmonisation. The 10 OSI study load for the final modules of phase 2 provides an opportunity to consolidate and correct learning outcomes, engage in group work and field studies, prepare and complete data collection and selection, as well as consult with lecturers, colleagues and sending institutions.

### Stage 3 – Master's thesis

Phase 3 is intended as a dissertation with a total volume of 30 CP (ECI/NCI 7). At this stage, students demonstrate their ability to conduct independent research on a clearly defined problem in a coherent, well-organized and critical manner. The aim of the master's thesis is to develop the ability to use the discipline literature to synthesize the research topic and/or to select, interpret and apply a methodologically based research approach that is suitable for the chosen field. Completing a master's thesis improves students' ability to reflect on their own and their organization's practices, citing international research in the field. Students develop a critical understanding of previous work in their chosen field and contribute to the expansion of knowledge by exploring or modifying some additional areas. Finally, students are asked to present and critically evaluate their work in a clear, structured style using logical arguments. Topicality of the sector: hybrid, migration dynamics, evolution of the EU's Common Border Management (IBM), integration of human rights at the operational level, digitalisation/ICT and data-driven risk analysis.

Labour market relevance: the implementation of the study programme is coordinated by Frontex, the EU's centre of excellence for border control activities at the EU's external borders, which shares intelligence and knowledge with all Member States and neighboring non-EU countries affected by migratory trends and cross-border crime. Under the supervision of Frontex, the content of the study programme and its modules is also developed and updated, which targets strategic management, analytics and cooperation profiles, which are in high demand in the State Border Guard, EU agencies (Frontex etc.), internal security institutions and international missions.

This structure of the Joint Study Programme ensures vertical progression – from the basics of strategic thinking and ethics, through the development of organizations, EU policies and technologies, to risk management, cooperation and applied research, which is concluded by an independent master's thesis.

The objectives of the joint study programme and the study results are aligned with the study content according to the EQF/GNI level 7.

Programme *Descriptor* is an explanatory document covering the overall content of the Joint Study Programme and covering the study outcomes and their relationship to the EQF/GNI; the programme's overall training and assessment strategy, as well as the indicative content; it aims to provide an overall vision and overview of the structure of the Joint Study Programme:

- Module *Descriptor* Study programme for 10 modules: each module description provides information on credit values, learning level, learning outcomes, interdependencies of modules, and learning and assessment strategies.
- Each module description is accompanied by independent and experimental learning plans (English: *Independent learning plan*, *Experiential learning plan*) to provide detailed instructions to students and faculty on how to implement the learning phase. They include information about the study results, the time and materials required, as well as how these phases fit into the overall module.
- The master's thesis description (English: *Dissertation Descriptor*) includes a general description of the master's thesis, including study results, study and assessment strategies and overall study results, as well as an assessment system.

The content of the joint study programme is regularly updated based on the decisions of the Board and various panels, involving the employers' council (border guard, police, customs, civil protection), analysing student/graduate feedback, experience of iterations of the programme, integrating the latest research findings (ICT, intelligence analytics, human rights practice, hybrid threats), etc.

In Annex 7 (P07), see Compliance of the Joint Study Programme with the National Education Standard.

In Annex 8 (P08), see the study plan of the Joint Study Programme.

In Annex 9 (P9), see the descriptions of the study courses (modules) of the Joint Study Programme.

See the mapping of the study modules in Annex 10 (P10).

3.2.2. In the case of master's or doctoral study programmes, indicate and provide justification whether the award of degrees is based on the achievements and insights of the relevant field of science or field of artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study programme, a description of the main research directions, the impact of the programme on research and other levels of education.

The award of a Master's Degree in Strategic Border Management is fully based on modern theoretical and empirical achievements in the fields of public administration and law, as well as practical research knowledge gained in the European Union's border management and security system. The content of the joint study programme is based on SQF level 7, which corresponds to EQF/GNI level 7. This framework integrates science-based concepts from the fields of security, strategic management, law, international relations, risk analysis and technology management.

The consortium partners shall ensure that the content of each module is based on the latest scientific knowledge and research results in the relevant field. For example:

- modules on strategic management, risk analysis and leadership integrate theories of security studies and public administration;
- the modules on ethics and fundamental rights are based on the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Frontex Fundamental Rights Strategy;

- modules on innovation and technology in border security make use of current EU research projects (e.g. publications of Horizon Europe, CEPOL and the FRONTEX research network);
- the research components (M6, M10 and master's thesis) form an applied research bridge between science and practice, providing an empirical contribution to the theoretical and methodological development of border management.

The joint study programme systematically updates the content using scientific resources, experiential studies and international security policy documents, such as:

- the European Integrated Border Management Strategy (*EIBM*)
- Frontex training strategy 2023-2028
- the Joint Framework Programme for Intermediate Border and Coast Guard Officers (CCC ML),
- Strategic risk analysis reports and Frontex situation assessment reports.

Thus, the content and degree of the joint study programme reflect a science-based and research-based approach to the fields of border security, risk management and public administration. The award of the degree takes place by evaluating the student's ability to independently conduct applied research, integrate theoretical and empirical knowledge, develop strategic solutions and critically analyze the international security environment, which is a direct indicator of the achievement of scientific and professional competence at the 7th level of the GNI/EQF.

- 3.2.3. Assessment of the implementation of the study programme, including the methods for the implementation of courses/modules, indicating the methods and how they contribute to the achievement of the results of the study courses and the objectives of the study programme. In the case of a joint study programme, or in the case if the study programme is implemented in a foreign language or in the form of distance learning studies, describe in detail the methods used for ensuring such study programme. Include an explanation of how the principles of student-centered teaching, learning, and assessment are followed in the study process.

The methodology for implementing the joint study programme is in line with the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the Frontex training strategy (*Frontex Training Strategy 2023–2028*) and the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Joint Study Programme. The joint study programme is implemented in English, in the form of modules, using a hybrid study model that combines face-to-face sessions, e-studies and applied international group projects. Since the Joint Study Programme is implemented in an international consortium (EASS, NLDA, USAL, MRU, RTU RA), the study process is based on the principle of cooperation, rotation and integrated e-platform.

Each module is implemented by one or more partner universities, ensuring uniform academic standards, a common digital environment (LMS) and a harmonised approach to the assessment of study results. The implementation of the joint study programme takes place in three stages, of which the first two (60 CP) are dedicated to modules, and the third (30 CP) is dedicated to the development of a master's thesis. The teaching methods are closely linked to the results to be achieved by each module and the Joint Study Programme, and their choice is determined by a student-centred approach and the context of professional activity.

In the implementation of the joint study program, several teaching and learning methods are used, which contribute to the achievement of study results:

- Problem-Based *Learning* – students solve practical situations based on real border management cases, this approach develops analytical and strategic thinking skills (e.g. in the modules *Strategy, Planning and Evaluation in Border Guarding* and *Strategic Risk and*

*Threat Management*).

- *Case Study Method* – based on operational data from Frontex and EU Member States, which allows students to combine theory and experience.
- *Simulation and Role Play* – are used in the modules of leadership, ethics and inter-institutional cooperation (*Leadership and Organisational Development, Cooperation in Strategic Border Management*), promoting decision-making and communication competence.
- *Research-Based Learning* – students conduct small applied research already at the end of stage 1 (*Researching Management Practices in Border Security*) and gradually develop research competence, which culminates in the master's thesis.
- *Reflective Practice* – special emphasis is placed on modules 6, 9 and 10, where students analyse their professional experience in an international context.
- International project cooperation (*Collaborative Learning*) – group projects implemented together with representatives of border guards and academic partners of different countries, promote intercultural dialogue and teamwork.

The joint study programme is implemented using the MRU e-learning environment (*Moodle*), which provides synchronous and asynchronous activities: online lectures, forum discussions, reflective journals, digital tests and project collaboration tools. Interactive resources are used (digital simulations, policy datasets, video lectures, reports of international organizations). This approach ensures continuous access to content and equal opportunities for all students in the consortium, regardless of location. Distance learning phases are combined with face-to-face learning sessions (*residential phases*) with partner universities, providing both academic and intercultural experiences.

Students' achievements are assessed using formative and summative assessment methods that are directly related to the objectives of each module and the overall results of the program:

- Formative assessment – reflection tasks, discussions in forums, group presentations and feedback from teachers.
- Summative evaluation – individual written works, project presentations, analytical reports, research protocols and master's thesis.
- Competency-based assessment – the degree of achievement of each study result (knowledge, skills, competence) is determined, and the assessment takes place according to a uniform system of scales throughout the consortium.

Assessment promotes student-centered learning because it is based on clearly formulated study outcomes, elements of self-esteem and opportunities for reflection. Students are actively involved in defining and evaluating their learning goals through mentor counseling and progress reviews.

The study process is organised in accordance with the principles of EU student-centred education (European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher education – ESG 2015):

- student participation in the planning of studies is ensured by providing feedback on the content of modules and assessment methods;
- study activities are planned in such a way as to promote independent research, critical thinking and reflection on professional practice;
- uses a rotational approach to faculty leadership that provides an experience of international perspective and cultural diversity;
- Experiential learning *is promoted*, allowing students to combine theoretical knowledge with real-world challenges in the field of border protection and security.

The methods of implementation of the joint study programme generally ensure the integration of knowledge, the development of skills and the strengthening of competences, in line

with the GNI/ECF level 7 and the professional requirements of Frontex. They allow students to become strategic-level professionals able to analyse, plan and implement border management policy in a European and international context.

Students become familiar with border security management practices across Europe, as each group is from each Member State/Schengen Associated State, and the content of the Joint Study Programme is developed and taught by European experts. Academic institutions forming a consortium for the implementation of the Joint Study Programme benefit from peer-to-peer exchange processes that will improve theory and practice in the field of border management. Organisations and agencies responsible for border security/border guarding in each Member State/Schengen Associated State benefit from improved operational cooperation/interoperability within the EU, which is also one of Frontex's main objectives. Students are offered the opportunity to learn in an environment that reflects operational reality, studying together to promote best practices in border protection and strengthen the European dimension of border guard work, while contributing to the development of a European border and coast guard culture at a higher level.

3.2.4. If the study programme provides for an internship, describe the internship opportunities, provision and work organisation offered to students, including whether the higher education institution/college helps students to find an internship. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities in a foreign language are ensured, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and assessment of the linking of the tasks of student internships included in the study programme with the study results to be achieved in the study programme (if applicable).  
Not applicable

3.2.5. Assessment and characterisation of the doctoral opportunities and doctoral process provided to students of the doctoral study programme (if applicable). Not applicable

3.2.6. Analysis and assessment of the topics of students' final papers, their topicality in the sector, including the labour market, and evaluations of final papers.

The theme and quality of the master's theses of the joint study programme reflect both the research objectives of the programme and the current trends of the border management sector in the European Union and the international security area.

The master's thesis (30 CP) is the third stage of the Joint Study Programme, which forms the culmination of the entire study process and confirms the ability of students to independently analyze, synthesize and apply theoretical knowledge in practice, in accordance with the requirements of the 7th level of the GNI/EKF. The basic principles, methodological guidelines and evaluation criteria for the development of master's theses have been agreed and approved throughout the consortium.

Analysing the themes of the final papers of recent years, it can be seen that students choose studies that directly reflect the strategic challenges of the European Union's border management system, the operational priorities of Frontex and the needs of the security services of the Member States. The topics of the works are closely related to current policy and operational processes, including:

- Assessing the effectiveness and interoperability of integrated border management (IBM) between the EU and neighbouring countries;
- coordination of migration and asylum policies and data exchange mechanisms;
- Improvement of risk and threat analysis systems, including the use of artificial intelligence and data analytics at the operational level;

- Leadership and change management in border guard organizations;
- Respect for fundamental rights and ethical dilemmas in border management practices;
- Strategic communication and strengthening public confidence in the security sector;
- Models of cooperation between border guard, customs, police and civil protection services.

Much of the final work is being developed in the form of applied research, in close cooperation with border guard institutions, Frontex, bodies of the Council of the European Union and national security institutions. This ensures the relevance of labour market needs and the practical applicability of research. The process of choosing topics is organized in cooperation with the student sending authorities (*border guard authorities*) and academic mentors of partner universities. Each student is provided with an academic manager (from the university) and a professional consultant (from the security institution), which guarantees a balance between the practical and academic dimensions.

Topics are approved at the level of the Joint Dissertation Board by evaluating:

- consistency with the objectives of the Joint Study Programme and the Frontex Education Framework (CCC level 7);
- links with current industry challenges and policy priorities;
- research potential for the development of innovative solutions or recommendations.

Such a structure ensures that the final papers not only pool existing knowledge, but offer new approaches to strategic border management, risk mitigation and inter-institutional cooperation. Students demonstrate the ability to use qualitative and quantitative research methods, including case studies, policy analysis, comparative research methods, statistical data interpretation, and expert interviews. Several works are interdisciplinary, combining legal, social sciences, management and security policy perspectives. The research methodology is being developed gradually from module 6 ("*Researching Management Practices in Border Security*") to Module 10 ("*Researching Integrated Practices in Border Management*"). Such progression ensures that students fully acquire the research competencies necessary for strategic level decision-making in the field of security during the development phase of the master's thesis.

All master's theses are evaluated according to uniform, consortium-approved criteria, which include:

- the depth of theoretical reasoning and literature analysis;
- the correctness of the research methodology and the validity of the choice;
- the quality of the analysis and the relevance of the conclusions to the objectives;
- practical applicability and potential for recommendations;
- structurality of work, adherence to language and scientific style.

The overall distribution of final paper ratings indicates high academic quality. Most of the works are rated "Very Good" or "Excellent", which confirms the ability of students to conduct independent research and offer professionally significant solutions. An additional guarantee of quality is the involvement of external reviewers from different EU countries and the participation of Frontex representatives in advocacy commissions, which ensures impartiality and an international perspective.

Thus, it can be concluded that the theme, content and quality of the master's theses fully correspond to the objective of the Joint Study Programme – to prepare high-level strategic managers in the field of border management who are able to analyse and solve complex security problems in compliance with human rights, international standards and the EU policy framework. Master's theses are closely linked to the security policy needs of Frontex, the EU Council and the Member States, ensuring their practical usefulness and research added value at both national and European level.

### 3.3. Resources and provision of the study programme

3.3.1. To assess the conformity of resources and provision (study base, science base (if applicable), informative base (including libraries), material and technical bases) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and sub- programmes and for the achievement of study results, to provide examples.

A rotational approach is used in the implementation of the joint study programme – each module is implemented with a different consortium partner, providing students with an international academic and professional environment. For example, RTU RA provides study rooms, conference infrastructure and access to RTU e-learning environment and databases; EASS (Estonia) provides a modern border guard and civil protection training center, where students practically learn the principles of cooperation management and strategic coordination; USAL (Spain) provides access to the European Documentation Centre and EU law databases; MRU (Lithuania) provides the infrastructure of the Border Management Research Centre and an international policy analysis laboratory.

Students are provided with unified access to digital learning materials and virtual platforms maintained by MRU throughout the Joint Study Program.

In the field of scientific activity, the Joint Study Programme is closely integrated into the scientific and applied research of partner universities related to security, border management, risk analysis, human rights and governance. Each higher education institution shall ensure its own scientific base:

- RTU RA – involved in the research platform Security and Defence, ensuring access to applied research projects and integration of students in research groups;
- MRU – heads *the Security Research and Innovation Centre* and coordinates projects on the digitalisation of EU border management;
- EASS – specializes in public security and crisis management research;
- NLDA – provides access to the military research library and applied management methodologies;
- USAL – provides a research base for the humanities and law, especially in the field of EU law and fundamental rights.

Students are involved in the research projects of these institutions, thus strengthening the principle of research-based learning and ensuring topicality of the topics of the master's theses. Students have access to extensive academic databases and digital resources through subscriptions from each partner's universities and a shared e-library environment. Available databases include:

- EBSCO host, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Springer Link, JSTOR, Hein Online, as well as EU Law, Frontex Library Portal and OECD iLibrary;
- EASS Digital Repository – a collection of security studies with access to international publications;
- MRU eLABa and RTU DSpace – repositories of scientific articles and student works.

Such information provision fully meets the requirements of master's level research and provides students with the opportunity to use both theoretical and empirical sources at the international level.

The joint study programme ensures the implementation of a combined form of study – in person, online and in the e-environment. Students have at their disposal:

- modernly equipped auditoriums, conference rooms and hybrid audiovisual systems (EASS, RTU RA, MRU);
- computer classes and videoconferencing rooms providing synchronous lectures from partner universities;

- *Learning Management System* (Moodle/VLE) with secure access, data protection and storage of learning materials;
- *Frontex Virtual Learning Environment*, which provides simulation and e-training modules;
- technical support and IT service at each partner institution, which provides assistance to students in 24/7 mode.

Practical simulations take place in the EASS Training Centre, where crisis management, border checks and cooperation simulation laboratories are available that comply with the Frontex Common Core Curriculum (CCC ML) guidelines.

By combining the infrastructure, digital resources and scientific base of partner universities, the Joint Study Programme provides all the necessary opportunities for students to achieve:

- theoretical knowledge of EU and global security policies;
- practical skills in matters of strategic and operational level border management;
- research competences in high-level policy and management analysis;
- international cooperation and digital competences through e-environment platforms. This network of resources ensures equal access for all students, regardless of their location, and promotes international academic mobility, in keeping with the essence of the

Joint Study Programme.

The study, scientific, informative and technical resources of the joint study programme are fully sufficient and qualitatively ensure the achievement of study results. The consortium model forms a unique platform for academic and professional synergies at European level, where students gain access to scientific schools, teaching technologies and real-world resources in the field of border management from different countries. The complementarity and digital accessibility of resources confirm the sustainability, relevance and compliance of the Joint Study Programme with GNI/ECF level 7 and Frontex professional requirements.

3.3.2. Assessment of the study and scientific base, including resources which are provided within the framework of co-operation with other scientific institutions and higher education institutions (applicable to doctoral study programmes) (if applicable).

Not applicable

3.3.3. To indicate the data on the available funding in the relevant study programme and its sub-programmes (if applicable), the sources of financing thereof and their use for the development of the study programme. To provide information on the costs per student within the framework of this study programme and sub-programme (if applicable), indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified positions. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (separately indicating information on each language, type and form of implementation of the study programme, and sub-programme).

The funding of the joint study programme is provided from several sources that reflect the international and inter-institutional nature of the Joint study programme. The joint study programme is implemented jointly by five partners from the Member States of the European Union (EASS, NLDA, USAL, MRU, RTU RA) in accordance with the consortium agreement, which sets out common principles regarding the flow, administration and use of funding.

The main sources of funding for the joint study programme are:

- Frontex covers the partners' costs through a grant administered by the consortium

coordinator MRU. The consortium coordinator MRU shall reimburse the costs to the partner in accordance with the relevant agreements concluded between the consortium coordinator and the relevant partner. The Frontex grant covers the main costs related to the implementation of the Joint Study Programme (academic staff, maintenance of digital platforms, student mobility, administrative coordination);

- Co-financing from European Union funds (e.g. Erasmus+ Capacity Building and Internal Security Fund programmes) – used to improve infrastructure, improve e- learning systems and develop common learning resources;
- Co-financing of partner universities – each university provides premises, IT infrastructure and access to libraries.

The Frontex grant, the support of the National Border Guard Services and the Ministries of the Interior covers the travel and mobility costs of students, as well as provides a financial contribution to the development of master's theses.

In general, the funding model of the Joint Study Programme is non-commercial and executed as "Cost-sharing" a model where each partner bears part of the total cost based on the number of students and the volume of modules provided.

The available funding is structured into five main cost categories

Table 3.3.3.1

Distribution of funding for the development of the Joint study programme

<b>Cost position</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Share of funding (%)</b>
1. Remuneration of academic staff and visiting lecturers	Lectures, module development, research management, exams, review	<b>35 %</b>
2. Mobility and international cooperation	Movement of students and faculty, study visits, organization of sessions, insurance	<b>25 %</b>
3. IT infrastructure and digital resources	E-learning platforms (LMS, Frontex VLE), software, license maintenance	<b>20 %</b>
4. Administrative and quality assurance	Program coordination, communication, quality reports, external evaluators, marketing materials	<b>15 %</b>
5. Reserve and Innovation Fund	Development of new training materials, co-financing of research projects	<b>5 %</b>

Funding is reviewed at the end of each semester at a Board meeting, where the spending report and priorities for the next cycle are also approved.

According to the consortium's financial records, the average cost per student (in the amount of 90 CP) amounts to approximately EUR 18,000-20,000 over the entire period of the Joint Study Programme (approximately 6 000–6 500 EUR per year). This amount shall include:

- remuneration of teaching staff and preparation of lectures;
- study visits and international sessions (airfare, stay);
- maintenance and technical support of the e-learning platform;
- subscriptions to libraries and scientific databases;
- advice, management and advocacy procedures.

The cost structure is in line with the EU Guidelines for Joint Study Programmes (*Erasmus Mundus Joint Master*), where about half of the total costs go directly to the quality of the learning process, and the rest to the maintenance and development of the study environment. The funding is used not only for the implementation of the Joint Study Programme, but also for sustainable

development, including:

- development of new digital modules and e-learning resources (*in the Innovation and Technology in Border Security module*);
- the establishment of joint research initiatives between partner universities and Frontex;
- further training of academic staff and the introduction of international teaching methodologies;
- the development of new practical simulation platforms (*Strategic Cooperation Laboratory*).

A regular financial audit of the Joint Study Programme is carried out, in accordance with the terms of the Frontex grant, and the results are submitted to the Management Board and the Frontex Agency.

The cost-effectiveness threshold of the joint study programme is determined on the basis of the fixed costs of implementing the modules and the amount of international mobility. In order to ensure financial balance and full implementation of the Joint Study Programme, the minimum number of students in full-time studies is 20. Such number of students ensures an even distribution of costs between partner countries and a full-fledged group dynamic in a modular system. For less than 20 students, the implementation of the Joint Study Programme would become economically inefficient, as the proportion of mobility and distribution of academic resources would decrease.

### **3.4. Faculty**

- 3.4.1. Assessment of the conformity of the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme (academic staff, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of laws and regulations. Provide information on how the qualifications of teaching staff contribute to the achievement of study results.

Academically and professionally highly qualified teaching staff from five European higher education institutions participate in the implementation of the Joint Study Programme, which together provides all the thematic areas of the Joint Study Programme: border security, governance, strategy, human rights, risk analysis and research. The composition of the academic staff of the joint study programme is fully in line with the European Joint Master's Programme (*Joint Degrees*) quality guidelines.

Each module is implemented by one or several lecturers of partner universities (professors, associate professors, leading researchers and experts in the professional field) with a doctoral degree in the relevant field of science and practical experience in the field of border management and security.

More than 30 teaching staff and experts participate in the implementation of the joint study programme, of which:

- 70% have a doctorate (Ph.D. or Dr.sc.adm., Dr.iur., Dr.soc., Dr.mil.);
- 30 % – recognised professionals with senior positions in the border guard or security authorities (brigadier generals, border guard officers, specialists at the management level of EU agencies) who act as guest lecturers and mentors of practical experience;
- 21 professors and associate professors are involved in the implementation of the joint study program, and 5 associate professors and professors from RTU RA will be involved in the implementation of the study program: A.Zvaigzne, I.Mietule, I.Arbidāne, L.Litavniece, J.Lonska.

Each higher education institution of the partner country shall provide lecturers according to its field of competence and module of responsibility:

Table 3.4.1.1

Responsibilities of the consortium partners in the Joint Study Programme

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Scope/Module</b>	<b>Responsible personnel and qualifications</b>
<b>EASS (Estonia)</b>	Security management, crisis management	Dr.sc.adm., Dr.soc. with experience in internal security services and international training projects
<b>NLDA (Netherlands)</b>	Fundamental rights, ethics, research	Ph.D. in military science, law, and management; professors with an international number of publications in Scopus and WoS
<b>USAL (Spain)</b>	EU law, politics and human rights	Professors and associate professors with Dr.iur., Dr.phil., experience in EU law and international relations research
<b>MRU (Lithuania)</b>	Risk analysis, security policy	Dr.sc.pol., Dr.iur. – experts in the management of security policy and intelligence
<b>RTU RA (Latvia)</b>	Leadership and organization, research, analytical methods, coordination	Dr.sc.adm., Dr.oec., experience in the field of vocational education and research of the border guard

Thanks to this distribution, the qualification base of the teaching staff fully covers all the objectives of the Joint Study Programme: strategic analysis, management, research, international cooperation and respect for human rights. Teaching staff are active in scientific institutes, Frontex expert networks and international security organisations, which ensure a direct link between research and the learning process.

For example, EASS lecturers are involved in the EU project "Civil Security Resilience in Europe"; MRU professors participate in EU Hybrid Threats and Border Security studies; RTU RA researchers – in the development of the Latvian Border Guard professional Development Platform; NLDA professors on the Ethics and Human Rights in Security Contexts working groups; USAL researchers – EU Integrated Border Management (IBM) Evaluation Mechanisms in research. Such experience allows for the provision of training content that is in line with current EU security and border management policies, as well as Frontex Common Core Curriculum (CCC) level 7.

The qualification of the teaching staff directly supports the achievement of the study results of the Joint Study Programme at three main levels:

Table 3.4.1.2

Correlation of learning qualification with the study results of the Joint Study Programme

<b>Study results group</b>	<b>Relevant competences of lecturers</b>	<b>How they help to achieve results</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	PhD degrees in law, management, security and social sciences	Provides a theoretical basis for EU security policy, human rights and governance systems
<b>Skills</b>	Experience in international border management, Frontex and NATO projects	Promotes the development of practical skills in strategic planning and inter-institutional cooperation
<b>Competence</b>	Experience of leading researchers, generals and heads of services	Provides the ability to analyze, solve and make decisions in an international security context

This combination ensures a balance between academic theory and practical application, which is an essential element of master's level competences (GNI/EQF 7).

Teaching staff regularly participate in joint lectures, visiting professorships and academic exchanges between partner universities. Each semester, block modules with a rotating composition of lecturers are implemented, which provide:

- students have a broad view of security and governance issues;
- the possibility of comparing the approaches of different countries to border management;
- the exchange of experience between the academic and practical sectors.

This approach complies with the European *Joint Degree* principle and ESG requirements for an international teaching environment. High qualification of lecturers, international experience and practical involvement in the field of security and border management:

- guarantees the achievement of study results in accordance with GNI/EQF level 7;
- provides a study process based on research and practice;
- promote the integration of European professional standards and Frontex requirements;
- promotes the development of students' critical thinking, leadership and strategic analysis competencies.

The structure of the academic staff and cooperation mechanisms confirm that the Joint Study Programme is a programme of high academic and professional capacity, which fully ensures the achievement of the study objectives and results.

Annex 11 (P11) provides basic information on the teaching staff involved in the study programme

See Annex 12 (P 12) for faculty biographies.

Annex 13 (P13) shall see the certification signed by the rector of RTU or the head of the study programme/s or direction that the knowledge of the official language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme/s conforms to the regulations regarding the amount of knowledge of the official language and the procedures for the examination of proficiency in the official language for the performance of professional and official duties.

#### 3.4.2. Analysis and assessment of changes in the composition of teaching staff for the reporting period, their impact on the quality of studies.

The composition of the academic staff of the Joint Study Programme during the reference period (2021-2024) has remained stable and of high quality, with gradual changes mainly related to the international rotation model of the Joint Study Programme, the strengthening of academic succession and the involvement of new experts from Frontex and the security authorities of the Member States. These changes reflect a targeted staff renewal policy based on expanding competences and strengthening digitalisation skills, rather than staff reductions.

The total number of academic staffs in the Joint study programme during the reporting period has fluctuated from 28 to 33 lecturers, of which:

- around 70% have a PhD;
- 30 % – guest lecturers and professional experts from the border guard, defence and legal sectors;
- 10 % – young researchers and doctoral students involved as support of assistants or lecturers in research modules;
- There have been no significant changes in the modules provided by RTU RA. Two foreign lecturers (invited within the previous consortium) with a PhD degree have been replaced by lecturers of the same level.

Table 3.4.2.1

## Summary of changes in the composition of the faculty

Period	Characteristics of changes	Main reason / purpose	Impact on quality
2021/2022	The beginning of the first full cycle of implementation of the Joint Study Programme – the academic team has been improved, leading professors from MRU and EASS have been attracted	Strengthening the methodological basis of the programme	Positive – high theoretical and methodological quality is ensured
2022/2023	Expanded range of teaching staff in the fields of risk management and technology, attracted guest lecturers from Frontex and NUPS	Integration of new competences (risk analysis, innovation, digitalisation)	Positive – expanded range of practical cases and examples, strengthened research-based approach
2023/2024	Partial rotation between partners – new teaching staff from UNED and USAL took over the modules <i>Ethics and Human Rights</i> and <i>EU Border Strategies</i>	Updating the content of the programme, incorporating changes to EU policies	Positive – updated content in line with the latest EU documents and Frontex strategies
<b>Overall</b>	Targeted staff rotation and ensuring academic continuity	Maintaining international academic mobility and uniform quality	Stabilised quality and expanded range of competences

During the reporting period, the research and digital competence of academic staff has been significantly improved.

- Several teaching staff from RTU RA and MRU have completed pedagogical development courses "Research-based Teaching in Joint Programmes" and "Digital Learning in Security Studies";
- NLDA lecturers have introduced a methodology for the development of e-learning module content (SCORM);
- MRU and EASS staff have improved their qualifications in the areas of EU project management and risk analysis;
- Some of the lecturers have become Frontex Certified Trainers, thus ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Common Core Curriculum (CCC ML). These changes in qualification directly strengthen the attainment of study results –

especially in the field of research and international cooperation competences.

The structure of the joint study program is based on the principle of rotation, which allows you to regularly change the composition of the teaching staff while maintaining stable methodological quality. A new faculty member must meet:

- doctoral level qualifications;
- experience in EU security policy or border guards;
- ability to work in English in academia.

As a result, each rotation cycle does not reduce, but complements the diversity of

competences of the Joint Study Program, allowing students to come into contact with the experiences, legal and cultural contexts of different countries. Cooperation with *Frontex Training Unit* ensure that lecturers participate in professional seminars and scientific colloquiums that help to incorporate the latest trends in the field into the Joint Study Programme.

Changes in the composition of the teaching staff of the joint study programme are generally positive and developmental and manifest themselves in:

- ensuring the relevance of the content, incorporating the latest EU security policies and technological innovations;
- the research dimension has been strengthened, especially in the methodological management of master's theses;
- promote student-centred learning as faculty learn new digital and interactive teaching methods;
- an expanded international academic network, which raises the reputation and visibility of the Joint Study Programme at European level.

Analyzing the reporting period, it can be concluded that:

- the stability and qualifications of the staff have remained at a high level;
- targeted rotation ensures the updating of content and the integration of EU policies;
- upskilling and Frontex certification directly improve the quality of studies;
- no negative effects on the quality of studies or student achievement have been identified.

Thus, changes in the composition of the teaching staff in the Joint Study Programme are strategically planned and aimed at strengthening academic excellence, international cooperation and professional relevance.

In Annex 14 (P14) see the compilation of quantitative data on scientific and/or applied research activities corresponding to the study programme during the reporting period.<sup>16</sup>

Appendix 15 (P15) contains a list of publications, patents, artistic creation works by teaching staff for the last 6 years.

Annex 16(P16) contains statistics on foreign teaching staff in the study programme, as well as mobility indicators for the performance of official duties.

3.4.3. Information on the number of scientific publications of academic staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme during the reporting period, adding a list of the most important publications published in journals indexed in databases Scopus or WoS CC. In the social sciences and humanities and arts, scientific publications in journals indexed by ERIH+ and peer-reviewed monographs can be additionally counted. Information on teaching staff included in the expert database of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, given name/surname of the teaching staff, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and the expiry date of the right of an expert of the Latvian Council of Science) (if applicable).

Not applicable

3.4.4. Information on the involvement of the academic staff implementing the doctoral study programme in research projects as project managers or main performers/ sub- project managers/ lead researchers, indicating the name of the relevant project, source of funding, amount of financing. To provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

Not applicable

3.4.5. Assessment of mutual cooperation between teaching staff, indicating mechanisms for

promoting cooperation in the implementation of the study programme and ensuring interconnection of study courses/modules. Also indicate the ratio of the number of students and teaching staff within the framework of the study programme (at the time of submitting the self-assessment report).

The implementation of the joint study programme is based on a purposeful and structured system of cooperation of academic staff, which is one of the basic principles of the Joint Study Programme. Cooperation is ensured both horizontally – between the teaching staff of different partner universities, and vertically – between teaching staff, module managers, the programme director and the Board of the Joint Study Programme. This coordination system forms a stable mechanism that guarantees the unity of the content of the modules, the achievability of study results and the consistency of quality at all places of implementation.

Cooperation between teaching staff is ensured by a number of formal and informal mechanisms:

1. *Joint Management Board (JMB)* – the highest supervisory and strategic management body of the joint study programme, in which all partner universities are represented.
  - The JMB approves the content of the modules, the rotation of the teaching staff and the assessment approach;
  - meet at least twice a year (in person or online).
2. *Academic Coordination Team (ACT)* – an operational working group that ensures intermodal linkage, observance of methodological unity and development of joint teaching materials.
  - ACT members (module leaders) regularly coordinate the learning content to ensure that each subsequent module builds on previously acquired knowledge and skills;
  - coordination takes place through a common digital environment (Joint LMS – Moodle/Teams).
3. *Joint Teaching Teams (JTT)* – international teaching staff working groups for each module.
  - They bring together lecturers from at least two partner universities;
  - ensures an integrated approach and methodological diversity (e.g. legal, strategic and operational perspectives in a single module).
4. *Shared Digital Repository* – a common database of training materials containing presentations, case studies, evaluation criteria and examples from different countries.
  - This approach ensures unity of learning and transparency of quality across the consortium.
5. *Peer-review system* – the content and evaluation tools of each module are reviewed by peer-reviewers of other partner universities before the module is implemented.
  - This helps to avoid overlapping content by ensuring consistent and coherent development of competences at all stages.
6. *Joint Workshops and Staff Weeks* – every year an academic week (Staff Week) is organized, where lecturers jointly improve teaching methods, create new integrated activities and analyze student feedback.

Cooperation mechanisms make it possible to ensure the thematic and logical sequence of modules (e.g. "Strategy and Evaluation" → "Leadership and Organisational Development" → "Strategic Risk and Threat Management"); to achieve a common approach to assessment using common criteria and rubrics; to promote research-based learning by co-directing student dissertations and providing joint scientific seminars; to strengthen a student-centred approach by offering diverse experiences, cultural and Methodologies. Such synergies also ensure the interconnection of the modules of the Joint Study Programme – each module serves as a basis for the next, and their content is coordinated according to the principle of "*learning progression*", which meets the requirements of level 7 of the GNI/EQF.

At the time of submitting the self-assessment report (end of 2025), the following are

studying in the Joint Study Programme:

- Total number of students: 26 (1 cohort);
- Total number of academic staff: 32 (including 24 core lecturers, 8 guest lecturers/mentors);
- Ratio: 1 faculty: 0.8 students (average)
- If assessed by provision during the active learning period in one cohort: 1 faculty member : 7 students.

This ratio is in line with good practice in European higher education (OECD average of 1:15 at master's level), thus ensuring an individual approach and effective mentoring.

In addition, students at each stage have access to:

- one academic mentor (from the university);
- one professional mentor (from the border guard or Frontex).

It significantly strengthens the learning support mechanisms and contributes to the achievement of the results of the Joint Study Programme, this cooperation structure contributes to the sustainability, international visibility and achievement of the study outcomes of the Joint Study Programme, in line with the Frontex Training Strategy, ESG 2015 and GNI/EQF level 7 quality criteria.