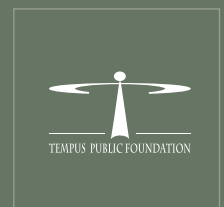


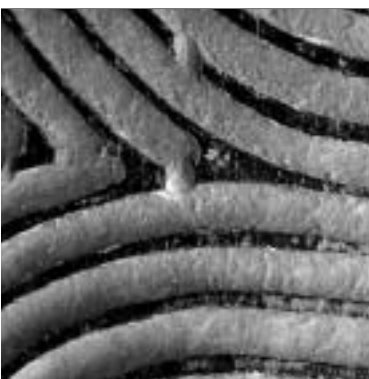
GenERAtion

FINAL REPORT 



Erasmus





GENERATION

Dissemination of results and best practices for raising the profile of Erasmus Mobility

Final report





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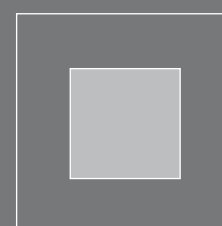
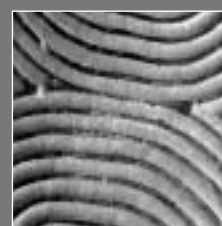
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Synthesis of the project

I. Synthesis of the project



I. Synthesis of the Project

A consortium representing 21 Socrates / Erasmus National Agencies submitted an Erasmus dissemination project proposal to the European Commission in May 2005. Tempus Public Foundation (the Hungarian National Agency) coordinated the project.

The rationale of the proposal was to reflect on the European political target of involving 3 million students in the Erasmus programme by 2012 and the implications for European and national developments in Higher Education. The main question for the project was therefore: in the light of the so far gained European experience of the Erasmus programme, how is it possible to reach the magic number of 3 million outgoing Erasmus students?

What does this number mean? There were only a few thousand Erasmus students in the first years of the programme. Due to the growing popularity of the Erasmus scheme, this number has been increasing continuously, so now there are more than 140 000 Erasmus students annually from 31 participating countries. Since the foundation of Erasmus in 1987, 1.7 million students have participated in short term studies abroad within the framework of Erasmus. This number, without doubt, has made Erasmus one of the most successful initiatives of the European Commission. The 3 million target, however, means that during less than a decade (2007-2012) almost the same number of students would have to participate in the programme as during the past 15 years. This is quite a challenge and not only with regard to providing the necessary financial means, but also the management of the structural and organisational aspects of student mobility.

In the project, nearly 500 participants including representatives of 21 countries from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), professional bodies and associations, National Agencies, National Authorities and representatives of the European Commission discussed experience and good examples within the framework of six interna-

tional seminars following nearly 80 presentations and keynote speeches.

MAIN TOPICS ADDRESSED

- Curriculum development and mobility
- Justification of joint degrees and their added value
- Challenges for European university-enterprise cooperation and the new Erasmus programme
- Recognition and quality of student placements
- Motivation, recognition and methodologies in teaching staff mobility
- How to find a balance between education and research?
- Perspectives of teaching staff mobility in the new Erasmus programme
- Incorporating lectures of incoming teachers into the curriculum
- Marketing: „what”, „why” and „how”, tools and goals
- Absorption capacity: accommodation and administration of mobility
- Intercultural and language preparation and academic services for incoming students

The conclusion of the project is that in spite of the current obstacles, there are promising good examples and practices. Certain regulative and procedural questions do not require extra financial resources, although a strong commitment from decision makers to European cooperation is required. We came to the conclusion that it is possible to increase the number of students participating in mobility actions in order to reach the target of 3 million Erasmus students by 2012.

Based on the presentations and comments of participants we have articulated several recommendations for National Authorities and Higher Education Institutions, which could serve as a source for each country and institution to work on their own policies depending on their situation and motivation.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL AUTHORITIES, RECTORS' CONFERENCES, AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

- 1) It is not advisable to underestimate the role and impact of Erasmus. National Authorities need to provide their full support to the European cooperation programmes, which exempt students from paying fees during their short-term studies abroad. It is essential to recognise the long-term effects of Erasmus in the light of the current tendencies¹ in Higher Education. The number of students participating in the established framework of Erasmus needs to be increased.
- 2) Currently, many HEIs are reluctant to take on board more Erasmus students, since the costs of teaching are not covered if inward mobility is greater than outward mobility due to the waiver of fees in Erasmus. A sustainable financial policy needs to be established in which the costs of incoming Erasmus students are covered. This may take the form of public subsidies or financial agreements between the partner HEIs.
- 3) The financial support system of HEIs should include incentives to encourage HEIs to become interested in internationalizing their educational activities. Indicators on internationalisation and participation in international mobility could be elements of the financial algorithm.
- 4) Joint Degree programmes are good and effective tools for improving the quality of education. There is a need for information on what is a joint degree? This has to be disseminated among the HEIs in order to encourage them to participate in such programmes. At the same time national legal obstacles, which hinder the implementation and operation of joint degree programmes, need to be suspended. The templates and the procedures for setting up these programmes need to be created. It is essential to create flexible accreditation and financial frameworks in order to surmount the differences of the 31 participating countries. It is necessary to foster international cooperation among the different national accreditation regimes.



- 5) In order to help HEIs wishing to develop joint degree programmes it is suggested that a compendium of national legislations, cooperation agreement templates as well as a glossary of definitions and a collection of best practices be made available on the Internet.
- 6) The visibility of Erasmus needs to be increased among employers and the public, who are not aware of the existence of the Erasmus programme. In the new generation of EU programme in the field of lifelong learning - Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 - there is lot more emphasis on Higher Education - employer cooperation. The ultimate objective is that it become a requirement on behalf of employers from future employees to have participated in Erasmus mobility and to have obtained suitable social and professional competences.
- 7) Vocational education can adjust in a more flexible way and more easily to the rapidly changing needs of the labour market than HE. To be able to properly define learning outcomes Higher Education should be aware of the balance between the static and dynamic features in the labour market, and stakeholders need to continuously analyse and synthesize the needs of the employers.
- 8) National higher education policy needs to acknowledge and encourage teaching staff mobility, as one of the essential tools for improving human resources and quality development in education. National Authorities should create a framework that makes HEIs and teachers

¹ Bologna process, European Higher Education Area, Growing competition for students, Fiscal pressures on HEIs



interested in increasing international mobility. Mobile teachers should be given the possibility to receive preparation in methodology and pedagogy. It is necessary to supplement the financial sources provided for teaching staff mobility by the European Union with national co-financing systems.

9) Academic and legal frameworks should be established to encourage an enhanced mobility culture in the HEIs.

10) Mobile students tend to prefer attending HEIs in bigger cities, while the reception capacity in smaller towns is not fully used. The country marketing needs to focus on presenting country, towns, and regions to the foreign partners, indicating which cities could host more students, since the demand for capital cities is already too great.

11) Besides the intercultural preparation if contributing to the quality of the study term, it is an effective means of HEI and country marketing. It is necessary to have language and intercultural preparation for as many students as possible. The language and intercultural preparations completed by the student should form part of the learning outcomes, although HEIs need guidelines and suggestions on how to integrate these components.

12) The accommodation is one of the main obstacles to increasing mobility. There is a great need for investment and further effort in this area.





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:

- 1) The management of HEIs should establish strategic and leadership capacity for international mobility. The role of the International Relations Offices and Erasmus coordinators must be strengthened and supported.
- 2) The changing educational environment demands closer cooperation between the International Relations Offices, Career Offices, and the Registrar's Offices. Information flow among these units should be intensified and possible synergies better exploited.
- 3) Regular feedback and communication of the results should take place at different levels of the programme, but mainly at the HEI level, in order to channel information to not-yet-involved departments and under represented subject areas.
- 4) The proper and widespread use of the ECTS documents (ECTS information package, Learning Agreement and Transcript of Records) is indispensable. It is a quality requirement to prepare the information packages on courses in due time in order to allow the students to prepare up-to-date Learning Agreements and a smooth framework for mobility cooperation. The partners should provide guarantees in the bilateral agreements to make the actual information on courses accessible to each other.
- 5) In order to devote more time to improve the quality of mobility it is necessary to reduce paper work linked to the organisation of mobility. Introducing online tools is important, especially regarding the immense amount

of learning agreements and transcripts of records. Internal regulations and integrated procedures need to be established, which guarantee full academic recognition for the students wishing to take part in Erasmus mobility.

- 6) The number of partnerships among HEIs has grown rapidly during the past years, so it has become a strategic issue by now, in which only quality and specialisation counts when choosing a partner.
- 7) It is essential to identify the specialities of the HEI, the factors that make it unique compared to others in order to be able to create a successful marketing strategy. When fiscal pressure is growing, the institutional marketing strategy should not exclusively target the fee paying degree students, but Erasmus exchange students too. The satisfied students will act as ambassadors of the HEI, and the good reputation they create will lead to new possibilities. In all cases, it is advisable to test the services on Erasmus students before entering the global market.
- 8) It is necessary to recognise teaching staff mobility even if it is a teaching or research activity and it has to become part of the internal performance evaluation. The results and outcomes of teaching staff mobility have to be disseminated inside and outside the HEIs (e.g. publishing the lectures of the outgoing teachers).
- 9) The process of introducing the two-cycle system raises the need for more intensive and broader cooperation between HEIs and employers. This could be manifested in curriculum development, in providing student placements, in inviting visiting lecturers, in professional train-





ing of teachers, in creating joint degree programmes at both Bachelor and Master levels. It is advisable to involve employers in the creation and development of BA and MA programmes, where HEIs are responsible for the academic content, but employers may provide topics for projects and practical placements for students. There are still opportunities in cooperation based on project and thesis works. Nevertheless, special attention must be paid to dealing with confidential business information. This cooperation gets special significance if the employers host foreign students for placement since the main goal of Erasmus is the exchange of students and staff among the countries.

10) Small- and medium-sized enterprises are important players to take into consideration for HEIs when developing plans for cooperation with employers (project works, placements, etc.). Multinational companies might be less interested in this kind of cooperation except in special cases.

11) Language barriers are one of the major obstacles to the development of curriculum projects. English seems to be the lingua franca. Nonetheless, intercultural preparation and teaching in LWULT² languages should be promoted and incorporated in the project applications. Intercultural and language preparation should be given ECTS credits in the curriculum development programmes supported by Erasmus.

12) Erasmus students can find a job in a shorter period of time compared to non-Erasmus students. Moreover, the joint-degree programmes significantly improve the competences and skills of graduating students on the labour market.



² Least Widely Used and Least Taught languages

To do list

✓	Prepare
✓	Contract
✓	Papers
✓	Agreement
✓	Report
✓	Message
✓	...
✓	...
✓	...

Main topics Addressed

II. Main Topics Addressed



II. Main Topics Addressed

II.1. EDUCATION AND ECONOMY

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Present and exchange successful cooperation examples between universities and companies concerning curriculum development and other activities related to mobility.
- 2) Discuss the implications of the economy's educational requirements for teaching staff and students in relation to employers.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1) Curriculum development and mobility
- 2) Institution - employer relations and mobility
- 3) Employers - student relations and mobility

GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES

- 1) In relation to curriculum development and mobility, the representative of the Arteveldehogeschool in Gent, Belgium presented two successful Socrates /Erasmus curriculum development projects. One MOD /DISS project concerning - International Course on Intercultural Competences (ICIC) and another full degree development project (PROG) entitled - Core Components in Occupational Therapy.
- 2) The case of the Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague, Czech Republic, which is successful in building up and maintaining relations with industry. Programmes are developed in close cooperation with industry representatives, teaching staff regularly involve industry experts in lectures and other educational activities.
- 3) The practice of the Europese Hogeschool Brussel (EHSAL) - Campus Economische Hogeschool, in



Belgium. The institution is successful in working closely with small and medium-sized enterprises on projects and placements within and outside the country.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Lack of information about the Erasmus programme among employers is a clear message from the participants. The European Commission, National Agencies, and HEIs should make further efforts to promote and disseminate the results of the programme, and give feedback to the wider professional and general public.
- 2) It is important to apply the win-win approach, institutions, employers and students should all benefit from the cooperation.
- 3) Institutions need to pay special attention to the confidentiality of business information while building up strategies for co-operation with employers.
- 4) Small- and medium-sized enterprises are important players to consider for HEIs when developing plans for cooperation with employers (project work, placements etc.). Multinational companies may be less interested in this kind of cooperation except in very special cases.
- 5) The labour market cannot be the number one driver in the organisation of education, even if certain needs are taken into consideration.
- 6) Existing educational systems are too rigid, which hinders international cooperation in curriculum development and mobility.
- 7) Mobility periods and placements abroad, should form part of the curriculum. Institutions need to intensify the use of their external relations to foster the mobility of



their students. Erasmus students are in a better situation to apply for a position and they tend to get higher salaries because of their social and professional experience abroad, compared to non-Erasmus students.

DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES

Curriculum Development and Mobility

- 1) The differences in standards of higher education make international cooperation in curriculum development demanding. It is difficult to put mobility windows in programmes if there are many countries among the partners, even if the differences bring the added value to the curriculum. Flexibility in the national legislations and accreditation procedures is a requirement in contrast to the rigidity of existing systems in several countries.
- 2) International curriculum development activities need to cope with the challenge of resistance to innovation and change. Proper measures are necessary to keep the balance between attitudes and structures, commitment of the management is a *sine qua non* for successful initiatives.
- 3) Language barriers are one of the major obstacles to the development of curriculum projects. English seems to be the lingua franca. Nonetheless, intercultural preparation and teaching in LWULT³ languages should be incorporated in the project applications. Intercultural and language preparation should be given ECTS credits in the curriculum development programmes supported by Erasmus.
- 4) International curriculum development cooperation is beneficial for the students as far as learning and cultural experience is concerned. It facilitates mobility and quality, increasing student capabilities living in a European environment. However, a certain inflexibility appears in study programmes due to the defined track of study.
- 5) Time and commitment can be considered as the costs of curriculum development projects. Nevertheless, the additional benefits - spreading the fame and professional



reputation of the professors are key factors in quality education.

- 6) Employers should take part in the accreditation procedures at national and institutional level.
 - 7) Vocational education can adjust in a more flexible way and more easily to the rapidly changing needs of the labour market than HE. To be able to properly define learning outcomes Higher Education should be aware of the balance between the static and dynamic features in the labour market, and stakeholders need to analyse and synthesize the rapidly changing needs of the employers.
 - 8) Higher Education is more international than the European labour market, and this works against internships and international curriculum development projects.
 - 9) The European CV and the European Language Portfolio should be used and promoted to students and employers. The specific needs of Higher Education need to be considered for the Language Portfolio.
 - 10) The European funding period for curriculum development projects is too short. Funding for longer periods should be envisaged and include staff costs. Maintaining the multi-annual approach is desirable.
- ### Institution - Employer Relations and Mobility
- 11) Institutions and employers are both interested in the mutual transfer of knowledge. Different forms of cooperation can be envisioned, starting from the joint development of Bachelor and Master programmes and including inviting lecturers to carry out research projects.

³ Least Widely Used and Least Taught languages



12) The proposal of topics for student theses and projects can be beneficial. Employers can be requested to cover all costs of this work even if the student does not receive a salary for thesis work.

13) Projects are particularly interesting if they include student activities abroad. Small- and medium-sized enterprises can be especially interested in this kind of cooperation with HEIs since they usually cannot afford the cost of working with consultancy firms and market research companies.

14) It is important to apply a win-win approach, as institutions, employers and students should benefit from the cooperation.

15) It is beneficial if the institution builds into its degree programmes the possibility of mobility and placements abroad.

16) Intellectual property rights and confidential business information are the most sensitive areas in cooperating with employers. Adequate strategies and sufficient internal regulations should operate within HEIs to respect the interests of the partners.

17) Employers lack information about the Erasmus programmes and its results: Promotion and dissemination of the results is an explicit requirement from the European Commission for National Agencies and HEIs.

18) Regular feedback and communication of the results should take place at different levels of the programme, but mainly at the HEI level, to channel information to not-yet-involved departments and underrepresented subject areas.

Employers - Student Relations and Mobility

19) In general, Erasmus students are in a better position to apply for a job after returning to their home country due to their increased social and language competences. In particular, they tend to get higher salaries. This is the benefit of Erasmus for the students. The shorter study

periods are insufficient to acquire in-depth professional experience.

20) The participants discussed the possible interest of employers to receive students from abroad for placements. They concluded that project work (e.g. market research) seems to be the most attractive field of cooperation. Receiving students for placements is more cost-effective compared to working with consulting firms.

21) Foreign experience is an asset for the employer when choosing employees, therefore Erasmus can bring considerable benefits for the students. Since employers require continuous learning from employees, the new teaching and learning methodologies gained abroad, the social competencies can be effectively applied in working life.

22) Existing networks like Europe Direct and EU Info Centres can help students to contact employers abroad.

23) The changing educational environment demands closer cooperation between International Relations Offices, Careers Offices, and Registrar's Offices. Information flow between these units should be intensified and possible synergies better exploited.





II.2. ERASMUS STUDENT PLACEMENTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNIVERSITY-ENTERPRISE COOPERATION

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Discuss the added value and identify challenges and ways of organising international student placements on the basis of the experience of different parties participating in such actions.
- 2) Promote quality cooperation between HEIs and enterprises by presenting good institutional examples and procedures.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1) Challenges for the European university - enterprise cooperation within the framework of the new Erasmus programme, and the role of student placements
- 2) Recognition and quality of student placements
- 3) Mainstreaming university - enterprise cooperation and the need for new strategies and arrangements inside Higher Education Institutions



- 4) Engaging university leadership and staff in university - enterprise cooperation
- 5) The role and added value of student placements from the point of view of the participating parties (i.e. employers, universities, and students)

GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES

- 1) Successful cooperation is reported from Finland and Norway where business and industry strongly support the objectives of the Erasmus programme to increase the mobility of students, teachers, and other staff and to augment cooperation between enterprises and HEIs. These states encourage student placements by promoting such activities and providing students with financial support.
- 2) Good examples already exist in Europe for the development of placement agencies (UK) or regional offices (Germany) with a specific role to cooperate with universities and enterprises. HEIs in the UK, such as Leeds University, have developed offices to take up the role within their own framework. Regional offices perform this role in Germany.
- 3) Good examples of partnerships between universities and enterprises have been reported from Finland, France, Norway, and Sweden. The following common features lead to success:
 - a) A close connection is maintained between the universities and the enterprises
 - b) Both the universities and the enterprises can find added value in the cooperation
 - c) The quality of the cooperation is ensured by measures that are agreed and accepted by all parties, including the students.
- 4) In the case of different university-enterprise cooperation projects the following initiatives work well
 - a) invitation of company representatives to the university board and to steering groups and seminars
 - b) active involvement of academic staff in work which relates to international practical placements as part of their work schedule
 - c) The introduction of a patronage system whereby enterprises choose a number of students, at the beginning of their study programme, and offer these students help in their studies as well as practical placements and topics for their dissertation with the possibility of offering them a job after graduation.



MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) University-enterprise cooperation can be successful only if it provides added value for all participants. This is true with international work placements.
- 2) Added value can be achieved when clear cooperation policies and methods are established where the roles and responsibilities of participants are clearly defined and accepted, careful planning takes place, there is a precise definition of requirements and guidelines for assessment, there is a good information flow between the partners and the activities are evaluated regularly.
- 3) Commitment is a prerequisite for success in order to maintain long-term and effective cooperation between HEIs and working life.



- 4) The duration of placements should remain the same in the new Erasmus programme (3-12 months).
- 5) According to a Finnish survey published by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) in 2005, less than half of the Finnish employers take studies or placements abroad into consideration during recruitment. This phenomenon requires further investigation. Dissemination of the results of the Erasmus programme by the HEIs, NAs, and the European Commission to employers might help to change these views. However, in general employers take a positive attitude to Finns studying and doing their placement abroad since they take the view that international study and practice opportunities augment a graduate's general and foreign language skills for working life. At the same time, the belief that international practice adds to know-how for a specific sector is not widespread⁴.

- 6) Best practices that are generated through the close interaction of employers and HEIs need to be disseminated locally and regionally via the programme.
- 7) Linguistic and intercultural preparation are essential in the new Erasmus programme because this kind of training is likely to increase the number of students who are capable and willing to undertake a work placement abroad.
- 8) Many employers are reluctant to give credit to a qualification earned abroad if they have no clear understanding of its content. In this regard, the European Qualification Framework (EQF) is of prime importance in bringing about a European labour market area and in promoting the mobility of students and workers. The EQF system has to be effective and transparent to improve the mutual trust of higher education institutions and employers throughout Europe.

DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES

Challenges for the European University - Enterprise Cooperation within the Framework of the New Erasmus programme: The Role of Student Placements

- 1) Educational curriculum linked to the labour market should consider what type of information and expertise is transferred from study to working life, how students can apply in practice what they have learned, and how to reach solutions to the needs of working life.
- 2) Another challenge is to evaluate how the role and activities of teachers should change in order for them to cross the boundary between education and the labour market and to participate in activities on both sides.
- 3) It is important to consider how to link the development of labour market skills to training so that the former does not become an activity that is set apart from the rest of the education.
- 4) The quality and recognition of student placements need to be guaranteed and mutually agreed by enterprises and universities.



- 5) It is an issue whether credits could be awarded for the successful completion of work placement.
- 6) Experience shows that signing a learning agreement between the participants (i.e. students, universities, and enterprises) is the most important measure to guarantee the quality and success of time spent in work placements.
- 7) In order for international work placements to work well, universities need to take a more active role in organising and managing the placements. The question is whether they are able and willing to do that.
- 8) The role of National Agencies will need to be extended if they are to coordinate work placement mobility at national level. It is important to review and define exactly what role and responsibility the National Agencies will be required to take, and how this role can be fulfilled.
- 9) Taking these challenges as a basis, there are practical issues that need to be addressed. These include: (1) How to find placements abroad? (2) Whose responsibility is it to find placements abroad? (3) How to motivate students to take placements abroad? (4) How to monitor placements?

Recognition and Quality of Student Placements

- 10) It is a widespread view that the importance and usefulness of placements lie in their direct relevance to the curriculum. The discussion continues on that work placements not having a straightforward link to the curriculum might significantly contribute to students' work experience and help develop transferable skills.
- 11) Another issue regarding the quality of placements is duration. There seems to be a consensus that the longer the placement is, the more it is possible for students to develop occupational skills, whereas shorter period placements can contribute to general skills development such as language and intercultural skills, flexibility and the ability to manage challenging situations (i.e. adapting to a new environment).



- 12) In order to ensure the quality of student placements, it is important to consider guidelines such as the Erasmus University Charter and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Clear learning objectives and formalised procedures, agreed by both universities and enterprises, are needed. These should state the general criteria for the placements and provide the framework for monitoring, quality assurance procedure, and the role of the tutor.
- 13) Recognition should be in accordance with the practices in the country of origin. As for awarding credits, there are countries, subject areas, and cases where it is possible to award credits for placements. However, experience indicates that this is not possible in all cases, therefore a flexible approach is needed. For example, the Mobility Pass and the inclusion of work placements in the Diploma Supplement provide an alternative form of recognition, or, as in British universities, the name of the degree can include a reference to work expertise.
- 14) In the case of awarding credits for placements, it needs to be decided who awards the credits. It raises the question whether mutual trust can work, at an international level, between the partner institutions (University - Enterprise) in a similar way to Erasmus exchange programmes.

Mainstreaming University - Enterprise Cooperation and the Need for New Strategies and Arrangements inside Higher Education Institutions

- 15) International placements so far have been principally associated with large enterprises operating in the international market. However, new jobs are generated increasingly by small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). This tendency might be taken into consideration when developing the operational framework of the new Erasmus programme. SMEs in particular need good



functional models and good practices that would boost their willingness to take students for placements.

- 16)** From the point of view of an employer, the objectives of student placements are
- a.) to develop a positive corporate image by giving students the opportunity to learn about the enterprise and to assess its activities
 - b.) to get to know potential employees and to assess their suitability as future recruits
 - c.) to bring in new know-how from an educational establishment to the enterprise
 - d.) to pass on know-how to institutions of higher education with the possibility of influencing the content and improve the quality of university degrees.

Engaging University Leadership and Staff in University - Enterprise Cooperation

17) In many parts of Europe, student mobility (as opposed to joint applied research projects) is not regarded as a priority by rectors and top-level university administrators. It is therefore a challenge to find ways to shift this attitude.

18) If the number of placements is to be increased considerably in the future, the working hours of academic staff devoted to preparing international placements will need to be increased. Presently, it is not clear how this target can be reached because it may include a number of lecturers spending a considerable amount of time abroad during the academic year while they continue to have teaching duties at their home universities.

19) Students need to be able to communicate effectively in the working language of the enterprise. Companies are likely to use the official languages of the given country. This raises the question: Is it possible for a large number of international students to be accepted for a placement in enterprises using an unfamiliar language (or languages)?

20) A further challenge relates to research universities. It seems that they are traditionally not concerned with

organising practical placements, especially in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Role and Added Value of Student Placements from the Point of View of Employers

21) Enterprises that are involved in international business activities are more interested in students with international backgrounds. Generally, these enterprises are large companies, and not SMEs.

- 22)** According to experience, enterprises find it useful to cooperate with HEIs because in this way they can
- a.) secure a flow of knowledge
 - b.) develop a positive corporate image
 - c.) become competitive
 - d.) increase innovation and creativity
 - e.) increase human capital
 - f.) influence curriculum and research
 - g.) ensure future recruitment by becoming familiar with gifted students while they are at university.

- 23)** It would seem necessary for universities to learn how to approach companies in order to develop a sustainable relationship with working life. To improve partnerships
- a.) the potential of ex-Erasmus students should be better exploited to develop close cooperation with enterprises
 - b.) communication between HEIs and enterprises should be improved
 - c.) more focus should be on international placements during the first cycle of studies
 - d.) student placements could be linked to other joint activities, such as student projects.





II.3. JOINT PROGRAMMES, JOINT DEGREES. WHY AND HOW?

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Discuss the achievements and challenges HEIs experience in the development and implementation of such programmes.
- 2) Role and perspectives of Erasmus mobility in developments of joint programmes.
- 3) Find good solutions, to explore ways of effective cooperation, to disseminate and exploit good results and best practice among the widest possible number of HEIs and partners to extend the scope of quality cooperation activities.
- 4) Exchange experience and know-how from the mobility point of view.
- 5) Explore related issues of accreditation and recognition procedures put in place for the success of these programmes.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1) Definitions
- 2) Justification and added value
- 3) Educational and quality assurance issues
- 4) Financial and administrative issues
- 5) Employability of students

GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES

- 1) Joint Master Programme in Information Technology
 - a. The partners have set up a 'course pool' based on a cooperation agreement between all parties. Each partner develops a number of subjects (minimum one) and these subjects contribute to the programme. There is a management committee, which decides which subjects are allowed in the pool. At the end of their studies, students receive the degree of their home university.

- b. The advantage of the programme is that it is very flexible because partners have the right to use as many common subjects as they wish.

- c. The aims of the programme are (1) to provide for a missing profile in the discipline through an interdisciplinary Master in ITC programme, (2) to collect and disseminate knowledge, research results, and experience of IT, and (3) to gather dispersed interested students. The delivery of the programme is via e-learning. A learning platform is available for students and academic staff via the Internet and a video conferencing system is used.

2) A Double Bachelor Degree Programme in Dutch Language, Literature and Culture in Central Europe
The students remain inscribed at their home university but they are required to absolve at least one semester out of six at one of the partner universities. All the partners offer e-learning modules as well. Two national degrees are awarded to the student upon successful completion of the joint programme. There are seven partners in this double degree programme (Vienna, Olomouc, Wroclaw, Brno, Bratislava, Budapest and Debrecen). The programme is run with the help of an Erasmus project within the period 2005 and 2008. This is the first philological project of this kind in Central Europe.

3) A Joint European Master Degree Programme in Comparative Local Development

- a. The methodology of the programme includes the use of distance learning facilities including an on-line forum, formal lectures, international guest lectures, work in laboratories, an internship, project work and discussion group activities. This is a Master level programme delivered in English over 3 semesters (95 ECTS). There are four members of the consortium: Coordinator: University of Trento (Italy), Partners: University of Regensburg (Germany), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), and Corvinus University of Budapest (Hungary). The general approach is comparative and interdisciplinary.
- b. Upon successful completion of the programme, the students will be awarded a Joint Master Degree in



Comparative Local Development corresponding respectively to „Master di secondo livello” in the Italian, „Mastergrad” in the German, „Magistrski Studij” in the Slovenian, and „kiegészítő alapképzés” in the Hungarian higher education system.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) As well as taking account of the autonomy of institutions, academic and political trust is necessary.
- 2) Erasmus Mundus has become synonymous with joint degree programmes. Erasmus needs to put more effort and promotion into Erasmus curriculum development projects and their exploitation.
- 3) In some countries, it is illegal to execute a programme in languages other than the official language(s) of the country.
- 4) Quality assurance problems may arise at national level when parties from different European countries are involved in joint degree programmes.
- 5) In the case of the regulated professions, it is challenging, but possible, to develop joint programmes.
- 6) In some European countries, legal obstacles hinder the development of joint degree programmes.
- 7) In order for a joint (degree) programme to be successful, it is essential to define clear goals and identify benefits for all participating parties (i.e. students, academia, labour market)
- 8) ECTS is a key tool to the success of good joint degree programmes.
- 9) Financial support for the mobility of students and academic staff participating in joint programmes is essential. The dissemination of relevant information should reach students and employers.
- 10) In the long run, accreditation of joint degree programmes at European level is desirable.

11) Joint degree programmes can contribute considerably to the skills and knowledge that students need in the 21st century.

DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES

Definitions

1) A joint programme

A study programme is developed, approved and delivered jointly by partner universities. Students from each participating institution study parts of the programme at different institutions. The home institution recognises such periods of study. Professors of each participating institution teach in the other institutions, work out the curriculum jointly, and form joint commissions for admission, quality assurance, and examinations. The students' stay at the participating institution can be of comparable length, although there are examples of joint programmes where students and academic staff participate in the programme using e-learning facilities. A joint programme is a prerequisite of a joint or a double degree but does not necessarily lead to either of these.

2) A joint degree

An official document issued jointly by the universities participating in the joint programme, which states that the student has been awarded a degree of the consortium of the partner institutions with the same legal effects in the given countries.

3) A double/multiple degree

Official documents issued separately by the universities participating in the joint programme. Each document states that the student has been awarded a national degree issued by the partner institution in a given country.

Justification and Added Value

1) Joint degrees are seen as a good way to enhance the attractiveness of Europe and to position European Higher Education in the global market by improving the competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area.





- 2) The prestige of a university can be raised by participating in successful joint programmes and/or issues joint or double degrees.
- 3) An advantage of such programmes is that it is possible to deliver a study programme using an interdisciplinary approach where a given body of knowledge is examined from different perspectives.
- 4) Intercultural aspects play an important role in joint (degree) programmes. This is important because in our global world intercultural experience for young graduates is necessary in order to function effectively in an international working environment.
- 5) From the students' point of view, participation in a joint programme is challenging, it requires cooperation at an international level in an intercultural environment.

Educational and Quality Issues

- 6) In some countries, students are required to collect additional ECTS credits if they wish to obtain a joint or a double degree.
- 7) An advantage of joint programmes is that partner institutions can share the educational infrastructure.
- 8) Experience shows that good personal contact is the basis for academic cooperation. Mutual trust is important to build upon.
- 9) Flexibility and a proactive attitude are needed because there are no hard and fast rules in terms of how to develop and deliver successfully a joint degree programme.
- 10) A programme director and module directors at each institution can ensure the success of the programme as well as regular meetings of the teaching and administrative staff involved.
- 11) Changes cannot be made to the programme without considering how they might affect the partner institutions.
- 12) In order to sustain a joint programme successfully, careful and continuous evaluation of the programme is necessary. As an element of this, feedback from students and the labour market should be included.
- 13) Quality assurance requires close cooperation between the partners.

Financial and Administrative Issues

- 14) At present, joint programmes and joint degrees are not cost-effective.
- 15) Experience shows that cooperation is easier to establish at the academic level. The main challenges arise with the administration.
- 16) In order to cater for all the administrative aspects of a joint programme in an adequate way, good organizational measures are necessary accepted by all participating parties.
- 17) The organisation of joint programmes means new motivation and new challenges for a HEI.
- 18) In order to help HEIs wishing to develop joint degree programmes, it is suggested that a compendium of national legislation, cooperation agreement templates, as well as a glossary of definitions and a collection of best practice be made available on the Internet.

Employability of Students

- 19) Employers report that the degree itself is one of many factors that they take into account when recruiting young graduates. Other aspects include international experience and an ability to work and live in different cultures as well as social skills and an interdisciplinary approach to different subjects.
- 20) A large number of employers are not aware of the existence of joint degrees and joint programmes.



II.4. MOTIVATION AND RECOGNITION OF TEACHERS TO FOSTER ERASMUS STUDENT MOBILITY

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Identify the best national and institutional frameworks and methodologies for the international educational activities of teachers.
- 2) Get to know students' views on teaching staff mobility, their needs and benefits, and factors that motivate teachers to take part in mobility.
- 3) Discuss examples of good practice in institutional policies focused on establishing a balance between research and teaching.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1) Identify the significant elements of teaching staff mobility, such as motivation, recognition and methodological skills
- 2) Find the balance between teaching and research activities during mobility
- 3) Consider new perspectives on teaching mobility in the LLL programme
- 4) Recognise the students' viewpoint and incorporate the visiting teacher's lecture as part of the curriculum.

GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES

- 1) In Sweden, there is a compulsory methodological and pedagogical course for those who are going to teach in HEIs and do not have a teacher's training degree. It proved to be effective since teachers became more confident to undertake mobility actions.

- 2) In Lithuania, there are training and language preparation courses for teachers willing to take part in mobility actions. As a result, the number of outgoing teachers increased.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Teaching staff mobility is beneficial and should be part of the internal performance evaluation in HEIs.
- 2) HEIs are able to apply internal regulations to create a better system of mobility recognition, performance evaluation, encouraging mobility participation, funding, management, and administrative support for mobility.
- 3) To ensure good quality that sustains the interest of host and sending institutes and the teachers, it is essential for teachers to have good methodological and pedagogical skills.
- 4) Teaching staff mobility could be used for research, to meet colleagues, to collect materials for articles, to prepare international cooperation to monitor Erasmus students. A diversity of objectives is not a problem if the main priority remains teaching and there is an appropriate balance between research and academic activity.
- 5) The host institution needs to make the incoming teacher's lecture part of the curriculum to guarantee recognition of the activity.
- 6) To monitor teaching staff mobility a system should be set up which focuses on the content of the lectures and not the quantity.
- 7) National financial resources should be used to supplement EU funds for teaching staff mobility.



DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES

Significant Elements of Teaching Staff Mobility, such as Motivation, Recognition and Methodological Skills of Teachers

- 1) Transfer of knowledge and technology stemming from teaching staff mobility might support the knowledge-based economy.
- 2) In general, the same teachers are ready to take part in mobility actions, and it is a challenge to involve other teachers. The main problems that discourage teachers are the lack of language and pedagogical skills, lack of time and energy, lack of interest and the fact that they might not see any long-term advantage. Teachers experience that their work builds up while they are abroad, and for the HEI it is challenging to find a solution to maintain the smooth operation of daily tasks.
- 3) If mobility is recognised or treated as added value, the motivation of teachers changes. It is essential to discuss how to recognise and motivate mobility, and set up an institutional strategy. A resolution on mobility should declare mobility as part of the performance evaluation.
- 4) Social events should be organised to create opportunities for teachers to meet their colleagues to exchange views and experience.
- 5) Language preparation courses should be made available for teachers preparing them to deliver lectures on a foreign language.
- 6) Quality should be the key element in Erasmus teaching staff mobility - not the quantity. However, the importance of increasing the number of mobile teachers was highlighted too.
- 7) Methodological and pedagogical training could be compulsory for those teachers who are going to teach in HEIs abroad.



How to Find the Balance Between Teaching and Research?

- 8) Teaching and research cannot be separated during mobility, since there is a possibility to meet colleagues from the scientific community, to gather information for research. The priority, however, should be placed on teaching.
- 9) Conferences are opportunities to establish contacts for teaching staff mobility. Teachers involved in international cooperation projects are better motivated to take part in mobility. Their example might serve as good practice.
- 10) Institutions can create a favourable environment to encourage teachers to carry out research and researchers to participate in teaching. Institutions could promote and encourage mobility by disseminating the results of their teachers. PhD students are motivated and can be involved in mobility.
- 11) Combining research and teaching in mobility includes the potential danger of brain drain.
- 12) A monitoring system should be set up and focus on the content of the lectures. If the teachers meet the quality requirements, they should be allowed to spend the rest of the mobility period on research and career development. The academic community should decide on quality criteria.

New Perspectives of Teacher Mobility in the LLL Programme

- 13) According to the original proposal of the LLL programme, the European Commission suggested two new types of mobility. One of them would have been long



term TS mobility, and the other, coming from the Leonardo da Vinci programme, would have been assignment to enterprises⁵.

14) In the new LLL programme, it will be possible for non-teaching staff to visit enterprises or other institutions for practical training, or for transfer of knowledge.

15) Regarding the differences of the Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci staff mobility, participation is open to all teachers in Erasmus, while it is limited in Leonardo da Vinci. In Erasmus, it is possible to give lectures involving foreign teachers or to publish articles. In Erasmus, teachers write their applications individually, whereas in Leonardo, the main responsibility lies with the project coordinator writing the proposal. In the new Erasmus programme, the Erasmus-like approach should be applied.



16) There are promising perspectives in the synergy of the two programmes that should be exploited on HEI level. It is essential to consider existing networks and research cooperation between employers and HEIs in strengthening cooperation with enterprises.

Student's View: Making the Visiting Teacher's Lecture Part of the Curriculum

17) The students benefit from teaching staff mobility, since both the incoming and outgoing teachers widen their perspectives and add European dimension to the topics. Students may encourage teachers when pointing at other HEIs they read about or would like to gather more information.

18) As a drawback, students might lose a good teacher, get a less good substitute or incoming teacher. Students take the lectures of the incoming teacher more seriously if the curriculum incorporates the lectures. The institution needs to find a solution to recognise the incoming teacher's lecture. Teachers in the host institution should be prepared to receive the incoming lecturer. The international office has a responsibility in assisting the hosting departments.

19) It is an institutional decision to give credit for teachers taking part in international projects or working with mobile students. To assure the quality of teaching there might be a limit of having an optimal percentage of foreign students.



⁵ As a consequence of the political agreement on the budget of the EU in 2007-2013, these two new types of TS mobility are terminated.



II.5. GLOBAL MOBILITY - MARKETING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Illustrate, demonstrate and promote the marketing capabilities and prospects of European higher education with a view to increasing the attractiveness of Erasmus mobility.
- 2) Present best practice and exchange experience in order to illustrate how several European countries have taken the lead in improving outgoing and incoming mobility.
- 3) Stress that national policy for improving the higher education structures, builds strong competitive advantages and grows its dynamism.
- 4) Improve the incoming and outgoing mobility through marketing approaches with a view to promoting the European dimension, and the establishment of mobility balance.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1) Marketing: „what“, „why“ and „how“?
- 2) Marketing tools and approaches
- 3) Strategic issues to foster the success of marketing

GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES

- 1) „Best talent initiative“ in the UK/Scotland. The best foreign students can apply for a special grant to extend their mobility and a residence permit. The question of immigration remains a problem.
- 2) Former Erasmus students organise Erasmus Fairs in the UK to meet other students, to disseminate their experience, to promote Erasmus and generate mobility.
- 3) The DAAD in Germany has launched a global campaign on promoting Higher Education by taking part in global educational fairs, opening up branch offices out-

side the European Union, and participating in PEER (Promoting European Education and Research).

MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The global mobility phenomenon affects the attractiveness of European Higher Education Institutions in general and their attitude towards incoming mobility in particular.
- 2) Student mobility and Erasmus itself is a unique possibility to promote the European Higher Education Area. However, the role and position of Erasmus needs to be defined.
- 3) It is essential to realise that HEIs are in a need of a professional and detailed marketing strategy to focus on various methods, to attract more students and improve quality. The strategy needs to be based on the special character or feature of the HEI that makes the institution *unique* compared to the others and *attractive* at the same time.
- 4) It is necessary to know the market and the target group and to try to prepare tailor-made information for these groups. A market-led approach has to be applied, whereby HEIs first listen to the market and then try to meet the requirements by using different marketing methods.
- 5) In general, students and teachers are the best promoters and ambassadors of the universities they study at; therefore, emphasis should be placed on their impressions and opinion.
- 6) It is recommended to make sure the services work with Erasmus students before starting to market them globally.



DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES

Marketing: What, Why and How

1) Before launching marketing activities, it is essential to analyse the global situation of mobility, its directions, and features. The subject of the marketing strategy needs to be identified, whether it is the HEI, the Erasmus programme or the mobility itself.

2) The results of an ACA study analysing student mobility showed that there is a great number of mobility⁶ taking place in the world, although an estimated 5% of all mobility is programme-bound. The Erasmus programme is an unparalleled structure among other scholarship programmes in the context of global student mobility. Erasmus mobility is one quarter of the 'free' intra-European, non-programme bound mobility. The „free mover“ is the normal case, moreover most mobility worldwide aims at a full degree program and not a temporary study abroad.

3) In some countries many foreign students are studying. However, there is a decreasing number of outgoing Erasmus students. In their case like in the UK, there is a lot of incoming students and quality of the programmes is on the agenda to recruit fee-paying students to finance HEIs. Students are bombarded with information regarding education, and there is competition among HEIs for foreign students. The English recipe is to find the best points of differentiation, the so-called „purple cow“, which makes the HEI special and different from the others.

4) Student mobility in Europe is imbalanced, over 60% of all foreign students choose to study in the UK, France and Germany. These trends of mobility should be taken into consideration when planning the marketing strategy. Countries and HEIs need to focus on their high quality foreign language programmes, on the excellent service they can offer to students besides highlighting the special features of their unique culture. Sometimes the use of 'intriguing titles' for the courses and programmes can be more appealing for students.



5) All the information on different programmes has to be available on Internet since, in some respects, students behave rather like consumers. The main emphasis should be placed on marketing the HEIs itself, the educational system and full degree programmes when attracting students.

6) Quality of education is the starting point for students, but a social experience, integration and good company is expected too. It is useful to organise welcoming social events for the students and monitor their opinions through evaluation sheets throughout their stay.

7) Marketing should be a synergy of many aspects such as mobility itself, HEIs and the attractiveness of lifestyle and a multilingual and multicultural experience. Incoming Erasmus students contribute significantly to the economy of the hosting country in general, and act as the best promoters of the HEIs in particular.

Marketing Tools and Approaches

8) The target is to increase the number of mobile Erasmus students. It is essential to use websites, publications, conferences, university networks, education fairs, and the Erasmus students to achieve that. There should be reliable information available on housing, national social events, lifestyle and multicultural community events.

9) The institutions need to invest in developing English-language programmes, although one of the unique features of Europe is multilingualism. However, the trend



that students are likely to choose English-language courses is clear. It is essential to invite international lecturers and include teaching staff mobility while creating English-language courses.

10) Marketing tools such as attending conferences, paying visits to other universities to exchange experience and ideas are useful. It is worthwhile to set up an Alumni club and organise social events for former Erasmus and other students.

11) However, there is a fear of focusing on marketing tools and not on promoting academic values.

STRATEGIC ISSUES TO FOSTER THE SUCCESS OF MARKETING



12) The role and position of Erasmus in the European Higher Education Area is substantial. Therefore, it is one of the strategic issues to get more HEIs involved in Erasmus mobility.

13) The global search for the best talents and brains is of strategic importance. Therefore, national policies should help to create an attractive scientific environment to keep them in Europe. Quality assessment is essential. The identification of unique elements (via a consistent and continuous communication policy) and the evaluation of feedback could help to create such an environment.

14) Institutions need to be student-oriented to create an effective marketing strategy. A core problem is that Erasmus students do face financial problems during their stay abroad. It remains a challenge to involve those students in Erasmus mobility that do not have a sufficient financial background. Students with a less privileged social background are aware of the financial difficulties associated with Erasmus mobility, and this makes them reluctant to take part in mobility. There is a need for internal policies offering complementary support to Erasmus students.

15) HEIs could attract more students by creating mobility windows in Bachelor and Master programmes.

16) It should be a strategic decision for HEIs to create the 'European brand' which is based on quality, traditions and cultural heritage. Transparency, transferability between the national educational systems would be a sine qua non to achieve it.





II.6. ABSORPTION CAPACITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND COUNTRIES

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Discuss the future challenges (both on infrastructure and at the individual level) for Higher Education Institutions and National Agencies related to their absorption capacity.
- 2) Find areas to be improved concerning accommodation, intercultural, language and academic preparation, administration of mobility at institutional and national level.
- 3) Identify good examples for mobility organisation and to indicate concrete areas and measures to be taken at institutional, national and European level to increase quality and quantity of mobility and to promote internationalisation of HEIs.

MAIN ISSUES

- 1) Strategies to increase mobility of students
- 2) Infrastructural issues to increase mobility: accommodation and administration
- 3) The role of intercultural and language preparation and the academic service for incoming students

GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES

- 1) Based on a national policy in Finland, HEIs get more funding if they are more active in internationalisation, and attract more international student.
- 2) ÖAD in Austria managed to convince property developers to invest in building environmental friendly „passive houses“ for student dormitories, and it turned out to be successful for both students and for the investor.

- 3) ‘Kummi Family Programme’ at the University of Oulu, Finland. Each of the incoming students has a host parent who manages everything and assists the foreign student to get all the useful information to get around and „survive“ in Finland.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) There should be a strong national intent to introduce financial incentives to encourage the internationalisation of HEIs by creating national policies where funding is based on performance of HEIs and indicators on internationalisation and international mobility.
- 2) There is a strong need for investment in infrastructure. Decision makers need to recognise that to invest in building new houses for students is a well-paying business and leads to an increase in the number of mobile students.
- 3) The compliance with the Learning Agreements and Transcript of Records has to be well monitored by the NAs and the HEIs to ensure transparency and to provide students the guarantee of recognising their mobility period abroad.
- 4) To motivate students, HEIs could declare intercultural competence as part of the learning requirements to award a degree.
- 5) Without financial agreements between the partner HEIs, there is a risk of putting the emphasis on attracting more full degree (fee-paying) students and not on creating more cooperation for the purpose of exchange students.
- 6) In some countries, Erasmus is the main scheme of mobility; therefore, it should be taken into consideration to create a favourable financial environment to achieve a balanced participation in mobility.
- 7) The country marketing needs to focus on presenting country, towns, and regions to the foreign partners, indicating which institutions in smaller locations could host more students, since the demand for mobility to major cities is already too high.



8) Increasing mobility has a strong impact on the quality of education, which has to be considered when setting the numbers.

9) Less paperwork would contribute to having more time for quality, and as a solution, the broad use of electronic and online tools is highly recommended.

DISCUSSION OF MAIN ISSUES

Strategies to Increase Mobility of Students

1) Strategic issues on increasing mobility should be discussed on four levels:

- a.) It has to be a political decision on an EU level, such as the concept of the European Higher Education Area, the Lisbon Agenda, or the Bologna process.
- b.) Mobility strategies and benchmarks should be set up on a national level.
- c.) HEIs need to develop attractive foreign-language courses, to carry out significant structural and administrative changes for improving the curricula and to offer windows for mobility.
- d.) There is a great demand from the students to make them fit for the labour market. This implies the use of a precise and effective system of recognition, and a society and economy based concept of mobility.

2) The measure of absorption lies in the balanced number of outgoing and incoming students. To balance and increase mobility, it is essential to diversify and to decentralise flows to less frequented countries, and to smaller cities, which are more economical in several aspects.

3) National policies need to focus on infrastructural developments to host more students.

4) There are some countries where Erasmus is the main scheme of mobility. This should be taken into consideration to create a favourable financial environment to achieve a more balanced participation in Erasmus. The national governments should complement the Erasmus grants, as it is the case in several countries. HEIs require

financial support to housing, libraries, or curriculum development to host more incoming students.

5) Internationalisation is one of the key elements that HEIs need to cope with to increase outward and inward mobility. National HE funding policies should encourage HEIs by introducing indicators of internationalisation. HEIs participating in international projects should receive more funding. Accordingly, departments who host international students could get more funding.

6) The need for good information material on various foreign-language programmes is essential and it has to be available at least six months ahead. Academic diaries should be matched.

7) The trend is to move from mutual understanding to capacity building and revenue generation. HEIs have started to focus primarily on full fee-paying degree students and to some extent on Erasmus students, however, the idea of the Erasmus programme originally was to initiate international discussion and cooperation.

8) In terms of motivating students from countries that receive more Erasmus students than they send out, the idea of more flexible mobility periods could be envisaged. Master students are often not able to afford to leave for three months or more. If students have a chance to meet foreign teachers, they might get interested in applying for an Erasmus grant.

Infrastructural Issues to Increase Mobility: Accommodation and Administration

9) Governments and HEIs need to invest in building new houses for students. Finding the appropriate accommodation is a problem, and it is one of the most important factors students consider when choosing a location. Property developers could be convinced to invest in building housing for foreign students, since there is an ongoing demand for accommodation. Students need flexible housing arrangements, and want to pay for the number of months they are actually staying.



10) The issue of the so-called international ghettos putting all international students in one place is a challenge. While it is beneficial for some of the students to experience multiculturalism and multilingualism, on the other hand there is less opportunity to mix with local students and to integrate into the university life. It is probably better to have students scattered in various dormitories and not placed together only with other Erasmus students. In addition, Erasmus students tend to have a bad reputation of being only party people, which results in that some owners do not want to rent out flats or rooms to them. It is necessary to expect minimum requirements from the Erasmus students.

11) International offices have to be well organised since they face a huge amount of workload in organising mobility. Investments are necessary to improve procedures and finding out ways to carry out more paperwork electronically. It is worth considering outsourcing some of the tasks to handle the immense number of incoming students. HEIs should accept each other's forms to reduce paper consumption and there is a great need in standardising bilateral agreements and learning agreements - at least at the country level.

12) It is advisable to give useful, applicable, and handy information via multi-channel communication, including the use of internet, posters on the walls and flyers. Former Erasmus students could also exchange ideas and information. It proved to be effective to put responsibility on students when taking part in mobility. International offices prepare templates for students, organise competitions for their reports after the mobility period, and the best reports are published on the homepage of the university.

13) It is important to consider and create plans about the implementation of bilateral agreements before signing them, besides having an academic contact designated to the success of the agreement.

The Role of Intercultural and Language Preparation and the Academic Service for Incoming Students

14) The role of intercultural and language preparation courses in increasing mobility is essential. Incoming students do need help when they arrive and some information to survive. There is a necessity to monitor and evaluate these courses and amend them to reflect the real needs of the students.

15) Application schedules are too tight for both the students and the organisers. This makes students reluctant to participate. Performance assessment is essential, therefore students should receive ECTS credits to recognise the skills they acquired during these preparation courses, but there is no consensus on how to award credits for these students.

16) HEIs should provide academic guidance, which consists of pre-arrival packages focusing on practical information and on application procedures, course selection, study guides, and offering e-mail counselling. The provided academic information should be individual, flexible, right, precise, and well timed. It is important to note that the work does not end when the student leaves. There should be ongoing assistance with the prompt signing and sending of transcript of records, possibly through the internet.

17) Based on the experience and the survey of a French Erasmus student having carried out a mobility period in Austria, one of the key issues is to find the balance between giving assistance at every single step or letting the students find their own way. It is good to have local students as tutors, but their support needs to be evaluated to provide tailor-made and sufficient help.

18) With exchange students, there is room for growth, but there is a serious demand for rearranging the workload of International Relations Offices. Integrating students is a colourful, but demanding task considering the variety of the types of studies, the countries of origin, the duration of stay, or the forms of mobility.



Conclusion

The project proved that in spite of the current obstacles, there are promising good examples and practices. Certain regulative and procedural questions do not require extra financial resources, although a strong commitment from decision makers to European cooperation is required. We came to the conclusion that it is possible to increase the number of students participating in mobility actions in order to reach the target of 3 million Erasmus students by 2012.





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IMPRESSUM:

Editors: Krisztina Antal, Szabolcs Bokodi, Bíbor Klekner
Katalin Kurucz
Published by Tempus Public Foundation
Responsible for publication: Gabriella Kemény director
Design by Bernadett Baukó
Printed by Komáromi Nyomda és Kiadó Kft.

© Tempus Public Foundation, 2006

This publication is funded by the European
Commission's subsidy.

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ISBN 963 86699 2 6



