



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE
ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK



International Experience and Language Learning

Research Report of the ESNSurvey 2014

Jesús Escrivá Muñoz (ed.), Emanuel Alfranseder, Paula Danciu, Julia Fellingner,
Roberta Piscone, Sandra Rimavičiūtė, Jurgita Stasiukaitytė

Erasmus Student Network AISBL, Brussels 2014

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Creating Ideas, Opportunities and Identity: Research Report of the ESNSurvey 2014

Author: Jesús Escrivá Muñoz (ed.), Emanuel Alfranseder, Paula Danciu, Julia Fellingner, Roberta Piscone, Sandra Rimavičiūtė, Jurgita Stasiukaitytė

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Erasmus Student Network AISBL

Rue Hydraulique 15

1210 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 256 74 27

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Preface

The Erasmus Student Network strongly believes in the added value that mobility brings to a students' academic life. We have seen it time and time again how a period abroad opens minds and has positive impact on the individual. Going abroad is a big step for a young person and many obstacles might occur.

That is why we are trying to support students before, during and after their stay abroad. We offer a wide range of services such as help with accommodation, buddy and mentor systems and the organisation of social and cultural events.

We started with the ESNSurvey in 2005 to try to explore obstacles, opportunities and the impact of a period abroad. The results have been used to support policy makers in developing policies that fit the needs of students. We also issued a range of recommendations for institutions and other stakeholders working with student mobility. Most importantly we utilized the insights we gained through the surveys to improve our own work.

Throughout the last years we constantly developed the way we work and also tried to tackle all the weaknesses that come with being a student organisation. One of our greatest achievements is the increased emphasis on social projects such as SocialErasmus where international students volunteer for the local community and make a positive impact while getting a closer link with the country of their studies. Another project which we are very proud of is ExchangeAbility. It aims at making ESN activities more accessible for international students with disabilities and to encourage local students with disabilities to take the step to study abroad.

I am happy to see that our Network is constantly growing and that policy makers value the input that we are giving with studies like the ESNSurvey. It is important that students voice their concerns and provide the necessary evidence for a positive policy change.

Kind greetings,

Stefan Jahnke
President ESN AISBL 2013/2014



Introduction

In the past few months, activity in the European Union has been hectic. The European Parliament elections have undoubtedly shaken the lives of the European citizens this year. If a conclusion can be drawn from the low voter turnout in the last elections, it is that Europeans need more Europe, which is what Erasmus+ has promised. Over 4 million Europeans will be able to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

The Erasmus programme has been opening minds and changing European's lives for over 25 years now. According to our previous ESNSurvey research, this programme fosters European identity. There might be nothing more peculiar in the European spirit than our preference for multilingualism.

ESNSurvey 2014 explores how international experiences foster language learning, and provides further insight into the attitudes of students towards learning different languages. However, the Erasmus programme is not the only opportunity that can provide this international experience, which is why we have also explored the full degree mobility and its associated obstacles in this report.

On behalf of my fellow researchers, and the whole Erasmus Student Network, I am glad to present the report of the ESNSurvey research 2014. I want to thank my team for their effort, our entire Network, and the many stakeholders that have helped us to promote our questionnaire. Without all of them, the ESNSurvey project would no longer be the continuous success it is today.

I wish you an enjoyable, fruitful reading!

Jesús Escrivá Muñoz
ESNSurvey Coordinator 2013/2014

Key Results

Obstacles for Mobility

- Financial issues and personal ties are still major obstacles for students to become mobile. However, lack of information, fear of recognition problems, long bureaucratic procedures, doubts about the quality of studies abroad or the fear of prolonged studies still play a role in the minds of potential students.
- More than 57% of non-mobile students consider financial issues to be the most important obstacle for mobility.

Finances and Work Opportunities during Mobility

- Amongst the non-mobile students, 76% would consider studying abroad if they were guaranteed a part-time job or a paid internship in the host country

Satisfaction with Studies and Stay Abroad

- On a scale from 1 to 5 (5 indicating highest satisfaction), students' rate for satisfaction with their stay abroad rose up to 4.4 but their satisfaction with studies abroad remained stable at 3.9.

Learning a Language when Studying Abroad

- Students generally improve the language of tuition after their stay abroad. This is particularly true for English (34%), German (43.7%), French (61.9%), Spanish (68.3%) and Italian (75.8%).
- Independently to the language of tuition, 83% of students are willing to learn the local language of their host country. It is important to note that in countries where the above-mentioned languages are not the local language, 74% of students are willing to learn the local language.
- Only one third of the mobile students have attended a language course in their home countries. This figure decreases to 19% for languages other than English, German, French, Spanish and Italian.



- During their exchange, 43% of students attended free language courses but 14% of them had to pay for their language classes.
- 61% of students continue practicing their Erasmus languages after their period **abroad**.
- 66% of students who attended “Language Tandem” activities improved their local language skills whilst only 54.5% of those who did not attend improved their language abilities.

Full Degree Mobility

- Reasons why students do not take a full degree abroad include the fear of losing personal ties, lack of information and the fear of not obtaining recognition.
- Students who do participate in full-degree mobility seek a personal challenge, an international environment or learning a new language.

Problems with Degree Recognition

- 9.0% of students that have taken a full degree abroad encounter problems with regards to the recognition of their degree.
- Foreign degree recognition issues occur particularly in connection with further education, state employment and for regulated professions. Many students complain about long, and sometimes costly, administrative procedures for recognition.
- Tools such as the Lisbon Recognition Convention are not widely known amongst students and almost 50% of individuals that did not get their degree recognised indicate not having turned to potential support organisations (such as national students’ unions or NARICs).

Student Organizations and their Help to Students

- In comparison to previous years, the percentage of students’ awareness concerning the existence of ESN continues to increase.
- Further emphasis on integrating exchange students into the local community should be made.

Recommendations

For National governments and EU-decision bodies

- Further efforts facilitating full degree recognition are needed to ensure the function of the EHEA. In addition, more information with regards to the benefits of taking a fully degree abroad should be provided. The recognition of foreign degrees should be improved.
- Students' mobility grants should be improved in terms of quantity and quality to provide all students with the possibility of an exchange period abroad. New schemes could be looked into and studied, such as the study and work systems where students participate both in a study exchange and in a traineeship abroad.
- Regarding mobility for students, other aspects such as lack of information, the quality of education during exchange, the problems of recognition and the long bureaucratic procedures should continue to be improved.
- Policy-making stakeholders should focus on improving the quality of studies abroad during mobility since it has been stagnant for several years in contrast to the satisfaction with the stay abroad, which continues to rise.
- On-line language courses should be reinforced and also designed for minor languages where students' interest clearly exceeds the availability of courses.

For Higher Education Institutions

- Students should be encouraged to follow courses of the local language before leaving and during their stay abroad. In particular, Higher Education Institutions should offer language courses for free: 14% of the respondents have to pay to attend a language course.
- Higher Education Institutions should make an extra effort to provide free on-site training in the local language.

For organizations providing services to international students

- Student associations should do their best to promote tandem events that actually help students to improve their knowledge of the local language.
- Further emphasis on integrating exchange students into the local community should be made.

Chapter I – Respondents’ Characteristics

By Jurgita Stasiukaitytė

Demographic profile

The ESNsurvey analyses different types of mobility abroad. Around 80.1% of all respondents have already lived abroad: 82.2% of them moved abroad because of studies, 17.7% have taken part in an internship, 16.5% have worked, 7.0% have been volunteering and 10.8% have lived abroad for reasons other than studies, work or volunteering.

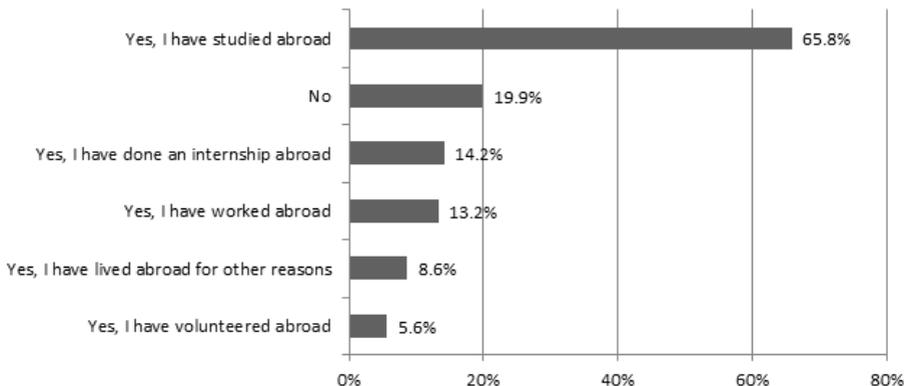


Figure 1. Reasons for living abroad (n=22,411)

Amongst respondents, 80% expressed their willingness to either work, volunteer or study abroad. Only 3.4% and 6.4% of respondents do not consider working or volunteering abroad or studying abroad, respectively.

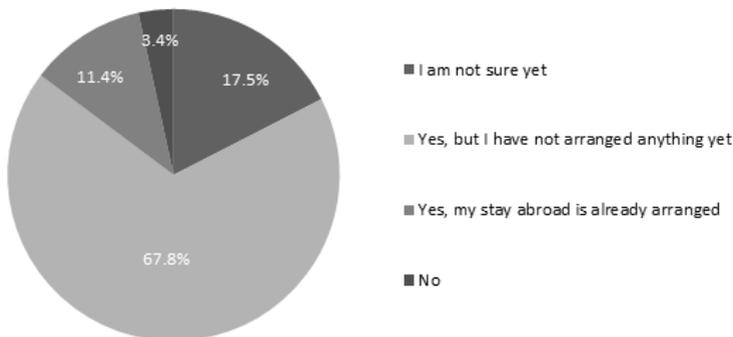


Figure 2. Respondents’ willingness to work or volunteer abroad (n=15,071)

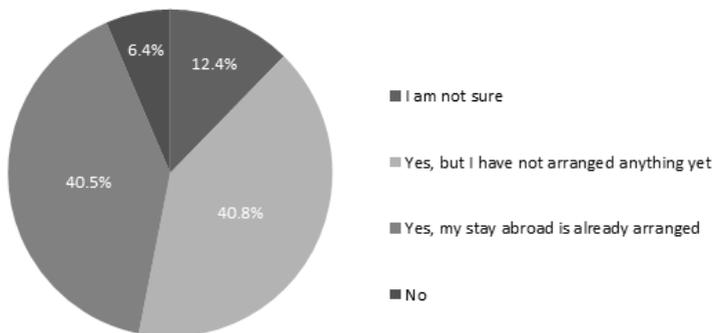


Figure 3. Respondents' willingness to study abroad

The most frequent exchange destinations are Spain (10.7%), Germany (10.0%), France (7.0%), Belgium (4.1%) and the Netherlands (3.4%). Whereas the main destinations in 2012 were: Spain (13.5%), France (9.6%), Germany (7.8%), United Kingdom (6.9%) and Italy (6.4%).

Host Country	Number of respondents	Percentage
Spain	570	10.7%
Germany	534	10.0%
France	375	7.0%
Belgium	218	4.1%
Netherlands	181	3.4%
Italy	176	3.3%
Austria	167	3.1%

Host Country	Number of respondents	Percentage
Switzerland	149	2.8%
Denmark	144	2.7%
Sweden	117	2.2%
Australia	112	2.1%
Ireland	111	2.1%
Poland	107	2.0%
Portugal	104	2.0%

Table 1. Host countries of ESNSurvey respondents who worked abroad (n=5,321)

When analysing students' volunteering experience, France (6.8%) followed by the United Kingdom (5.4%), Spain (5.3%), Germany (4.4%), Belgium (3.3%) and Italy (3.3%) turn out to be the most frequented destinations.



Host Country	Number of respondents	Percentage
France	83	6.8%
United Kingdom	66	5.4%
Spain	65	5.3%
Germany	54	4.4%
Belgium	41	3.3%
Italy	41	3.3%

Host Country	Number of respondents	Percentage
Romania	32	2.6%
India	30	2.4%
Turkey	29	2.4%
South Africa	28	2.3%
Poland	26	2.1%
Portugal	23	1.9%
Netherlands	22	1.8%

Table 2. Host countries of ESNSurvey respondents who volunteered abroad (n=1,227)

Background of respondents

Approximately 82% of the respondents who answered the questionnaire are between 20 and 25 years old. Their average age is 23.2 years, as in previous editions of the ESNSurvey. The gender ratio is also in line with previous years' results with more female (63.8%) than male (36.2%) respondents. The most common countries of residence of our respondents are Spain (10.6%), Italy (8.5%), Germany (8.4%), Poland (7.6%) and Denmark (7.2%).

Country of residence	Number of respondents	Percentage
Spain	1890	10.64%
Italy	1508	8.49%
Germany	1484	8.35%
Poland	1342	7.56%
Denmark	1278	7.19%
Austria	929	5.23%
France	827	4.66%

Country of residence	Number of respondents	Percentage
Netherlands	719	4.05%
Turkey	654	3.68%
United Kingdom	621	3.50%
Belgium	618	3.48%
Finland	610	3.43%
Hungary	508	2.86%

Table 3. Countries of origin of the ESNSurvey respondents (n=17,763)

The most popular areas of studies of respondents are Business Studies and Management Science (15.5%), Engineering Technology (13.4%), Languages and Philological Sciences (9.9%) and Economics (9.1%). Moreover, we can identify a slight increase in all 4 major areas as comparing to last year's figures, but this composition is in any case in line with previous year results and there are no new trends.

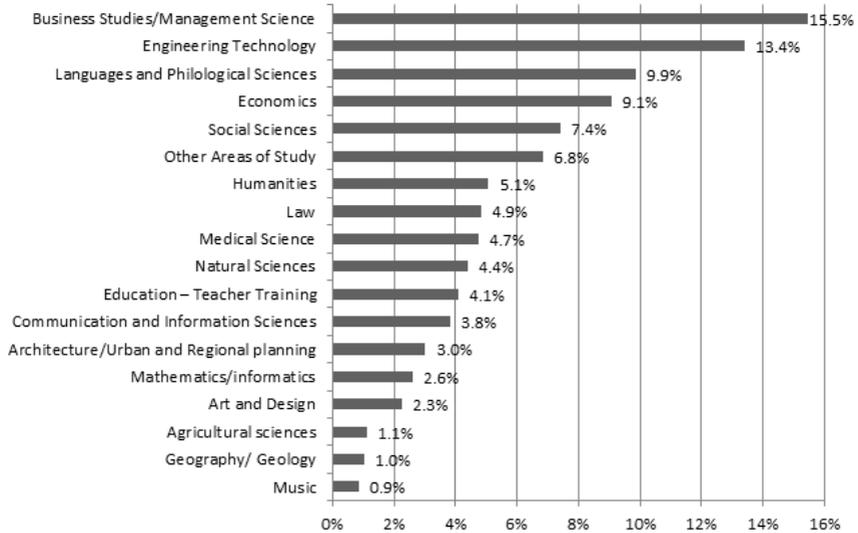


Figure 4. Areas of studies of respondents (n=17,813)

The majority of the respondents (64.3%) graduated from their latest programme of studies at the university in 2012-2014, 27.7% will graduate after 2014 and 8% graduated before 2012. Their highest degree obtained has either been High School (44.3%), Bachelor’s degree (40.1%), Master’s degree (14.7%) or PhD (0.9%).



Chapter II – Students’ Mobility

Obstacles for going abroad

By Julia Fellingner

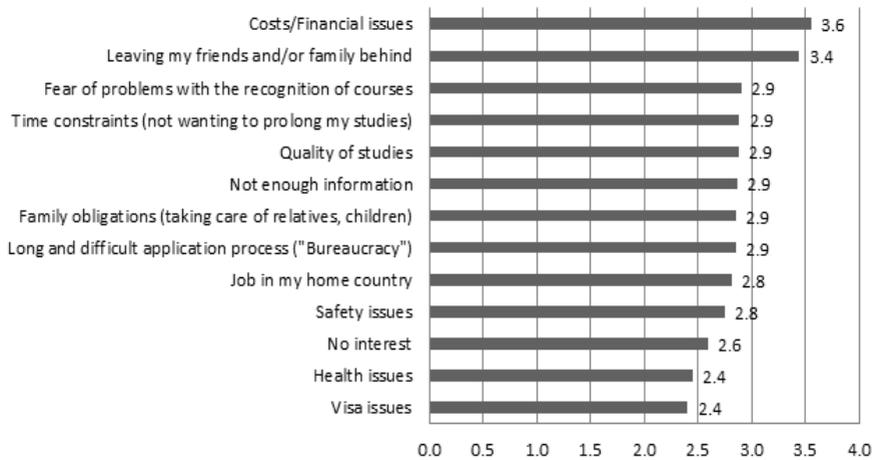
This year’s edition focuses not only on mobile students, but also sheds light on the reasons why some students do not choose to study abroad. When rating various factors from 1 to 5 (1 = not important at all to 5 = very important), financial issues and the fear of leaving friends and family behind are identified as the most important reasons for staying at home.

	Most frequent	Median	Average
Costs/Financial issues	5	4	3.6
Leaving my friends and/or family behind	5	4	3.4
Fear of problems with the recognition of courses	3	3	2.9
Time constraints (not wanting to prolong the studies)	3	3	2.9
Quality of studies	3	3	2.9
Not enough information	3	3	2.9
Long and difficult application process (“Bureaucracy”)	3	3	2.9
Family obligations (taking care of relatives, children)	1	3	2.9
Job in my home country	1	3	2.8
Safety issues	1	3	2.8
No interest	1	3	2.6
Health issues	1	2	2.4
Visa issues	1	2	2.4

Table 1. Rating of obstacles for going abroad, from 5 = very important factor to 1 = not an important factor at all (n=1,094)

The previous obstacles are followed by university-related causes: the fear of having problems with the recognition of courses (explored in more detail by ESN within the PRIME Research Project), time constraints, not wanting to prolong one’s studies, and reservations concerning the quality of studies abroad. Lack of information and bureaucratic issues, such as long and difficult application processes, are mainly rated as “neither important nor unimportant”. Family obligations, having a job in the home country, safety, and health and visa issues are perceived as less important. Moreover, the low rating for the lack of interest as an obstacle for going abroad means that most of the respondents do have a general interest in going abroad for studying.

Figure 5. Average ratings of obstacles (5=very important, 1= not important at all, n=1,094)



Since the most important obstacles identified are the financial issues, the impact of this detrimental factor was analysed for all non-mobile students. The following figure shows that more than 57% of non-mobile students consider financial issues as either important or very important.

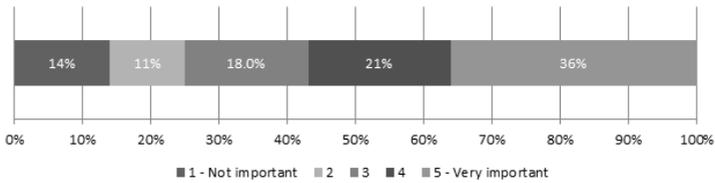


Figure 6. Rating of factor “costs/financial issues” as an obstacle for going abroad (5 = very important, 1 = not important at all, n=1,094)

International Experience during childhood

By Julia Fellinger

The following sub-chapter explores respondents’ mobility background. More precisely, international experience prior to study and work mobility is explored.

A great majority of respondents were born in the country they grew up in. However, mobile students (excluding those who stated that they have lived abroad for reasons other than working, studying or volunteering) are more likely to have been born in a country different to the one they grew up in (7% of mobile compared to 4% of non-mobile students). Therefore, early childhood mobility may have consequently had an impact on the likelihood of them becoming mobile in adult life.

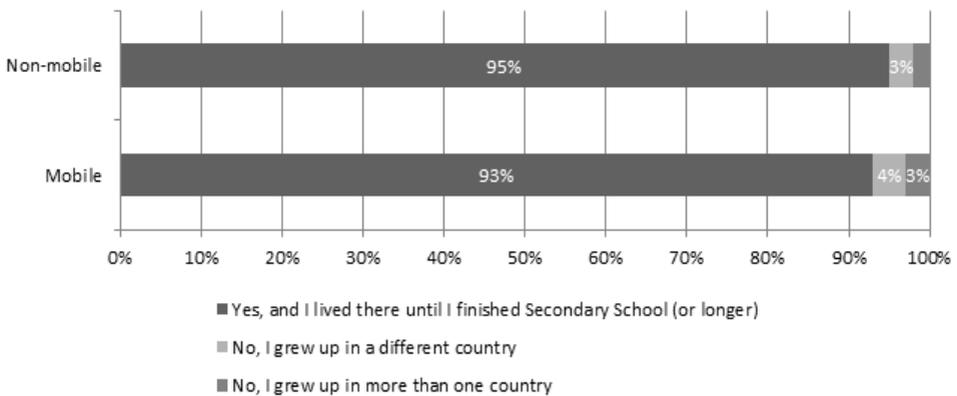


Figure 7. Growing up in different countries (n=3845-14461)

When examining the travel experiences of mobile and non-mobile students, travel experiences with family members seem to encourage mobility later in life. Fifty-two percent of mobile students, compared to 44% of non-mobile students, state that they regularly travelled with their parents. However, on the other end of the scale, 24% of mobile students compared to 30% of non-mobile students never travelled with their parents, showing that travel experience as a child or teenager is not necessarily a prerequisite for mobility.

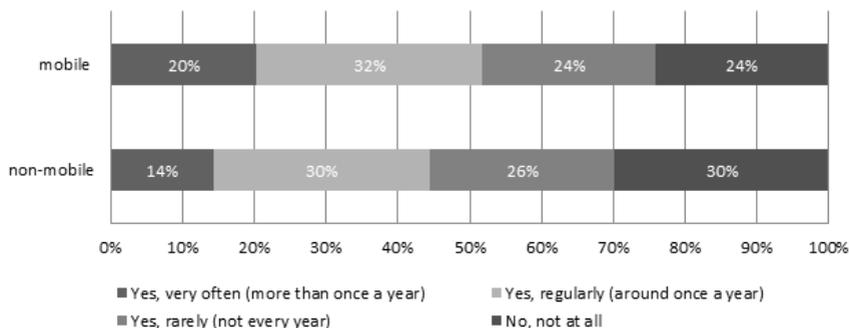


Figure 8. Travelling experience as a child (n=3,801-14,989)

When looking at the influence of parents’ encouragement to travel, non-mobile students seem to have been more encouraged than mobile ones. This result might be related to the fact that non-mobile students did not travel with their parents to the same extent as mobile students.

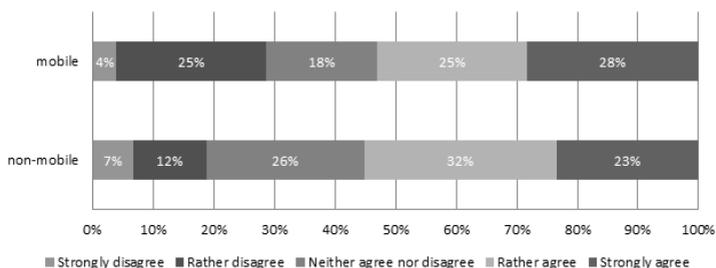


Figure 9. Parents’ encouragement to travel (n=3,765 – 17,964)



Finally, the following figure shows that mobility behaviour does not seem to be influenced by whether the travel destinations were to different countries or the same one. matter for them and 10.2 % of the respondents have not decided yet.

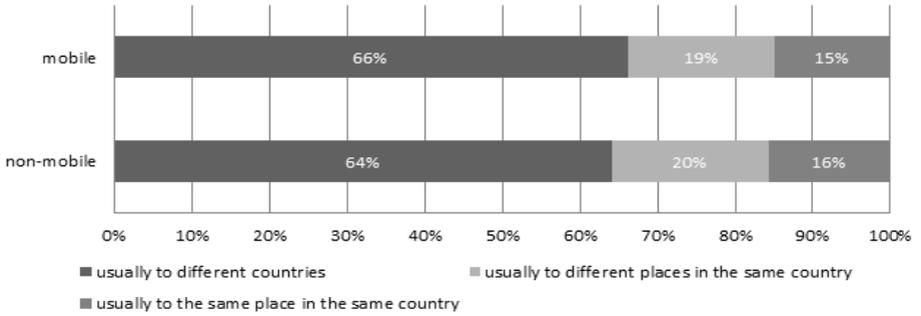


Figure 10. Travel destinations (n=2,663-11,370)

Finances and Work Opportunities during mobility

by Paula Danciu

As discussed in the previous chapter, the costs/financial issues represent the biggest obstacle for mobility. This section is focused on the finances and work opportunities available for students during mobility.

Among the non-mobile students, 76% would consider studying abroad in case of being guaranteed a part-time job or a paid internship in the host country alongside their full-time studies whereas 24% show no interest in this possibility. This can be seen in Figure 11.

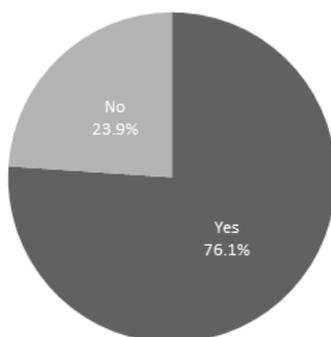


Figure 11. Willingness of studying abroad if offered a part-time job/paid internship in the host country (n=1,095)

Therefore, the majority of students would be interested in studying abroad if a job was guaranteed, in order to provide a greater constant income during the study period. Since costs or financial issues represent an important obstacle for mobility, the relation between cost and financial issues as a deterrent to go abroad and willingness to study abroad, if offered a job/internship in the host country, has been studied.

The results, which can be seen in Figure 12, show that for more than a half of the respondents who would be willing to study abroad if they were offered a part-time job or paid internship in the host country, costs/financial issues represent a very important obstacle for their mobility. This conclusion was statistically proved using a Chi-square test resulting in a coefficient of $p=0,003$ at a confidence level of 99%.

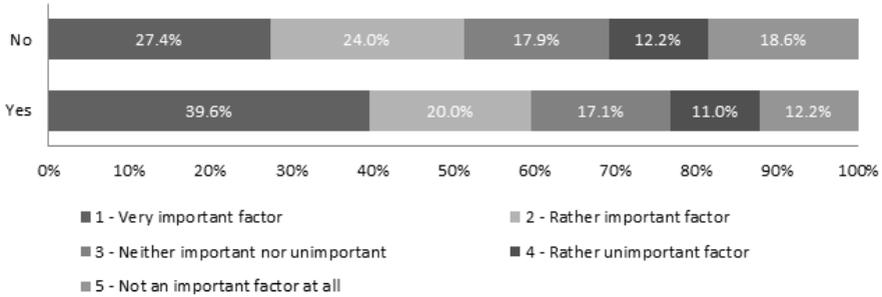


Figure 12. Rating of the students' perception of costs/financial issues as an important obstacle for mobility according to their willingness of studying abroad in case of being guaranteed a part time job/paid internship (n=1,095)

Another purpose of this survey was to determine the attitude of the students towards a combined programme including a part-time internship and part-time studies. Unlike the previous analysis, in this case students are offered a combined programme which would be better adapted to their needs: both studies and placement would be organized as part-time. Students who rate financial issues as an important obstacle for mobility are more interested in this type of programmes. As a consequence, work and study would have equal prominence in the student's life.

Students' interest in this sort of programme is of high importance as there already are institutions that offer such possibilities, with Campus Europae being one of them. The European University Foundation – Campus Europae has implemented a mobility scheme that allows students to combine their studies abroad with a part-time placement in the host country. The part-time placements help students improve their professional knowledge and skills, while providing additional financial support based on social criteria. This scheme aims at increasing the employability of graduates as well as the cooperation between the employers and universities.

The results, which can be seen in Figure 13, show that more than 80% of students have a positive attitude (“strongly agree” or “rather agree”) towards this idea.

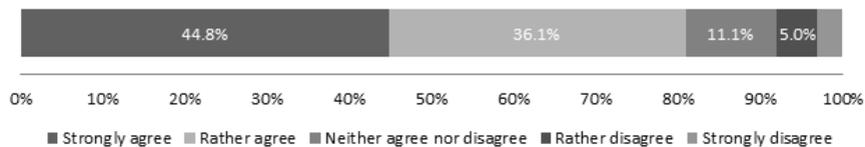


Figure 13. Interest in doing an exchange in a combined programme that would include a part-time placement (internship) and part-time studies (n=2,090)



Satisfaction with studies and stay abroad

by Paula Danciu

Students' overall level of satisfaction is measured regarding both the stay abroad and the quality of studies. While most of the respondents are very satisfied (65.7%) or rather satisfied (24.1%) with their stay abroad, there are some small differences when it comes to the level of satisfaction with the quality of studies during the exchange. Even if most of them are either very satisfied (35.5%) or rather satisfied (38.5%) the numbers are lower than in the first case. As a conclusion, students tend to be more satisfied with their stay abroad than with the quality of studies. This indicates that mobility programmes provide further benefits than the study programme itself.

Compared with the previous edition of ENSurvey, there has been a 2.3% increase in the level of satisfaction regarding the stay abroad, while the results regarding the quality of studies are constant.

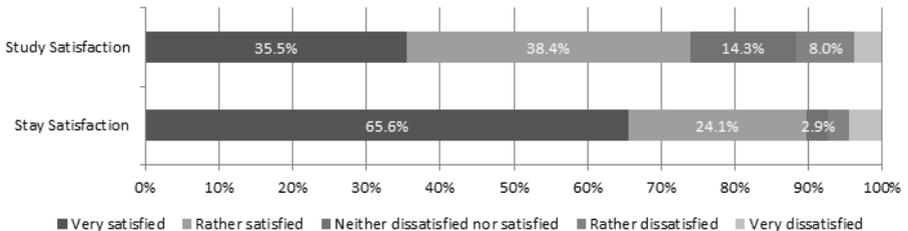


Figure 14. Level of satisfaction with experience and studies abroad (n=11,169- 11,173)

On the one hand, satisfaction with the stay continues to grow since 2011, and it rates 4.4 on a 5-point scale where 1 means very unsatisfied and 5 is very satisfied. On the other hand, the satisfaction with the quality of studies abroad continues to remain steady at a rate of 3.9 points since 2011.

Chapter III – Language Learning when Studying Abroad

By Roberta Piscone

This chapter investigates the impact of international experiences on the language learning process and the likelihood of improvement of language skills during mobility. An in-depth study shows whether there is any specific pattern between language learning and the country of exchange and if certain countries encourage students to learn foreign languages more than others.

Introduction

In this report, the analysis takes into account three groups of languages. The first group is English only, the second group includes French, German, Italian and Spanish, and is named the Big Four languages. The last group consists of all other European languages (including Turkish). Moreover, the self-evaluation of the knowledge of languages expressed by students has been divided into three levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Basic User (Level A1 and A2, Basic Levels); Independent User (Level B1 and B2, Intermediate Levels); and Proficient User (Level C1 and C2, Advanced Levels). In the analysis done on this subject, the cases of “No Knowledge” of the language and “Mother Tongue” have also been considered.

Some countries have more than one local language: this element has to be taken into consideration when looking at the results for each language.

In Belgium the local languages are Dutch and French; in addition, German is considered an official language in this country but it has not been mentioned as a local language or language of instruction by the respondents who have lived there. In Switzerland, the local languages are considered to be German and French; Italian has not been mentioned.

For Spain, the language intended as the local language is Castilian Spanish; the answers coded as Catalan have been considered separately.



Parallels with other publications

The report “English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education”, edited by ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education, has provided useful insight into the development of this section of the ESNSurvey. Even though the results of the report are based on data collected in 2007, they proved to be relevant for our analysis.

The report indicates that English programmes are mostly offered in North-Eastern Europe. In 2007, the country with the highest number of English taught programmes (taking into account the different sizes of the education systems) was the Netherlands, followed by Finland and Cyprus. The higher education institutions with lower levels of English-taught programmes are in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Overall, the countries in Northern Europe have more programmes taught in English; countries in Central and Eastern Europe have fewer programmes and countries in the South have even fewer programmes in English.

In general, language problems are reported to play a relatively small role in English-taught programmes, both by Institutional Coordinators and Programme Directors.

Language of instruction

Respondents report that during their exchange classes are held mainly in English (65% of the responses). Nevertheless, the situation is completely different in other countries. When considering exchange students in France, Germany, Italy and Spain, the results show that the lectures are held mainly in the local language whereas in other European countries, more than 85% of the lectures are held in English.

Figure 15 and Figure 16 depict the situation from two different perspectives: Figure 15 shows the 10 countries where the percentage of lectures held in English is the highest. Figure 16 displays the 10 countries where the percentage of lectures in English is the lowest.

As shown in the previous chapter, 9.9% of the students who go on exchange are studying Language and Philological Sciences. Therefore “Others” in Figure 15 and in Figure 16 represents those who attend lessons held in another language.

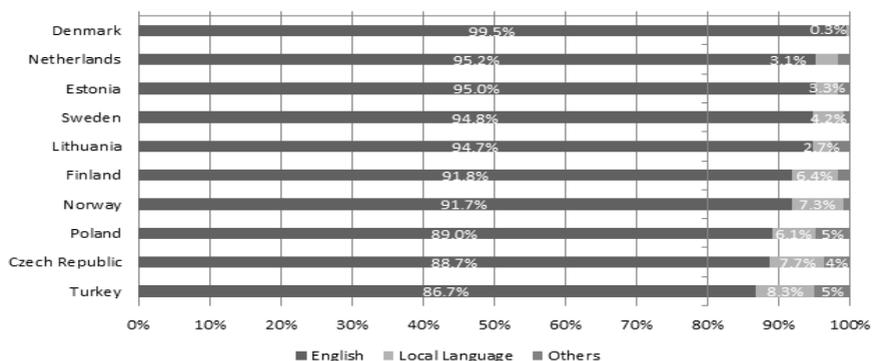


Figure 15. Countries with the highest percentage of lectures held in English (n= 12,288)

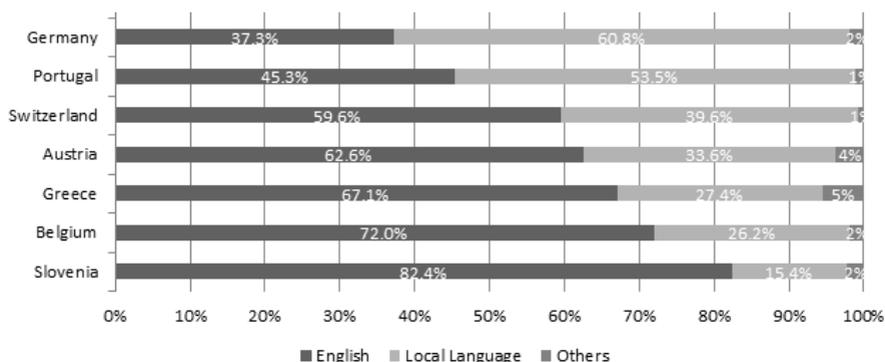


Figure 16. Countries with the lowest percentage of lectures held in English (n= 12,288)

Notably, in 40% of the cases, there is a second language of instruction (see Table 4). In 35.6% of these cases, the first language of instruction is one of the Big Four and the second language is English. In 24.6% of cases the first language is English and the second language is one of the Big Four. In 25.6% of cases the first language of instruction is English and the second language of instruction is the local language (when it is not one of the aforementioned languages). “Others” refers to lectures held in two languages, none of which is one of the Big Four or English.



One language of instruction (60% of the answers)	EN	65%
	ES	13%
	FR	7,2%
	DE	6,9%
	IT	4,4%
	OTHERS	3,4%
Two languages of instruction (40% of the answers)	BIG FOUR + ENG	35,6%
	ENG + BIG FOUR	24,6%
	ENG + LOCAL LANGUAGE	25,6%
	OTHERS	7,9%
	LOCAL LANGUAGE + ENG	6,8%
	OTHERS	3,4%

Table 4. Languages of instruction (n= 5,065-12,288)

Self-Assessed level of the language of instruction

The respondents report to be at an intermediate level (in 40% of the cases) or at an advanced level (in 34% of the cases) of the language of instruction before going on exchange. This is a self-assessed evaluation of knowledge of the language according to the rating scale explained at the beginning of this chapter.

Eighty-seven per cent of those who went on exchange in a country where English is the language of instruction claim to have an intermediate or level of English. An Intermediate and Advanced level of knowledge of the language of instruction is also assessed in the cases of French (75%), German (65%), Italian (42%) and Spanish (54%).

In the table below (Table 5), the level of knowledge of English in each country of residence is stated based on the respondents' self-evaluation.

Country of residence	B1/B2- Intermediate	C1/C2- Advanced
Greece	19%	76%
Sweden	22%	70%
Switzerland	26%	70%
Finland	25%	68%
Austria	35%	61%
Germany	37%	59%
Denmark	33%	59%
Slovenia	36%	58%
Netherlands	33%	57%
Belgium	40%	53%
Poland	50%	46%
Hungary	50%	46%
Turkey	44%	45%
Portugal	42%	44%
France	58%	36%
Spain	58%	32%
Czech Republic	59%	31%
Italy	61%	28%

Table 5. Knowledge of the language of English based on the country of residence before going on exchange, self-assessed evaluation (n=5846).

It is important to note that these figures are based on the students' personal perception of their level of English. However, our results are consistent with the English Proficiency Index elaborated by Education First with the exception of Greece (no data) and Turkey.

After the period abroad, the respondents perceive an improvement in their knowledge of the teaching language. If we look at this in detail, 17% of the respondents state that their knowledge of the language improved to an intermediate level from a basic level and 28% have passed from an intermediate level to an advanced level.



		Language level after exchange					Total
		A1/A2- Begin- ner	B1/ B2- In- terme- diate	C1/ C2- Ad- vanced	Mother tongue	No knowl- edge	
Before exchange	A1/A2- Beginner	1%	8%	3%	0%	0%	12%
	B1/B2- Intermediate	0%	12%	28%	0%	0%	40%
	C1/C2- Advanced	0%	0%	32%	1%	0%	34%
	Mother tongue	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%
	No knowledge	3%	2%	1%	0%	1%	7%
Total		5%	22%	64%	8%	1%	100%

Table 6. Comparison between knowledge of the language of instruction before and after going on exchange (n= 12,285)

Considering the improvement for each language, the improvement of the Big Four languages is striking. 34% of the respondents who had English as the language of instruction improved their level of the language after exchange. This applies to 43.7% of the respondents who were instructed in German and 61.9% of the respondents whose language of instruction was French. The highest improvement can be seen in Spanish (68.3% of respondents), and Italian (75.8% of the cases). As before, the improvement is based on a self-assessed evaluation. The level of improvement is divided between “Improvement to Basic Level” and “Improvement to Advanced Level”. The former indicates that the respondent has reached level A1/A2 or B1/B2 and the latter indicates that the respondent has reached level C1/C2.

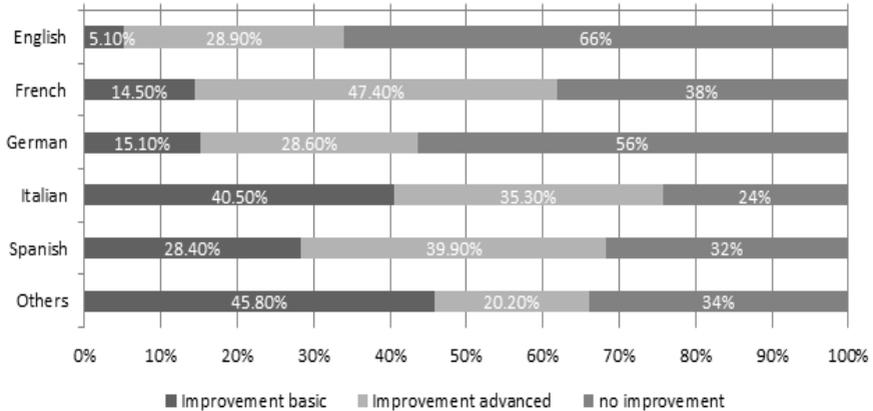


Figure 17. Improvement in the knowledge of the language of instruction (n=12,285)

Clearly, this is an important advantage provided by the experience abroad. The improvement of the language of instruction can be very valuable for future jobs and experiences, not only abroad but also in the home country.

Local language

41% of the respondents state that they had no prior knowledge of the local language before going to the country of their choice and 19% answered that they were beginners in the local language before their time abroad. However, the situation is very different when one goes into deeper analysis, and when the analysis is looked at separately for the three different languages groups mentioned at the beginning.

For English-speaking countries and the Big Four European language countries, where the local language is normally also the language of instruction, the level of prior knowledge of the language is higher. For the other European languages, the knowledge of the local language is usually quite basic (no knowledge or beginner).

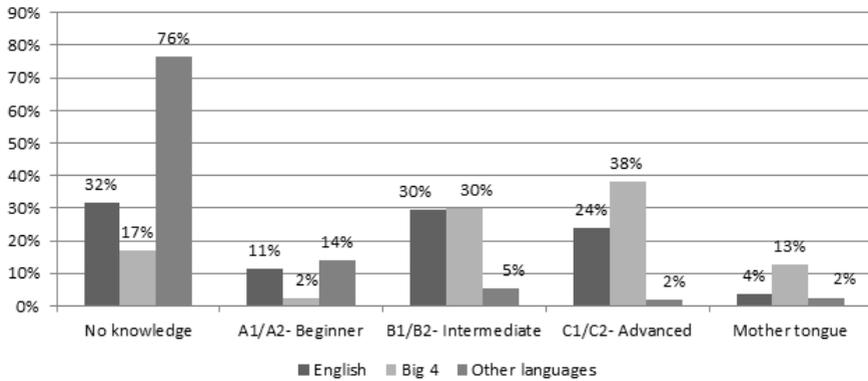


Figure 18. Knowledge of the local language before going on exchange (n=14, 571)

Willingness to learn the local language

The lack of previous knowledge does not imply indifference towards the local language. 83% of the respondents state that they planned to learn the local language during their time abroad and 32% say this is the main reason they have chosen the country they went to in exchange.

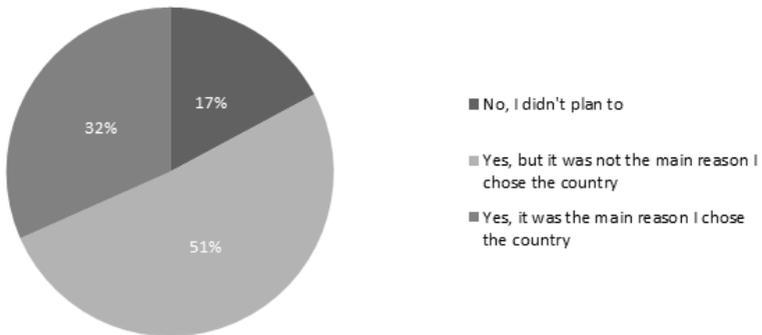


Figure 19. Did you plan to learn the local language whilst abroad? (n=14,571)

Moving to a specific country to learn the language has proved to be particularly true for nations where the local language is French, German, Italian or Spanish but not where the local language is English.

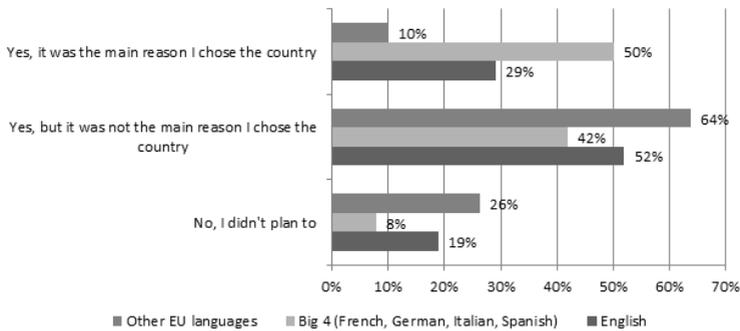


Figure 20. Did you plan to learn the local language while abroad? Analysis divided into 3 groups (n=14,571)

When comparing the answers with the countries of origin, it can be seen that people living in the United Kingdom and Ireland seem to be the most willing to go abroad with the intent of learning the local language.

Country	No, I didn't plan to	Yes, but it was not the main reason I chose the country	Yes, it was the main reason I chose the country
Ireland	17%	26%	57%
United Kingdom	14%	35%	51%
Italy	17%	44%	39%
Austria	14%	48%	38%
Hungary	14%	50%	37%
Finland	12%	51%	36%
France	16%	48%	36%
Germany	13%	52%	35%
Czech Republic	16%	50%	34%
Poland	14%	53%	34%

Table 7. Willingness to learn a language on exchange depending on the country of residence (n=14,571)



Just one third of the respondents are reported to have attended a language course in their home country. When the local language is one of the Big Four, language courses are attended in approximately 57% of all the cases. When English is the local language, the course is attended in 35% of all cases. Regarding the other languages, only 19% of the respondents completed a course in the local language before moving.

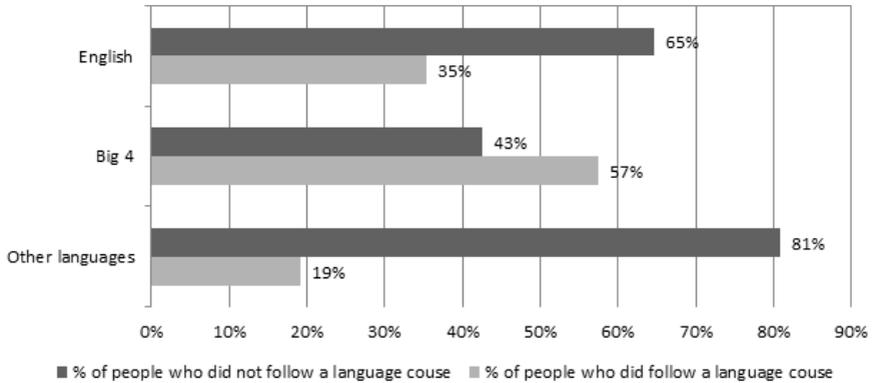


Figure 21. Did you attend a language course in your home country before your stay abroad? (n=14,569)

However, even if before going abroad no language course is taken, when people arrive in their chosen country, they usually decide to start a language course; this happens in more than 50% of the cases.

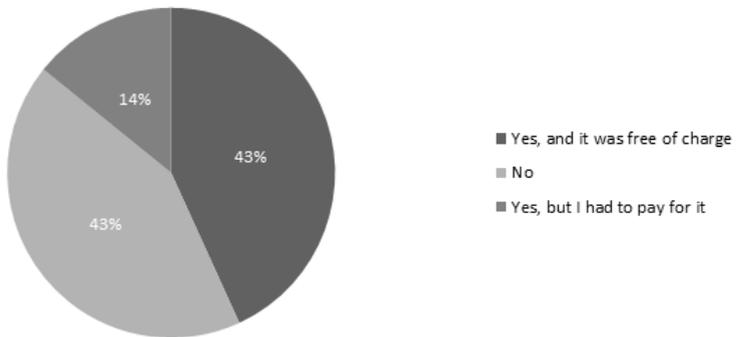


Figure 22. Did you attend a language course during your stay abroad? (n=14,568)

In detail, Figure 23 shows that English courses are not attended when abroad, whereas people are willing to take courses in the other languages. This may be because English is already quite well-known by students before leaving their home country and people do not feel the need to attend a course, as they can improve their English-speaking level in everyday life. People are twice more likely to pay for courses in the Big Four languages, but there is also a large number of people willing to pay to learn other languages

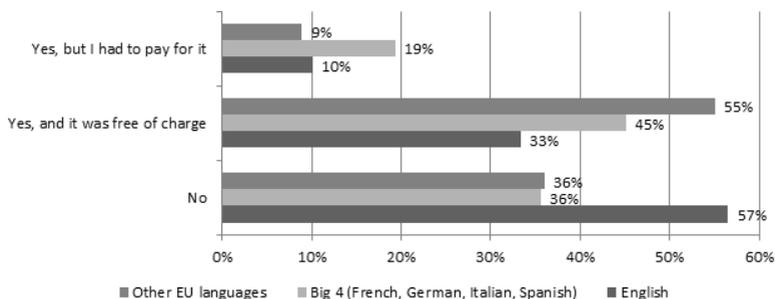


Figure 23. Did you attend a language class during your stay abroad? (n=14,568)

Different situations, different languages

During their time abroad, English and the local language are the most used languages. Notably, we can observe a difference depending on the speaker that the person on exchange is interacting with; and on the country of exchange.

In the case of countries where the Big Four languages are spoken, these are commonly used in everyday life (82% of the answers). On the other hand, when the country of exchange is one of the other European countries, English is the most commonly used language (68%).

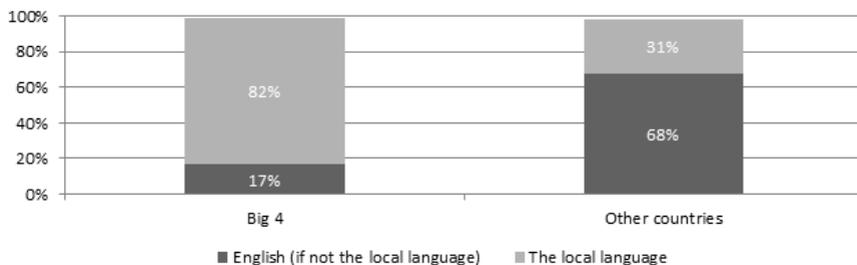


Figure 24. Which language did you mainly use in everyday life? (n=14,571)



With other students or trainees, English is the preferred language. However, in the case of an experience abroad in one of the Big Four speaking countries, the use of the local language is still very widespread (41% of the cases).

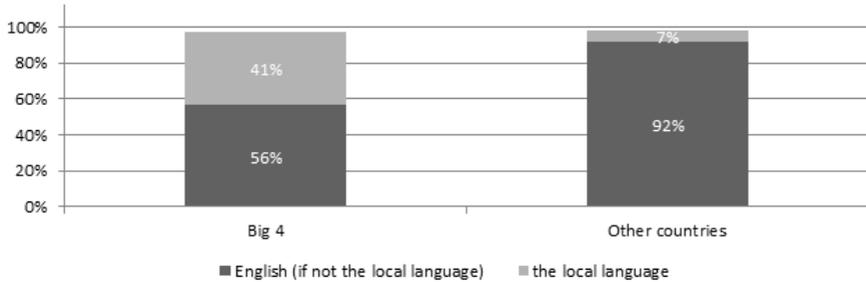


Figure 25. Which languages did you mainly use to talk to other exchange students/interns/volunteers? (n= 14,571)

Local people hold different attitudes when the respondents try to speak the local language: in 49% of cases, they seem honoured, in 28% of the cases they do not seem to react in any particular way and in 8% of the cases they seem impatient or switch to English.

Language improvement

After their time abroad, nearly half the respondents noted that their local language level had improved and this is true, in particular, for people who had no previous knowledge of the local language before moving. These people, after their period abroad, have a basic knowledge of the language (24%) and, in some cases (14%), they have passed from basic knowledge to an intermediate level of the language.

		Language level after exchange					
		A1/A2- Beginner	B1/B2- Interme- diate	C1/C2- Ad- vanced	Mother tongue	No knowl- edge	Total
Before exchange	A1/A2- Beginner	6%	10%	3%	0%	0%	19%
	B1/B2- Intermediate	1%	9%	14%	0%	1%	24%
	C1/C2- Advanced	1%	0%	10%	1%	0%	12%
	Mother tongue	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	4%
	No knowledge	24%	4%	1%	0%	11%	41%
	Total	31%	24%	28%	5%	12%	100%

Table 8. Comparison between the knowledge of the local language before and after going abroad (n=14,500)

Comparing students with trainees/workers, presents some differences in the improvement of the local language level. There are more students who improve their local language level than the workers who do the same (47.2% vs 36.2%). However, the knowledge of the local language before leaving is higher for the second group, therefore this explain why the improvement is smaller for the latter category.

61% of the respondents state that they keep on practicing the language even after they left the country. This is especially true for those who learned either English or one of the Big Four European languages (French, German, Italian, and Spanish).

The “tandem language learning” is a reciprocal language learning programme, in which people are paired with a native speaker of the target language they want to learn or improve. With participation in this programme, the language improvement presents slightly different results. When students participated in the tandem programme, 66% of them report an improvement in the local language level, whereas those who did not participate or studied where tandem is not offered, state that 54.5% of them improved.



As a final remark, 42% of the respondents affirmed that they learnt at least the basics of another language which was not the local one.

Main conclusions

In conclusion, we can summarise that people who go on Erasmus improve the language they already know (language of instruction) and they are willing to learn another language (local language). When abroad, they attend language courses and try to practice what they have learnt from interaction with local people. The experience abroad encourages people to practice the language they have learnt when they go back to their home country and is likely to motivate them to spend time with foreigners.

Chapter IV – Full Degree Mobility

By Emanuel Alfranseder

ESNSurvey reports have already showed the different benefits of mobility as well as the barriers and motivations for students to become mobile. However, there is a clear lack of data from a student perspective regarding the challenges, obstacles and consequences of the studying a full degree abroad. The present chapter provides a closer insight with regards to the reasons as to why students decide to take part in a full degree abroad and the main obstacles they encounter for doing so.

Demographics

Figure 26 shows the full sample of students that have already studied abroad during their education. The majority of respondents have not done a full degree abroad (10,523) whilst 1,980 respondents have done a Bachelor degree abroad, 1,312 a Master and 135 a PhD.

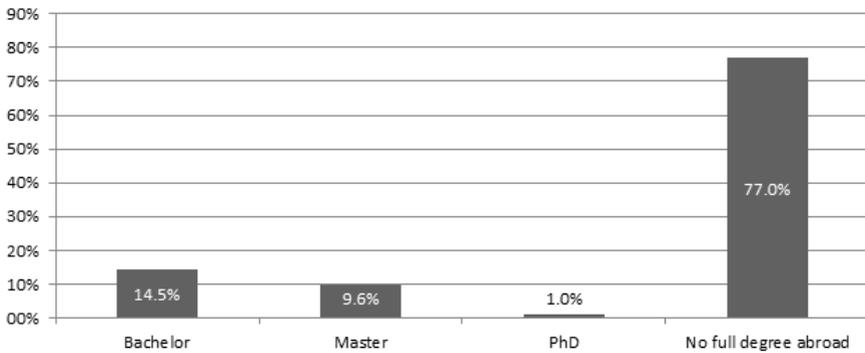


Figure 26. Have you ever studied abroad in a full degree programme? (n=13,669)



Motivation and obstacles for doing a degree abroad

The reasons as to why many students chose to not study abroad, according to the study carried out, shows that more than half of the respondents found the high costs for studying abroad to be an obstacle.

Figure 27 shows that the loss of personal ties, named by around 27% of respondents, is also an important factor and consistent with our previous findings on more permanent mobility such as labour mobility (cf. Erasmus Student Network, 2012). Fear of not getting recognition deters around 15% of respondents from doing a full degree abroad. Insecurity about the quality of education is additionally connected with the fear of non-recognition. Considering that high costs and the fear of losing personal ties are already preventing students from further considering a full degree abroad, the number is substantial.

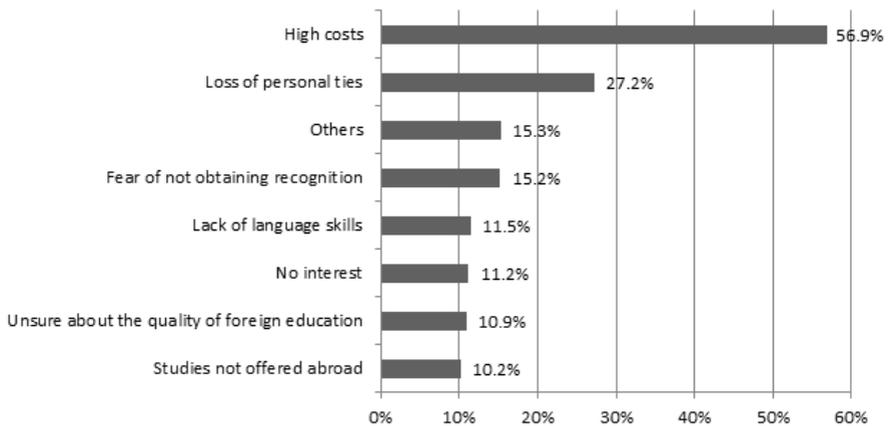


Figure 27. Why have you not studied a full degree programme abroad so far? (n=10,413)

Moreover, 15% of students suggest other reasons for not joining a full degree programme abroad which were not included in the questionnaire. The main ones are related to lack of interest, information or confidence. Moreover, some students also prefer to finish their bachelors to go on a full master abroad and others prefer to stay in their home countries because they consider their universities to be better.

In line with our previous findings, we discovered that personal development is a main motivator such as seeking a “personal challenge” (around 64% indicate this as a reason for doing their degree abroad), fun and travel (around 38%) and independence (around 32%) are often mentioned. Figure 28 further depicts that around 38% indicate better job opportunities and around 36% state better quality of education abroad as the driving force behind their decision. Also, learning languages is often cited as a reason (around 46%). In this case, other options refer mostly to double and triple degrees.

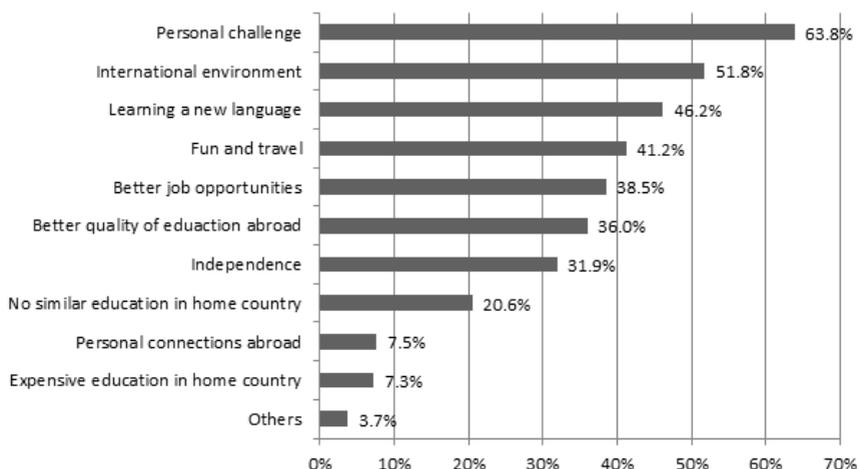


Figure 28. Why did you decide to study abroad in a full degree programme? (3,218)



Chapter V - Problems with degree recognition

by Emanuel Alfranseder

This chapter explores one of the main obstacles that students face when enrolling in a full degree abroad: the problem with regards to the recognition of degrees.

In the Bucharest Communiqué of 2012 the Ministers of Higher Education of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) state their determination to remove outstanding obstacles hindering effective and proper recognition and willingness to work together towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees, building on the tools of the Bologna framework, as a long-term goal of the EHEA. Furthermore, the Ministers commit to reviewing national legislation to comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. In addition, the commitment to support the work of a pathfinder group of countries exploring ways to achieve the automatic academic recognition of comparable degrees is included in the Communiqué.

Automatic recognition of full degrees is in many ways an ultimate goal of the EHEA. Ideally, all degrees obtained within the area should reach a certain threshold level in terms of quality and scope. At the current state of the EHEA, thriving for automatic recognition of full degrees is being faced with controversy. The mutual trust in the quality of degrees is not a given in many cases. Setting up a pathfinder group that mainly focuses on automatic recognition within certain regions of the EHEA provides the opportunity to establish and test procedures that can be later extended to the whole EHEA. As a potential drawback, the approach risks to create a two-speed integration process. Different regions might develop differing procedures that are in the end hard to harmonise across the whole EHEA.

Demographics

The sample used in this chapter is the same as in the previous one. Table 9 gives an overview where the respondents did their degree abroad. Spain (330), Denmark (328) and the Netherlands (314) are the most prominently featured countries in the sample.

Country	Number of respondents	Country	Number of respondents
Spain	330	Czech Republic	65
Denmark	328	United States	55
Netherlands	314	Turkey	44
United Kingdom	295	Estonia	42
Austria	196	Ireland	36
Germany	196	Norway	33
Italy	175	Lithuania	26
Poland	165	Greece	26
France	165	Romania	24
Finland	152	Hungary	23
Sweden	152	Slovenia	23
Belgium	112	Australia	22
Switzerland	84	Bulgaria	18
Portugal	76	Others	154

Table 9. Countries in which respondents took their degree abroad (n=3,331)

Figure 29 shows that 146 respondents had problems with recognition. Many cannot judge whether they will have problems with recognition in the future. Putting the figure in relation to the ones that report no problems with recognition shows that 9.0% report problems with recognition. As the survey reaches many current students and recent graduates, some might still encounter such difficulties in the future even if they answered “no” in the survey.

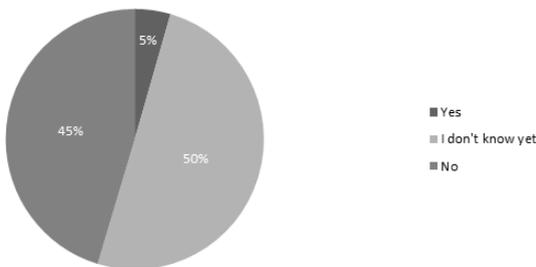


Figure 29. Have you had problems getting your higher education degree recognised after completing your studies? (n=3,268)



Table 2 shows the countries in which respondents had problems getting their foreign degree recognised. The total number is not sufficiently high enough to draw conclusions concerning country differences in terms of recognition of foreign degrees.

Country	Number
Germany	22
Italy	18
Spain	18
France	15
United States	9
Belgium	6
Switzerland	6
Poland	5
Austria	5
Denmark	5
Greece	4
Turkey	4
Bulgaria	4
Czech Republic	3
Portugal	3
Sweden	3
Norway	2
United Kingdom	2
Australia	2
Croatia	2
China	2
Others	14

Table 10. Countries in which respondents had problems with getting their foreign degree recognised (n=154)

Subsequently those respondents that report difficulties with recognition were asked more in depth questions about these difficulties. Figure 30 illustrates that 35% of all respondents state long administrative procedures as the source of their difficulties. Also, some say that the degree didn't meet all the conditions required for recognition (46 respondents) whilst others report that the degree didn't exist in the respective country (28 respondents). High administrative costs seem to play a role for around 13% of the respondents that report problems with the recognition of their degree. In Figure 30, others refer to problems with mark recognition or credit units in most cases.

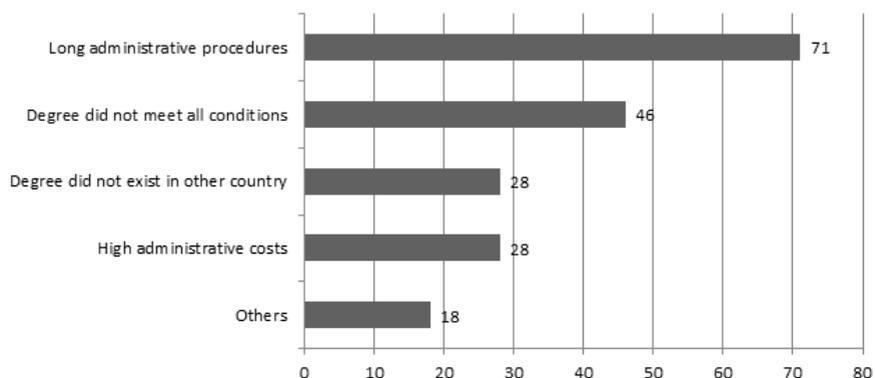


Figure 30. Which were the difficulties you encountered in degree recognition? (n=291)

Further insight into the last results show us that the 19 students that had other difficulties during their degree recognition process were mainly caused either by problems with the translation of marks or by the fact that their degree was not considered valuable in their countries.

The results of inquiring further with students whose degree didn't meet all conditions of the respective country are shown in Figure 31. The mismatch of study years and insufficient learning outcomes are most often cited as reasons. Not enough ECTS, missing compulsory courses and the degree being considered as completely different are also reported as reasons for the denial of further education.

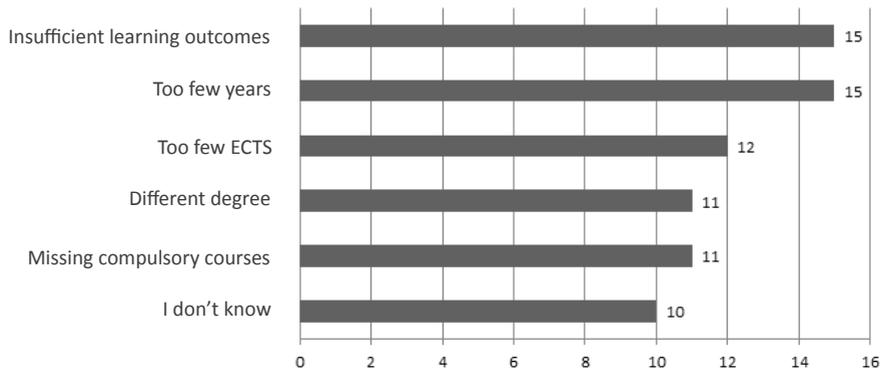


Figure 31. What were the reasons that your degree did not meet the conditions required for further education? (n=74)

Figure 32 shows almost half of the respondents did not take any action when told that their degree was not recognised. Those who took action appealed the decision (11 respondents), contacted the students' union (7), referred to the Lisbon Convention (5) and contacted the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC, 4).

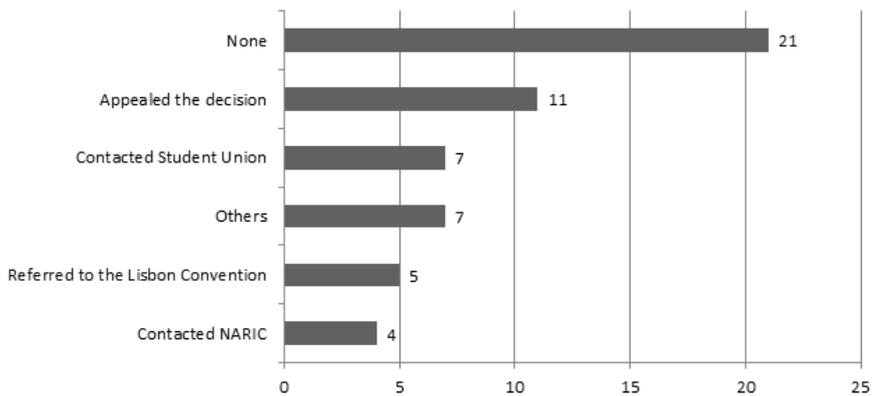


Figure 32. What steps did you take to remedy this situation? (n=55)

In these cases, other steps include taking extra examinations or changing their life plans and going to study another degree or gather professional experience somewhere else. All students with a full degree abroad evaluated whether or not such a degree was advantageous for them when seeking employment. Figure 33 confirms that the majority considers it an advantage (63%) and only 1.6% thinks it is a disadvantage. The rest either are not sure or feels that it is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage.

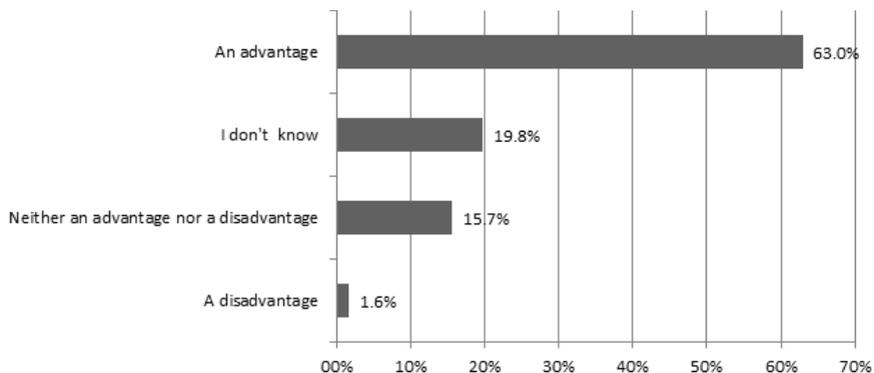


Figure 33. How do you feel about your foreign degree when it comes to finding employment in your home country? (n=3,161)

As shown in Figure 34, respondents that consider it to be a disadvantage report problems with requirements for regulated professions (15) and a lack of trust in the foreign degree from employers (23). Some respondents encounter problems because some subjects considered crucial by the employer were not covered in the degree.

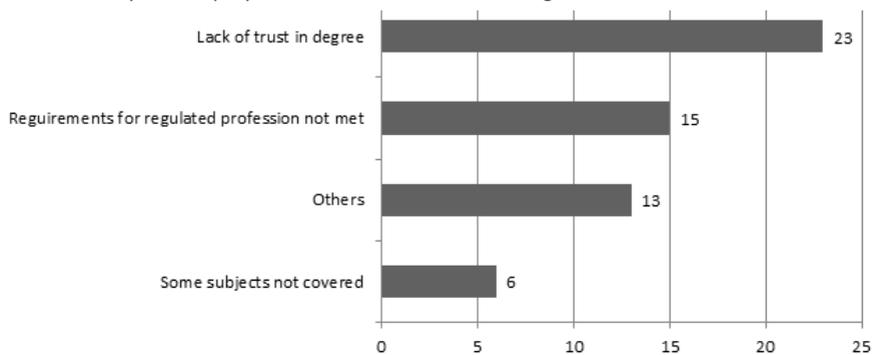


Figure 34. What kind of difficulties did you have finding employment because of your foreign degree? (n=57)



Students complaining about other kind of difficulties encountered problems mainly because their foreign degrees were not useful in their living country or because local education in the home country was considered better.

Asking participants whether they think the Diploma Supplement facilitated the recognition in their home country shows that it is hard to evaluate for students. As displayed in Figure 35, more than 50% of respondents do not know whether the Diploma supplement was helpful in the process (also possibly because they haven't tried to have their degree recognised). Only 8% think the Diploma Supplement did not facilitate the process, while around 40% think it was conducive to recognition. Taking aside those who do not feel able to judge the utility of the diploma supplement shows that more than 80% of all respondents think the diploma supplement facilitated the recognition process.

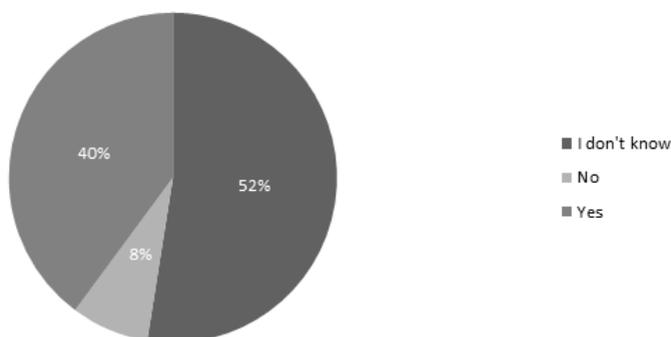


Figure 35. Do you think that the Diploma Supplement of your foreign degree facilitated the recognition process in your home country? (n=3,095)

Most respondents are not familiar with the Lisbon Recognition Convention as shown in Figure 36. Only around 19% of respondents report that they are familiar with the Convention.

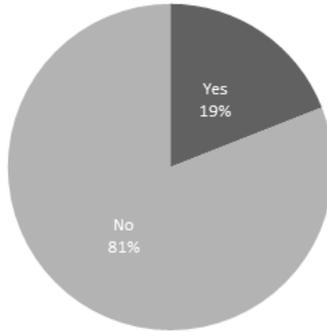


Figure 36. Are you familiar with the Lisbon Recognition Convention? (n=3,093)

Those who are familiar with the Lisbon Recognition Convention were asked whether higher education institutions in their country use the Convention in their recognition practice. Figure 37 indicates that 61% of all universities involved in the sample use the Convention.

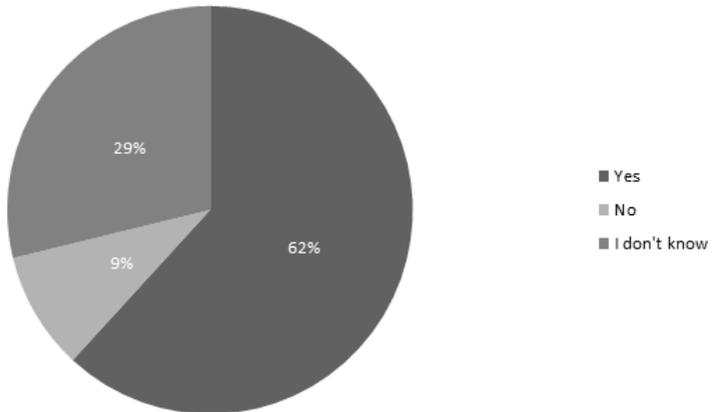


Figure 37. Do higher education institutions in your country use the Lisbon Recognition Convention in their recognition practices? (n=587)



Figure 38 displays how useful respondents find the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Calculating a weighted average (1-Not useful at all – 5-Very useful) results in an average of 3.99. The result shows that respondents consider the Convention, on average, rather useful.

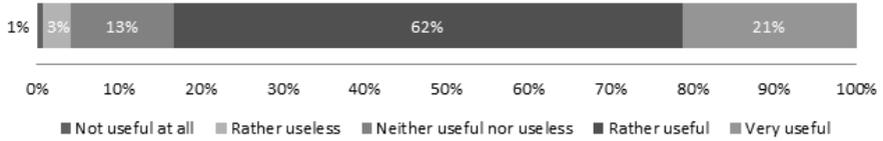


Figure 38. How useful do you think this Convention is for facilitating recognition of foreign degrees? (n=582)

Quotes

In the following section, some insightful quotes from respondents with difficulties are presented.

Degree taken in Netherlands, problems with recognition in Greece

"I only had problems to have my degree recognised for the public sector"

Degree taken in France, problems with recognition in Portugal

"The grades were not correctly changed into the Portuguese standard"

Degree taken in Germany, doesn't know yet whether it's going to be a problem with recognition

"If I want to become a teacher, I have to do 2 bachelors"

Degree taken in Australia, problems with recognition in Norway

"I went to Denmark to do my further education instead as they recognised my bachelor"

Degree taken in Sweden, problems with recognition in France

"The French grades were not matching the Swedish ones and France doesn't value a 1 year master program enough"

Degree taken in the UK, problems with recognition in Croatia

"Requirement of nostrification by NARIC office in Croatia which doesn't make sense if Croatia is in the EU and I have EU degree"

Degree taken in Sweden, problems with recognition in Serbia

"The law for nostrification is not yet established in Serbia."

Degree taken in Norway, problems with recognition in Switzerland

"Differences in ECTS-points amount. My university degree was only recognised as Fachhochschule and not as university course."

Degree taken in Switzerland, problems with recognition in Bulgaria

"In order to get my degree recognised, I needed to receive a very specific and difficult to obtain court stamp."



Conclusions

The analysis shows that around 9.0% of students that have taken a full degree abroad encounter problems with the recognition of their degree. Comparing this result to the persistently challenging situation of credit recognition, the results draw a quantitatively less problematic picture. The consequences of non-recognition of a whole degree can, however, be far more severe for the individual. Likewise, the survey cannot capture all problems with recognition as many may still face recognition issues in the future.

Very few people consider a foreign degree a disadvantage on the labour market- indicating high levels of acceptance and recognition from employers. Nonetheless, issues arise when it comes to recognition of degrees for the purpose of further education, state employment and for regulated professions. The analysed sample shows that many complain about long (and sometimes costly) administrative procedures for recognition.

While not the main obstacle of not taking a full degree abroad, many fear not getting their degree abroad recognised and thus, have general reservations about the quality of education abroad. Financial obstacles and personal preferences play a major role when deciding whether to take a full degree abroad. Tools such as the Lisbon Recognition Convention are not widely known amongst students and almost 50% of individuals that did not get their degree recognised indicate not having turned to potentially supporting organisations (such as national students' unions or NARICs).

While further analysis with more data is needed to investigate the challenges around full degree recognition, it is clear that further efforts facilitating full degree recognition are needed to ensure the functioning of the EHEA.

Chapter VI - Student Organizations and their Help to Students

By Sandra Rimavičiūtė

This chapter analyses the exchange students' perception of the student organisations in charge of assisting them at their host university during their exchange period. Amongst respondents who studied abroad, 60% state that there was an ESN Section. This figure has increased compared to the 57% in the last ESN Survey 2013. However, 16% of students say that there is no ESN section, and 24% of respondents are not aware of an ESN section at their host university.

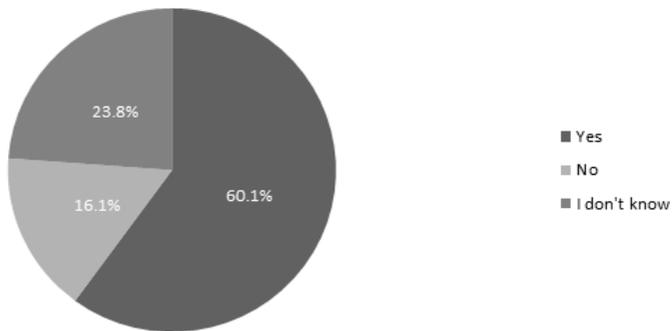


Figure 39. Existence of an ESN section at the host university (n=10,591)

Students are also asked about the existence of other student organisations apart from ESN at their host institution. 28% of the respondents remark that there are some other student organisations, 26% that there are no other organisations, and the remaining 46% have not heard or do not know anything about the existence of any other students organisation besides ESN.

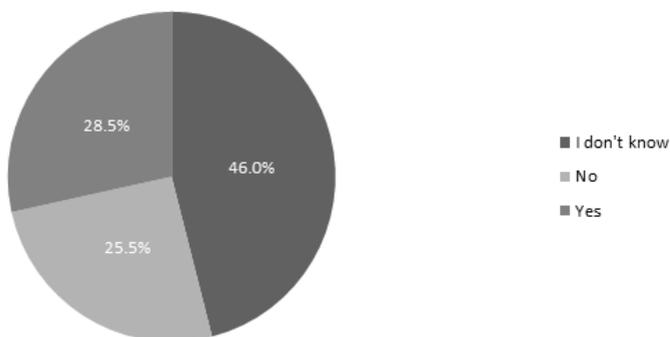


Figure 40. Existence of student organisation at the host university besides ESN (n=10.559)

Concerning other student organisations, respondents name generic student associations without specifying (14%, 526 respondents) and AEGEE (5%, 198 respondents). Others, like AIESEC (1.51%, 59 respondents) or Buddy Programmes (1.82%, 71 respondents) do not feature very prominently.

Satisfaction with students' organisations

The overall satisfaction with ESN on a scale from 1.0 to 5.0 (very dissatisfied to very satisfied) is on average 4.1 (compared to 4.0 of other student organisations), in line with previous year's results. More specific activities have also been evaluated. ESN achieves the highest satisfaction levels when it comes to orientation week (4.2), informal meetings (4.2), trips and visiting tours (4.1) and SocialErasmus activities (4.0).

A comparison between students' satisfaction with activities provided by ESN and by other student organisations can be seen in Figure 41. The satisfaction with ESN activities is higher in all aspects, with exception of cultural events (3.8) and integration with local community (3.5). Low level of satisfaction with the integration into the local community has been mentioned in previous editions of ESNsurvey. Finally, buddy and mentoring systems need to be improved as well (3.5). Comparing to previous years, the ranking shows almost the same results.

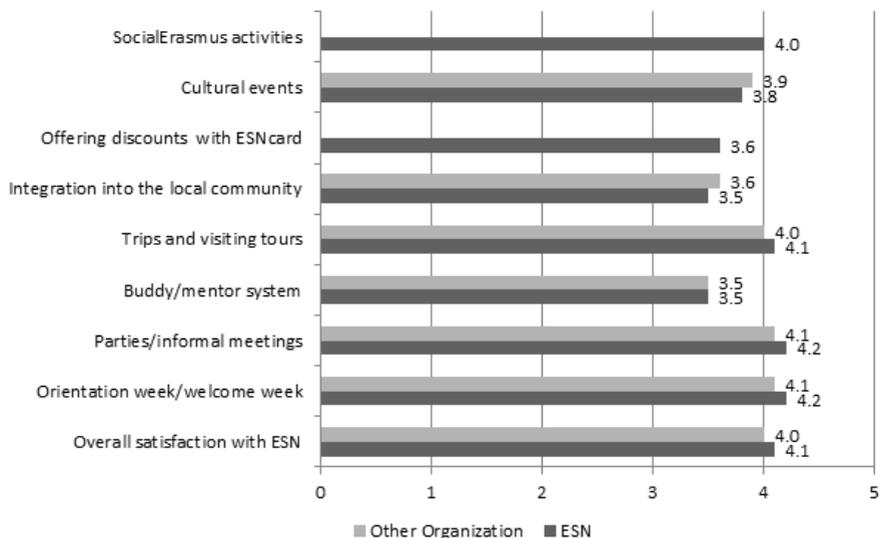


Figure 41. Satisfaction with ESN’s and other student associations activities (on a scale from 1 – very dissatisfied to 5 – very satisfied), n=1,808-5,919)

Satisfaction with studying abroad is higher for those students who were in contact with an ESN section or with other student associations. To provide statistical significance to this statement, a test has been done comparing the means of quality of the exchange period abroad with and without student associations (ESN or others). The test has given confirmation to the statement; it has been used a significance level of 95% (p-value=0.024).

Furthermore the survey asked whether the work of ESN volunteers has encouraged students to volunteer themselves on their return to their home country. 17% of respondents answer that they have joined a volunteer organization, whereas 83% of them have not joined or do not want to join any volunteer organisations.

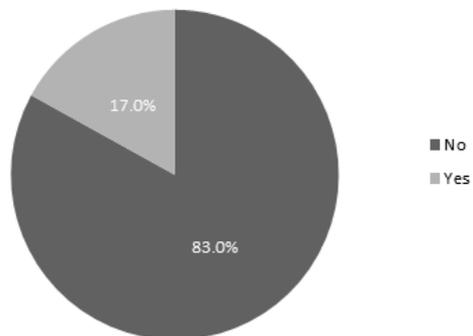


Figure 42. Work of ESN volunteers encouraging respondents to do volunteer work themselves (n=17.912)

Acknowledgements

Gathering more than 22,000 responses has only been possible thanks to the help of all the local sections of the Erasmus Student Network and the support of many other associations and institutions active in the field of international education.

Our special gratitude goes to all supporters of the ESNSurvey 2014 who helped disseminate the questionnaire – AEGEE, Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), British Council, Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Coimbra Group, Compostela Group, Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA), European Students Union (ESU), Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA) and European Association International Education (EAIE).

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It is thanks to their dedication, motivation and enthusiasm that the ESNSurvey continues to be one of the most successful projects of ESN.



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List of Abbreviations

ACA:	Academic Cooperation Association
AEGEE:	Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe / European Students' Forum
CEFR:	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
ESN:	Erasmus Student Network AISBL
EC:	European Commission
EHEA:	European Higher Education Area
EP:	European Parliament
EU:	European Union
HEI:	Higher Education Institution
LLP:	Lifelong Learning Programme
n:	Number of valid responses
NARIC:	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
PRIME:	Problems of Recognition in Making Erasmus



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Annex 1: About ESN

The **Erasmus Student Network (ESN)** is the biggest inter-disciplinary European student organisation in the field of mobility. ESN is a non-political, non-profit and non-religious organisation with over **13,500 volunteer members from local student groups (so called sections) in more than 450 Higher Education Institutions in 37 countries**. ESN supports educational, social and cultural integration of international students and provides practical information for incoming and outgoing students about various exchange programmes. Furthermore, ESN provides intercultural experiences to students who cannot access a period abroad (internationalization at home). The vision of ESN is the enrichment of society through international students – thus, ESN works to foster the mobility of students under the principle of SHS – students helping students. ESN provides its services annually to about **150,000 international students** in Europe and beyond. ESN's activities comprise **hundreds of projects** developed at all levels. The main international projects of Erasmus Student Network are:

1. ESNSurvey (<http://esn.org/content/esnsurvey>) is a European-wide research project covering different topics concerning mobility and education. It is conducted annually and surveys students at higher education institutions, with an average response rate of 10,000 answers. Starting in 2005, the ESNSurvey is the biggest regular European research project planned and carried out entirely by students for students. So far, the ESNSurvey has investigated upon the following topics – Experience of Studying Abroad (2005), Exchange Students' Rights (2006), Generation Mobility (2007), Exchanging Cultures (2008), Information for Exchange (2009), E-Value-ate Your Exchange (2010), Exchange, Employment and Added Value (2011) and Exchange: Creating Ideas, Opportunities and Identity (2013).

2. PRIME (Problems of Recognition in Making Erasmus, <http://www.prime.esn.org/>) is a research project addressing the continuing challenges concerning recognition procedures for outgoing exchange students. PRIME has been carried out in 2009 and 2010 following up on the results of the ESNSurveys 2006 and 2007, showing that full recognition is not yet a reality. The aim of PRIME is to collect best practices among participating higher education institutions and through their dissemination contribute to the improvement of the situation. A new study was conducted in 2013.



3. SocialErasmus (<http://socialerasmus.esn.org/>) gives international students an opportunity to help local communities in several ways through the interaction between students and local communities. It was the flagship project of ESN in 2011/2012. Projects are mainly carried out in three areas: Charity, Environment and Education. At the same time, international students gain experience, knowledge, openness and discover their love for Europe! Erasmus in Schools (EiS) was the flagship project of ESN for 2013 within the framework of SocialErasmus. These activities aim to promote mobility at an early age. ESN's local sections organise visits to elementary and secondary schools so that international students can do a wide range of activities that include country and culture presentations, language sessions and mobility promoting activities.

4. ExchangeAbility (<http://exchangeability.esn.org/>) aims at allowing students with disabilities to be fully involved in the activities of the local sections of ESN. Sections are encouraged to engage disabled students at their universities in the work for international students. Through participation and involvement in different activities, students with disabilities are given an opportunity to experience the international and intercultural atmosphere associated with the exchange programmes. The long term goal of the project is to encourage an increasing number of disabled students to go on an exchange.

5. ESNcard (<http://esncard.org/>) is the membership and discount card of ESN and ESN sections distribute the card to their volunteers and international students. The card offers a number of discounts at the local, national and international level. Annually, ESN issues about 80.000 cards.

6. ESN Galaxy (<https://galaxy.esn.org/>) is a web platform based on the Web 2.0 technology. It brings all ESN sections together, allows them to communicate and share information in real time. This unique system allows international students and ESN members to look for accommodation or to get information about their host country. ESN Galaxy also supports local sections via the provision of web-based services.

7. eXpress, the ESN Magazine (<http://esn.org/magazine>) is published three times a year. It is an informative, high-quality magazine about issues concerning ESN, Europe and the European Union in particular, exchange and mobility. The articles are written by ESN volunteers and students from all around Europe.

8. ESN Newsletter (<http://esn.org/newsletters>) is an ESN online communication tool, sent twice per month (at the beginning and in the middle of each month) to over 7.200 subscribers informing them about the network, ESN events and other interesting initiatives happening in Europe and beyond.

9. ESN Events – the International Board of ESN conducts open calls for various international events, taking place every year. These events include Regional Platforms (Central European Platform, Northern European Platform, South Eastern European Platform, South Western European Platform and Western European Platform), Committee Meetings, National Board Meetings, Cultural Medley, Councils of National Representatives, Council of National Delegates and the Annual General Meeting of ESN.

Erasmus Student Network is a full member of the European Youth Forum since April 2010 and is a member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the **Council of Europe** for the next mandate 2014/2015. ESN is also a **courtesy member of the European Association for International Education**, full member of the **Informal Forum of International Student Organizations (IFISO)**, full member of the **European Movement International (EMI)** and a full member of the **European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL)**.



Annex 2: Questionnaire

Dear participant,

We invite all current and former students to fill in this year's ESNSurvey on International Experience and Language Learning. We want to learn about the experience of those who participated in an exchange abroad, as well as the attitudes towards studying abroad of those who did not study abroad or plan to do it in the future.

All answers will remain anonymous. The results will be used for internal and scientific purposes; no answer will ever be traced back to you personally.

Answering the survey takes around 15 minutes, and you have the opportunity to win a new iPad with Retina display or a Panasonic Lumix DMC-SZ camera with 10x optical zoom and a Leica lens!

The ESNSurvey is based entirely on volunteer work of ESN members and we are grateful for your support of our research and your time to fill in the survey!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the ESNSurvey Team: surveyteam@esn.org

Part 1. International Experience

1. Have you ever lived abroad? (multiple choice possible)
 - a. Yes, I have studied abroad
 - b. Yes, I did have an internship abroad
 - c. Yes, I have worked abroad
 - d. Yes, I have volunteered abroad
 - e. Yes, I have lived abroad for reasons other than study, work or volunteering
 - f. No

2. [If 1. f] Would you consider living abroad? (study, work, volunteer)
 - a. Yes, my stay abroad is already arranged.
 - b. Yes, but I have not arranged anything yet.
 - c. I am not sure yet.
 - d. No.

3. [if 1.a] Have you ever studied abroad in a full degree programme? (multiple answers possible)
 - a. Yes, I did my bachelor's degree (B.A.) abroad
 - b. Yes, I did my master's degree (M.A.) abroad
 - c. Yes, I did my Ph.D. studies abroad
 - d. No

4. [If 3 d] Why have you not studied abroad in a full degree programme so far? (multiple choice possible)
 - a. Specific field of studies not available abroad
 - b. Unsure of the quality of foreign education
 - c. Fear of not having the degree recognised after returning to my home country
 - d. High costs involved
 - e. Not enough language skills
 - f. Personal connections (didn't want to/couldn't leave friends/family)
 - g. No interest
 - h. Other: Please explain: _____



Part 2. Degree Mobility and Recognition of Foreign Degrees

5. [If 3 a,b,c] Why did you decide to study abroad for a full degree programme? (please choose the 3 main reasons)

- a. My home country didn't offer opportunities in the desired study field
- b. The quality of education was better (academic culture / teaching approach)
- c. Studying in my home country was more expensive
- d. Personal challenge (new culture, new people)
- e. I wanted to study in a more international environment
- f. Fun, travelling opportunities
- g. Independence
- h. Possibility to study and practice a different language
- i. Better job opportunities after completing studies: degree is "worth more" than from universities at home, bigger network of friends, international career
- j. Personal ties to the country (e.g. family, friends living there)
- k. Other (please explain: _____)

6. [If 3 a,b,c] Have you had problems getting your higher education degree recognised after completing your studies?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. [If 6a] In which country did you have problems with getting your degree recognised?
 drop down with the list of the countries

8. [If 6a] Which were the difficulties you encountered in degree recognition? Tick all appropriate.

- a. Long administrative procedures
- b. High administrative costs
- c. The degree was considered not to have met all the conditions required for access to further education
- d. The degree attained didn't exist in the country I wanted it to be recognised
- e. Other _____

9. [If 8c] What were the reasons your degree did not meet the conditions required for further education?

- a. It showed a shorter number of study years than requested in the country of application
- b. The learning outcomes were found to be insufficient
- c. The compulsory courses required for access to a further course of study were not reflected in the degree
- d. The profile was deemed to be different than the one requested for access to the study programme
- e. The number of ECTS mentioned on the degree was lower than the one required in the country where the recognition request was submitted
- f. I do not know, I was just not admitted to the course programme
- g. Other: _____

10. How do you feel about your foreign degree when it comes to finding employment in your home country?

- a. I feel it is an advantage to have a foreign degree
- b. I feel it is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage to have a foreign degree
- c. I feel it is a disadvantage to have a foreign degree
- d. I don't know
- e. Other

11. [If 10c] What kind of difficulties did you have finding employment because of your foreign degree?

- a. Employers did not trust my degree
- b. The employer saw from my Diploma Supplement (DS) that some subjects were not covered
- c. I applied for a regulated profession and my qualification was not recognised by the specific competent authority because it did not correspond to the national requirements imposed for joining that particular profession
- d. Other



12. [If 11c] What steps did you take to remedy this situation?

- a. I appealed the decision/ statement of non-recognition
- b. I went to my national student union and I asked for help
- c. I went to the national academic information and recognition centre (NARIC) and I asked for their opinion when the university refused to recognise my degree
- d. I referred to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and I asked to be explained what the substantial difference was
- e. Other___

13. Do you think that the Diploma Supplement of your foreign degree facilitated the recognition process in your home country?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

14. Are you familiar with the Lisbon Recognition Convention?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. [If 14a] How useful do you think is this convention for facilitating academic recognition of foreign degrees? (choose on the scale)

1- Not useful at all	2 - Little useful	3 - Neither useful nor quite useless	4 - Useful	5 - Very useful
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16. [If 14a] Do higher education institutions in your country use the Lisbon Recognition Convention in their recognition practices?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I do not know

Part 3. Activities Abroad

17. [If 1. a] Have you ever participated in an exchange programme for studying abroad?

- a. Yes, during Secondary School (such as High School, Gymnasium, Lycee etc.)
- b. Yes, during a bachelor's programme (B.A.)
- c. Yes, during a master's programme (M.A.)
- d. Yes, during my Ph.D. studies
- e. No, I have not

18. [if 17 a,b,c] How did you first hear about the possibility to participate in an exchange programme?

- a. I heard about it in Secondary School
- b. A friend told me about it
- c. I read/heard about it on the internet / in a newspaper / on tv
- d. I received information at university
- e. I received information through a student organisation (such as ESN)
- f. I don't remember

19. [If 17 b,c,d] Please choose the host country of your most recent exchange experience:

drop down with the list of the countries

20. [If 17 b,c,d] Please choose the host university of your most recent exchange experience:

drop down filtered by country. Only universities from European Countries (option: other)

21. [If 17 b,c,d] How long did your most recent exchange experience last? (in months)

22. [If 17 b,c,d] What was your overall level of satisfaction with your stay abroad during your most recent exchange?

I was:

very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

23. [If 17 b,c,d] What was your overall level of satisfaction with the quality of studies of your most recent exchange?

I was:

very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

Part 4 International/educational background (question for all respondents)

24. Which of these sentences best describes what you believed as a teenager?

- a. I believed that for all my life I would stay in the same place I was born
- b. I believed that I would not be living in the place I was born, but a different place in my country
- c. I believed that I would not be living in the place I was born, but abroad
- d. I didn't think about it at all

25. Were you born in the country you grew up in?

- a. Yes, and I lived there until I finished Secondary School (always lived there)
- b. No, I grew up in a different country
- c. No, I grew up in more than one other country

26. Was one of your parents born in the country different than the one you grew up in?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27. Did you travel to foreign countries with your parents when you were a child or teenager?

- a. Yes, very often (more than once a year)
- b. Yes, regularly (around once a year)
- c. Yes, rarely (not every year)
- d. No, not at all

28. Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:

My parents encouraged me to travel when I was a child or teenager:

strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

29. At what age did you start travelling abroad without your parents/family members?

- a. Under 16
- b. 16 - 18
- c. 19 - 21
- d. 22 or older
- e. I have never travelled without my parents or other family members

30. Who in your family has a higher education degree? (such as a university degree)

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. Both
- d. None

Part 5 Obstacles for not going abroad (NON-MOBILE students only)

31. [If 17 e] Please rate how much the following items played a role in your decision not to study abroad: 1 = very important factor to 5 = not an important factor at all

Costs/Financial conditions	very important role	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Visa issues	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Health issues	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Safety issues					
Job in my home country	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Family obligations (taking care of relatives / children)	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Not enough information	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Quality of studies	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
fear of problems with the recognition of courses after coming back from abroad	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
Losing time (not wanting to prolong my studies)	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
I didn't want to go	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
The application process seemed long and difficult ("Bureaucracy")	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree
I didn't want to leave my friends and/or family behind	strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree

32. [If 17e] Would you consider studying abroad if you would be guaranteed a part time job/paid internship in the host country?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Part 6 Finances

33. [If 17 b,c,d] Did you receive financial support for your studies abroad?

- a. Erasmus grant
- b. Family ("pocket money")
- c. Institutional grant (money you could spend freely)
- d. Government loan (money you had to pay back)
- e. None
- f. Other _____

34. [If 17 b,c,d] Did you have a part- or full-time job next to your studies, before going abroad?

- a. Yes
- b. No

35. [If 17 b,c,d] Did you work (paid) during your studies abroad?

- a. Yes
- b. No

36. [If 17 b,c,d] Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:

I would have been interested in doing an exchange in a combined programme, which would include a part-time placement (internship) and part time studies.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	rather disagree	neither agree nor disagree	rather agree	strongly agree

Part 7 Language Learning: (mobile)

37. What was the main local language of the city you studied/worked in?

Drop Down

38. [if studied abroad] In which language were your classes held (=language of instruction)?

- a) in the local language
- b) in a different language: Drop Down

39. [if studied abroad] If your classes were held in more than one language, what was the second language of instruction? Drop Down

40. Did you plan on learning/improving the local language during your stay abroad?

- a. Yes, it was the main reason I chose the country
- b. Yes, but it was not the main reason I chose the country
- c. No, I didn't plan to

41. How well did you know the local language before going abroad?

- a. No knowledge
- b. A1/A2 - Beginner
- c. B1/B2 - Intermediate
- d. C1/C2 - Advanced
- e. Mother tongue

42. Did you attend language classes of the local language before your stay abroad (in your home country)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

43. Did you follow language courses of the local language during your stay abroad?

- a. Yes, and they were free of charge
- b. Yes, but I had to pay for them
- c. No

44. [if 38 b] How well did you know the language of instruction before going abroad?

- a. No knowledge
- b. A1/A2 - Beginner
- c. B1/B2 - Intermediate
- d. C1/C2 - Advanced
- e. Mother tongue

45. [if 39 b] How well did you know the second language of instruction before going abroad?
- No knowledge
 - A1/A2 - Beginner
 - B1/B2 - Intermediate
 - C1/C2 - Advanced
 - Mother tongue
46. Did you use the possibility of a language buddy exchange (“Tandem language learning”)?
- Yes, for the local language
 - Yes, for another language: Drop down
 - No
47. Did you learn any languages apart from the local language and/or the language of instruction? (e.g. from other international friends?)
- Yes, a lot
 - Yes, basics
 - No
48. [if 47 a,b] Which other language did you learn?
DROP DOWN languages
49. Which language did you mainly use in everyday life? (shopping, restaurants, etc)?
- The local language
 - English (if not the local language)
 - Other: ____ (drop down)
50. Which language did you mainly use to talk to other exchange students/interns/volunteers?
- Local language
 - English (if not the local language)
 - Other: list of languages
51. Did you keep on learning/practicing the local language after your experience abroad?
- Yes
 - No
 - I am still on exchange
 - I just came back - I don't know yet

53. How well do you know the local language now, after your stay?

- a. No knowledge
- b. A1/A2 - Beginner
- c. B1/B2 - Intermediate
- d. C1/C2 - Advanced
- e. Mother tongue

54. [if 38 b] How well do you know the language of instruction now, after your stay?

- a. No knowledge
- b. A1/A2 - Beginner
- c. B1/B2 - Intermediate
- d. C1/C2 - Advanced
- e. Mother tongue

55. [if 39 b] How well do you know the second language of instruction now, after your stay?

- a. No knowledge
- b. A1/A2 - Beginner
- c. B1/B2 - Intermediate
- d. C1/C2 - Advanced
- e. Mother tongue

Part 8. Student Organisations (only for mobile)

Part 8a. Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

56. [If 1 a or 8 a] Was there an ESN section at your host university?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

57. [If, 37a] Please evaluate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following activities offered by ESN.

If you haven't participated or these activities were not organised by the ESN section, please choose "I did not use/not offered".

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use / not offered
a) Orientation week/welcome week	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Parties/informal meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Buddy/mentor system	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Trips and visiting tours	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) Integration into the local community	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) Offering discounts with ESN Card	1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Cultural events	1	2	3	4	5	6
h) Social Erasmus activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
i) Overall satisfaction with ESN	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part 8b. Other Student Organisations (only mobile)

58. [If 1 a] Was there any other student organisation at your host university helping exchange and international students besides ESN?

a. Yes: Please specify name of the organisation that helped you the most:

b. No

c. I don't know

59. [If 1 a] Please evaluate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following activities offered by this student organisation.

If you haven't participated or these activities were not organised by the student organisation, please choose "Not applicable"

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use / not offered
a) Orientation week/welcome week	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Parties/informal meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Buddy/mentor system	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Trips and visiting tours	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) Language Tandem/Language Cafes	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) Overall satisfaction with the student organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part 9. Demographic information (all)

60. Age:

61. Gender:

- a. Female
- b. Male

62. Are you or have you ever been an active member of an ESN section?

- a. yes
- b. no

63. Which phrase below best describes the area where you grew up?

- a. A big city
- b. The suburbs of a big city
- c. A town or a small city
- d. A country village
- e. A farm or home in the countryside

64. Major/area of studies (current, or the faculty you graduated from): ☑drop down

- Agricultural sciences
- Architecture/Urban and Regional planning
- Art and Design
- Business Studies/Management Science
- Communication and Information Sciences
- Economics
- Education – Teacher Training
- Engineering Technology
- Geography/ Geology
- Humanities
- Languages and Philological Sciences
- Law
- Mathematics/informatics
- Medical Science
- Music
- Natural Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Other Areas of Study

65. Please choose your country of residence: ☑drop down with the list of the countries

66. Year of graduation of latest programme of studies at the university (please indicate your expected graduation if you haven't graduated):

- Before 2005
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- After 2014

67. What is the level of your highest attained degree?

- a. High School (I am still studying)
- b. Bachelors degree
- c. Masters degree
- d. PhD

If you do not wish to participate in the competition, thank you very much for your time already, you don't need to do anything else! All your previous answers will remain anonymous and are solely used for the analysis of the ESN Survey 2013.

Part 10 (optional)

If you want to participate in the competition for a new iPhone or digital camera, please continue:

The following questions as well as questions about your university and personal demographics are going to be used for helping educational programs and websites ESN is collaborating with, in their mission to provide information to international students. Your answers will be published anonymously

Please tell us why you would recommend or not recommend this particular city / university? * [text area – minimum 50 characters]

Please select what you just wrote about: * [checkboxes]

- Academics
- Accommodation
- University services & facilities
- Personal & professional development
- City & Culture
- Cost & Funding
- Practicalities
- Social life
- Overall / Other

What is your advice for future students who want to go there? Anything you would do differently if you could do it over again? [text area – minimum 50 characters]

Can you tell something about how expensive it is to live and study there? Please share any budget insights that might be useful for future students. [text area – minimum 50 characters]

Can you tell something about the academic aspects? How did you like the courses and the teaching methods at this university? [text area]

Beginning of stay: [date selector]

End of stay: [date selector]

Yes, the information I provided above may be published by educational programmes and websites ESN is cooperating with. I agree to the Privacy statement [\[link\]](#) and terms of use [\[link\]](#).

Please indicate your name and email address so we can contact you in case you win. We will never publish your email address or hand it on to third parties.

Name _____
Email _____

Thank you for your participation! We really appreciate your time. You can download the reports of previous editions of the survey at <http://www.esn.org/content/esnsurvey>.

ESN AISBL
Rue Hydraulique / Waterkrachtstraat, 15
B-1210 Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode / Sint-Jost-ten-Node
Brussels BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 (0) 22 567 427
www.esn.org

If you have any questions or would like to know more about ESN, please contact us directly at secretariat@esn.org.

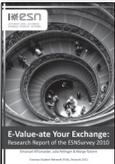
For any information regarding the ESNsurvey, directly contact the ESNsurvey team at survey@esn.org.



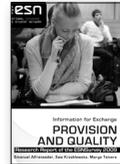
ESNSURVEY 2013
 Creating ideas, opportunities
 and Identity



ESNSURVEY 2011
 Exchange, Employment
 and Added Value



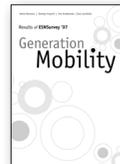
ESNSURVEY 2010
 E-Value-ate Your Exchange



ESNSURVEY 2009
 Provision and Quality



ESNSURVEY 2008
 Exchanging Cultures



ESNSURVEY 2007
 Generation Mobility



ESNSURVEY 2006
 Exchange students' right



ESNSURVEY 2005
 The experience of studying
 abroad for exchange students in
 Europe



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