

Irina Ferencz, Bernd Wächter (eds.)

European and national policies for academic mobility

Linking rhetoric, practice and mobility trends

**ACA Papers on
International Cooperation in Education**

Lemmens



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Contents

I. Introduction	7
II. European mobility policies	10
III. A comparative overview of national mobility policies	32
IV. Austria	58
V. Cyprus	85
VI. Germany	110
VII. The Netherlands	129
VIII. Norway	145
IX. Romania	164
X. Spain	186
XI. United Kingdom (England)	210
XII. Concluding thoughts	229
Annex	233

I. Introduction

The present study was produced in the time between November 2010 and January 2012. It was funded by a grant from the Lifelong Learning Programme (Accompanying Measures) of the European Commission. The project which resulted in the present report – and which was officially entitled *ENPMOB (Comparative study on European and National Policies and Practice on academic MOBility)* – was led by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), with the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as institutional partners. Irina Ferencz and Bernd Wächter (both ACA) are the editors of the study. They also acted as authors of individual chapters, as did Nicole Rohde of DAAD and Adinda van Gaalen, Rosa Becker and Sjoerd Roodenburg, of NUFFIC. Finally, one chapter was contributed by Iris Schirl of the Fachhochschule des bfi Vienna, but in a personal capacity.

The study continues the long-standing commitment of the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) to matters related to the international mobility of students (and staff), which found expression in recent publications such as *EURODATA*¹ and *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*.² It is dedicated to the strategies and policies of the European Union and its member states in the area of international student and staff mobility. The key question behind the study is whether or not the European Union, and the single countries of Europe, avail of a systematic approach to mobility at all. Related questions pursued refer to the

- *rationales* of such strategies (i.e. the reasons given for them),
- the *quantitative targets* set (if at all),
- the favored *types of mobility* (credit or degree mobility, inbound or outbound),
- the *geographical focus*, if any,
- the focus by *level of study*, and
- the *disciplinary orientation*.

Another set of questions refers to the development of these policies over time, and to whether or not they are converging (between the single countries, and between the level of the European Union and its member states).

¹ Kelo, M., Teichler, U., and Wächter, B. (2006), *EURODATA. Student Mobility in European Higher Education*, Bonn: Lemmens.

² Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011), *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*, 2 vols., Bonn: DAAD (Dok&Mat 69, 70).

A multiplicity of methods was used to produce the present report. Among these were

- the analysis of pertinent research literature on academic mobility, relating to the EU as a whole, the individual 32 countries covered by this study, as well as literature relating to the Bologna Process;
- the analysis of official EU policy documents with a bearing on mobility in the tertiary sector in particular and to internationalisation in higher education more generally, as well as like government documents of the eight countries investigated more in depth in this study (Austria, Cyprus, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom);
- an online questionnaire-based survey of national governments (ministries of education and /or science and research) in 32 countries (EU-27, EFTA-4 and Turkey);
- a series of interviews with relevant persons in ministries, internationalisation agencies, and rectors' conferences, amongst others, as well as with higher education researchers, in the eight countries studied more in depth (see above).

Throughout the study, the stated aims of national governments and European institutions are being compared to the latter's actual "investments" in mobility, i.e. to the programmes and mechanisms they provide to foster mobility. This comparison serves as a "reality test" of the strategies and policies.

The study is organised in 12 chapters, as well as an annex. *Chapter I* is the present introduction, which, very briefly, describes the main traits of the study.

Chapter II is devoted to the analysis of European-level documents relating to student and staff mobility. Next to official documents of the European Union and its institutions, these include also texts emerging from intergovernmental contexts, like the Bologna Process (European Higher Education Area). The chapter deals with: the legal issues pertaining to Union engagement in (higher) education, the modes and directions of mobility, the regional focus and levels of study, quantitative mobility targets, mobility obstacles, as well as rationales for mobility. The chapter also takes into account the mobility funding programmes of the European Union.

Chapter III creates an overview, analysis and comparison of the national policies identified in the 32 countries covered by the above-mentioned questionnaire survey. The results are based on the responses to the said survey, as well as on an analysis of government policy documents carried out in

the framework of the study *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*.³ As the chapter finds that very few European countries actually have a fully-developed mobility policy in place, it analyses cross-country convergence on different mobility policy elements rather than fully-fledged policies as such.

Chapters IV to XI are devoted to the analysis of the higher education mobility in eight countries studied more in depth, i.e. to Austria, Cyprus, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The countries were selected to represent a variety of geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts, as well as systems at different levels of development, as far as the aggregation of mobility policies is concerned. The issues addressed are similar to those in the European chapter. A typical chapter would include a look at the recent history of mobility strategies, it would explore the emphases with regard to mobility modes and directions, disciplines and geographical regions, numerical targets, rationales for promoting mobility, and, importantly, it would compare the political statements with a government's concrete action in the area of mobility, i.e. with its funding programmes and other mobility-facilitating instruments, but also with the recent mobility trends.

Chapter XII contains the conclusions drawn from the previous chapters. It identifies the issues on which EU and national policies "converge". It also highlights the areas and issues where there is divergence.

The annex contains an inventory of those persons who made themselves available for interviews.

³ op.cit.

II. European mobility policies

Bernd Wächter, ACA

This chapter is the result of a review and analysis of relevant European Union policy documents with a bearing on student (and staff) mobility. While the focus is on very recent documents, some of the texts reach back to the late 1980s. Wherever possible and appropriate, this analysis is complemented by a look at and an analysis of the Union's funding instruments in higher education (i.e. its mobility and cooperation programmes).

1. Introduction: The centrality of mobility in the Union's policies

Since the early days of Community involvement in higher education, the mobility of students and teachers across country borders has been one of the key concerns in Community higher education policy. Originally, it was even almost the only issue pursued. While the range of issues dealt with has widened in the last decade (mainly due to the introduction of the Open Method of Coordination), transnational mobility remains a very central concern right to this day. There is a very simple reason for the central importance of mobility: the lack of a strong legal mandate on which the Community could justify measures of a more far-reaching nature.

Until the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht, the Community had, in a strict sense, no mandate at all to act in the area of "general education", to which belongs higher education. Education, including higher education, was a matter solely for the member states to act on. Community activities dating back to earlier days, such as the "Education Action Programme" (1976-1984), which had already introduced a predecessor scheme of the ERASMUS Programme (the "joint study programmes"), were usually justified on the basis of the Community competence in vocational training (article 128 of the Treaty). The same applied to the ERASMUS Programme in its early (pre-Maastricht) days.

Introducing mobility measures before Maastricht meant, in a strict sense, at best acting in a legal grey zone, which was made possible by a toleration of the member states and by a very understanding European Court of Justice.¹ But it was clear that member states would not grant any such toleration for activities beyond cooperation between member states. In other words, measures with a bearing on the national higher education systems and institutions themselves – their funding, governance, etc. – were "off limits" for the Community. Therefore, its possible sphere of intervention was restricted to

¹ Compare the Court's ruling in the "Gravier case" of 1985, in which it declared higher education to be part of vocational training, by virtue of (hopefully) leading to employment.

transnational cooperation measures – with the mobility of persons being the most obvious one. One may therefore argue that the very strong emphasis of Community policy and action on transnational mobility was chosen *faute de mieux*.

The Treaty of Maastricht clarified the situation, but only in the sense of legalising Community action of the sort already going on, and by no means widening the Union's mandate. Its Article 126 finally introduces a Community competence for education, but reconfirms the sole responsibility of member states “for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems”. The Community's role is that of fostering cooperation and exchange *between* the national systems, notably by

- the development of a “European dimension”;
- the promotion of “cooperation between educational establishments”;
- the development of “exchanges of information and experience” between member states;
- the “development of distance education”, and, especially relevant in the present context;
- encouraging mobility of students and teachers.

The Article in question has been left unchanged in all amendments to the treaty after Maastricht. What has made it possible for the Union to comment on a wider set of issues beyond the mobility of persons was the introduction of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the early 2000s. This method gave the Commission the role of a coordinator of joint target setting of member state governments and of a watchdog to monitor goal-achievement. While the OMC has widened the range of policy issues the Commission may deal with, this widening has not in any way weakened the central position of mobility in the Community context. All that has changed is that mobility has lost its singularity as a Community concern.

2. Modes and directions

For a long time, Community policy documents focused almost exclusively on credit mobility between its member states (and neighbouring countries). Degree mobility was largely absent from these documents, apart from the occasional reference to incoming degree mobility from developing countries. This can be explained by the corresponding foci of Community mobility programmes, and the type of mobility they funded. These instruments were heavily focused on credit mobility.

Since its inception and to this very day, the ERASMUS Programme has funded exclusively temporary mobility, and only in Europe. As part of pre-accession strategies and near-neighbourhood policies, some non-member states in Europe could participate in the programme (most of whom have in the meantime become Union members). The Commission proposal for an “ERASMUS for all” Programme² from 2014 onwards foresees for the first time the inclusion of degree mobility and a possible extension to a wider range of participating countries.

Intra-European credit mobility, though for company placements (traineeships), was also the focus of the Comett Programme (started as early as 1986). The Tempus Scheme (1990) likewise funded (and continues to fund) credit mobility only. This scheme was originally designed for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (when the division of Europe was overcome) and today supports cooperation with the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe (beyond EU membership) and Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.

Degree mobility gained some currency only in the present century. This applies to mobility into the Union (and not, by and large, out of it). At the level of policy documents, the development towards some attention for inbound degree mobility set in with the Lisbon Strategy (2000), which acknowledges global competition as a result of globalisation, and which set the famous goal for Europe to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.³ Following on to this, the objective was set for the Union to become “the most favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers”. However, key education-related documents of the Lisbon Strategy, such as the report of the Education Council to the European Council of February 2001, *The concrete future objectives of education and training systems*, also continue to mention “exchanges”, and thus credit mobility, as an objective.⁴

It took the Union until 2004 to translate the partial widening of the focus from credit mobility inside of Europe to degree mobility into the Union to be found in policy documents into its own funding tools. 2004 marks the start of the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme, the major purpose of which was to fund the mobility of high-performing students from “third countries” into Master-

² European Commission, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing “ERASMUS for all”, the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, SEC(2011) 1402, SEC(2011) 1403.

³ Lisbon European Council, 23/24 March 2000, Presidency Conclusions: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm#a.

⁴ Council of the European Union, *The concrete future objectives of education and training systems*, 5980/01 EDUC 23.

level programmes at universities in the Union. ERASMUS MUNDUS is of course not the only instrument of the Union to support mobility with other parts of the world, nor was it the first one. But the other instruments mostly funded credit mobility only (Alfa, Asia Link, EU-US/Atlantis), they were small in scale (EU-US/Atlantis, EU-Canada, other schemes with non-European “industrialised countries”), and most of them were not devised in the framework of the Union’s education policies, but in the context of external trade or development.

Despite the extension of focus described above, the major thrust of Union policy has remained to this very day on (credit) mobility inside Europe. The relative underratedness of mobility into the Union is still very apparent in recent strategy documents. The 2009 Green Paper on learning mobility⁵ devotes only a small section to “mobility to and from the Union”. The Youth on the Move Communication uses some strong language. It announces that “the international dimension will be reinforced”, and it concludes that Europe “needs to make European higher education more attractive and open to the rest of the world and to the challenges of globalization, notably by promoting student and researcher mobility”. But, overall, also this Communication devotes much more space and attention to intra-European (credit) mobility than to degree mobility into the Union. The very recent (2011) “Modernisation Communication” of the European Commission could mark a change in this regard. It puts more stress than earlier policy documents on the “external dimension”, by underlining the need to attract “the best students, academics and researchers from outside the EU”.⁶ Preparing the ground for the soon-to-follow proposal for the “ERASMUS for all” Programme, it also emphasizes the need for more degree mobility⁷, though inside Europe.

The relative weakness of the Union’s commitment to inbound degree mobility from countries outside of the EU (and, in particular, from other continents) in comparison to that for intra-European credit mobility) is also underlined by the fact that the Community has so far provided only little support for marketing European higher education globally. Between 2006 and 2009, the European Commission funded the Global Promotion Project, which created the Study-in Europe web portal, a “European brand” (of sorts), which supported two European higher education fairs, and which resulted in a study for the establishment of a physical European higher education presence (European

⁵ European Commission, *Promoting the learning mobility of young people*, 8 July 2009, COM(2009) 329 final.

⁶ European Commission, *Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe’s education systems*, 20 September 2011, SEC(2011) 1063 final.

⁷ The European Commission refers to this form of degree mobility between the cycles as “vertical” mobility.

marketing offices) in key non-European source countries, amongst other. But the initiative, which had originally been designed as a pilot project with wider action to follow, remained a one-off.⁸

Summing up, we observe the following: the original focus, in EU mobility strategy documents as well as in the Community's programmes, was on intra-European credit mobility, mainly at undergraduate (first-cycle) level.⁹ The commitment to this type of mobility has not at all decreased over time, but it has been complemented by a second – and so far still weaker – focus on incoming degree mobility, mainly from outside of Europe, which set in with the Lisbon Strategy (at a political level) and ERASMUS MUNDUS (in practical, i.e. programme terms). A third focus which appears to be emerging at present is on Master-level degree mobility inside of Europe.

3. Regional focus

As should have become apparent already earlier in this chapter, the prime regional emphasis of EU mobility policy (and funding programmes) is on the EU itself, as well as on countries in the Union's vicinity with special links (EEA/EFTA, accession and neighbouring countries). This is anything but surprising, because one of the major rationales behind EU mobility policies is the further integration of the Union (see section on "rationales"). Except in the case of policies beyond education (for example foreign trade and development), the focus on the own region was in the early years almost the only one.

This changed gradually since the beginning of the present century, when globalisation came to be seen as irreversible, when the Lisbon Strategy was launched and when the dominant paradigm in mobility partly changed from a cooperative to a competitive approach. European policy documents particularly point out the future centrality of emerging economies, and particularly the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). The Union's practical tools to generate mobility with other parts of the world, its programmes, remained largely region-unspecific, though. ERASMUS MUNDUS, the by far biggest scheme, was and remains open to all countries of the world. Region-specific schemes, such as Alfa (with Latin America) and Asia-Link (with Asian countries, no longer in operation), were not developed as part of the Union's education agenda, but as part of development aid, foreign trade or other policy areas. In contrast, the afore-mentioned Tempus Programme falls within

⁸ The no-longer operational AsiaLink Programme funded a series of "European Higher education Fairs" in Asia. On a decentralised basis, the EU Delegations in certain countries provide funding for European participation in fairs.

⁹ It has to be borne in mind that the distinction into separate cycles, or anyway into those of the Bachelor and Master, is in many European countries quite a recent phenomenon, brought about by the Bologna reforms.

the remit of EU education policy, but its geographical spread is relatively wide (see above).

Like emerging countries, OECD-type developed economies were gaining in prominence roughly from the start of the present century onwards. Documents in the framework of the educational emanation of the *ET 2010 Strategy* frequently mention the USA as a benchmark for excellence in higher education (and as an unrivalled destination for foreign students). Despite this, support instruments for mobility with ‘industrialised’ countries and regions outside the Union remained few and small. Already in the 1990s, a cooperation programme with the USA was created (originally named the “EC-US Programme”), as was a parallel scheme with Canada. In this decade, similar mini-programmes were started with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. The programmes with the USA and Canada were suspended in 2011 (due to budgetary difficulties of these two countries) and their future fate is uncertain.

4. Levels of study

With regard to levels of study (as in respect of mobility modes and directions), EU policy documents are rarely very precise. Recent documents, such as the 2009 Green Paper on Learning Mobility or the *Youth on the Move* Communication, do not even specify into specific sectors of the education and training system, but talk of the “mobility of young people”, inclusive of higher education students. Documents specifically devoted to higher education usually refer simply to “students” (sometimes together with “staff”, “researchers” or “young researchers”). On the basis of the Union’s own strategy papers, it is therefore difficult (or daring) to decide which level of study Union mobility policies accord most importance. A slightly clearer picture emerges when looking at the Community’s mobility-funding programmes.

The Union’s by far biggest student mobility instrument, the ERASMUS Programme, is funding mobility at all levels of tertiary education, including short-cycle (sub-Bachelor, ISCED 5B), Bachelor and Master (ISCED 5A) as well as PhD programmes. This notwithstanding, it is generally regarded as an “undergraduate” scheme.¹⁰ Following this logic, one might conclude that the Union’s focus in intra-European student mobility, at any rate initially, has been on undergraduate students.

Over time, instruments for the support of postgraduate mobility have been added. The biggest programme with this focus is ERASMUS MUNDUS. Since

¹⁰ As we pointed out earlier, in many European countries the Bachelor-Master distinction was only introduced as part of the Bologna reforms in the first decade of this century, so that the differentiation into undergraduate and graduate study at an earlier stage was somewhat problematic.

this programme has mainly concentrated on the inbound mobility of non-European nationals¹¹, we might cautiously conclude that the Union has so far favoured “undergraduate” mobility in an intra-EU context, and graduate mobility in a global one. The possible opening of the ERASMUS Programme from 2014 onwards (under the proposed “ERASMUS for all” umbrella scheme) might in the future result in a strengthening of the postgraduate level in intra-European programme-funded mobility as well.

5. Mobility targets

The recent heated discussions about mobility targets in the context of the intergovernmental Bologna Process and in an EU context would appear to suggest that the setting of quantitative targets is a new phenomenon. This is not entirely true.

The ERASMUS Programme

The earliest European-level mobility target we found dates back to the year 1989, and it was set in the context of the ERASMUS Programme. The Commission’s proposal for an amendment to the initial (1987) Council Decision establishing the ERASMUS Programme of 29 May 1989 refers to the “declared aim of the Commission” of enabling 10% of the student population to “spend a period of study in another Member State at some stage during their university studies”.¹² This target for outbound mobility was to be attained by the year 1992, when a minimum of 150 000 students would have been needed to be mobile annually. The target was to be attained not only by the ERASMUS Programme, but also by efforts of the member states. The formulations in the Council Decision appear to refer to credit mobility mainly, although the term “period of study” does not by necessity exclude the possibility that the period extends to the duration of an entire degree, i.e. that it also encompasses degree mobility. Later Council Decisions extending the lifespan of the ERASMUS Programme no longer mention the target. As was the impression amongst observers at the time, the target was silently dropped when EU policymakers became convinced (not necessarily on the basis of solid data) that it was beyond reach.

In an ERASMUS context, a new attempt at target-setting was made in 2002, when the Programme celebrated its one millionth grantee. This time, the target was an absolute number, and referred only to grantees of the programme

¹¹ Originally, only non-EU students received grants in ERASMUS MUNDUS Master Programmes. As a result of the last reform of ERASMUS MUNDUS, such grants are now also available for EU students.

¹² European Commission, Proposal for a Council Decision amending Decision 87/327/EEC adopting the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) COM(89) 235 final.

itself. The Commissioner in charge of education at the time, Viviane Reding, announced that, on its 25th birthday in 2012, the programme was to have funded the mobility of three million students.¹³ This target is likely to be missed, but only very narrowly.

EU mobility benchmark

In parallel to efforts in the context of the Bologna Process, the European Union has worked on a mobility target. After lengthy negotiations, it was adopted in the form of “conclusions” by the Council on 28 November 2011.¹⁴ The target refers to outbound mobility (including credit as well as degree mobility) and is set at 20%. It includes both mobility into other European countries and movements to elsewhere in the world. Almost superfluous to say, it relates to “physical” mobility only.

In quantitative terms, the European benchmark is identical with the target which ministers of education set for the EHEA already in 2009 in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, although it remains to be seen if the EHEA will use the same definition for attainment. Like the old ERASMUS target, it refers to graduates and the percentage thus relates to the concept of “mobility in the course of studies”. The minimum criterion for inclusion in the count is a period of “education-related study or training” of three months or 15 ECTS credits. Shorter periods (of a minimum of two months) may only be taken into account if they are “recognised by the individual Member State within the context of a quality mobility scheme”. The 20% represent an average at Union level, and not a threshold to be reached by each and every country. Rather, “Member States are invited to consider,..., how and to what extent they can contribute to the collective achievement of the European benchmark”. Like the Bologna target, this one is to be reached by 2020.

Bologna targets

In the framework of the Bologna Process, two targets are under discussion, one for outbound and one for incoming mobility. The much more fervently discussed one is that for outbound mobility. As stated above, the ministers of education had already adopted this one at their meetings in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve in the spring of 2009: “In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have a study or training

¹³ Press Release of Commissioner Viviane Reding
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/02/1525&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

¹⁴ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on a Benchmark for Learning Mobility*, 28/20 November 2011.

period abroad“.¹⁵ What had been left for a later stage to be decided on was the exact definition of the type of mobility to be counted towards this target. A working group on mobility under the BFUG is currently developing a proposal for the ministers to adopt at the 2012 summit in Bucharest. The latest document of the group available to us¹⁶ proposes to count the following:

- outbound credit mobility to any other country in the world, inclusive of countries belonging to the EHEA;
- outbound degree mobility, but only to other countries in the EHEA;
- of both types, only ‘genuine’ mobility, i.e. involving a physical move across country borders for educational purposes;
- mobility at all levels of study, from short-cycle education (ISCED 5B) at the low end, to doctoral education (ISCED 6) at the high one;
- activities of a “study-related” nature and thus not only study at higher education institutions and internships, but also including a wide variety of other activities; and
- also stays of a very short duration, minimally worth one ECTS credit point.

While both the European benchmark and the Bologna target aim at an identical minimum share – 20% – of graduates with a mobility experience, the definition behind the target is very different. The European benchmark only includes stays of a minimum duration of three months (one semester) or at least(15) ECTS credit points. The EHEA target, in its present formulation, is much more inclusive (or ‘soft’): it allows for the count of very short stays (one ECTS credit translates into about one week of study/work) and a multiplicity of activities (not only study and traineeships, but also language courses and summer schools, for example). The only point on which the Bologna target definition is stricter than that of the European benchmark is the exclusion of credit mobility to non-EHEA countries. It remains to be seen if the much more demanding definition of the European benchmark will now lead to a rethink of the definition of the Bologna target.

The above-quoted working group document also proposes a target for incoming mobility (only from non-EHEA countries). This is proposed to be set at 5% of total enrolment in the countries of the EHEA. Unlike the outbound

¹⁵ The Bologna Process in 2020 – The European Higher Education Area in the new decade. Communiqué of the Conference of the Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28/29 April 2009.

¹⁶ Mobility for better learning. Mobility strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area. Working paper of the BFUG working group Mobility, 24 August 2011.

target, which counts stays abroad in the course of study, this target relates to “stocks”, i.e. the percentage of foreign or inbound mobile students of total enrolment at a given time. Like the target for outbound mobility, it is to be attained by the year 2020. Even though this is not explicitly stated, the target appears to comprise only degree mobility.¹⁷

“Mobility for all”

It is clear that the Union, and in particular the European Commission, regards international mobility of students (and staff) as an intrinsically good thing, of which there can never be too much. Mobility is very positively connoted in European policy documents. This is why the Union has at any point in time sought to increase present mobility volumes. Over time, policy documents have become ever more ambitious. This trend has recently culminated in demands for “mobility for all”. The *Youth on the Move* Communication of 2010 demands that “by 2020, all young people in Europe should have the possibility to spend a part of their educational pathway abroad”. Even though this cannot be translated into a 100% mobility target (since not everybody might want to avail themselves of the “possibility”), it clearly signals that the European Commission seeks to reach a state where mobility is the rule rather than the exception. The “mobility for all” objective had already been prepared by a “High-Level Expert Forum on Mobility”¹⁸, which demanded in June 2008 that “learning mobility should become a natural feature of being European and an opportunity provided to all young people in Europe”. Not letting themselves be distracted by definitional worries, the experts had suggested that, by 2020, 50% of all young Europeans be mobile, and the European mobility programmes be expanded to fund the mobility of 2.9 million per year by 2020 (instead of 300 000 at the time they published their report).

Balance

Next to quantitative targets, the concept of “balance” in mobility is playing an increasingly prominent role. Considerations of balanced mobility are not entirely new, but they have recently gained increasing currency.

The idea of balance was and remains a key issue for the ERASMUS Programme. Based on the idea of mutuality, this programme always strived for reciprocal exchanges, between institutions, but also between countries. In

¹⁷ The formulation “students matriculated in the EHEA” who have “obtained their prior qualification elsewhere” seems to suggest this, since credit-mobile students are often not formally “matriculated”.

¹⁸ High-level Expert Forum on Mobility, *Making Learning Mobility an Opportunity for all*, June 2008.

the early years, the challenge was to overcome the dominance of the countries of the so-called “golden triangle” (UK, France, Germany) as a destination, by promoting study in the then less-sought-after South of the European Union. Today, the East-West imbalance is the major concern.

A much more elaborate idea of balance is currently emerging in a Bologna context. The above-quoted *mobility strategy 2020* is proposing to limit the discrepancy between inflows and outflows to 25% of the lower value, between different EHEA countries as well as between EHEA countries and those outside of the Bologna area. The document states this aim for balance for both credit and degree mobility, although it attaches higher importance to balance in the latter mobility mode. The authors appear to be convinced that high outflows of degree mobility will directly translate into (permanent) emigration and therefore into “brain drain”.¹⁹ In relation to non-EHEA countries, the authors suggest that imbalances with developing and emerging countries (to their disadvantage) be addressed by efforts of EHEA countries and governments to mobilise their own nationals to study in these countries, and that imbalances with industrialised countries to the disadvantage of the EHEA be addressed by the governments of these countries, in the form of mobility programmes with an EHEA destination.

The above-quoted *mobility strategy 2020* has not yet been adopted by the Bologna signatory countries’ governments²⁰ and, in the interest of common sense and reason, it is to be hoped that changes are still possible. Degree mobility, in particular, is governed by overriding “push” and “pull factor” largely beyond the steering powers of mobility programmes. Degree mobility is “vertical” in nature and largely a reaction to quantitatively and/or qualitatively insufficient provision in the country of origin. Unless these imbalances in quantity and quality of provision can be reduced, there is no hope to overcome corresponding imbalances of inflows and outflows.

¹⁹ It is interesting that a number of European governments confronted with high inflows of foreign students from other EHEA countries depart from exactly the opposite assumption. Austria, for example, is confronted with a strong influx of foreign – particularly German – students. The Austrian government is convinced that these students will not stay in Austria after study, but return to their country of origin (nationality). Also arguing with “balance”, Austria is attempting to limit inflows.

²⁰ The document will, in its present or changed form, be adopted by the Ministers of Education of the EHEA at their next meeting in Bucharest in spring 2012.

6. Mobility obstacles and how to overcome them

When it comes to student mobility, the European Union has a strikingly simple view of the world: students (and staff), at any rate in Europe, desire to become mobile. The fact that many do not is entirely due to obstacles in their way. As a result of this, the Union and, in particular the European Commission, has created an array of instruments designed to remove these obstacles, or anyway reduce their deterring effect.

Mobility obstacles identified in Community documents (as well as such relating to the Bologna Process) comprise, amongst others, funding, recognition, linguistic issues, information and guidance, curricula and organisation, motivation and access.

Funding

A lack of funding is identified as a major obstacle to transnational mobility, whether this concerns temporary study in another country, or mobility for a full degree. As far as we can see, the Community has addressed this challenge mainly in two ways: by means of the provision of scholarships in the framework of its cooperation programmes, as well as through measures to make the national study funding systems available for study in other countries.

The engagement of the European Union in the area of programmes enhancing cooperation and mobility is well-known, has been referred to before in this chapter and does not require detailed description. Suffice it to underline that, amongst all regional actors in the world, the EU's engagement for mobility support is certainly unparalleled. This applies particularly to support for intra-European credit mobility, for which the ERASMUS scheme has, in the course of its history, provided grants to close to 3 million students. It is interesting to note that the Union managed to mobilise these impressive numbers by means of top-up funding only, and thus at relatively low per-capita costs (and grants). This became possible through co-funding provided by some national and sub-national regional actors, but more so through the particular design of the scheme, which, through "integrated study abroad" based on widespread recognition of the periods studied abroad, does not (at least as far as intentions go) lead to an extension of the overall duration of study, and therefore requires only funds for the extra costs of study abroad. We will analyse the particular approach of ERASMUS and other Community programmes in this regard further down in this chapter.

With the launch of the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme, the Community has also become an important supporter of degree mobility into the Union.

Beyond the provision of scholarships, Community efforts have concentrated on what is called in European jargon the “portability of loans and grants”.²¹ Most European countries traditionally provide study support, either as subsidies (grants) or loans to be paid back later, for study in the country of nationality (or residence). Some countries make such support available to all students, regardless of their financial situation (or that of their parents), while others support only students from financially modest backgrounds (“means-tested loans/grants”). In the last decade (and also supported by the Bologna Process), the European Commission has made major efforts to make these instruments “portable”, i.e. ensure that they are also made available to those students who undertake part or all of their studies in another Union (or EHEA in a Bologna Process context) country. These efforts have resulted in improvements, even though full portability of national grants and loans is still the exception rather than the rule.²²

Recognition

The European institutions (as well as other European actors) are convinced that problems with the recognition of degrees and periods of study abroad prevent higher volumes of mobility than hitherto attained. Efforts to improve recognition in Europe set in as early as the 1950s, when the pan-European Council of Europe issued its first conventions on the issue. In an EU context, the discussion on and legislation on recognition started in the area of professional qualifications, with academic recognition following later. In the area of the recognition of degrees, the UNESCO/Council of Europe ‘Lisbon Convention’ of 1997 was an erstwhile culmination point, although this obviously happened outside a Community context.²³

In academic recognition, the Community started its engagement in the mid-1980s, with the creation of the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs). The late 1980s saw the creation of the European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as it was originally called. ECTS was first developed on a try-out basis in the context of the ERASMUS Programme, with a small number of higher education institutions involved, and mainly as a system for transfer (between-country recognition), and not yet an accumulation system (since most European countries did not yet have credit

²¹ These efforts started at least 15 years ago. The 1996 Green Paper Education-Training-Research. The Obstacles to Transnational Mobility (COM(96) 462 final) already announces the intention to “remove the territoriality of grants and other assistance”.

²² Compare the section on “Mobility and Portability of Student Support”, in: EURYDICE, *Higher Education in Europe 2009. Developments in the Bologna Process*, 2009.

²³ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm>.

systems of their own in place). Only in the course of the 1990s, and in a more serious way through the Bologna Process, was ECTS introduced into the domestic study logic of national systems, with its widespread introduction (through legislation) as a credit accumulation system. But obviously, ECTS continues to be used as a between-country recognition instrument and as such is a major mobility-boosting instrument.

In 1997-98, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES developed the Diploma Supplement (DS), which is to be used as an appendix to the national degree (or qualification) and which provides, according to a common format, a description of the “nature, level, context, content and status of studies undertaken and successfully completed” by a graduate. It is intended to facilitate the professional and academic recognition of degrees and other qualifications between countries, by contextualising and “translating”²⁴ the degree for better understanding outside of the country where it is issued. The Bologna Process promoted (and continues to promote) its use by higher education institutions, which is yet far from standard practice.

Another “transparency instrument” to facilitate the recognition of qualifications across country borders in Europe is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The EQF is intended to serve as a common reference framework and to help member states, education institutions, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU’s education and training systems.²⁵ Once every member state will have created its own national qualifications framework (which is not yet the case), the EQF will facilitate the comparison of qualifications, by enabling to locate it on a “common map”, consisting of eight levels. The hope is that the EQF “will increase the mobility of workers and students”²⁶, i.e. serve both professional and academic recognition purposes.

In a wider sense, and beyond these individual tools, the Bologna Process as a whole can be seen as an attempt to create the conditions for increased mobility. Above all, the common degree architecture was originally proposed in the hope of increasing the mobility of higher education students. Only later were these hopes (temporarily?) replaced by fears that the shorter duration of the single “cycles” (degrees) would reduce rather than increase (credit) mobility volumes.

²⁴ European Communities, *The history of European cooperation in education and training. Europe in the making*, Luxembourg 2006.

²⁵ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (OJ C111, 6.5.2008).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Curricular integration of mobility

In a variety of ways, the European Union has attempted to encourage higher education institutions to structurally integrate mobility into curricula, so that it would become the norm rather than the exception.

In a sense, already the original ERASMUS Programme of 1987 (and its predecessor pilot project - the Joint Study Programmes) structurally embedded mobility. Unlike other scholarship programmes at the time, it aimed for organised mobility, based on agreements between university departments (later the whole institution) in different countries. Right from its inception, participating higher education institutions had to pledge full recognition of studies undertaken abroad (even though they did not fully comply). At a later stage, when the ECTS system had been developed, the sending and receiving institution had to conclude a “learning agreement” with the student, in principle securing full recognition (if the courses studied abroad were successfully completed).

Beyond these general requirements, the programme provided, from its inception onwards, funds for the development of jointly delivered programmes by institutions in two or more countries, based on the mutual recognition of the part of studies undertaken at the other institution(s). At a first glance going a step further were the so-called “double degrees”, which, on successful completion of the integrated programme, awarded the degrees of both institutions. But the difference is largely one of “certification”, and not of the fundamental design. In the first decade of the present century, there was further “certificational” progress: instead of two national degrees, the ERASMUS MUNDUS scheme aimed at awarding “joint degrees”. For this to become possible, national legislation had to be changed (which has still not happened in all European countries). In the meantime, a new generic term has emerged for structurally embedded mobility: “mobility windows”. The European Commission is strongly encouraging the “mobility window” approach. This notwithstanding, it is unclear how much more common these “windows” have become over the past 30 or so years. Few know that the first double degree programmes were started as early as the late 1970s.

Language

The learning of (European) foreign languages and multilingualism²⁷ more generally has been a key concern of the Union right from its start. This is only understandable: in order to move ahead with European integration, citizens

²⁷ See for example the 2008 Communication *Multilingualism – an asset for Europe and a shared commitment*, COM(2008) 566.

need to understand each other across country borders. At the same time, the lack of a command of foreign languages has been regarded as a key deterrent to mobility. Documents on linguistic issues with regard to mobility have therefore been “double-edged”. On the one hand, they stress that mobility can be a tool for language learning. On the other hand, they have acknowledged that the widespread lack of the mastery of more than one European language presents an obstacle to the mobility of students (and staff).

For a long time, and still in the Green Paper on the learning mobility of young people (see above), the former rather than the latter has been highlighted. The document is upbeat about the linguistic opportunities inherent in transnational mobility: “Living, studying and working in a foreign country provides an opportunity for total immersion in another language and culture. Foreign language skills and intercultural competences widen an individual’s professional options, upgrade the skills of the European workforce and are essential elements of genuine European identity.”²⁸ The same Green Paper also states that that “Europe’s linguistic diversity is a key part of its richness” and that it is therefore desirable that countries with less spoken languages are also promoted as mobility destinations.

This notwithstanding, the Union has acknowledged that language can act as a barrier to mobility. The Lingua Programme has provided, for a variety of learners also and beyond higher education, funding opportunities to improve the command of European languages. Already at an early stage, the ERASMUS Programme provided students with linguistic deficiencies with the opportunity of a pre-study language course, in order to facilitate their mobility (particularly to countries with low inflows and “small” languages).

The strong Union policy on multilingualism has for a long time hindered it from using a *lingua franca* approach to increasing mobility. While many member states started in the late 1990s and the first decade of the present century to use English as a language of instruction, in order overcome a linguistic disadvantage, the Union has been reluctant to advocate such approaches. In this regard, ERASMUS MUNDUS made for a (little) change: most of the Joint Master programmes under this scheme are offered in English, for the simple reason that it would otherwise be difficult to attract sizeable numbers of top-quality students from outside of Europe.

Motivation and motivators

We said earlier that European Union policies assume that the natural inclination of higher education students (and other “young people”) is to want to be mobile, and that only concrete obstacles prevent more from becoming mo-

²⁸ Promoting the learning mobility of young people, 2009, op.cit.

bile. However, recent documents, such as the Green Paper on Learning Mobility, tacitly acknowledge that students might lack in motivation. The Green Paper admits that “the benefits of learning mobility may not be sufficiently understood among young people themselves” and that there may be a “general reluctance to leave ‘home’”. Such reasoning can also be found in the *Youth on the Move* Communication.

In order to counter such attitudes, it must be made sure that “the benefits of learning mobility are better explained to them.” In this context, teaching staff and other multipliers are expected to play the role of motivators.²⁹ Examples of good practice are likewise highlighted as a way forward, as is the proper preparation of mobility periods. The provision of information on mobility opportunities, particularly in the context of European and national scholarship programmes, is also being recommended, inclusive of information campaigns.³⁰

Visa and entry requirements

With regard to non-EU students, Union documents frequently address administrative hurdles, particularly regarding the entry and stay in Union countries for the purpose of study (or training and research). Problems to obtain visas are seen as major obstacles to the inbound mobility of non-European (degree) students, as is the free movement in the Union of students having been able to enter a European country. The latter has particularly affected ERASMUS MUNDUS Master students, who need to move from one European country to another to complete their degree.

In order to facilitate access of nationals of countries from outside of the European Union, the Council adopted already in 2004 a Directive “on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purpose of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training and or voluntary service”.³¹ Apparently, however, the transposition of the Directive into national legislation and thus compliance with it is still not too high.

Access of disadvantaged groups

The European Union has a record of aiming to “democratise mobility in Europe”³² and to make special efforts of involving students with a disad-

²⁹ This is somewhat ironical, since many observers detect a much less mobility friendly outlook in staff than in students.

³⁰ Cf. the Council Resolution concerning an “action plan for mobility”, OJ, C 37, 23.12.2000.

³¹ Council Directive 2004/114/EC, 13 December 2004.

³² Action plan for mobility, op.cit.

vantage or with special needs in European mobility. Early on already, the ERASMUS Programme devoted special attention to students with handicap, and it is still today providing an extra (top-up) grant to handicapped students.³³ There are similar possibilities in ERASMUS MUNDUS. A focus has also been on access to mobility, and particularly to the ERASMUS scheme, of economically and socially disadvantaged groups of students. During the lifetime of the programme so far, the European Parliament commissioned two studies to explore if ERASMUS was socially inclusive, rather than selective. The 2009 Green Paper on learning mobility suggests that the help provided to special needs students in ERASMUS be extended to further Community mobility programmes. Students belonging to ethnic and cultural minorities and students with a “migrant background” also receive special attention in EU mobility policy documents.

7. Rationales

Before describing the concrete policy objectives and rationales which the European Union is pursuing in the mobility of students (and staff), it is worthwhile pointing out that most texts with a bearing on mobility refer to wider, overarching policy agendas and basic documents of the Commission and Union at a given time. Thus, first Council Decision establishing the ERASMUS Programme in 1987 makes direct reference to the “People’s Europe”. The first Green Paper on Mobility of 1996 refers to the Single Market and the four freedoms it established, notably the freedom of people (and thus also students and staff) to move in the Union, as well as the White Papers of 1993 *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*³⁴ and of 1995 *Teaching and Learning: towards the Learning Society*.³⁵ Mobility policy documents in the first decade of the present century often relate to the Lisbon Strategy (growth, jobs and the knowledge-based economy.) Very recent documents usually make reference to the Europe 2020 Strategy (“smart, inclusive and sustainable growth”) as well as the “Agenda for new Skills and Jobs”.

In some cases, the links between the overarching documents and the concrete mobility rationales stated are “organic”, i.e. the two are intrinsically linked. But often, the relationship between the two is rather “forced”, and the reference is mainly of a justificatory nature.

³³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc1055_en.htm.

³⁴ European Commission, *White Paper Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* COM(93) 700.

³⁵ European Commission, *White Paper Teaching and Learning: towards the Learning Society* COM (95) 590 final.

European integration

One of the most frequently stated objectives related to the mobility of students (and staff), as well as of young people more generally, is that of contributing to the deepening of European integration, by creating encounters of nationals from different member states. Especially early policy documents put the stress on this rationale of “European nation-building”, but it can also be found in very recent texts. The Council Decision establishing the ERASMUS Programme (1987)³⁶ highlights that the “further development of the Community depends to a large extent on its being able to draw on a large number of graduates who have had direct experience of studying and living in another Member State.” The document also stresses that it is desirable to strengthen “the interaction between citizens in different Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of a People’s Europe”.³⁷ In a similar line of argument, the 1996 Green Paper expects mobility to result in a better understanding of other European societies and cultures, and the Action Plan for Mobility of 2000 sees the benefits of mobility in a sharing of cultures, resulting in European citizenship and “political Europe”. Very recent texts, like the 2009 Green Paper on Learning Mobility, argue in the very same way: mobility results in a “deepened sense of European identity and citizenship” and will help fight unwelcome tendencies, such as xenophobia.

Competitiveness

Considerations of Europe’s competitiveness are prominent in many policy texts. The exact meaning of the term is not always clear, and it shifts between documents. The idea of competitiveness is mostly closely linked with that of the acquisition of additional knowledge and skills, for example in the field of foreign languages and cultures, which would strengthen the individual (employability), but also Europe’s economies and societies. This line of argument is already found in the initial Decision on ERASMUS (1987). It is also present in the 1996 Green Paper, which views mobility as an investment in “human resources” (amongst other things) and quite prominent in the successor Green Paper of 2009, which claims that mobility adds to “human capital”, making students “access new knowledge and develop new linguistic skills and intercultural competences” and building knowledge-intensive societies.

Implicit in the above is that mobility enhances the quality of education (in the sense of producing more qualified graduates) and improves employability. While the latter term is used only in more recent documents, the idea itself crops up already in early texts. Overall, the concept of competitive-

³⁶ op.cit.

³⁷ ibid.

ness used in European documents is quite vague, and, importantly, fails to identify exactly vis-à-vis whom Europe is to remain or become competitive. In one respect, however, it is quite clear. Unlike in some national policies, the concept of competitiveness at a European level is *not* related to commercial motives, i.e. to the intention to generate financial income for universities from foreign (non-European) students. The argument is rather that the higher level of skills and knowledge created by mobility will improve overall economic performance and build knowledge-intensive economies, and thus produce benefits for everybody.

Quality and employability

As already indicated, there is the strong belief expressed in European documents that mobility will improve the “quality” of education. Mostly, it is left open what exactly this quality consists of. Early texts stress added values in the area of the learning of other European languages, the acquisition of intercultural competencies, and the knowledge of other European countries in a wider sense. Later documents appear to imply that study abroad also enhances disciplinary (academic) learning. Given that the (implicit) focus of most documents is (even today) on credit mobility, which mostly takes place in the framework of inter-institutional exchange arrangements, the assumption that study abroad enhances disciplinary learning across the board is somewhat paradoxical, since it presupposes that both the sending and the receiving institution are of superior academic quality. A slightly different idea of quality is introduced by the 2009 Green Paper on Learning Mobility. The argument put forward in this Communication is that mobility creates channels between higher education (and research) institutions which transfer knowledge and innovation between countries, and also results in system reform and rejuvenation.

As mentioned before, the idea that international mobility boosts graduates’ chances on the labour market is an old one. In contrast, the term employability, which would appear to denote the same phenomenon, is to be found predominantly in more recent documents. The *Youth on the Move Communication*, like the report of the High-Level Expert Forum (2008) on which the latter heavily builds, strongly emphasizes the potential of mobility to “strengthen future employability” and make students “acquire new professional competences”. It also claims that employers recognise and value competences acquired abroad.

Mobility as a right

In parallel with the increasing rhetoric about “mobility for all”, policy documents of the European Commission started to refer to mobility as a right a

few years ago. In allusion to the “four freedoms” introduced with the Single Market in the early 1990s (the free movement of goods, capital, services and people), this “fifth freedom” was to be created by removing barriers to the cross-border mobility of researchers, students, scientists and academic staff. Unlike the four freedoms, which are guaranteed by European law, the fifth freedom is largely a moral commitment, and was developed in the context of researcher rather than student mobility (even though it also covers the latter). It figured prominently in the 2009 Green Paper devoted to learning mobility.

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III. A comparative overview of national mobility policies

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1. Introduction – some methodological considerations

As the previous chapter has shown, international student mobility is very often mentioned in the European-level higher education discourse, and that, with great enthusiasm – as a naturally positive, desirable and even necessary development. On the other hand, the mobility realities at the level of individual European countries are extremely different when both *credit mobility* and *degree mobility* are concerned. While most European countries are equally affected by the impossibility to accurately assess international *credit mobility* (outside mobility programmes like ERASMUS), the country contrasts with regard to *degree mobility* flows are striking. The absolute number of *foreign degree-seeking students* ranges, in the 32 countries covered by this comparative analysis, from 594 in Liechtenstein to 459 987 in the United Kingdom (in the academic year 2006/07)¹ while their relative presence spans from 0.6% in Poland to 88.3% in Liechtenstein. In the same academic year, while 747 students from Liechtenstein studied abroad towards a higher education degree, 87 750 German students pursued similar studies abroad. And last but not least important, even though Europe as a whole is a net importer of students, about half of the European countries are *net exporters*, sending more students abroad for degree studies than they host.

Being aware of these very different country realities, we developed an interest in pursuing the present study in order to find out:

- firstly, to what extent some of the “grand mobility objectives” set at the European, supranational, level have become a priority at the national level, in the 32 European countries, if at all;
- secondly, whether European countries, in general, pursue mobility in a systematic manner, i.e. whether they have developed fully-fledged national policies or strategies for academic mobility; and
- thirdly, if the national approaches (the policies) for international student (and staff) mobility converged or diverged, in terms of objectives, types of mobility, and instruments.

To be able to answer at least some of these questions in the framework of our present research, we launched a standardised online survey of national-

¹ Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011), *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*, 2 vols., Bonn: DAAD (Dok&Mat 69, 70).

level representatives (generally of employees of ministries of education with responsibilities for international matters, if not specifically for international student mobility) in March 2011. Through the survey we have asked the addressees to provide us with specific information about, amongst others, the foci of their national policy approach for mobility (if any), the prioritised types of mobility and levels of study (if any), the target regions, the actors with a key role in mobility policy-making, and the support measures and instruments used at the national level. The addressees were reminded 4 times; the last response came in November 2011. The overall response rate was close to 50% (of the 34 addressees²).

As half of the 32 countries sampled did not respond, we supplemented the survey results with information we gathered through prior research on this topic – the study *Mapping mobility in European higher education*.³ In addition, we used survey information⁴ gathered in the context of the EURYDICE *Focus on higher education 2010*⁵ publication (which also had a questionnaire component) as well as the country responses provided in the context of the 2009 *Bologna Stocktaking* exercise.

Important to mention at this stage is that, what we mainly analyse in this chapter is cross-country convergence (or not) of the national policy discourse, i.e. of the *declared objectives* set in the sampled countries with regard to international student and staff mobility. We will try, whenever possible, to contrast the policy discourse with recent mobility trends in Europe. Nevertheless, we do not intend to establish a causal relationship between the two as this would have required an in-depth analysis of the implementation process of national support measures for mobility in the 32 countries, which falls beyond the scope of this study.

² Within the UK, we sent separate questionnaires to England and Scotland. The same for Belgium, where we addressed the Flemish and the French communities separately. We have received survey responses from Austria, the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Netherlands. France provided us with the responses to the Bologna survey, and Liechtenstein answered that it would prefer not to be compared in such a context given the specificity of its higher education system. For the rest of the countries that have not responded we used the responses to the EURYDICE questionnaire as well as national policy documents we had previously collected. For countries like Cyprus, Norway, Spain, and Romania, which did not respond to our survey, we have obtained further information through interviews conducted with national officials during the site visits.

³ Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B., op. cit.

⁴ While the survey we have designed in the context of this study was much more detailed than the EURYDICE questionnaire, we were able to use some information from the latter, e.g. of geographical focus of mobility policies.

⁵ EURYDICE, *Focus on higher education 2010*.

2. In search of a national mobility policy

One of the first steps we had to take when we embarked on this project was to define the object of analysis, i.e. what an *explicit national mobility policy* actually is. We have, upon consultation of relevant literature, come to conclude that a *fully-fledged national policy for mobility* is one that encompasses a number of very specifically-defined *mobility policy elements*, namely:

- *clearly differentiated foci, i.e.:*
 - differentiated *modes of mobility* (incoming credit/degree mobility, outgoing credit/degree mobility, of various mobile groups – student/researcher/faculty/ staff)
 - clear *rationales* behind the promotion of different modes of mobility
 - differentiated *purposes of mobility* (study, internship, study-related activities, others)
 - *target levels* and *fields of study* in which students should be mobile
 - *geographical target regions* and/or *countries* for different modes of mobility
- *quantitative targets* for different modes of mobility
- *measures/instruments* to promote mobility or to overcome obstacles
- clearly identified *providers of mobility opportunities* (EU programmes, national programmes, regional/international programmes)
- clearly identified *actors responsible for policy-making* and *policy implementation*.

These different policy elements constituted the backbone of our national-level survey⁶, and will be tackled individually in the next section.

3. Overview – the presence or absence of a national mobility policy

The first and most important question we addressed to national respondents was whether they have a national policy, strategy or action plan in place to foster student mobility. All the respondents to our survey (except Slovenia) as well as the majority of remaining countries who did not respond to our survey

⁶ In our online survey we asked for information on 2 additional policy elements: a) earmarked budgets for mobility and b) monitoring frameworks for assessing the implementation of mobility plans. As the information we received on these 2 specific items is impossible to compare, internationally, we decided to exclude these 2 elements from the comparative analysis.

but answered previous queries from EURYDICE on this topic, claimed that they have one.

It is clear though that the national-level understanding of what a fully-fledged policy *is* differs very much from our understanding of a *fully-fledged mobility policy*. As soon as we applied the set of mobility elements listed above to the national-level initiatives indicated through the different studies that touched on mobility policies, we came to conclude that of the vast majority of countries that answered “yes”, only few have what we would regard as a systematic approach to mobility.

Among the country respondents to our survey, the Netherlands, together with Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, are some of the very few countries which could substantiate their claims with an elaborate policy paper focusing on mobility.⁷ Slovenia, as stated in the survey, indeed does not have a national policy dealing with mobility, although there is one⁸ in the pipeline. Slovenia is, however, not the only country without a national mobility policy. Most of the countries that did not respond to our survey are found to have only very basic elements of mobility in their policy documents, with the exception of Switzerland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and Norway.

Based on the combined sources of information we have about the 32 countries, we came to the conclusion that about a third of the European countries falls into the “middle” category, i.e. between having paid lip service to mobil-

⁷ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2008). Internationaliseringsagenda ‘Het Grenzeloze Goed’. Den Haag: OCW. Retrieved from: <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/rapporten/2010/08/12/internationalisation-agenda-het-grenzeloze-goed-the-boundless-good.html>.

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Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (2011). *Programme on promoting Internationalisation of Higher Education for 2011–2012*. Retrieved from:

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⁸ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Republic of Slovenia (2010). *Bold Slovenia. Slovenia: Knowledge-based society. National Higher Education Master Plan 2011–2020*. Retrieved from: http://www.mvzt.gov.si/fileadmin/mvzt.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/odnosi_z_javnostmi/14.10._NPVS.pdf.

ity and having developed an explicit policy for mobility. Many of these countries are respondents to our survey. This allows us to gain some insights into what a national mobility policy means for them.

The “middle” category countries, according to our grouping, are countries that have incorporated mobility plans and goals, to a varying extent, as integral parts of different national policies, e.g. a *national policy for the internationalisation of higher education and research*, or other *national-level policies dealing with innovation or economic development*. They do not have an aggregate national policy focusing on mobility, but may have in place elaborate initiatives and support programmes. In some cases, the *national agencies responsible for the internationalisation of higher education* – in the German context, *the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)* – may have even developed elaborate strategies or action plans for mobility development.

We may say that it is more typical within Europe for countries to have different *policy elements* mentioned in various national-level policy documents, and to regard the sum of these bits and pieces as their national mobility policy or strategy, rather than to have an aggregate policy document of all these elements. While we hesitate to honour the piecemeal approach taken by most European countries as a national mobility policy, we are left with no choice. In the following sections we will compare the different national-level mobility policy elements rather than the fully-fledged mobility policies. The latter, as we have seen, are extremely few.

4. Student mobility policies

4.1 Foci of national mobility policies

4.1.1 Mobility modes in policy focus

Most national-level policy documents do not clearly distinguish between different types of mobility. Like most European-level documents or policy papers, they talk about the need to increase or support “mobility” in general, without any further differentiation. For the countries that make this distinction, though, it seems (based on the survey responses and previous enquiries) that *outgoing credit mobility* is the top priority at the national level, followed by *incoming degree mobility*, and then by *incoming credit mobility*. In general, *outgoing degree mobility* is the least addressed as a priority by countries with a mobility policy. This confirms previous ACA research on this topic. Naturally, the order of priority is determined by the perceived benefits associated with the different types and directions of mobility, for the mobile individuals, the higher education institutions and the countries at large. In the following sub-section, we will comment on the different types of mobility in focus.

Credit mobility

In general, national governments reported to primarily support *outgoing credit mobility* for the purpose of *study*. This was confirmed by a third of the survey responses. International internships only come as a second priority.⁹ The only exception is the Czech Republic, which indicated that mobility for internship rather than study-purposes is the most important type supported (because of the presumed employability benefits). Further, this order of priority (outgoing credit and then incoming degree mobility) is valid for most countries, with the exception of the Czech Republic and the Flemish Community of Belgium. These are the only two respondents that prioritised both types of credit mobility, outgoing and incoming, over incoming degree mobility, which is rather unusual compared to the general order of priorities.

Degree mobility

Most national governments attach great importance to *incoming degree mobility* as opposed to *outgoing degree mobility* (see clear examples of countries like England and Wales, Italy or Lithuania). However, in countries like Austria, Denmark and Luxembourg, *incoming degree mobility* was given a *lower priority* than *outgoing degree mobility*. This is in stark contrast with the general trend.

The priority given to *incoming degree mobility* over *outgoing degree mobility* in national policies that make this differentiation is generally a conscious drive to “gain” - either talent or income, depending on whether tuition fees (if existing) play a significant role in the respective countries. Obviously, England and Wales are known to have a determined policy aimed at attracting *incoming degree (fee-paying) students*. The determination displayed recently by Italy and Lithuania to attract incoming degree-seeking students has also caught our attention. While Italy hopes that through this type of focus it would become more visible in countries like China, Lithuania¹⁰ wants to attract incoming degree students from post-Soviet, non-EU countries, as well as from rapidly developing Asian countries, through its specialisation in “Baltic studies”. The aspiration to become “an international research and education service centre” with a regional niche is clearly a new development in Lithuania, but not in countries such as Cyprus, Malta and Ireland, that have adopted similar discourses much sooner.

⁹ Summer/winter schools and language courses are considered less important for policy support by most respondents, except in Finland, Germany, Poland, *Lithuania*, and Denmark. One must note that Finland, Germany, Poland, have shown no policy preference over different types of credit mobility, though they hold mobility in high regard. Lithuania is the only country which has shown some preference for supporting language courses, in line with its specific goal of promoting Baltic studies.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (2011). Programme on promoting Internationalisation of Higher Education for 2011-2012.

In contrast to the general trend, the motives behind the strategic choices of the 3 countries favouring *outgoing degree mobility* are very different. Luxembourg, for example, continues to support *outgoing degree mobility*, as a necessary measure to make up for the lack of internal capacity (as did Norway for a very long time, in medical studies, and Cyprus), but this might change in the future. Austria, in turn, as Chapter IV of this volume also shows, is a country that has been confronted in recent years with what it considers to be excessive inflows of foreign (mainly German) students in specific subject fields (medical and paramedical studies). To counteract this presumed negative trend, the country has changed its national-level approach in recent years, and declared to favour *outgoing degree mobility* over *incoming degree mobility*, in the hope of achieving a “balance” between the two types of flows. Similar fears are evoked in the French-speaking Community of Belgium, and in Switzerland, though the preferential support for *outgoing degree mobility* is not as clearly stated in the national policy documents. Balance in mobility is also a recent concern in the Danish context. While Denmark declares to support *outgoing degree mobility* because it contributes to one of its main country goals – to educate “global citizens” – it does so by paying careful attention so that the outflow does not exceed the inflow of degree students.

In short, while *outgoing credit mobility* remains largely unchallenged as the top national priority for countries which have expressed clear priorities, the general enthusiasm over the attraction of *incoming degree mobility* is fading in a number of countries that feel they have attracted “too many” of this type of students. More changes are expected in this particular type of mobility, although they may not have been reflected in the current policy documents.

Current mobility situation

Looking at the current state of data collection and at the capacity of national governments and of international organisations to trace and measure these different types of mobility, it is interesting to note that an international dataset for the top priority – *outgoing credit mobility* – is basically non-existent. Outside mobility programmes like ERASMUS (and excluding the few student or graduate surveys), fairly little is known about the extent of this mode of mobility. This is also the type of data collection that national statistical offices have opposed the most, whenever the improvement of the international data collection system was brought up by organisations like UNESCO, OECD or EUROSTAT.

Secondly, while the majority of European countries seem to favour *incoming degree* over *outgoing degree mobility*, current datasets show that about half of these countries are net exporters rather than *importers of degree-seeking students* (i.e. they send more students for degree studies abroad than they

host). The countries that declare the opposite – Luxembourg, Austria or Denmark – are not amongst this group.

4.1.2 Rationales in support of mobility

As we have argued in other parts of this chapter, national policy documents for student mobility are not very elaborate in many countries. Similar to most European policy documents, student mobility is described at the national level as a very positive phenomenon, which needs to be supported. The specific reasons why *different types* of mobility are considered important are, however, rarely given in the national context. Through the online questionnaire, we have nevertheless obtained a more nuanced answer to this question.

Rationales for supporting outgoing credit mobility

The added-value that study abroad is perceived to bring (for the personal and career development of higher education graduates) seems to be the main reason why national governments prioritise short-term outgoing mobility. In this sense, “*to enhance the employability of graduates*” and “*to present outgoing students with the opportunity to learn from diversity*” are the two rationales most often quoted by the respondents when explaining their national-level support for *outgoing credit mobility*. These are followed closely by the rationales “*to enhance the ‘quality of education’*” and “*for knowledge gain and to strengthen knowledge production*”.

In turn, the broader aim of contributing to European integration and to the creation of a European identity – which inspired impressive programmes like ERASMUS – are less of a reason for supporting outgoing mobility, in national governments’ eyes. Only very few respondents regarded the aim “*to help students develop and strengthen their European citizenship*” as one of the most important rationales for encouraging outgoing credit mobility.

The most important five rationales mentioned above for supporting *outgoing credit mobility* are believed to be serving first and foremost the interest of students, then the national interest, and to a lesser extent that of Europe and of world regions outside of Europe. Only one country respondent listed “*to increase the global attractiveness of the EHEA*” and “*to help build capacity in other countries and world regions*” as the rationales of the highest importance for outbound credit mobility.

Rationales for supporting incoming degree mobility

In contrast, *incoming degree mobility* seems to be most often associated with increasing “*the competitiveness and/or attractiveness of the national system of higher education*”. This was quoted as the most important rationale for

supporting *incoming degree mobility*, by the overwhelming majority. After that come the rationales “to enhance the ‘quality of education’”, “for better internationalisation at home” and “for knowledge gain and to strengthen knowledge production”, which were selected by about half of the respondents.

To a lesser extent, rationales such as using *student mobility as a foreign policy instrument*, i.e. for building good relations with other countries, for improving trade relations with other countries, and for helping build capacity in other world regions were also considered to have some importance. Comparatively speaking, such rationales related to external relations were considered more important in driving *incoming degree mobility* than *outgoing credit mobility*. In other words, foreign degree-seeking students are seen as potentially *better ambassadors* than own nationals going for short studies abroad.

The more “egoistic” rationales, such as “to diversify sources of funding in higher education” and “to counteract negative demographic trends” in the host country, were very rarely selected by the respondents. This is understandable, as the majority of European countries do not yet charge substantial tuition fees to *foreign students*, nor are they threatened by an immediate *demographic decline*; but this will very likely change in the medium-term. We see already countries like Denmark or Sweden that have recently introduced tuition fees for foreign non-EU/EEA degree seeking students. Admittedly, not as a money-making move, but more because they had to show national taxpayers that foreigners are no longer educated at their expense.

Based on the pattern of responses gathered, we can say that in Europe national policies (that show enough specificity) tend to support outgoing credit mobility because this is primarily perceived to have a positive impact on the *graduates’ success on the labour market*, while they support incoming degree mobility because foreign students are generally seen, first of all, as a *sign of attractiveness of the national higher education system*, much more than a source of income.

4.1.3 Levels of study targeted in mobility policies

Due to their generally unspecific nature, most national policy documents mention the need to promote the mobility of “students” overall, without explicit references to any level of study (i.e. to Bachelor, Master or Doctoral students). Nevertheless, seven countries that answered our survey claimed that they target students at specific levels of study through their mobility efforts.

Of the countries that indicated a clear policy preference for particular levels of study, the majority declared to be targeting students at the *doctoral level*, followed by the *Master level*. These countries declared they support *all types*

of mobility at *Doctoral* and *Master* levels, with one notable exception – *outgoing degree mobility*. At *Bachelor* level, *outgoing credit mobility* stands out as the one attracting major policy support, while *outgoing degree mobility* is not mentioned by any of the surveyed countries. Very few countries seem to aim to foster *incoming (both credit and degree) mobility* at *Bachelor* level.

The survey responses, together with the qualitative analysis of national policies conducted previously, have confirmed that the *de facto* emphasis of *incoming degree mobility* in Europe lies on the *postgraduate level (Master and Doctoral)*. National investments in promotion and branding activities, scholarship schemes and the introduction of parallel/joint study programmes taught in a foreign language (mainly English) are generally directed towards the attraction of postgraduate degree-seeking students. Some countries, as we will see later in this chapter, have actually set up specific targets for incoming PhD and Master students.

4.1.4 Fields of study targeted in mobility policies

Little information is available on this aspect of mobility. None of the survey respondents, except for Scotland, indicated that there are targeted fields of study in their mobility policies. In Scotland, though, government scholarships are offered to students studying in subjects related to the priority sectors identified by the Scottish government. These are: creative industries, financial services, food and drink, renewable energy, and life sciences and technology.

However, from the national policy documents and the analysis of instruments used to attract foreign postgraduate students (which are hoped to foster research and innovation) we could also infer that the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) have been receiving more support at the national level recently.

4.1.5 Geographical regions/countries targeted for student mobility

As with most other policy elements tackled in this chapter, very few countries have expressed clear preferences for certain target regions in their mobility policies, and even fewer on target regions for specific types of mobility. We knew, nevertheless, that in some countries the foci on specific regions are not so much apparent from the policy documents, as they are from the mobility-enhancing instruments the countries use (which are at times directed at certain countries). We have thus tried, through our survey component, to bring about further clarity in this respect.

Geographical regions targeted for credit mobility

For the very few countries that declared to have explicit target regions for *credit mobility* in our survey, the top priority is clearly the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This comes as no surprise, knowing that this particular group of countries have implemented, over time, similar recognition-enhancing instruments, like the use of ECTS. Further, the biggest student exchange programme in the world – ERASMUS – has actively supported *credit mobility* in this region (more precisely amongst the EEA countries and Turkey), not to mention that for nationals of EU member states it is increasingly easier, also from an administrative point of view (e.g. no need for visas), to study in another EU country.

However, two countries – the Netherlands and England – declared that they *prioritise Asia* over the *EHEA* for *credit mobility*. The Netherlands indicated a clear focus on China, while England and Scotland indicated a similar focus on China, plus, of course, India.

The US and Canada are the second most stated target countries for this type of mobility, while other continents and world regions, including Australia, were given much lower priority by individual countries.

Geographical regions targeted for degree mobility

For *degree mobility*, the EHEA and the US and Canada seem to be the top two target regions of the few countries that provided this information, with some variation in the order of priority. For example, England indicated that the US and Canada are the only countries it targeted for degree mobility. Scotland saw the US and Canada and EHEA as of equal importance, whereas Austria prioritised the US and Canada over the EHEA for degree mobility. These country responses are rather interesting in that countries have shown some differentiated geographical preferences for degree and credit mobility. We find this intriguing however when looking at the recent data, which show that the absolute growth of foreign student numbers in Europe is largely due to Asian (Chinese and Indian) students. Either countries have (mis)interpreted this question as meaning priority regions for outgoing degree mobility, or they feel that less effort is needed to attract students from these regions, which have been sending more and more students to Europe.

Earlier research¹¹ found that EHEA is the top priority for mobility in general, followed by Asia and the US/Canada, and, at a distance by Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Australia. This is largely confirmed by our survey. We noted, however, that with the rise of the BRICS and the Middle East, old

¹¹ EURYDICE and Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B., op. cit.

political ties with Africa and Latin America, the establishment of capacity-building programmes with Eastern European countries, (earlier) and the developing world, European countries have been directed into all major world regions, except Australia and New Zealand, which seem to be known but are rarely ranked high on the priority lists.

Overall, we found the attempt to map the geographical foci of the different types of mobility very cumbersome. The main problem was that geographical foci appear very rarely in official national mobility policies other than a phrase or two without much elaboration. Countries like Romania, Turkey, Cyprus, Portugal, Greece and Slovenia have clear expressions of geographical priorities, but they do not yet have a fully-fledged mobility policy at the national level. In such cases, the priorities either reflect the focus of bilateral agreements or other types of support measures without a genuine focus, or they are mere rhetoric.

4.2 Quantitative targets for mobility

While many national governments claimed to have a mobility target, considerably fewer are able to elaborate on it. Some countries mention simple ambitions for “as much as possible” or to “double” mobility as mobility targets. This is not quite the target definition we had in mind when we asked national governments whether they had formulated *quantitative targets for outgoing and incoming mobility*.

As Table 1 shows, just 14 European countries have formulated (in some fashion) *measurable targets for inbound or outbound mobility*. Only 6 of these have set targets for both types of mobility. A few more countries have made a reference to the *Bologna outgoing mobility target* – 20% of graduates with a study or training experience abroad by 2020 - like Italy, Malta, Slovenia and Switzerland, without officially endorsing it though. One last example – Denmark – highlights the responsibility of higher education institutions within the country to set “their own benchmarks”.

Table : National quantitative mobility targets

Country	Outgoing target	Incoming target	Comment
Austria	50% of graduates to have had a study- or research-related stay abroad by 2020	None	
Belgium – NL	20% in 2020 (10% in 2010, 15% in 2015)	None	Outgoing target explicitly linked to Leuven Bologna target
Belgium – FR	None	None	
Bulgaria	None	None	
Cyprus	No information	None	
Czech Republic	50% with at least one semester at a foreign HEI	10% of the student population by 2010	Outgoing target is an “expectation” only. Incoming target includes <i>credit mobility</i>
Denmark	No targets, but HEIs “have the responsibility to set their own benchmarks” (Regeringen 2006)	None	Leuven Bologna target is mentioned, without being clearly endorsed
Estonia	4-5% by 2015 (about 2,000) in exchange programmes or short mobility schemes. All PhD students at least one semester abroad.	Double the number of foreign students by 2015. 10% foreign PhD students and post-docs.	Outgoing student target relates only to <i>study</i> in another country
Finland	by 2015 6% of first-degree students in universities and 8% of master-degree students in polytechnics outgoing mobility for study and training for over one week	by 2015 7% foreign degree students 20% foreign post-graduate students 6% and 8% of foreign exchange students (for over one week) at universities and polytechnics respectively	

Country	Outgoing target	Incoming target	Comment
France	2011 target: 26 500 students for usual ERASMUS study mobility 6 400 students for ERASMUS placement mobility	By 2012, 17% foreign students at master level (with 3.1% from OECD countries) and 33% at PhD level (with 9% from OECD countries).	Outgoing target refers to Leuven Bologna target of 20%
Germany	50% of graduates had "study-related stay abroad" in the course of studies; 20% (of above?) one-semester study abroad. Interim target by 2012: 100,000 German students to have had study abroad (target reached in 2011)	10% foreign students Interim target by 2012: 300,000 foreign students to have had studied in Germany (target reached in 2011)	Incoming target relates to <i>Bildungsausländer</i> only
Greece	None	None	
Hungary	None	None	None
Iceland	No information	No information	
Ireland	None	12-15 % foreign students	
Italy	Vague reference to the Leuven Bologna target of 20%	Targets for master and PhD students (unspecified)	None
Latvia	None	None	No EURYDICE questionnaire
Liechtenstein	None	None	Liechtenstein points out that it has very high mobility rates and does not need a benchmark
Lithuania	Increase the number students in outgoing credit mobility (minimum 2 weeks) by no less than 10% every year (since 2008)	Increase the number of all incoming credit (minimum 2 weeks) and degree students by no less than 8% every year (since 2008)	

Country	Outgoing target	Incoming target	Comment
Luxembourg	No information	None	No targets, since “mobility is at satisfactory levels”
Malta	Reference to 20% Leuven Bologna target, which “Malta will strive to achieve as much as possible”	5,000 non-EEA foreign fee-paying students between 2009 and 2020	Unclear if incoming rate is annual enrolment or added up
Netherlands	25% of student population by 2013. Explicit refusal of government to set target for outgoing degree mobility	Individual HEIs are to set their own targets	Outgoing target refers to a given year (not graduation).
Norway	No information	No information	
Poland	No information	None	None
Portugal	Double number of ERASMUS stays	None	None
Romania	Yes, but unspecified (EURYDICE)	Yes, but unspecified	One Romanian document mentions that 1 in 5 graduates should have an international experience (by 2012)
Slovakia	No information	No information	
Slovenia	Yes for outgoing credit mobility by 2020, but unspecified (ENPMOB)	10% of foreign students for degree mobility at all levels	
Spain	Increase ERASMUS mobility “as much as possible”	None	
Sweden	None	None	
Switzerland	Reference to Leuven Bologna target of 20%	None	
Turkey	None	None	None

Country	Outgoing target	Incoming target	Comment
United Kingdom	None (but aim to increase in Scotland)	100 000 additional foreign students by 2011 compared to 2006 (70 000 in higher and 30 000 in further education)	Additional incoming target: doubling the number of countries sending over 10.000 per year to the UK

Legend: HEI = higher education institution

Sources: ENPMOB survey, EURYDICE survey and Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011)

Even within this group of countries with targets expressed in a quantitative form, specific references to the types and duration of mobility, as well as the student body that “counts” for the target, are missing in most cases. As a result, the national targets are rarely comparable if we take into consideration these different parameters.

For example, for *outgoing mobility*, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic all set a 50% target. However, Germany counts “study-related stays abroad” without stating what “related” means in this context or what the minimum duration of such a stay should be (for it to be counted towards the target). Austria counts a “study- or research-related” stay, without stating the minimum duration either. Its definition seems though broader than the German one, counting also research-related activities. The Czech Republic specifies that the period of stay abroad should be of at least one semester, but does not mention the purpose of such a stay (whether it is for study or placement, e.g.). Another example of how to formulate a national target is given by Lithuania, which wants to increase outgoing (as well as incoming) mobility by 10% every year, from 2008 onwards, counting mobility of 2 weeks or more.

Different parameters used by the ministry and the higher education institutions have resulted in very contrasting results in the Austrian context, for example (see Chapter IV). While Austrian higher education institutions calculated an outgoing mobility rate of 18%, the ministry calculated that 33% of Austrian students had a study abroad experience already.

Moreover, defining the group and the method of counting is also quite crucial – do countries mean that 50% of their annual cohort of students should have a study abroad experience in a particular year, or do they mean 50% of their graduates? More detailed parameters for targets are very important in bringing clarity into the vagueness surrounding many times the country targets. They determine the closeness or distance from reaching the target. As we lack such parameters in many countries, we have serious doubts over the

comparability of national targets. We will, nevertheless, make below some general remarks about the current state of affairs.

Looking at the countries which have specified numerical targets, the *outgoing* and *incoming* benchmarks are different, in most cases. *Incoming mobility targets* are generally more modest (around 10%) than *outgoing targets* (over 20%). Some of the more ambitious percentage targets for *outgoing mobility* (which presumably only include *credit mobility*, due to the generally low priority attached to *outgoing degree mobility*) seem to have been influenced by the Bologna benchmark of 20%, but are clearly also an example of the very diverse definitions of outgoing credit mobility at the national level as described above.

The situation is slightly different for incoming mobility. Given the absence (until very recently) of a Bologna target for incoming students (see the previous chapter) there was no commonly defined standard in Europe to influence national approaches. Despite this, targets for incoming mobility are, in general, more specific. Of the 10 countries that have set an incoming mobility target, 8 actually mean exclusively *incoming degree mobility*. France and Estonia are even more specific about the level of study of *incoming degree-seeking students*. They have defined separate targets for foreign postgraduate students, as has Finland. Finland, on the other hand, is the only country that has, in addition to a target for incoming degree-seeking students, also one for *incoming credit mobility* – 6% and 8% at universities and polytechnics in Finland, respectively.

Another observation when comparing the incoming and outgoing mobility targets is that some countries have set targets for either incoming or outgoing mobility, but not for both. Unsurprisingly, the UK and Ireland, both known for the export of their higher education services, have articulated targets only for *incoming degree mobility*. In contrast, Austria and the Flemish Community of Belgium have set only outgoing targets, presumably for *credit mobility*, without setting incoming targets given their concern with “balanced” mobility.

Our analysis of the presence or absence of national mobility targets leads to the conclusion that less than half of the 32 countries have set specific numerical targets for mobility, although many more have passively endorsed the Bologna benchmark of 20%, and believe that they have a quantitative target for mobility.

Nevertheless, as we have seen above, even the few quantitative targets that exist remain ambiguous as to the exact type, duration and purpose of mobility that should be counted towards them. Until the ambiguity of the targets is clarified, what we can compare now is the expressed desire or ambition of countries in increasing mobility and their attempts to quantify that in some

fashion, rather than actual progress towards reaching the declared benchmarks. The sad truth is that most countries have severe difficulties in measuring the latter, as the necessary datasets are simply not in place.

We wonder, thus, in this context: What is the ultimate goal of national policy-makers? Do they see it as desirable or even necessary to have a more precise target and method of measurement (and use this to evaluate the success of their policies), or do they prefer to preserve the ambiguity and leave themselves enough room for manoeuvre, depending on the national realities on the ground? Neither of these hypotheses is to be excluded, we fear.

4.3 Measures to increase student mobility

National-level measures adopted to increase mobility in general fall into the realms of *easing recognition*, *adjusting legal frameworks*, *providing financial incentives (in the form of scholarships and other types of support)*, and *promotional activities*. While the general types of measures are the same, we note some interesting differences when it comes to the exact instruments used to support *outgoing* and *incoming mobility*.

Outgoing mobility

Based on the responses to the survey and on relevant literature, national-level measures adopted to boost *outgoing credit mobility* seem to be primarily funding-related, and come in the form of different *grants*, *scholarships* or *loans*. The most common measures are the provision of *supplementary grants* to top up EU grants, the provision of *portable grants and loans*, and state *scholarships*. Top-up grants for ERASMUS are offered for instance in Spain. In the UK, tuition fees are waived for students who take part in ERASMUS. Further, while many countries declare that their grants and loans, which are normally funding higher education studies inside the country, can also be taken abroad, we note some differences in the understanding of this concept at the national level. Nevertheless, countries that offer good examples in this respect are the Nordics in general (Sweden, Norway, and Denmark). In these countries, all students that are entitled to financial aid can take this abroad, under certain conditions (normally if they study at state-accredited institutions).

Other than funding, national *promotion campaigns* are another instrument mentioned in the support of *outgoing credit mobility*. This is becoming more common, as most European states have a national agency for EU programmes that is tasked to support this type of mobility. A concrete example is offered again by a Nordic country – Sweden – which launched a major media campaign several years ago, when the participation of Swedish students in the ERASMUS Programme started to stagnate.

Often quoted, also, when it comes to *outgoing credit mobility*, are the efforts made by European countries to ease the *recognition of study abroad periods* once the students returned home. Concrete measures quoted in this respect are the implementation of *ECTS credits* and the wide use of *learning agreements*. Recognition remains nevertheless the prerogative of higher education institutions. Recent results show that while many of these measures have been introduced on paper they do not yet fully work in practice, and recognition remains one of the big barriers for outgoing mobility.

A few countries also claimed that national measures have been adopted to internationalise the curriculum, mainly through the introduction of “*mobility windows*” or through *joint/double degree programmes*, to increase *outgoing credit mobility*. A quantitative estimate of the spread of such programmes at the European level does not exist, though, for the moment.

In contrast to *outgoing credit mobility*, and given that the promotion of *outgoing degree mobility* is almost never a national-level priority, very few measures that support this types of mobility have been cited. A few countries, like Norway and Cyprus, make available their state aid to their students for degree studies abroad as well, but these countries are a minority and changes are noted recently. Another example is Austria, which has recently introduced a so-called “*mobility grant*”, which can be used for studying abroad for a full degree. Nevertheless, Norway for example is becoming more selective in its approach, trying to send students only to the top universities abroad in the future, while Cyprus is starting to steer the state aid towards its own internal market, and mainly to the private institutions at home.

Incoming mobility

For *incoming mobility*, national-level measures undertaken to boost *credit and degree mobility* have much more in common. For example, great emphasis has been placed on measures to *simplify visa and residence regulations*, to grant *permission to foreign/credit students for part-time/full time employment*, to engage in *active marketing and recruitment*, and to improve *student services*, particularly for *foreign students*. However, comparing the two, more measures are clearly put in place to attract *incoming degree students*, which is the second priority of most national governments after the promotion of *outgoing credit mobility*. Knowing that *incoming credit mobility* is often seen as the automatic “*side-effect*” of outgoing credit mobility, this is not a big surprise.

Other measures used for this purpose are the provision of *attractive scholarships*, *recognition of foreign qualifications*, and the *permission for foreign graduates to stay for employment*.

We noted, in general, increasing efforts of national governments to promote their higher education systems abroad. A group of countries has already fully-fledged campaigns in place, which include: a national agency assigned with this task – “the likes” of DAAD, Nuffic, or British Council; a national brand – e.g. “Germany. Land of ideas”, “Study in Denmark. Think, play, participate”; a promotional video; a “Study in...” website; in-country presence – participation at regional higher education fairs or even the set-up of offices in target countries. Most other European countries have a least a “Study in...” website, and start to actively participate in international recruitment events.

Another instrument used by some European countries (especially those that do not have the advantage of a widely-spoken language to attract degree-seeking students) is the introduction of *study programmes taught in a foreign language (mostly English)*. While more and more countries seem to be interested in building this type of tuition (by, amongst others, removing legal barriers – see Greece for example), increasingly more countries stress the importance of foreign students learning also the local language. Denmark for example underlines this aspect, which would enable foreign graduates to enter the Danish labour market.

4.4 Important programmes and arrangements supporting mobility

The ERASMUS Programme seems to be the most important programme supporting mobility for the countries which responded to the survey. Considering that the top priority addressed in countries with a national mobility policy is *outgoing credit mobility*, financed in a significant way in the framework of ERASMUS, it is not a surprise that this programme is seen as very important at national policy level.

ERASMUS is followed by *nationally-funded programmes* and then by the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme. Other EU-funded programmes and regional cooperation programmes are cited to also play a part, but more limited, for example in supporting mobility to and from Eastern European countries and with third countries.

4.5 Major actors involved in agenda-setting and policy-making

Survey responses show that countries have different hierarchies of actors when it comes to mobility policy-making, portraying either top-down or bottom-up tendencies. Nevertheless, following the *competent ministry and department overseeing higher education matters*, several countries consider *other government ministries*, particularly ministry of foreign affairs, ministry of internal affairs, ministry of economic development/finances, as most important actors involved in the making of mobility policies.

Significantly fewer – mostly Central and Eastern European – countries placed the EU as the *most important actor*. Such countries are Austria, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania. Similarly, except for the Netherlands, which has mentioned the OECD in passing, none of the respondents mentioned other supranational organisations (e.g. *OECD, UNESCO, World Bank*) among the actors that they considered important. Nevertheless, EU policies and OECD reviews are frequently mentioned in national policy documents as benchmarks and references. Some countries, as we have shown in the target section, have adopted targets set at the European level as their national targets, even if further elaboration or conception of implementation measures at the national level is needed.

The majority of respondents indicated that *national agencies responsible for the internationalisation of higher education* are somehow of a secondary importance, following the previous groups of actors. As in most countries these agencies are rather seen as the implementation arms of the ministries of education, this ranking is perhaps not completely surprising.

The importance of the *rectors' conferences* varies in different countries. Italy, Slovenia, and Poland regard these actors as most important in policy-making. In all other countries they are considered of secondary importance (if at all).

One other category of actors that is rarely rated as central is *national students' associations*, with a few exceptions – Finland, Poland, and Slovenia. Other actors such as the *national teachers' associations, employers or industry representatives*, are involved in to varying degrees only in Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands. Germany is the only country in which *foundations* have an active role to play. They are considered more important than the national rectors' conference, which is not surprising if we were to think of the major (financial) role these entities have in supporting mobility (of students but also researchers).

Quality assurance and accreditation agencies, whom one might expect to influence national policies, are either not listed among important actors or considered the least important in the making of mobility policies.

The ranking of different actors indicates to some extent the different approaches adopted by individual countries in the formulation of mobility policies (or of policies in general). While most countries have a top-down approach, we found particularly interesting the contrasting example of Finland, which indicates that higher education institutions, the rectors' conference and national students' association, are more important than others such as the national agency, national teachers' association and employers. We won-

der how, if at all, this influences the sense of ownership of the policy and affects its implementation.

We have also noticed that countries which have ranked *other government ministries* as the most important actors in addition to the one *responsible for higher education* (e.g. the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, and the UK) are generally *importers of degree-seeking students* (i.e. they host more than they send abroad). We wonder if the current central involvement of other ministries (and particularly the foreign affairs ones) is an expression of a need of concerted efforts to support the new national priorities and to reach out, as much as possible, or whether this is just part of the political culture of the respective countries (i.e. policy consultation).

In short, national governments seem to remain the most important actors in the making of national policies. The national agencies for internationalisation, rectors' conferences and student associations are also involved to some extent (the share of their involvement varies from country to country). What we found particularly interesting in this cross-country analysis, however, is the lack of acknowledgement of the importance of the EU and OECD in national mobility policies. This may be because higher education policymaking, even in the realm of internationalisation policies, is seen primarily as a national competence. Nevertheless, several countries seem rather quick at adopting new policy priorities and the general discourse from the supranational level, at least at the policy level.

5. Staff mobility

In comparison to student mobility, substantially fewer countries stated that they have a national *policy for increasing staff mobility*. This is consistent with previous research results¹² which have underlined that staff mobility stretches from being just a “*footnote*” in *student mobility policies*, to the *core of strategies in science, research and innovation policies*. This has much to do with the way staff is defined and understood in national contexts. *Staff in the higher education setting may include administrative staff*, research staff, teaching staff, and in some European countries like Germany, a borderline category of PhD “students” who are not necessarily enrolled as students, but working as university “staff” in research projects. The modes of employment/engagement of staff (full-time, part-time, fractional-time, honorary), the hierarchical structure of staff, as well as their types of mobility, are also much more sophisticated than in the case of students. Therefore, we are not surprised to see a general lack of a dedicated national mobility policy for staff *per se*.

¹² Teichler, U., Ferencz, I. and Wächter, B. (eds.), op. cit.

Despite the lack of a clear and comparable definition of staff within Europe, our analysis of documents considered relevant for staff mobility reveals that national discourse tends to focus on two generalised types of mobility, based on the roles of staff rather than their actual employment positions.

The first type of staff mobility cited considers staff members as *multipliers for student mobility* and as *international networkers*. This is the “footnote” type of staff mobility reference, occasionally found in student mobility policies. The “multiplier staff” may vary and incorporate, from *administrative staff* and *teaching staff* to *PhD students*. The type of mobility thus taking place or supported is normally *short-term outgoing mobility*. It happens through European programmes, such as ERASMUS, or nationally-financed programmes, as is the case with Germany and the Netherlands, for example. The type of activity “performed” abroad is most commonly teaching, training or research. Other types of support measures are replacement costs paid to the home institution for the outgoing staff, paid leaves for the staff’s stays abroad, and, in some countries, the recognition of the experience abroad for career advancement. *Permanent outgoing staff mobility*, as a general rule is not encouraged at the national level, due to the perceived risk of brain drain, and is generally a personal initiative. Nevertheless, well-integrated *short-term* staff mobility *recognised* in the home institution for career advancement has begun to gain attention at the national level in countries such as France.

The second type of staff mobility emphasised regards the mobile staff as “stars” *lighting up the research landscape*. In contrast to the previous type of staff mobility, this type of mobility constitutes the *core of strategies in national research, science and innovation policies*. The kinds of mobile staff targeted through such strategies are the *crème de la crème* in specific disciplines from around the world. Therefore, the focus is placed on *incoming mobility (recruitment)*, preferably as a *long-term arrangement*, but may also start as a short-term, trial period. The prime meaning of staff in this context is researchers, and to a much lesser extent teaching staff.

In a broader sense, this type of mobility falls also into the realm of *national immigration policies*, if existent, even though more and more this type of policies are also targeted not only at *foreigners* but also at the “re-attraction” of own (*highly-qualified*) *nationals*. In fact, we do see a rather strong emphasis in the national policy documents on the attraction of returnees, including seasoned academics and PhD graduates who were “lost” (as a result of *brain drain*). This slightly preferential focus on returnees is somewhat contradictory to another common measure advocated for the *attraction of foreign staff* – open recruitment.

Regardless of the nationality aspect, such attraction policies require long-term planning and commitment at the national level, to be effective. The set-

ting of a percentage target for *foreign staff* may be viewed, in this context, as a sign of a country's determination. As in the case with students, though, it is not just the policy ambitions but the actual opportunities and support measures a country leverages that can attract the talented foreign nationals. In the case of staff, such measures clearly have a higher weight than for students.

A *sine qua non* is the provision of attractive remuneration packages or fellowships. In addition to that, efforts to alleviate some of the main obstacles to foreign staff recruitment prove crucial. Such measures include the relaxation of immigration laws, of issues that are related to visa, employment permission (work permits). In this context, many countries consider the incorporation of the *Council Directive 2005/71/E (and, less often, 2004/114/EC)* on easing the entry of third-country nationals for research purposes, into national law, as a significant improvement. Further, at the European level, we observed the positive influence of EURAXESS on raising the awareness of the national governments on the importance of providing information and service support to incoming staff. Many countries actually stressed the efforts of their national mobility centers in the context of EURAXESS network.

Overall, it is clear that if countries want to effectively compete for talented incoming staff they need to take a systematic approach to ease the regulatory barriers, and have a properly-functioning communication system between the various national authorities concerned. Keeping an eye on the EU-level developments has also proven useful in the past.

6. Conclusion

Mobility is unquestionably high up on the agenda of national governments in Europe in the context of the Bologna Process and the introduction of large-scale mobility programmes like ERASMUS. However, national-level mobility policies come often just as bits and pieces under different policies in the majority of 32 European countries studied. Some countries have elaborate sections about mobility in internationalisation policies or in research, science and innovation policies. Some only mention mobility in promotional messages, reports and reviews at the discourse level or in the descriptions of planned or *ad hoc* mobility programmes. The breadth and depth of mobility policies vary to a great extent. But even so, most countries believe that they have a national policy in place to increase mobility.

As one of our chief ambitions in this study has been to search for evidence of converge and/or divergence between national-level approaches, we can safely say that we see a trend of European countries starting to think in more systematic terms about the promotion of mobility at the national level. And even though the level of advancement is still very different across the ana-

lysed countries, we were able to identify cases where national approaches on particular mobility policy elements both converge and diverge. We list some of them below.

Through comparisons of the mobility elements addressed in national policies, we found that the highly visible aspects of mobility, targets and geographical foci that are frequently used for international comparisons remain vaguely defined at the national level. They both seem clear in terms of numerical percentages and geographical locations, but are rarely presented in relation to the types of mobility encouraged. As a result, they remain symbols of ambition or desire with little value in guiding the development of national measures in support of policy implementation. Interestingly, these frequently compared mobility elements, though vague by definition, are among those which have shown strong signs of convergence. Target-setting is becoming a new trend; generally, higher targets are set for outgoing (credit) mobility, while more modest, but fairly uniform percentage targets are set for incoming (degree) mobility. The EHEA, US/Canada, Asia and the “neighbouring countries” are common areas of interest shown in national policy documents, even though details are rarely given on how these regions are related to the types of mobility flows expected.

In terms of mobility types, we have also found clear indications of converged priorities attached to *outgoing credit mobility*, which comes as the top priority, as in contrast with *outgoing degree mobility* which lies at the bottom of the priority list. However, when it comes to incoming mobility, countries which become cautious of the high influx of mobile students from neighbouring countries into their national systems, and countries which are active in attracting fee-paying students from non-EEA/EU countries have begun to display diverging preferences. In most cases, when incoming degree mobility is prioritised, countries share a common focus on Master and Doctoral levels.

In terms of rationales we also see some evidence of convergence, in general. Employability is the most often stated rationale related to outgoing credit mobility, while to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of national higher education systems is the most stated rationale related to incoming degree mobility. The last rationale, however, is weakly related to two other rationales - demographic changes as well as additional funding sources. Such a divergence leads to the question of whether the European countries are striving to be attractive for attraction's sake. Similarly, despite the fact that most countries showed a preference for mobility within the EHEA and regarded ERASMUS as the most important mobility programme, a discrepancy is noted in between the low importance attached to the rationale of enhancing European citizenship and the preoccupation of national governments to enhance the attractiveness of national systems and the employability of their graduates.

In regard to support measures, slight differentiations in terms of national support measures for credit and degree mobility are noted, but consistency is found in widely discussed measures such as enhancing recognition, provision of funding supports, relaxation of legal frameworks and efforts in providing information and promotion. How exactly the countries implement these measures, however, would probably reveal a vast diversity of scenarios.

Finally, in terms of actors influencing national mobility policies, other ministries especially those involved in immigration, foreign and internal affairs, in addition to the ministries in charge of education, culture and research, are the most stated important actors. Second to them are the national agencies responsible for mobility. The EU and organisations like the OECD are mentioned, but not regarded as the most important actors in our survey. This may be explained by the understanding that higher education remains the national competence of individual countries. In national policy documents, we have, however, noticed frequent mentions of EU regulations, programmes, as well as OECD reviews in directing policy change.

IV. Austria

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1. Introduction to the Austrian higher education system

This country analysis incorporates the results of the online survey conducted among national-level decision-makers in the framework of this study as well as relevant documents identified at the national level on student and staff mobility. It further subjects these documents to a reality check by means of 12 expert interviews conducted with national and institutional-level stakeholders and by contrasting the policy discourse with the actual mobility trends. The analysis builds upon both quantitative and qualitative mobility aspects.

The Austrian tertiary education sector (*Hochschulsektor*) consists of:¹

- public universities (*Universitäten*), mainly funded by the state;
- private universities (*Privatuniversitäten*), operated by private organisations with state accreditation;
- maintainers of the university of applied sciences degree programmes (*Fachhochschul-Studiengänge*) incorporated on the basis of private or public law and subsidised by the state, with state accreditation (some of which are entitled to use the title *Fachhochschule*);
- university colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) mainly funded by the state or operated by private organisations, with state accreditation;
- universities of philosophy and theology (*Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschulen*), under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church.

A big difference between Austria and many other European countries is that Austria did not diversify its higher education system in the course of the expansion recorded at the end of the 1960s and 1970s, but rather its higher secondary vocational education. When preparing for the EU accession, the difference between the two sectors was increasingly perceived as a potential problem for graduates of the vocational programmes who risked being at a disadvantage in the European labour market.² Therefore, the agreement of a coalition government of 1990³ announced the establishment of *universities*

¹ BMWF 2010(a): 1.

² cf. Hackl et al. 2003: 16.

³ Federal Government, 1990.

of *applied sciences* in order to bring the Austrian vocational education in line with the EU standards.

The higher education system in Austria was subsequently further diversified with the introduction of *private universities*⁴ increasing the competition within the higher education sector in Austria. Gradually, the influence of the state in higher education policy was also reduced, giving universities more autonomy. Increased autonomy was also granted for internationalisation activities.

According to the list compiled by the *National Agency Lifelong Learning Austria* together with *ENIC-NARIC Austria* in 2010⁵, there was a total number of 79 registered higher education institutions in Austria, which offered academic-oriented education at the ISCED⁶ 1997 levels 5A and 6. Of these, 22 were public universities, 13 private universities, 21 universities of applied sciences, 18 university colleges of education including private ones and 4 schools of theology. The Institute of Science and Technology Austria (IST Austria) complements the list of higher education institutions as a research institute with PhD programmes. The universities of applied sciences (UAS) are complementing the system with strongly practice-oriented study programmes. They also further concentrated the regional offer of tertiary education institutions. Nowadays, every federal state of Austria has a tertiary education institution.⁷

Based on information from Statistics Austria, a total of 263 071⁸ Austrian students was registered in a study programme at an Austrian higher education institution in the fall term 2009/10.⁹

The OECD Economic Survey of Austria 2009 stated that an Austrian problem is that universities are required to register all qualified applicants to the programmes and courses of their choice, without any selection and at no financial cost to the student. The OECD suggests that Austria should solve this problem by giving the universities “greater leeway to select their students

⁴ cf. Federal Government, 1996.

⁵ BMWF 2010(b).

⁶ ISCED stands for the International Standard Classification of Education, of UNESCO, the 1997 version.

⁷ The number of higher education institutions increased since 2004 due to the formal outsourcing of the faculties of medicine and the transformation of pedagogical academies into university colleges of education (since 2007/08).

⁸ Adjusted number; one person is counted only once even if the person is studying at more than one HEI simultaneously.

⁹ 211 746 Austrian students were studying at *public universities*, 3 641 at private ones, 31 789 at *universities of applied sciences* and 693 Austrians were attending further education courses there. 8 814 have chosen a study programme from a university college of education and 7 930 attended further education courses there. 97 students were registered at one of the three theological universities and 3 468 domestic students attended a university-level course.

and charge tuition fees, with a comprehensive student grant and income-contingent loan system ensuring equality of opportunity”.¹⁰

Traditionally, the number of students from abroad has been high in Austria. In 1970, 15.9% of all students at universities came from abroad.¹¹ In 2006/07, the share of foreign students in Austria stood at 16.7% (corresponding to 43 572 foreign students). In turn, 12 965 Austrian students were enrolled abroad in 2006/07, being 6% of the total students with Austrian nationality.¹² The Austrian in:out ratio was 3.4 in 2006/07, meaning that three times more foreign students were enrolled in Austria at that time compared to Austrian students studying abroad.

According to the *Austrian Bologna Monitoring report 2009*¹³, 3 242 academic staff members were abroad in 2007, representing 23.8% of the total academic staff. In comparison, 4 917 incoming academic staff were in Austria in 2007, showing an in:out ratio of 1.5. It is not clear though if these mobility activities were for teaching or research purposes.

2. Milestones of mobility policies in Austria

This section provides an overview of the Austrian mobility policies and a selection of the most important related documents in Austria, since the mid-1980s (the start of EU student mobility programmes) until the most recent years. The analysis will focus on university-level education (ISCED 5A and 6).

2.1 Different steps in Austrian mobility policy-making

Since having lost its former position in the scientific world in the aftermath of the Second World War, Austria has been cultivating an “anachronistic self-image” of scientific importance¹⁴ until the 1980s. The conditions for study and research in Austria were hardly attractive during the post-war years. Austria was convinced that it had much to learn from the experiences of other countries, especially in the fields of science and research. An OECD study observed in 1988 that Austria showed a lack of internationalisation in its higher education policy due to an “isolation complex” which hindered the country from finding a place in the new geopolitical realities.¹⁵ This OECD report rec-

¹⁰ OECD 2009.

¹¹ Hackl et al. 2003: 12.

¹² Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011), *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*, 2 vols., Bonn: DAAD (Dok&Mat 69, 70).

¹³ BMWF 2009(a): 136.

¹⁴ cf. Leidenfrost et al. 1997: 43.

¹⁵ cf. OECD 1988.

commended that Austria “take greater pride in its scientific and technological potential [. . .], abandoning its nostalgia about past history ...”.¹⁶

The 1980s

Official government documents, such as coalition agreements and government programmes, document how the level of awareness has developed since the mid-1980s. The government programme of 1983, for instance, included only a single reference to “the international dimension of science and research”.¹⁷

One of the first important measures developed in Austria to promote cooperation and to increase *outgoing and incoming mobility for students and staff* was the signing of *bilateral agreements* with countries within and outside of Europe. In the 1980s, unilateral Austrian initiatives supplemented these bilateral agreements in order to provide global opportunities especially for *outgoing students* who had completed their first degrees or doctorate programmes. Further, between 1970 and 1989, the total budget of the Ministry of Science increased ten-fold. Austrian expenditures on the internationalisation of higher education increased correspondingly.

The 1990s

In the early 1990s, more substantial political initiatives for internationalisation were undertaken. Two factors influenced debates about Austria’s place in European Higher Education: the planned accession to the European Communities (EC) and the collapse of the communist system in Austria’s neighbourhood in 1989 – i.e. in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Austrian Ministry of Science and Research (BMWF) established a priority area in CEE (including Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine) after 1989. Criteria taken into account for this decision were clearly the geographical closeness, historical considerations and the traditionally good relations that Austria had with many of these countries. In 1993, the *Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS)* was established as an Austrian regional initiative promoting academic mobility within CEE.¹⁸

The Austrian internationalisation policy objectives in the field of higher education resulted to a large extent from the country’s *accession to the EU in 1995*. From 1990 onwards, government working programmes and coalition

¹⁶ Leidenfrost et al. 1997: 44.

¹⁷ Leidenfrost et al. 1997: 42.

¹⁸ CEEPUS is a transnational university network from 15 Central and Eastern European countries offering monthly mobility allowances to students plus a lump-sum for travel costs.

agreements contained chapters dealing with higher education and research in the context of EU accession negotiations¹⁹ Furthermore, a special department (*Sektion*) for international affairs was established in 1991 within the Ministry of Science and Research to promote and coordinate the processes of internationalisation not only in the higher education sector, but also in the research sector. Programmes to bring the Austrian professional education system in line with European standards were also announced, and resulted, as earlier said, in the creation of the *universities of applied sciences sector* in Austria.²⁰

Austrian higher education institutions were in EC programmes before Austria's accession to the European Union on 1 January 1995. ERASMUS, for example, became fully open to Austrian higher education institutions in the academic year 1992/93. As a result of the country's involvement in European mobility programmes, and of their increasing autonomy, Austrian HEIs have established increasingly independent institutional policies for internationalisation. In conjunction with the new *University Organisation Act* in 1993, many universities decided to establish *executive positions for international affairs*.

Austria was also a strong promoter of the *Bologna Process* from the early beginning. Joint European action was seen by the Austrian government as providing a chance to build support for reforms that originally encountered internal opposition.²¹

The 2000s

The BMWF further introduced a monitoring procedure for the implementation of the Bologna Process in Austria which included the definition and operationalisation of Austrian objectives towards the Bologna Process as well as allocated responsibilities and timelines for their implementation. One of the areas addressed was international student mobility.

Since 2005, the *Diploma Supplement* is being issued in the German and the English languages to every graduate at Austrian higher education institutions.

¹⁹ For example, the coalition agreement of the governing Social Democrats (SPÖ) and Christian Democrats (ÖVP) in 1990 stated that "the dynamics of European integration, the opening of Eastern neighbour states and the internationalisation of many realms of life place new demands on educational policy and make a further improvement of the quality of the educational system necessary". *Ibid*, p :44.

²⁰ Federal Government, 1990.

²¹ The Austrian implementation of the Bologna objectives is supported by the Austrian Bologna Follow up Group established in 1999 with representatives of universities, universities of applied sciences and university colleges of teacher education, students and the BMWF. A special Austrian Bologna website <http://www.bologna.at> disseminates information on the Bologna Process since 2001.

In 2007²², the first quantitative target for mobility was set in Austria. The aim was for 1 in 2 (50% of all) Austrian graduates to have a study period abroad during their studies, by 2020. As we have seen from other chapters of this publication, relatively few countries have set targets as a part of their strategy for mobility.

In 2008, Universities Austria (UA) started to militate for an active involvement of Austrian higher education institutions in the implementation of the Bologna Process. Further, this body warned against possible negative consequences of the Bologna degree architecture on student mobility developments because of the shorter duration of especially Bachelor programmes and the modularisation of studies.²³ The body proposed, as a solution, the introduction of “mobility windows” into the curriculum.

Contrary to this perception, the actual mobility data do not show a continuous decline in mobility numbers. Except for a slight decrease of 1% in ERASMUS outgoing student numbers at Austrian public universities between 2003 and 2004²⁴, numbers have risen since 2002.

In the second *National Reform Programme of 2010*, the Austrian Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ) stated that the mobility and exchange of students and researchers needs to be fostered both within and outside of Europe.²⁵ As a further objective, the Ministry defined the removing of obstacles for incoming excellent students and researchers from third countries.

Furthermore, shortly after the *Bologna Ministerial Anniversary conference in Vienna* in March 2010, the federal minister for science and research at the time announced 10 measures to improve the Bologna implementation in Austria, under the title *Bologna reloaded*. The 10th measure was dealt with mobility and recognition²⁶ with the overall objective to guarantee the recognition of comparable courses.²⁷

²² cf. BMWF 2008 (b): 6.

²³ cf. UA 2008: 3.

²⁴ cf. BMWF 2010: 1.

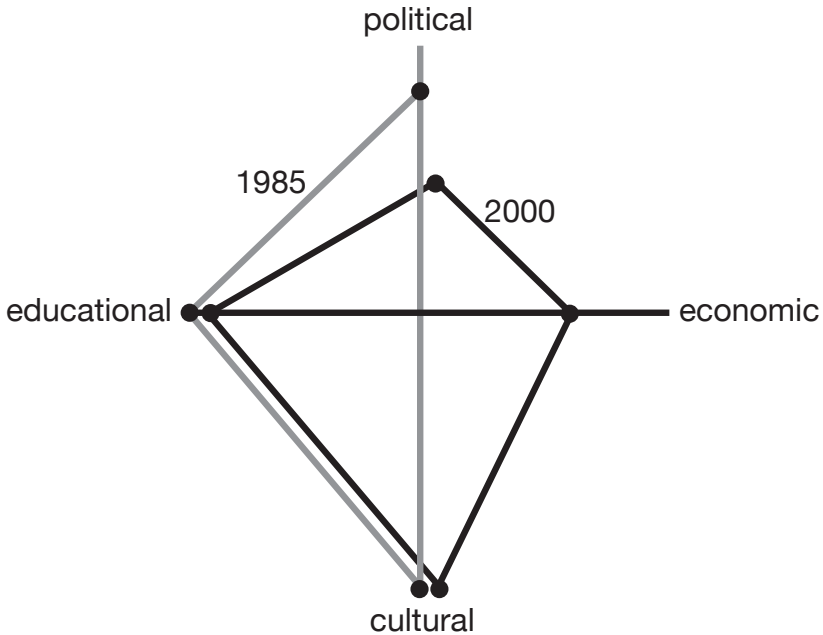
²⁵ BMWFJ 2010: 24.

²⁶ cf. BMWF 2010(c): 4.

²⁷ according to § 78 University Act.

2.2 Rationales for supporting mobility

In the course of time, the *rationales* behind the pursuit of internationalisation in the Austrian context have evolved. A model suggested by Van der Wende²⁸ can be used to assess the interplay of these various rationales in the Austrian higher education setting, although the various rationales cannot always be easily differentiated, and are many times closely linked.



Graph 1: Rationales for internationalisation policy in Austria (Leidenfrost et. al 1997: 45)

The graph seems to show a shift in Austrian internationalisation policy in higher education towards an increased economic orientation, at least on paper. For instance, tuition fees in Austria were re-introduced at public universi-

²⁸ Van der Wende 1997: 37. The two axes do not represent two continuums, but four separate lines each with a minimum (in the middle of the model) and a maximum (at the exterior of the model). The four different rationales of national internationalisation policies represented in the model are defined as follows : political – everything related to the country's position and role as a nation in the world (security, stability/peace, ideological influence); economic – everything related to the direct (income and net economic effect of foreign students) and long-term economic benefits (such as internationally trained graduates and foreign graduates as keys to trade relations, etc.); educational – everything generally related to the aims and functions of higher education; and cultural – everything related to the role and place of a country's culture and language.

ties in 2001 (after their abolition in the 1970s), but with a relatively low level of 363.36 Euro/semester. Nevertheless, while the principle of tuition fees still exists, due to an enactment of the Austrian parliament in 2008, the majority of students are exempt from paying fees.²⁹

Another element that favours this interpretation is the gradual adoption of economic terms like “competitiveness” and “employability” into the national level discourse, paralleling the Lisbon Process objective of making the EU “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.³⁰ Yet, while the discourse has evolved to incorporate economic concepts, it must be said that the recruitment of foreign students in Austria has never arrived to be an industry, i.e. an income-generation activity.

2.3 National regulatory frameworks supporting mobility in Austria

With the signature of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, an immediate amendment procedure of the *Austrian University Studies Act (1997)* was initiated. Provisions for the new 2-cycle degree structure (Bachelor/Master), as well the application of the European Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS), were introduced. With the amendment to the *UAS Studies Act 2002* (FHStG-Novelle 2002), the legal basis for the organisation of Bachelor and Master programmes was created also at Austrian universities of applied sciences (UASs). As the Austrian government had intended to shorten the duration of studies earlier, they fully supported the Bologna Bachelor/Master (and later PhD) model.

Further, the *Universities Act 2002* determined that new study programmes could only be implemented as Bachelor and Master programmes, with the exception of medical study programmes and programmes of teacher education.³¹ Since 1999, the use of ECTS has become obligatory for all Bachelor and Master programmes, and since 2003 for all diploma programmes.³² In the fall term 2008/09, 82% of study programmes at universities and 95% at

²⁹ This broad exemption regulation arose from an election promise of the Austrian Socialist Party and could be seen as a re-orientation from the economic towards the educational rationale. But the strategic goals set on European level raised the public awareness for an international framework of reference in Austria simultaneously becoming an increasingly economic one.

³⁰ European Parliament 2000.

³¹ the latter being offered BA and MA programmes with an amendment since 2009.

³² A diploma degree (*Diplomgrad*) is awarded by Austrian universities after eight to twelve (in the arts up to 16) semesters, depending on the relevant field of study. Its full denomination is „*Magister/Magistra ...*“, including a description of the field in which it was obtained, e.g. *Magister philosophiae*; in the fields of engineering, it is „*Diplom-Ingenieur/in*“. The studies of medicine and dentistry are exceptions: The first degree awarded is „*Doctor medicinae universae*“ or „*Doctor medicinae dentalis*“, respectively, after twelve semesters (FHR: 1).

universities of applied sciences were transformed according to the two-cycle degree structure.

Furthermore, according to the Universities Act 2002, internationalisation and mobility were both to become part of the performance agreements reached between the Austrian ministry responsible for higher education (BMWF) and the public universities.

In 2008, the Austrian government commits itself to internationalisation and mobility through the government programme for the period 2008-2013. The programme argues that a stay abroad and international networking are the key success factors for career paths in science and research and, more generally, for Austria as a research destination. Therefore, it reinstates that every second higher education graduate should have had at least one stay abroad until 2020.³³ The federal government subsequently listed the following, rather vague, steps to reach this objective:

- enhancement of student and graduate mobility in selected countries;
- increase of Austrian participation in the ERASMUS MUNDUS programme;
- support of young academics, also attracting international young researchers to Austrian doctoral programmes, through excellence initiatives.

The *National Strategy for Research, Technology and Development* also mentions the “enhancement of student and graduate mobility in selected countries”³⁴, without further specifications though.

One challenge to achieve the national quantitative target of 50% mobile graduates arises from the autonomy of Austrian higher education institutions. One element the Austrian ministry can use to determine institutions to pursue and reach this target are the performance agreements.³⁵ One of the fields of negotiation included in these contracts between the ministry and the universities is the increase in internationality and mobility.³⁶

³³ cf. Federal Government 2008: 220.

³⁴ Bundeskanzleramt et al. 2011: 17.

³⁵ According to the Universities Act 2002 § 13 (1) “Performance agreements are contracts under public law. They shall be concluded by the individual universities and the Federal Government, within the limits of the law, for periods of three years”.

³⁶ BMWF 2011: 16. “Activities and projects in this area relate, in particular, to multi-year international co-operation agreements with other universities, research institutions and artistic or cultural institutions, to joint degree programmes and exchange programmes for students as well as for the scientific and artistic staff, and to an increase in the proportion of foreign undergraduates and postgraduates in the student body”.

Some HEIs publish their own internationalisation reports publicly available on the web to demonstrate their past performances and strategies. The University of Vienna for example, as the biggest Austrian university, offers a 42-page report³⁷ dealing with its internationalisation strategy, facts and figures, international co-operation and networks, an extra section on its relationships with Central and Eastern Europe as its focal region and measures and services developed by the university to improve its international profile.

In its *Strategy 2020*³⁸ paper, the *Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development* has also referred to internationalisation as one of the strategic cornerstones in the framework of future Austrian RDI (Research, Development and Innovation). The strengthening of international mobility, the integration in international networks and the development of strategies for neighbouring countries are identified key factors therein.³⁹

2.4 Main actors involved in the formulation and implementation of mobility policies

Ministry of Science and Research

The *Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BWF)* is the main decision-making body in Austria for formulating mobility strategies and planning related support measures. In 1991, a new section for *Scientific Research and International Affairs in Research (Sektion für Wissenschaftliche Forschung und Internationale Angelegenheiten – Bereich Wissenschaft)* was founded within the ministry, succeeding the former section for research. This section is mainly responsible for the realisation of the European area of research and higher education and for coordinating international affairs in research. Partially, it has to coordinate its agenda with the existing section for universities and universities of applied sciences.

³⁷ University of Vienna 2010.

³⁸ Austrian Council 2011.

³⁹ The Strategy also puts forward a number of recommendations, namely: the recognition of foreign qualifications shall become unified country-wide according to international standards. Nostrification processes shall be improved and the Federal Government shall strive for a general recognition of qualifications obtained in EU countries on European level; to facilitate the access to the Austrian RDI system, a well-directed package of measures needs to be developed, with legal and administrative barriers to be removed for qualified migrants and their families; an awareness campaign shall be initiated to increase the tolerance for and acceptance of the integration of foreigners and to transport the positive image of Austria as an innovative immigration country. Furthermore, Austria should be promoted as an attractive immigration country towards high potentials; universities should increasingly develop national joint-degree-programmes, accompanied by an incentive scheme and according objectives to be defined in the performance agreements; traditional mobility programmes should become complemented by research-based ones with a strong focus on performance; furthermore, foreign students and post-docs should have facilitated access to Austrian research institutions, with legal and university barriers to be removed.

OeAD – the Austrian agency for international mobility and cooperation in education, science and research

Since the late 1980s in particular, a significant share of administrative work has been transferred from the ministry to the *Austrian Exchange Service (OeAD)*⁴⁰ or to the individual higher education institutions, the ministry safeguarding its policy-making role. OeAD's activities currently embrace general, academic and vocational education, with an ever increasing focus on academic mobility.⁴¹ Nowadays OeAD is responsible for managing a wide range of scholarship and exchange programmes for students, scholars and scientists. It also incorporates the National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Representatives of HEIs

Two bodies promote the knowledge transfer within their sectors and develop recommendations for the ministry and OeAD with respect to internationalisation policies:

- The *Policy Committee on International Affairs of Universities Austria* (i.e. of the *Universitäten Konferenz – UA*) serves as a platform for debate and for exchange of experiences concerning specific measures to promote cooperation in international activities. Members of this committee are the vice-rectors responsible for international affairs of Austria's public universities.
- In 2002, the *Association of Austrian UASs (Fachhochschulkonferenz)* set up a similar group, the *Committee for International Matters*. This is composed of the heads of international offices at universities of applied sciences.

Austrian Bologna Follow up Group

Since the year 2000, the Austrian BFUG has been preparing the Austrian contributions (national reports) to and positions on the European level developments, e.g. for the supranational BFUG and the biannual ministerial conferences organised in the framework of the Bologna Process. The Austrian BFUG consists of all relevant stakeholders (ministry representatives, HEI representatives, social partners, OeAD, AQA, the student union) and of six Austrian Bologna experts.

⁴⁰ OeAD was founded in 1961 as an association of the *Austrian Rectors' Conference* with the objective of supporting international students studying in Austria. In 2000, the OeAD General Assembly was extended with two new members: the *Austrian Fachhochschulkonferenz (FHK, association of the providers of UAS study programmes)* and the *Steering Committee of the colleges of teacher education (Bundesleitungskonferenz der Pädagogischen Akademien)*. On 1 January 2009, the association was converted into a limited liability company.

⁴¹ cf. OeAD website.

3. Focus on the current national student mobility policy

While at the moment Austria does not have a stand-alone policy paper for internationalisation or international student mobility at the national level, many of its governmental policies have tackled these aspects throughout time in a very coherent manner. Below, we will shed light on the most important elements of the country's international mobility approach.

3.1 Focus on mobility types

In the response to the national survey conducted in the framework of this study, the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research (BWF) representatives indicated the following order of priority for mobility efforts in Austria:

1. outbound credit mobility;
2. inbound credit mobility;
3. outbound degree mobility; and
4. inbound degree mobility.

The ministry argues that outbound mobility has a higher priority than inbound mobility in general, as first and foremost the Austrian students should be served. This order is somewhat surprising if we think of the main trend observed in most other European countries, i.e. to equally prioritise *outgoing credit* and *incoming degree mobility*, but has nevertheless an explanation in recent mobility realities in Austria. Unlike most other countries in Europe, which want to attract more degree-seeking students from abroad, Austria has been complaining in recent years of the exact opposite. The country reported being overflooded by students of one particular foreign nationality – German – in one particular subject field – medical studies. To limit this phenomenon, Austria established a system of quotas for medical study programmes in the autumn term 2005/06 to constrain the too high inflow of German students in medical universities.⁴² The fear was not so much related to the high inflow, but to the later consequences of this phenomenon. Austrian authorities claimed the German medical students, once graduated, returned to their home countries to practice medicine, and did not stay in Austria. As a result, Austria might be confronted with a severe shortage of qualified medical personnel in the near future. According to the quota system, 75% of all university places for human and veterinarian medicine were to be reserved for Austrians, 20% open to students from EU countries and 5% to students from other countries.

⁴² Germany is a country that has a *numerous clausus* system for medical studies, and as a result the demand is higher than the available university places.

Austria, like the French-speaking community of Belgium (who was confronted with a similar situation with French students) was subsequently brought in front of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for a possible breach of EU law through its introduction of quotas for foreign students. According to the ECJ case law, foreign students coming from other EU member states had the same rights and obligations as domestic students, and should not be treated differently.

Nevertheless, in the most recent hearing, the ECJ gave Austria a moratorium until 2012. Austria has to demonstrate in this timeframe that the maintenance of its medical care system is endangered (because of the return of foreign medical students to their home countries upon graduation), if it wants to maintain the student quotas. In 2011, the majority of German students who had started their medical studies in Austria in 2005 have graduated. Austria is now in the process of assessing the return rate of these graduates to their home countries, and will in 2012 present the results of its assessment to the ECJ.

3.2 Geographical focus

In terms of target regions/countries for student mobility, the Austrian ministry distinguishes specific priority areas for credit and degree mobility. For credit mobility, the ministry particularly targets, in this exact order:

- *EHEA*: through the Lifelong Learning programme and ERASMUS. The ERASMUS programme in particular has a significant role in the Austrian context;
- *Canada and the United States*;
- *Central and Eastern Europe*. Student exchanges with this region are supported by programs like CEEPUS and bilateral country actions, e.g. between Austria and Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary that award monthly scholarships for students;
- *Asia*. The *Eurasia-Pacific Uninet (EPU)* network was established by Austria in 2001 with the objective of creating an educational network for Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences and other educational institutions in Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific⁴³; and

⁴³ PhD and post-doc students can apply for monthly grant allowances for student exchange between Austria and Asian countries. In addition, ASEA UNINET, the Austrian South-East Asian University Partnership Network, was established in 1994 to encourage and facilitate cooperation between academic institutions in staff/student exchange, teaching and research activities. ASEA UNINET also offers PhD and post-doc grants.

- *Australia and New Zealand.*

In contrast, incoming degree mobility is targeted at: the United States and Canada in the first place, the EHEA region in the second, and at Australia and New Zealand in the third.

4. Quantitative targets for student mobility

The only type of mobility for which Austria has set a quantitative target is *out-going mobility*. The *Austrian Government Programme 2008-2013* mentions in its chapter on education and science that “until 2020 every second graduate shall have spent part of his/her study programme abroad”.⁴⁴

After talks with BMWF representatives, it became evident that there is so far no clear definition of what a “study programme abroad” would include in this specific benchmark, and how this should be ultimately measured. The ministry hopes though that in the near future the definition work carried out in the Mobility Working Group of the Bologna Process would help Austria to more clearly define this target. Interestingly, the Austrian target (of 50%), irrespective of the exact definition, is already much more ambitious than the one set in the Bologna context – 20% of graduates with a study or training period abroad by 2020.

Austrian representatives of higher education institutions also stress that student mobility data is currently collected on different definitions and time periods (e.g. cohort-wise vs. annually) at the institutional level and criticise the lack of governmental guidance on how to gather comparable data for the whole system. In the absence of specific instructions from the ministry, the two associations – UA and FHK – defined their own measurement criteria for the moment.

5. Support instruments and incentives

Matching the Austrian policy approach to student mobility, the incentives and instruments used at the central level to support this phenomenon are, by international standards, fairly diversified, even though different stakeholders within the country often argue that more could be done in this respect.

As the Bologna Process played such an important role in the Austrian context, it is no wonder that an often mentioned category of mobility-enhancing instruments is related to it. Austrian policy documents highlight the early implementation of the ECTS system, of the Diploma Supplement, of the 3-cycle degree structure, but also the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Conven-

⁴⁴ Federal Government 2008: 220.

tion⁴⁵ as important steps to facilitate the *recognition* of study abroad and of foreign qualifications, and to ultimately ease international mobility.

One of the biggest incentives offered to foreign students is that, although officially tuition fees exist in Austria, most categories of students are exempt.

In order to attract talented incoming students but also to provide Austrian students with more opportunities to study abroad, the ministry has offered support for the initiation of *joint and double degrees*⁴⁶ in collaboration with international partners. One example is the creation of a special action programme – AUSTRIA MUNDUS – designed to support Austrian universities and to increase their participation, as well as that of the teachers, researchers and students in the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme. Special funds were made available for that purpose.

Outgoing credit mobility – the top priority of BMWF – is supported through two important measures. Primarily, Austria is one of the very few European countries that offer *ERASMUS top-up grants* in order to make this EU programme more attractive for Austrian students. Secondly, *needs-based study grants in Austria are portable for study abroad*. According to Austrian Student Support Act 1992 § 53 (StudFG⁴⁷), students at universities and universities of applied sciences are entitled to receive grants for their studies abroad for a maximum duration of 4 semesters, and students at colleges of education for maximum 2 semesters. Additional financial support is available for the study period abroad, as well as for travel costs and language courses.⁴⁸ In

⁴⁵ UNESCO-CEPES / Council of Europe 1997.

⁴⁶ On joint and double degree programmes, a recommendation by the Federal Ministry of Science and Research for the purpose of drafting joint degree/diploma programs has become valid from 1st November 2010, replacing the *Doppeldiplom-Empfehlung* 2004/3 of 28th June 2004. As an annex to this recommendation, a sample agreement was attached, which has been drafted jointly by the BMWF, UA, the FHK and the ÖH. This sample should serve, as far it seems to be possible for the relevant partner institution, as a basis for the agreement of joint degree/diploma programmes (with reference to art. 51 para. 2 subpara. 27 of the Universities Act 2002 – UG, BGBl. I no. 120/2002, art. 3 para. 2 subpara. 10 of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act – FHSStG, BGBl. no. 340/1993, and art. 35 subpara. 4 of the Teacher Education Act 2005, BGBl. I no. 30/2006, each as amended).

⁴⁷ cf. Jusline(a).

⁴⁸ The Austrian Study Grant Authority has published an English Information brochure on Financial Aid for students in Austria. Therein, it well describes how grants for study abroad are awarded: first, through extension of eligibility for study grants for the period of study abroad, by no longer than four semesters; secondly, through additional supportive measures such as grants for study abroad, including travel cost allowance and subsidies for language courses: as a preparatory measure for a student's study abroad, the ministry offers subsidies for ad hoc language courses. These subsidies may cover part of the costs for a language course, or result in the extension of the grant for one's study abroad by an additional month. Additionally, travel cost allowance may be granted for travelling to the respective university site abroad. Cf. Austrian Study Grant Authority 2010: 19.

addition, the CEEPUS Programme is certainly the most prestigious Austrian initiative to support credit mobility (both incoming and outgoing) in Central and Eastern Europe.

To further raise awareness amongst the domestic student population about the importance of study and research abroad, OeAD launched the promotional campaign *Auslandserfahrung im Studium: beweg dich und deine Karriere* (literal translation: *Study experience abroad: move yourself and your career*).

Not only credit mobile students, but also *outgoing degree-seeking students* benefit from *financial support* in Austria. Austria has recently introduced (in the winter term 2008/09) a new form of financial support – the so-called “mobility grant”. The “mobility grant” has the function to support Austrian students who want to study a full programme (at Bachelor or Master level) at a state-approved university, university of applied sciences or a university of education within a country of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

Further, a *national database of study grants and scholarships*⁴⁹ gives comprehensive and easy access to information to both outgoing and incoming students.

Information about admission requirements for *foreign students* is coordinated by NARIC – the Austrian National Academic Recognition Information Centre. The Austrian ENIC-NARIC website further gives information on *international recognition agreements* or recommendations by country.

An important instrument to attract foreign students is the development of English-taught programmes. At the national level, OeAD⁵⁰ provides information on *international study programmes*, meaning on: programmes taught in languages other than German (mostly English); joint degree programmes and double degree programmes, as well as ERASMUS MUNDUS programmes; programmes based on specific international agreements (e.g. *Cotutelle* – binational conferrals of doctoral degrees). At the time of writing, 147 study programmes identified in this list were offered completely in English. Several other programmes were bilingual, i.e. offered in German with some English courses available.

6. Focus of the national staff mobility policy

In the Austrian context, for the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research staff mobility mainly means researchers’ mobility whenever the topic is brought up. This is also very clear in the response to the online survey conducted for

⁴⁹ See: <http://www.grants.at>.

⁵⁰ OeAD 2011 (a).

this study. The ministry representatives described the following initiatives as most important in fostering staff mobility in Austria.

In 2004, the *Network EURAXESS Researchers in Motion* (formerly: ERA-MORE) was created to support and advise researchers from across Europe in mobility-related issues. In this context, the *Austrian Researchers' Mobility Portal* has been activated.⁵¹ *OeAD*, the *Austrian Research Promotion Agency* (*Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft, FFG*) and most of the Austrian higher education institutions are involved in this initiative.

The *National Strategy for Research, Technology and Development* of the Austrian federal government further identified some specific objectives for a better positioning of Austria on the global market, related to international mobility, namely⁵²:

- an increased Austrian participation in European funding programmes;
- a selective global cooperation to be set up or increased with innovation front runners such as the US, selected Asian countries and BRIC countries;
- further collaboration with countries from CEE and SEE.

As a response to the European Commission Communication entitled *Better Careers and More Mobility: A European Partnership for Researchers*⁵³, Austria has compiled a *National Action Plan for Researchers*. Therein, Austria claims that it has taken a leading role within Europe on the *portability of research grants*. In Austria, grants have largely been made portable as part of *Austrian Science Fund (FWF)* projects carried out through the *EU-ROHORCS (European Heads of Research Councils)* initiative called *Money follows the researcher*. This policy had been actively pursued for a number of years through the umbrella agreement 'DACH' between the FWF, the *German Research Foundation (DFG)* and the *Swiss National Science Foundation (NSF)*. Moreover, research fellowships and programmes administered by the *Austrian Academy of Sciences* can be used either domestically or abroad.

Moreover, the following three additional objectives have been identified with regard to researchers' mobility⁵⁴:

⁵¹ See: <http://www.euraxess.at/>.

⁵² cf. *Bundeskanzleramt* et al 2011: 42.

⁵³ Eur-Lex 2008.

⁵⁴ BMWF 2009(b): 4.

- to promote mobility, cooperation and an open labour market for researchers through international, transparent advertisement of research jobs, and to position Austria accordingly in the European Research Area and its networks;
- to bring accomplished researchers to Austrian universities through a selection and appointment procedure backed by quality assurance, while preserving the autonomy of the universities. Implementation of non-discriminatory application procedures is also a goal over the long-term. This measure comes to serve government's aim to "make it possible to actively recruit world-class research staff not least in the university system"⁵⁵;
- to improve, expand and design information services for mobile researchers to be more user-friendly.

The BMWF also ascribes an important role to the universities in the promotion of researchers' mobility. They are asked to "award positive recognition to or even proactively encourage periods of mobility in the careers of young researchers"⁵⁶.

In the *Strategy 2020*, the *Austrian Council for Research, Technology and Development* defined internationalisation as one of the 8 strategic elements, and highlighted the importance of attracting highly-qualified international researchers.

The *Bologna monitoring report 2009*⁵⁷ brings further information on how staff mobility (also of academic staff in this context) is pursued at the institutional level. This report states that at UASs international mobility of academic staff is part of institutional and programme-related evaluation. Further, at private universities, international mobility of academic and research staff is part of the accreditation procedure. Also, at university colleges of teacher education lecturers can apply for a sabbatical for short-term ERASMUS periods abroad for the purpose of teaching or initiating research cooperation, and are entitled to financial support.

The BMWF does not refer in this report or in other contexts to administrative staff mobility which is also funded by ERASMUS. At any rate, the participation of Austrian academic staff in the ERASMUS programme increased significantly in the period 2000/01-2009/10 (from 435 to 937). The participation of administrative staff is growing faster than that of teaching staff (whose total number is actually declining: from 773 in 2006/07 to 755 in 2009/10).

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*: 10.

⁵⁷ *cf.* BMWF 2009(a): 61.

7. Mobility realities

7.1 Inbound mobility

Degree mobility

In Austria, both the number of total students and that of *foreign degree-seeking students* saw constant increase over the past year, with one exception – the academic year 2001/02 – when tuition fees were introduced in the country (Table 1). Recent research shows nevertheless that the drop in absolute numbers largely accounts for the “dormant students”, i.e. those who showed no academic activity in the previous semesters.⁵⁸

Table 1: Student mobility trends in Austria 1998/99-2008/09 (ISCED 5/6)

Academic year	Total enrolment in Austria	Total number of Austrian students in Austria	Total foreign students	Share of foreign degree-seeking students of total enrolment	Study abroad (degree-seeking) students	Ratio of study abroad students to all Austrian students in Austria
2008/09	262 191	210 519	51 672	19.7%	–	–
2007/08	252 888	205 343	47 545	18.8%	–	–
2006/07	241 714	198 878	42 836	17.7%	12 965	0.065
2005/06	232 788	192 978	39 810	17.1%	–	–
2004/05	219 157	184 673	34 484	15.7%	–	–
2003/04	213 151	179 444	33 707	15.8%	–	–
2002/03	203 635	173 281	30 354	14.9%	12 655	0.073
2001/02	197 143	169 373	27 770	14.1%	12 234	0.072
2000/01	239 691	208 604	31 087	13.0%	11 423	0.055
1999/00	237 272	206 576	30 696	12.9%	11 471	0.056
1998/99	228 936	199 752	29 184	12.7%	11 407	0.057

Legend: no data

Source: UOE

⁵⁸ Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011), *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*, 2 vols., Bonn: DAAD (Dok&Mat 69, 70).

In relative terms, Austria is one of the countries with the highest share of *foreign students* of total enrolment. In 2008/09, this stood at 19.7%. In line with the policy focus, most *foreign students* in Austria come from Central and Eastern European countries. At the same time, almost 1 in 3 foreign students in the country was German (Table 2). Of 51 672 foreign students just 48 847 came to Austria for higher education study (were genuine *incoming degree-seeking students*). The rest have already been in Austria prior to higher education (very likely these are students with a migrant background).

Table 2: Top nationalities of foreign students in Austria and top destinations of Austrian degree-seeking students in 2006/07 (ISCED 5/6)

Top 10 nationalities of foreign students in Austria				Top 10 destinations of Austrian study abroad students			
Rank	Country of nationality	Total	% of all foreign students	Rank	Country of destination	Total	% of all study abroad students
1	Germany	12 386	28.4%	1	Germany	6 564	50.6%
2	Italy	6 209	14.2%	2	United Kingdom	1 834	14.1%
3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 582	5.9%	3	Switzerland	970	7.5%
4	Turkey	2 245	5.2%	4	United States	862	6.6%
5	Poland	1 472	3.4%	5	Sweden	497	3.8%
6	China	1 391	3.2%	6	France	424	3.3%
7	Serbia and Montenegro	1 303	3.0%	7	Liechtenstein	288	2.2%
8	Slovakia	1 301	3.0%	8	Spain	241	1.9%
9	Bulgaria	1 288	3.0%	9	Netherlands	212	1.6%
10	Croatia	1 259	2.9%	10	Italy	211	1.6%
Total (top ten)		31 436	72.1%	Total (top ten)		12 103	93.4%
Total (all foreign students)		43 572	100.0%	Total (all study-abroad students)		12 965	100.0%

Source: UOE

Credit mobility

National data sources (uni:data) also provide information on *incoming students via exchange programmes*. The vast majority of these are the students mobile with ERASMUS. In 2008/09, the number of incoming ERASMUS students in Austria stood at 4 728 students.⁵⁹

7.2 Outbound mobility

Degree mobility

In contrast, the number of Austrian students enrolled for a degree abroad (*study abroad students*) increased very modestly during the last decade (Table 1). Yet, while this is so, the *study abroad ratio* of Austrian students is significantly higher than the European average – 0.065⁶⁰ compared to 0.033 in the academic year 2006/07. Thus, although the Austrian authorities state to want to considerably boost outgoing degree mobility, the country is already doing better than the average. Compared to the countries of origin of foreign students, Austrian degree seekers primarily target Western European countries and the United States to get a foreign qualification (Table 2). Germany features also as the top country of destination.

Comparing the inflows and the outflows, Austria clearly received about three times as many foreign students as it sent abroad. In other words, the country is a “net importer” of students, this reality being also amongst the major causes of current discontent (as we have commented in section 3.1).

Credit mobility

Using again the ERASMUS database, Austria sent abroad 4 989 students on ERASMUS in 2008/09., i.e. almost as many as it hosted in the same year. Interestingly, while the degree mobility flows are imbalanced in the Austrian case, Austria is one of just two European countries with balanced flows in the ERASMUS Programme. Austria is also one of the countries with the highest national participation in the programme. It is (with a 1.66% rate of ERASMUS outgoing students) among the top 4 countries with the highest national involvement in the programme in 2009/10 after Liechtenstein, Malta and Spain.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ This means that for every 1 000 Austrian students studying in Austria there were 65 Austrian enrolled towards a degree abroad.

⁶¹ European Union 2011: 4.

8. Policy, measures and mobility realities

While Austria is not yet a country with a separate policy document entitled “the national policy for international student and staff mobility (or internationalisation)”, its very strategic approach to mobility throughout the past decades is certainly worthy of the label “policy”.

Many of its initiatives in the field of mobility were related to the country’s membership of the European Union, and, certainly most importantly, to its participation in the Bologna Process policy-making. National authorities intended to make Austria a good example in this context – the “good pupil” in implementing Bologna, as this was consistent with many domestic reforms that were deemed desirable by the BMWF. They have continuously taken an active role in implementing the process, despite internal criticism, both from the higher education institutions and from the students.

The instruments used to support international student mobility are clearly in line with the policy objectives and the observed mobility trends. Outbound credit and degree mobility are supported through appropriate financial means, the latter type of support being a rarity in the European context. So are incoming students (both credit and degree-seeking), despite the fact that Austria seems to want to limit the inflow of foreign degree-seeking students in the future. When it comes to student mobility, Austria has managed to re-establish itself as a key actor in Central and Eastern Europe, but it also makes good effort to reach new “markets”.

The fact that the country has set a national quantitative target for mobility well in advance of the Bologna and EU mobility benchmarks is also laudable. Admittedly, the target is perhaps a bit too ambitious (50%) and could use further clarity as to what type of outgoing mobility will be counted and how (which data collection system). At the moment, the data collection of universities speaks of a mobility level of 18%, while the ministry has counted separately 33% of graduates with a study abroad experience. Nevertheless, rather than following European trends, Austria has managed, in this particular area, to establish itself as a trend-setter. This benchmark, once clearly defined, will also have the advantage to provide a clear reference point for national policy evaluation.

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V. Cyprus

Queenie Lam, ACA

1. Background: General policy context

The history and geopolitical context of Cyprus have a significant impact on the internationalisation of higher education and student mobility, which are closely associated with the past and present political ties of Cyprus and its geographical location. Therefore, before delving into the topic of national policy for mobility, it is important to know the general policy context in Cyprus.

Cyprus is a small island-state (9 251 km²) in the European Union (EU) with 804 435¹ inhabitants. It is situated at the south eastern tip of the European Union, detached from continental Europe but centrally located at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. With a small population and a strategic location, Cyprus was occupied by different superpowers including the Ottoman Empire and then the British Empire until 1960, when it became independent from British colonial rule. The independent island state, however, was soon divided into two parts in 1974, when Turkey occupied 36% of the island's territory in the north.

The Turkish-controlled area declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983, a status recognised only by Turkey. The southern part of the island controlled by Greek-Cypriots – the Republic of Cyprus, which has been internationally recognised for its *de jure* sovereignty over the entire island became a full member state of the European Union in 2004. Despite the many attempts to reunify the divided parts of Cyprus, including at the time when Cyprus joined the European Union as a member state, the “Cyprus Problem” remains to be resolved. The capital of Cyprus, Nicosia, where most universities in Cyprus are located, is still divided by the “Green Line” – a ceasefire demarcation border.

It must be noted, however, that the tension between southern and northern Cyprus is more a political issue than a military one nowadays. Since 2003, travel restrictions between the north and south have been eased, enabling virtually free flow of people between the north and south. There are now Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots who travel across the border for employment, business, tourism as well as education. Nevertheless, when it comes to political stances there remains a clear divide. For example, universities in the Turkish-controlled area are declared “illegal”² by the Republic of Cyprus and a “warning message” has been widely publicised through official channels.

¹ Total population in Cyprus as of 1 January 2011 (population in the Greek-speaking community only). EUROSTAT (2011).

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus. (2011).

In the EU context, it is also clear that EU laws and benefits apply only to the Greek Cypriot community in the south, but not the Turkish community in the north. There is hope that the “Cyprus Problem” could be resolved in the course of Turkey’s negotiations for accession to the EU. However, before that happens, “Cyprus”, in the EU context normally refers to the Greek Cypriot community in southern Cyprus only. In light of this, we will also only analyse the higher education system in the Greek Cypriot community of Cyprus in this study, although we are aware of the existence of another higher education system in the Turkish community.

2. Development of higher education and mobility policy in Cyprus

2.1 The absence of university-level education until 1992

Following its independence from the British colonial rule in 1960, the Cypriot government cooperated closely with international organisations such as the UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in developing post-secondary education. Most of its public non-university institutions (e.g. the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus, the Higher Technical Institute, and the Cyprus Productivity Centre) were the results of joint projects between the Cypriot government and these international organisations. These post-secondary institutions, as well as those established during the colonial era (e.g. the Nursing School, the Police Academy of Cyprus) and some other private post-secondary institutions fell short of developing into universities, however.

The first university in Cyprus – the University of Cyprus was only established in 1989. It started to admit its first undergraduate students in 1992 and its first postgraduate students in 1997, i.e. more than 30 years after Cyprus became independent from British colonial rule. While the colonial background may explain the late start of Cyprus in establishing a university of its own, the political turmoil following its independence³, as well as the cost-efficiency to send its limited number of degree-seeking students abroad instead of developing its own universities, were influential factors delaying the development of universities in Cyprus.

Before the University of Cyprus opened its doors non-university institutions in the public and private sectors offering professional and vocational training were the only options for high school leavers who chose the path of further studies. Those who wanted to obtain a university degree had no other

³ Sectarian conflicts between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus in 1974.

choice, but to look for external opportunities in countries such as Greece or the United Kingdom (UK), which have close political ties with Cyprus.

As a result, Cyprus has developed a long tradition in outgoing degree mobility with constantly over 55% of a single cohort of Cypriot students enrolled in tertiary education⁴ institutions abroad. This tradition has been sustained until the most recent academic year, 2009/10,⁵ when the percentage of Cypriot high school leavers going abroad for tertiary education dropped to a record low of 48.7%.

2.2 EU accession and a policy shift to compete in external markets in 2004

The recent drop in the share of outgoing degree mobile students of the total Cypriot student population is not unexpected. Rather, it is related to a deliberate shift in the national policy of Cyprus, announced in 2004. For Cyprus, 2004 is a watershed in the country's development in many aspects. It marks its accession to the EU, opening the EU market to Cypriot business services and the Cypriot market to other EU member states. It also marks the beginning of a structural education reform that aims to expand the capacity and upgrade the quality of education in Cyprus. While it is difficult to establish a causal relationship, these two developments are closely associated, at least at discourse level, as evident in the *Strategic Development Plan 2004-2006*⁶ released by the *Planning Bureau of Cyprus*.

In the strategic plan, "private tertiary education" was identified as one of the Cypriot business services with a favourable prospect on the large internal market of the EU. However, it was also found that the limited possibilities for tertiary education in Cyprus constituted a weakness for the competitiveness of Cyprus. The development of tertiary education in the private sector and of research capacity in the public sector, were therefore identified as a priority in the national development of Cyprus under the policy framework of "human capital development" and "enhancement of competitiveness". It was in this strategic plan that the aspiration of Cyprus to develop itself into "a regional educational centre" first entered the national policy discourse and the outward orientation of exporting Cypriot higher education services was first displayed.

⁴ Tertiary education and higher education are used interchangeably in the official documents in Cyprus covering the universities and public/private non-university institutions. The same principle is adopted in this study.

⁵ The share of *Cypriot students abroad to total Cypriot students in Cyprus and abroad* was above 55% until 2008/09 when it dropped from 55.7% in 2007/08 to 51.5% in 2008/2009 and 48.7% in 2009/2010. CYSTAT, (2011b).

⁶ Planning Bureau, Republic of Cyprus (2004).

2.3 First stage of the structural higher education reform – expand and upgrade

According to the 2004 Plan, “a qualitative upgrading and a quantitative expansion (of tertiary education) should be pursued, aiming at contributing, at a first stage, towards satisfying the Cyprus economy needs in highly educated personnel, and at a second stage, the promotion of exporting tertiary educational services.” There is, however in this strategy no clear indication of the timeframe for the “first stage” and the “second stage”, or specific targets that should be achieved in these two phases.

Presumably, the “first stage” started in the public sector in 2002/03⁷ when legal frameworks were provided for the establishment of two more public universities, and in 2004/05⁸ in the private sector, when a law regulating the operation of private universities was enacted and the evaluation and accreditation bodies for private universities were created. These initial steps laid the ground for a drastic increase in the number of universities in Cyprus, largely done through merging and upgrading the public and private non-university institutions. By 2007, five new universities opened their doors to undergraduate students in Cyprus.

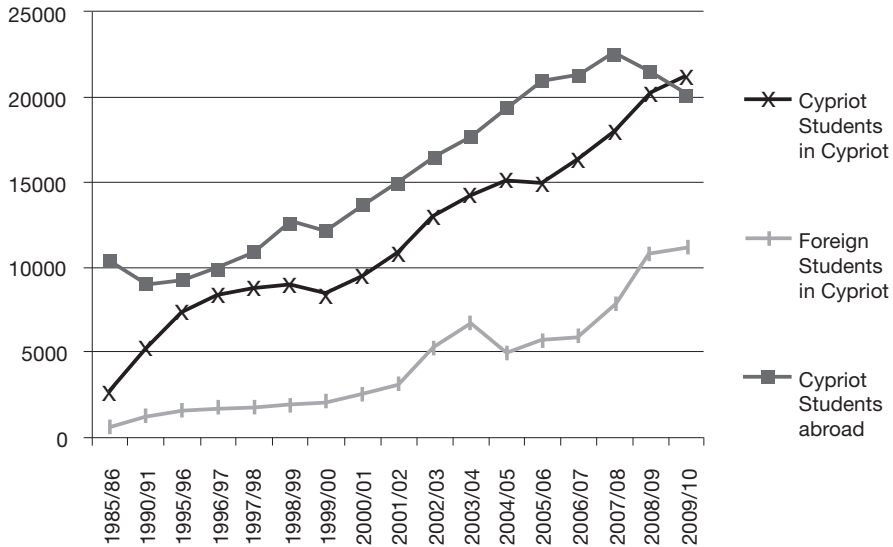
The rapid increase in the number of universities in Cyprus did not cause, though, an immediate drop in the number of outgoing degree students in 2007/08. The effect of the internal expansion appeared in 2008/09 and 2009/10. In that year, a continuous drop in the absolute total number and share of Cypriot students studying abroad (with the exception of those going to the UK), as well as a parallel jump in the number and share of Cypriots and foreign students studying in Cyprus⁹ were recorded in national statistics (see Figure 1).

⁷ Steps were also taken in 2002 and 2003 to expand the public sector by providing the legal frameworks for the establishment of new public universities, namely the Open University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology. The two universities began to admit students at around the same time as the private universities – in September 2006 and September 2007 respectively. This led to a substantial increase in the number of university-level study programmes within Cyprus since 2007/08. Ministry of Education and Culture (2009, 2010).

⁸ The Law 109 (I) 2005, which regulates the establishment of private universities, was enacted in July 2005 by the House of Representatives. An Evaluation Committee for Private Universities (ECPU) was also appointed by the Council of Ministers in the same year to evaluate the applications for the establishment of private universities. These steps have laid ground for the operation of the first three private universities namely: the Frederick University, the European University Cyprus, and the University of Nicosia in 2007, as well as the fourth one, the Neapolis University – Cyprus, in 2010. Ministry of Education and Culture (2009, 2010).

⁹ The number of Cypriot students in tertiary education abroad increased continuously in the past decade until 2008/09 when it dropped from 22 530 in 2007/08 to 21 473 in 2008/09, and further to 20 051 in 2009/2010. Meanwhile, the number of Cypriot students in tertiary education in Cyprus experienced a significant jump from 17 936 to 20 221 in 2008/09, and the number of foreign students from 7 752 to 10 765. CYSTAT (2011b).

Figure 1: Cypriot and foreign students in Cyprus and Cypriot students studying abroad



Source: Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT)

The changes in the mobility flows in Cyprus described above could be attributed to the national strategy and the structural reform kicked off in 2004. However, before concluding that the first stage of the structural reform has now achieved its end, one must be aware that the drop, or potential drop, in the number of Cypriot students studying abroad could also be the result of external factors, such as the financial and political instability in Greece or the substantial tuition fee increase in the UK, both of which are popular study destinations of Cypriot students. Besides, the qualitative impact of the plan remains to be seen after the first cohort of students from the new universities graduated in 2011. It is, therefore, too early to conclude that Cyprus has achieved the end of the “first stage”, as planned in the strategic document of 2004.

2.4 Second stage of the structural higher education reform – to export

According to the strategic plan of 2004, the second stage of the structural reform is to export tertiary education services. However, based on the analysis of information available and input of the interviewees, Cyprus has been exporting private tertiary education services long before the first stage took place. The export involves a group of private institutions of tertiary education (PITE) which have a tradition in attracting foreign students, mainly from former British colonies like India and Bangladesh, for English-taught programmes at diploma and higher diploma levels (ISCED 5B). Today, such institutions offer also 4-year undergraduate courses that lead to the award of Bachelor qualifications (i.e. BA, BSc) and 1-year to 2-year postgraduate programmes of study that lead to the award of a Masters qualification (i.e. MA, MSc).¹⁰ The vast majority of foreign students in Cyprus was enrolled in the PITE sector (79.7%)¹¹ in 2007/08. This outnumbered the percentage of foreign students enrolled in private universities (11.2%), public universities (8.7%), and public non-university institutions (0.4%).

Compared to the young University of Cyprus, some institutions in the PITE sector were established in as early as the 1960s i.e. before the university opened its door to Cypriot students. In 2005, legal framework was provided to “upgrade” a selected few of such institutions into private universities (e.g. Cyprus College to European University of Cyprus, and Intercollege to University of Nicosia). However, the majority of them (23 institutions, as of 2010) stay registered as private non-university institutions even though they may also offer programmes up to the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.¹²

As regards the export of education services, the role of these private institutions is expected to increase with the further opening of the Cypriot higher education market to other EU higher education providers.¹³ In 2011, a few institutions in the PITE sector have started to offer study programmes awarding foreign degrees in Cyprus. For example, Global College is offering programmes with degrees awarded by the University of Wolverhampton, and Alexander College is offering programmes with degrees awarded by the University of Wales. Such possibilities for the PITE sector to “upgrade” itself by offering degrees awarded or validated by foreign universities have injected fresh impetus for the development of the private non-university sector.

¹⁰ EURYDICE (2011b).

¹¹ Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (Eds.) (2011).

¹² Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Cyprus (2010).

¹³ EUROPA Press releases RAPID (2009).

Despite the dynamism, of the PITE sector in attracting foreign students the strategic plans of 2004-2006 and 2007-2013 in Cyprus and the documents of the Ministry for Higher and Tertiary Education tend to ignore or mention only in brief the development of this specific sector in Cyprus. Instead, the focus of the national plan to “export tertiary education services” has been placed on the university sector, which attracts more Cypriot students than foreign students. The lack of planning for and support given to institutions in the PITE sector, as will be discussed later, further demonstrates that the priority of the Cyprus government is exporting “university education” rather than “tertiary education” as a whole.

2.5 Promotion of Cyprus as a regional centre for education – a goal or policy?

Similar to the actual export of tertiary education services via the PITE sector, the discourse of developing Cyprus into a “regional educational and research centre” precedes the completion of the first stage and has been developed in parallel with the expansion of the system from 2004. Many institutions in the PITE sector have been using this national goal in their promotional materials. The goal is widely promoted also via official channel by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, such as the website Cyprus Higher Education and the publications *A guide to education in Cyprus* and *Higher Education in Cyprus*, all of which are targeting foreign students.

In the interviews conducted during the site visit to Cyprus, the majority of the interviewees had cited this goal of Cyprus, in addition to examples of the rapid expansion of the university sector, as “the national policy” of higher education in Cyprus. Most interviewees, however, were not aware of any specific national policy document that guides the development of Cypriot higher education sector towards this end.

The absence of a specific and comprehensive national policy for higher education or mobility, despite the ambitious goal of Cyprus to develop into a regional centre for education and research, could be explained by the fact that higher education is closely tied with the economic development of the country. The higher education sector is not only expected to contribute to the development of human capital but also the competitiveness of the economy through research, innovation and export of “private tertiary education services”. Policies concerning higher education mobility and research can thus only be found as a subset of economic policies and plans released by the Planning Bureau.

In this sense, Cyprus does have some goals in developing its higher education, despite the absence of a detailed stand-alone national policy for higher

education. The internal capacity of Cyprus' higher education system has increased substantially with the opening of additional (six) universities between 2006 and 2011. It is, however, doubtful if the next steps in the higher education development in Cyprus – quality upgrade and service export – could be achieved with the continuing absence of a national higher education policy. The following sections shall shed light on this, by analysing various aspects in the development of mobility in Cyprus.

3. Rationales for supporting mobility

3.1 Outwards mobility to make up for insufficient internal capacity

Associated with the lack of internal capacity is the national support for outgoing degree mobility. Before the University of Cyprus opened its doors in 1992, supporting outgoing degree mobility was the only way for the Cyprus government to fulfil its manpower needs and its constitutional obligation¹⁴ of providing higher education opportunities for qualified Cypriot students. Initially, it was therefore not a policy choice, but a need-driven imperative that contributed to the development of outgoing degree mobility in Cyprus.

Today, with the three public and four private universities, the outgoing mobility tradition in Cyprus is expected to be reversed. However, the percentage of Cypriot students enrolled in tertiary education institutions abroad remains high, at about 50% in the academic year 2009/10.¹⁵ That said, while the provision of university study opportunities at home has increased, the “tradition” of Cypriot students going abroad for tertiary education remains strong. Possible reasons gathered from various reports and interviews: 1) portable national scholarships and financial aid for Cypriot students studying abroad¹⁶; 2) the lack of study opportunities for certain disciplines in local universities, such as medicine and law¹⁷, which were only introduced into the Cypriot

¹⁴ Article 20 of the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus stipulates the right for every person to receive and give education, and the right of parents to secure for their children education in conformity with their religious convictions. EURYDICE. (2011d): 6.

¹⁵ The share of *Cypriot students abroad to total Cypriot students in Cyprus and abroad* was above 55% until 2008/09 when it dropped from 55.7% in 2007/08 to 51.5% in 2008/2009 and 48.7% in 2009/2010. CYSTAT (2011b).

¹⁶ The government of Cyprus provides an annual grant to the families of students studying in Cyprus or abroad, and this subsidy (€ 1 708 and € 2 562, if fees are paid) is portable. Also, the Cyprus State Scholarship Foundation provides portable grants to high calibre students that can be used for studies at the universities in Cyprus or abroad. Bologna Secretariat (2009).

¹⁷ The University of Cyprus (UCY) first introduced an undergraduate programme in Law in September 2008. In the same year, legislation regarding the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine at UCY was passed and it is expecting to admit the first medical students in 2013. Bologna Secretariat (2009).

higher education system recently; 3) the influence of educated Cypriot parents, who used to obtain their degrees abroad, on their children's choices of study destination; and 4) the uncertainty over the recognition of degrees awarded by the private universities and new public universities, most which will only have their first cohort of graduates in 2011.

In short, the need to support outgoing mobility to make up for the lack of internal capacity in the early years, and still, in professional disciplines today, has created a deep-rooted tradition in Cyprus for outgoing degree mobility. This tradition, while expected to change, remains strong for the moment.

3.2 Higher education export as a new source of income

Cyprus has identified the export of higher education services as one of the new pillars to support its economic growth. Counting on, its long "tradition" of mobility, and the international connections it has established through student mobility in both directions, Cyprus aims at attracting students from the Middle East, Egypt and Eastern Europe, by dramatically expanding its higher education system, in particular the private sector.

The economic considerations in expanding the Cypriot higher education system and attracting more incoming degree students is clearly spelt out in the Planning Bureau's Strategic Development Plan 2004-2006 and the new one of 2007-2013, which has outlined the following measures:

"Enhancing the attractiveness of higher education to foreign students by importing a number of foreign students with accredited educational profiles and economic capacity to cover their expenses and by giving out scholarships to first-rate foreign students. Conducting a market survey regarding supply and demand of higher education and innovation sectors in neighbouring countries and using the English language in teaching."

The price structure outlined in the EURYDICE study¹⁸ further suggests the commercial and outwards orientation of the Cypriot higher education system. While the Cypriot government pays for the fees of Cypriot and EU undergraduates enrolled in public universities and no tuition fee is charged in public non-university institutions, in which most of the students are local Cypriots, third country students have to pay a substantial amount of tuition fee ranging from € 3 417/semester in regular public universities to € 7 000/year at private institutions.

¹⁸ EURYDICE (2011d).

Therefore, at the national policy level, the economic incentive to attract incoming degree students seems to have overtaken in recent years the pragmatic consideration of prioritising outgoing degree students as government's major rationale for supporting mobility. In terms of credit mobility and of mobility supported by EU programmes, the political consideration to integrate Cyprus into the European community dominates, however.

3.3 International engagement as a means to safeguard national independence

Even though Cyprus is a relatively new member of the EU, its involvement in European programmes dates back to 1980. Cyprus was one of the first countries to adopt the EURYDICE project to support the development of policies and cooperation at European level. Furthermore, it joined the Socrates Programme in 1997, the ERASMUS Programme in 1998/99, and the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in 2000, prior to its accession to the EU in 2004. Though not being an original signatory of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, it joined the Bologna Process in 2001 as one of the signatories of the *Prague Communiqué*, signalling its support for increasing the mobility and employability of European higher education graduates. In 2007, it also signed the Treaty of Lisbon, which was ratified in 2008 and has since then begun to influence Cypriot national policies.¹⁹

As commented by one of the interviewees, Cyprus has signed “all kinds of agreements” for international cooperation. Such agreements in turn exert influence and, at times, pressure over the higher education system in Cyprus.

According to the ET2010 Progress Report of 2005, “the priorities agreed under the Copenhagen and the Bologna processes have been a key factor in guiding change and development” in Cypriot higher education. The adoption of the two-cycle degree structure, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS), are quoted as examples of such influence. Moreover, the international studies in which Cyprus participated, such as EURYDICE and TIMSS studies, are said to have exerted influence on education policies in Cyprus “as a result of the public dialogue which these studies usually raise in Cyprus”.

While it is difficult to prove whether public dialogue over European policies has influenced the national policies in Cyprus, the site visit and analysis of the official information sources confirm that the perceived influence from the EU is viewed in a positive light among the Cypriots in general. This is partly because Cyprus has been performing relatively well in higher education, at

¹⁹ EURYDICE (2011d).

least on numerical terms, among all the EU member states, and partly because of the urge of Cyprus to position itself well in the European Union, due to its sensitive geopolitical situation.

This open and welcoming attitude of Cypriots towards EU policies and programmes does not necessarily imply active participation of Cyprus in European programmes, or immediate, full compliance to EU regulations, however. Administrative obstacles and restrictive legal frameworks within which universities operate have stopped Cypriot universities from participating fully in European programmes. For example, Cyprus joined ERASMUS in as early as 1998/99 as a non-member state. For that, the Cypriot government had to contribute some 500 000 Cypriot pounds for the University of Cyprus to participate in the programme. This was quoted by the university as an example demonstrating the importance of mobility on the agenda of Cypriot policymakers. However, from the number of Cypriot students participating in ERASMUS throughout the years²⁰ and the timing when Cyprus joined the programmes, which was the beginning of accession negotiations between Cyprus and the EU, the early participation of Cyprus in EU programmes appears as more a symbolic political gesture than a national action to promote mobility in Cyprus.

4. Regulatory frameworks

4.1 Unified legal and quality assurance frameworks for HEIs

Cyprus has some 40 higher education institutions, if the PITE sector is taken into account. These institutions are typically grouped into four types: public universities (7), private universities (4), public non-university institutions (7), and private non-university institutions (26)²¹ and are governed by different laws. Similarly, the quality assurance measures applied to private and public institutions are different. To simplify the legal and quality assurance frameworks, two major reforms, namely the introduction of a new Unified Law for the Universities in Cyprus (Unified Law)²² and the establishment of a national quality assurance body called Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation

²⁰ Total number of Cypriot students participated in ERASMUS stays at a low level in the past one decade: 35 (1998/99), 129 (2006/07), 157 (2008/09). The number of incoming ERASMUS students is higher, but is negligible compared to incoming degree-seeking students: 14 (1998/99), 211 (2006/07), 394 (2008/09). Teichler, U., Ferencz, I. and Wächter, B. (Eds.) (2011).

²¹ Ministry of Education and Culture (2011).

²² The Minister of Education and Culture has appointed a specialist committee of university professors and high rank administrators with the objective of proposing a new unified Law for Higher Education. The specialist committee has already submitted its recommendations and the new law has been submitted to the parliament. EURYDICE (2011a).

Agency for Higher Education²³ are expected to be completed in 2011. These reforms are prompted by the dramatic expansion of the higher education system in Cyprus and are expected to address two major issues in mobility: 1) the lack of autonomy of Cypriot HEIs, especially private institutions, in recruiting foreign students; 2) the need to enhance the recognition of degrees conferred by Cypriot HEIs.

Although the Unified Law and the national quality assurance agency will deal with both the public and private sectors of the Cypriot higher education system, it is generally believed that they are introduced to up-lift the private sector by giving more flexibility and credibility to private HEIs which have a large disparity in terms of scale and quality. Such changes are deemed necessary, especially for the private institutions since they operate in a competitive environment for attracting mobile students from abroad and potentially mobile Cypriot students. Evidence supporting this view was found in the prescribed responsibilities of the national quality assurance agency, which relates mostly to private HEIs and transnational education rather than the quality assurance of public universities.

However, until the Unified Law and the national quality assurance agency go through all the legal procedures and become a reality, the private sector and public sector of the Cypriot higher education system are regulated separately, with little cohesion.

4.2 Strict immigration control over entry and re-entry of third-country students

Apart from the proposed Unified Law and the establishment of the national quality assurance agency, which have received high visibility in public policy discourse, immigration control and the regulation over the employment of foreign students during the periods of study in Cyprus are closely related to mobility development in Cyprus, as well.

In recent years, Cyprus has recognised a long-standing problem – the inflow of “non-genuine” foreign students from third countries whose “real and exclusive purpose” of entering Cyprus is to “stay and work in Cyprus”.²⁴ The inability of private institutions, which have been active in recruiting third country students, to verify the genuine purpose of such students has led to exceptionally strict immigration control and regulation over the employment of third country students in Cyprus.

²³ The Council of Ministers has proceeded with the establishment of the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education with its decision No. 66010 dated 5 September 2007. EURYDICE (2011a).

²⁴ Planning Bureau, Republic of Cyprus (2007).

Up to now, third country students applying to study in private non-university institutions are required to go through a rigid and costly application procedure.²⁵ The final selection process of such students is conducted by Cyprus embassies and consulates overseas and the officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose major concern is immigration control rather than the academic merits of the students. Due to time differences and the fact that there are not many Cyprus embassies and consulates abroad, the centrally-organised selection process has at times caused severe delays in the admission of third country students and therefore inconveniences for the private institutions, as revealed by some interviewees.

Similarly, immigration control has deterred the mobility of third country students after their enrolment into Cypriot HEIs, according to some interviewees. Despite that fact that the ERASMUS Programme has been opened to third country students enrolled in HEIs within the EU member states since 2009/10, the perceived difficulty for third country students to go through the visa application anew in order to re-enter Cyprus has deterred institutions from sending such students abroad. While one of the private non-university took the initiative to negotiate with the national agency to send abroad some Russian students via ERASMUS, other private institutions have not considered the option due to the perceived difficulty in supporting such applications and the potential complications that may arise if the students “disappear in continental Europe”.

Interviews with both government officials and institutional leaders in Cyprus have suggested that the situation of having recruited “non-genuine students” into Cyprus has changed over the past few years due to strict immigration control and increased efforts of institutions in tracking the attendance of students in classes. Such a change of perception could be attributed to the emergence of private universities in Cyprus and the national policy to attract qualified and financially sound students from third countries into upgraded private institutions. Nevertheless, suspicion over the quality of students recruited by private non-Universities and the students’ primary purpose of entering Cyprus remains strong, as demonstrated through the inconsistent practices regulating the employment of third country students in Cyprus.

²⁵ An example of admission procedure for international students: All governmental documents (Passport, School Certificates and Non-Criminal Record Certificate) should firstly be attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the student’s home country and then receive a diplomatic attestation by a Cyprus Embassy, Consulate or High Commission. Non-governmental documents should receive the following attestations: The Medical Examinations Report should firstly be attested by a notary public then by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then by a Cyprus Embassy, Consulate or High Com. The Bank Letter should firstly be attested by a notary public and then by a Cyprus Embassy, Consulate or High Commission. If any of the above documents is issued in a language other than English then an attested English translation must be attached to it.

4.3 Employment restrictions for third-country students

In order to attract third country students into the fast expanding private sector in Cyprus higher education, the Ministry of Education and Culture and individual higher education institutions have been promoting a welcoming image of Cyprus as a “regional centre for education and research” for talented students in their promotional materials and official presentations. Following the global trend in providing more work opportunities for students and combine work with study and thanks to the EU directive of 2007, the Alien and Immigration Law No. 184(I)/2007 concerning the employment of students from third countries was promulgated in Cyprus. This has been publicised as a change of policy in Cyprus and a new element in the attraction of third country students.

However, a close examination of the new law and the “specific sectors” in which third country students are permitted to take up part-time jobs reveals the deep-rooted mentality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance in regarding third-country students as low-skilled non-genuine students. As shown in Table 1 below, the jobs allowed for third country students are mainly manual work, which does not correspond to the objective of the EU directive to engage highly-qualified workers or with the objective of the Ministry of Education and Culture to make Cyprus an attractive destination for talented foreign students.

Table 1: Occupations allowed for employment of third-country students

No.	Economic activity	Employment
1	Industry – Repairs	Freight handlers in wholesale trade and labourers at petrol stations and car wash
2	Health – Social services	Care givers in homes for the elderly provided that the provisions of the relevant law are fulfilled
3	Household activities	Circumstantial work in households.
4	Manufacturing	Labourers in bakeries, in animal feed production, in waste recycling and night shift labourers
5	Agriculture – Husbandry – Fishing	Labourers in agriculture, fishing and husbandry
6	Other activities	Building cleaners
7	Catering	Delivery

Note (1) During the period 1st June – 15th October, the employment of students in the hotel/ catering sector is allowed for training purposes in accordance with current policy and practice.

(2) Students registered in recognised mechanical and electrical engineering courses will be allowed to be employed for practical training purposes, provided a relevant written training agreement is signed between the employer and the Educational Institution and has been approved by the Department of Labour.

Source: Alien and Immigration Law No. 184(I)/2007, Department of Labour, Cyprus

It is noted that the law does allow exceptions for students to undertake practical training related to their studies in summer months. According to one of the institutions which has a large population of third-country nationals enrolled in practice-oriented programmes such as hotel management, the exceptions do exist, but due to administrative delays of the relevant ministries, permits for the students to engage in practical training were sometimes issued when the planned internship period was over, rendering the exceptions *de facto* non-existent. In other words, over regulation coupled with the lack of administrative efficiency has created quite a challenging environment for the operation of private higher education institutions, whose development relies heavily on the attraction of third country students.

5. Foci of mobility in Cyprus

5.1 Outgoing vertical mobility to Greece and the UK

As mentioned above, outgoing degree mobility has been historically supported by the Cypriot government, due to the lack of internal capacity in higher education. To compensate for the lack of study opportunities within Cyprus, scholarships and national financial aid are made available also to degree-seeking students studying abroad. Compared to students who are studying in local public HEIs, which are tuition free, students studying abroad are awarded a higher amount of financial aid to study in countries where tuition fees are charged. Such a policy of “positive discrimination” in the allocation of national financial support to Cypriot students studying abroad has thus created a tradition of outgoing degree mobility.

Outgoing degree mobility from Cyprus to Greece has been systematically promoted at a national level through the Pancyprian Examinations, which are recognised by both Greece and Cyprus as a university entrance qualification. At an earlier stage, a quota equivalent to 8% of the study places in Greek HEIs reserved for Cypriot students. The 8% quota phased out after Cyprus’ accession to the EU in 2004. Cypriot students can now enrol as EU students in Greek HEIs as well as in HEIs in other EU countries including the UK, which is the second most popular study destination for Cypriots. Nevertheless, the number of Cypriot students going to Greece maintains at a high level of over 10 000 students/year.²⁶ The long-standing political and socio-cultural links between Cyprus and Greece explain the strong tie between the higher education systems of the two countries.

²⁶ The number of Cypriot students enrolled in Greek HEIs, mainly universities, has been on the rise from 6.158 in 1998/99 until 2008/09 when it experiences the first drop from 13 342 in 2007/08 to 11 752 and a further drop to 10 262 in 2009/10. CYSTAT (2011a).

Recent official statistics suggest that the tradition for Cypriots studying in Greece is being challenged, however. While maintaining its dominant position as the most popular study destination for Cypriot students, a significant and continuous drop in the number of Cypriots studying in Greek tertiary education institutions (23%) is recorded between 2007/08 and 2009/10.²⁷ The drop applies to all other destinations except the UK, which registered an increase of 15% during the same period of time.

Such a phenomenon could be attributed to the rapid expansion of the Cypriot higher education system, especially the private sector, which has been cooperating closely with UK institutions. Through the preparation of Cypriot students for top-up degree programmes in the UK and by offering programmes awarding degrees validated by UK institutions, such private institutions are more likely to channel the students to the UK or retain potentially mobile Cypriots in Cyprus for attaining a foreign degree at home. Moreover, until the higher education system in Cyprus runs in full capacity, i.e. provide all the professional disciplines necessary for the national development of the country, outgoing mobility to the UK, continues to be a necessity. The same applies for Greece, despite a significant drop in the absolute number of Cypriots studying in Greek institutions recently.

5.2 Incoming mobility from former British colonies – the “old market”

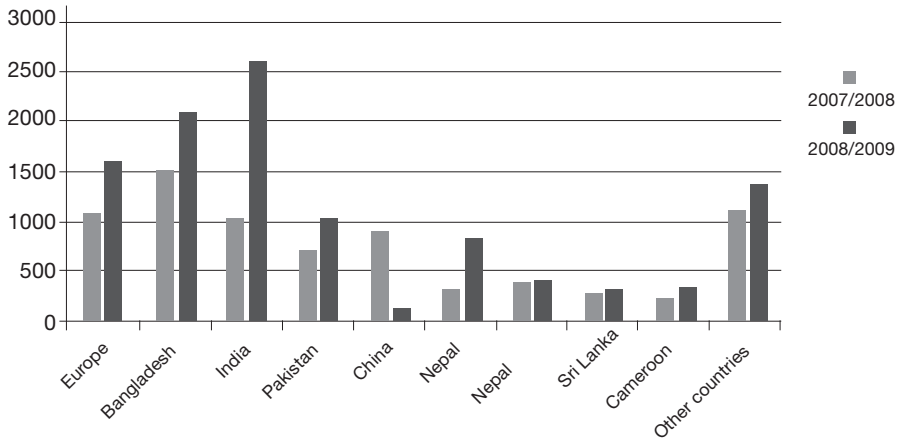
Cyprus is one of the European countries which have attracted a large number of foreign students into its higher education system. These foreign students are mainly enrolled in the private sector, especially private non-university institutions. Bangladesh was the most popular country of origin for such students followed by China, until 2008/09, when the number of Indian students overtook both Chinese and Bangladeshi students. An interviewee from a private university explained that some institutions have shifted their focus away from China due to increasing competition and decreasing return for their marketing efforts. There was no clear answer to the drastic increase of Indian students, however.

Nevertheless, the commonality between Cyprus, India, Bangladesh, as well as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Cameroon, as former British colonies, could be an explanation for the inflow of students from these particular countries into Cyprus' private higher education sector (see Figure 2). The Commonwealth network, the use of English as a common language, a similar degree structure (i.e. diploma, higher diploma awarded by non-university institutions and bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees awarded by universities), and the recognition of G.C.E (General Certificate of Education) or G.C.S.E (General

²⁷ CYSTAT (2011a).

Certificate of Secondary Education) credentials as entry qualifications of overseas students, do not only facilitate the outflow of Cypriot students to the UK, but also the inflow of students from former British colonies into Cyprus.

Figure 2: Number of Foreign Students by Country of Citizenship



Source: Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture – Annual Report, 2010

5.3 Incoming mobility from the “region” – the new market

Egypt is the country which led to Cyprus’ ambitious plan to develop into a “regional centre for education and research”, according to one of the government officials interviewed. The large population in Egypt and the lack of HEIs in the country imply a large potential market for Cypriot HEIs. Similarly, the growing demands in the Middle East and Eastern Europe promise a regional market for higher education services. Despite the lack of internal capacity, Cyprus boasts one of the highly educated populations in Europe in terms of literacy rate and education attainment level, and a highly international higher education system with a tradition in accepting third country students into its private HEIs and sending local students abroad. Therefore, it appeared possible and profitable for the Cyprus higher education to tap into the demands of the neighbouring countries and develop higher education services as an additional source of income for the country.

To respond to the new national goal of developing Cyprus as a “regional” centre for education and research, it is inevitable that Cyprus broadens the geographical scope of student recruitment or redirects its recruitment focus from Asia to its neighbouring countries. This is difficult to verify at a national

policy level because of the lack of a national policy document or strategic plan on mobility. However, from the promotional activities and scholarship programmes run by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the individual HEIs, it is possible to trace the geographical foci of mobility in Cyprus.

On the website of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture Cyprus Higher Education, the participation of Cyprus in the European Higher Education Fair in Asia and the organisation of Academia Egypt 2010 are highlighted as the promotional activities at the national level. These promotion activities coincide with the old and new geographical foci being identified by the government of Cyprus. Other than promotion activities, there is however no additional information on how the government helps in the recruitment of students from these regions.

Interviews with government officials and HEIs confirm the limited involvement of Cyprus government in facilitating the outreach activities of private HEIs, which play a more important role than public HEIs in driving the development of Cypriot higher education “industry”. As a result, the Cypriot HEIs may derive their own strategic focus which may align with or depart from the national goals and promotional agenda. Some interviewees said that Russia and Bulgaria are the new foci because of the growing economic ties. Some said there are currently joint programmes with institutions from the Middle East to promote Middle East Studies and with Mexican institutions to promote Greek studies. Some admitted that there is no particular geographical focus, as students tend to come from similar geographical regions due to established practices in students recruitment.

Based on the above, one may therefore conclude that there is no pre-set geographical focus for mobility at the national level despite the presence of clear trends for Cypriot students to study abroad in Greece and the UK, and for Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani students to study in Cyprus. Instead, the political and economic ties between Cyprus and these countries may provide an explanation. Besides, the institutional efforts in promoting mobility may better account for the geographical concentration of the origins of foreign students studying Cyprus than the national strategic goal set by the government at the time this study conducted.

6. Supporting instruments and practices for mobility

Given Cyprus’ aspiration to develop into a regional education and research centre, one may intuitively look to the private higher education sector in Cyprus when discussing mobility policies and support instruments, because the private HEIs have been attracting more foreign students than the public ones. However, private HEIs, universities and non-universities alike, claimed

that they have not received much practical support from the government, other than occasional information seminars. Some private HEIs reckoned the government's recent initiatives to organise promotion fairs within Cyprus and abroad, but some were not satisfied because private HEIs in Cyprus had to pay to participate in such fairs, while public universities were waived the charges. Private HEIs therefore see themselves neglected in the national efforts promoting Cyprus higher education and are now urging for more national support in overseas promotion and in signing agreements of mutual recognition with other countries.

When asked about this aspect, officials in the Ministry of Education and Culture explained that the Ministry found it difficult to cross-subsidise the operation of private HEIs with public funding, since private HEIs in Cyprus are profit-making, and they chose to be profit-making instead of non-profit when they were given the options. Nevertheless, the Ministry said that the state financial aid scheme which supports Cypriot students to enrol in accredited courses in both private and public universities has been indirectly subsidising the private sector. Besides, from the Ministry's point of view, it is more important to build up the quality and recognition of the private sector, which it has tackled through the structural reforms.

Indeed, this financial instrument has a significant impact on mobility development in Cyprus. Both the state scholarship scheme and the financial aid scheme are portable. Moreover, the amount of the grant given to students enrolled in overseas institutions and private HEIs is higher than those enrolled in tuition free public universities. With such financial support schemes, the Cyprus government has indirectly supported outgoing mobility at a national level by easing the financial obstacle for students to study abroad (or in the private sector). Recently, the government has though begun to use the merit-based state scholarships scheme to steer the mobility flow in Cyprus by offering scholarships to foreign students and reallocating more scholarships to qualified Cypriot students who decide to study in Cyprus.

Other than the financial instrument, which affects more the development of degree mobility, most frequently mentioned national instruments and practices supporting mobility are: wide adoption of Diploma Supplement and the ECTS system in both public and private institutions, provision of information about Cypriot higher education in different languages, and provision of training to administrative staff involved in mobility. The permission for private and public universities to establish joint degree programmes and offer transnational education programmes is a relatively recent development. While the permission has resulted from a change of national policies, the development of joint and transnational study programmes is, however, mainly driven by individual institutions.

7. Staff mobility

With the aspiration of developing Cyprus into a regional centre for education and research, the retention of recognised Cypriot scientists and the re-attraction of Cypriots from abroad have become a priority on the national policy agenda. The opening of the University of Cyprus in 1992 and the Cyprus University of Technology in 2007, and to a smaller extent, the upgrading of four private non-universities into private universities in the past five years, are major steps taken by the Cyprus government to create research and innovation capacity internally.

To speed up the building of research capacity in Cypriot universities, the Cyprus government has heavily relied on external networks in the EU and the US. The initial step was the establishment of the Research Promotion Foundation (RPF). Since its establishment in 1996, the RPF has been working to facilitate the creation of networks between Cypriot and foreign scientists and to promote the involvement of Cypriot scientists in European research programmes through signing bilateral agreements and participating in EU-wide research mobility networks such as EURAXESS.²⁸ Other steps taken were the establishment of an educational and research centre on public health jointly with Harvard University and the establishment of a “Cyprus Institute” to network with renowned research centers abroad. Both the centre and the institute provide also postgraduate study programmes.

The establishment of international networks is seen as a practical and efficient way to create research and innovation capacity in Cyprus due to the lack of a critical mass of Cypriot researchers as well as research infrastructure within the Cypriot higher education system. The risk of brain drain was mentioned in the Strategic Development Plan 2007-2010. However, Cypriot higher education remains open to international mobility of researchers since a seclusion policy is seen as counterproductive in retaining talented scientists in the small and young higher education system in Cyprus. Outgoing mobility of researchers in universities is financially supported as part of the institutional research policy²⁹ and incoming mobility of researchers, especially those of Cypriot origin and those from neighbouring countries in the Middle East and North Africa³⁰, is strongly encouraged. In this respect, one may say that a balanced mobility in the form of “international networks” has been fa-

²⁸ RPF is the service centre of EURAXESS in Cyprus. EURAXESS is a network of more than 200 centres located in 35 European countries providing free services to facilitate the relocation of European researchers and their families. Research Promotion Foundation, Cyprus (2008).

²⁹ European Commission (2005, 2007).

³⁰ Planning Bureau, Republic of Cyprus (2011).

voured in the national research policy of Cyprus despite the fact that there is an urge for brain gain and the worry about brain drain in Cyprus.

Apart from the mobility of researchers, the mobility of administrators and teachers takes place in the context of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme and was frequently mentioned by the interviewees of both public and private institutions. According to EURYBASE³¹, 85 teaching personnel participated in ERASMUS teacher mobility and 13 experts in education and training policy participated in study visits organized at the EU-level in 2008/09. Compared to student mobility, which has a strong third-country dimension, staff mobility, especially non-research staff, is much smaller in scale and it takes place mainly through participation in EU programmes.

8. Actors involved in agenda setting and policy implementation

In Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Department for Higher and Tertiary Education are primarily responsible for the management of higher education. However, the overall strategic planning of education at the national level is the responsibility of the Planning Bureau, which establishes key objectives for the sector, in line with other national development goals. Specifically in the area of mobility, the Planning Bureau was the one that started the ERASMUS Programme in Cyprus, which was later handed over to the Ministry of Education and Culture where the programme was administered until the establishment of the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes in 2007. Together with HEIs, particularly the University of Cyprus, the Foundation is mainly responsible for credit mobility in Cyprus. The proportion of credit mobility, is however, very small in comparison to degree mobility.

The ministry that is crucial in directing the degree mobility flows in Cyprus is the Ministry of Finance. Through the state scholarship scheme and financial aid scheme, its financial instruments steer the flow of mobility by setting the quotas and priorities of subsidies allocated to Cypriot students opting for different types of HEIs. Working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance is the Cyprus State Scholarship Foundation (IKYK), which administers the merit-based state scholarship scheme.

When it comes to the attraction of third country students, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its foreign diplomatic missions, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance are frequently quoted when obstacles are concerned. The lack of coordination between these Ministries and the Ministry of Education and Culture has resulted in overlapping, and

³¹ EURYDICE. (2011c).

sometimes contradictory, administrative efforts and thus delays which make the operation of private HEIs difficult in a competitive global environment. To further complicate the picture, the relationship between the private HEIs and the Ministry of Education and Culture does not seem to be close enough for the Ministry to reflect the views and difficulties of the private HEIs to the other ministries. In fact, the Ministry of Education and Culture is hesitant to support the for-profit private HEIs with state funding.

In contrast with the unwelcoming immigration and employment regulations set up by the different ministries, the interviewees saw the tightening of quality assurance and accreditation measures in a positive light. They unanimously agreed that quality assurance measures will increase the credibility of Cypriot HEIs and therefore help in the attraction of foreign students and local Cypriot students. Moreover, through accreditations, it is possible for them to benefit from state financial aid indirectly, because the students enrolled in accredited programmes are entitled for such aid regardless of the type of institution. The establishment of the national quality assurance agency is therefore seen as a positive national action by both the institutions and the Cyprus government.

Last but not least, the student unions of Cypriots studying abroad and the Pancyprriot Federation of Student Unions (POFEN – Pagkyprria Omospondia Foititikon Enoseon) play an intermediary role of reflecting the needs of the mobile students to the institutions and ministries. For example, when the Cyprus Ministry of Defence changed the conscription period from two years to one and the Greek institutions refused to register male students who, they thought, had to complete military service in Cyprus, the Cypriot student union in Athens was the one to ask the Ministry of Defence to clarify the situation with the Greek authorities. Another example is the planning of public transportation in Cyprus. Cyprus only introduced a public transportation recently, in 2010. Issues concerning the physical mobility of university students within Cyprus were raised by the student representative in the consultation of the Ministry of Transportation. As a result, one of the bus terminals was located at the University of Cyprus. However, the success was limited as the same convenience was not made available to other universities despite the students' suggestion.

An overview of the interplays between above described actors in Cyprus suggests a fragmented and un-coordinated approach of internationalisation in Cyprus higher education. To a large extent, the Ministries are working independently from each other and independent of the needs of those they are serving. There is a clear national aspiration for Cyprus to develop into a regional centre for education and research. However, such an aspiration did not come with a detailed national plan, but only with a few paragraphs outlined in the Planning Bureau's strategic plans. This leaves room for signifi-

cantly different interpretations of the national goal by different stakeholders and the possibility of window-dressing in order to comply with regulations at the national and international levels.

9. Conclusion

Strictly speaking, Cyprus does not have a national policy for higher education despite the existence of some directions outlined in the Strategic Development Plans issued by the Planning Bureau and the widely promoted national goal to develop Cyprus into a “regional education and research centre”. In the strategic plan of 2004, two major phases in the development of Cypriot higher education, namely expansion and export of higher education, were announced. The Cypriot university system experienced a rapid expansion in the years following the plan, with the addition of five more universities by 2007. While the expansion of the university system has catered for the increasing demand of local Cypriots for higher education, thus decreasing outgoing degree mobility, the export of higher education service by private universities has not taken off when compared with the private non-university institutions, which account for the intake of some 80% of the foreign students in Cyprus. In other words, while the export of higher education is planned to take place after the expansion of the university system, assuming that the attraction of foreign students lies on the development of the university system, the private non-university institutions have been exporting higher education in parallel with the rapidly expanding university system. In other words, the expansion of the Cypriot university system and the export of higher education have taken place with minimal planning by the government.

As a small and open economy, Cyprus regards higher education as the new economic pillar. Higher education policy is therefore a subset of economic policy under the frameworks of increasing competitiveness through research and innovation, and developing human capital to serve economic needs. Moreover, the export of services, including higher education services to the EU market and neighbouring emerging markets in the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe has been identified as a possible source of income. Driven by the economic incentive, incoming mobility from third countries currently tops the national policy agenda while the promotion of outgoing mobility through portable grants has been restrained through reallocation of funding. These developments are in line with the broad policy goal of the country to keep Cypriot students at home institutions and attract foreign students to Cyprus.

However, since there are no specific targets or foci guiding the development of Cypriot higher education towards the national goal of becoming a regional education and research centre, institutional practices, especially those in private non-university institutions, are influenced more by their “tradition” than

government policy. With their established recruitment practices, they continue to attract more students from Asia rather than the neighbouring countries. The practices of the different ministries dealing with third country students are also found to be relying on deep-rooted perception of foreign students being non-genuine students rather than the type of talented students that the country desires to attract strategically.

All in all, although the development of higher education has moved up the agenda of the national strategy and we note some visible results in the expansion of the university sector and the promotion of the country as an education and research centre, it is doubtful whether further development of the system, in terms of quality upgrade and export of service, could be achieved without a detailed national policy or action plan to align the interests of different institutions and ministries.

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VI. Germany

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1. German higher education system and student body

In Germany the federal structure of the state determines the responsibility for and jurisdiction over higher education. According to the Basic Law (Article 30), the individual *Länder* are responsible for the governance of the higher education sector, as long as there is no other regulation. The federal government has only a limited number of legislative competences and funding responsibilities with regard to higher education. However, it provides the general framework and basic principles governing higher education (Article 75, No. 1a, Basic Law) and is responsible for the Framework Act for Higher Education which the Higher Education Acts of the German *Länder* have to comply with. The *Länder* have introduced internationalisation strategies of their own to varying degrees.

In the winter semester 2009/10, Germany had a total of 409 state-recognised higher education institutions. There were

- 104 universities (*Universitäten*) and equivalent institutions of higher education;
- 6 colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*);
- 16 colleges of theology (*Theologische Hochschulen*);
- 51 colleges of art and music (*Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*);
- 203 universities of applied science (*Fachhochschulen*); and
- 29 colleges of public administration (*Verwaltungsfachhochschulen*).

According to the Federal Statistical Office (*Destatis*), the total number of students enrolled in German higher education stood at 2 121 190 in the academic year 2009/10. In the same year, about 245 000 foreign students were recorded, which corresponds to a share of 11.5% of the entire student body.¹ Among foreign students, 181 249 were inwards mobile students (*Bildungsausländer*) and 63 527 resident foreign students (*Bildungsinländer*). Since 1996/97, the number of inwards mobile and foreign resident students increased by 81.1% and 22.5% respectively.

Since 1998/99 the number of German study abroad students doubled and reached a new peak in 2008/09 with 102 800 study abroad students. This is a

¹ Since 1980/81 the number of foreign students increased fourfold (+424.1%). In the same period the number of all students increased twofold (+ 204.7%).

share of 5.8% of all national students enrolled in German higher education. A comparison of the share of foreign students among all students enrolled at a German higher education institutions and the share of study abroad students of all national students shows a clear imbalance of the mobility flows, with inbound mobility far exceeding outbound mobility.

With regard to staff mobility, the total number of foreign academic staff stood at 28 593 in the academic year 2009/10. This corresponds to a share of 9.5% of all academic staff in German higher education. Among the total foreign academic staff, 2 242 persons were foreign professors. The share of foreign of all professors in German higher education stands at 5.6%.

2. Milestones

Teichler (2007) distinguishes three distinct periods of internationalisation in German higher education. He refers to the period up to the beginning of the 1980s as the 'pre-systematic phase' (*vorsystematische Phase*), meaning that the choice of partner countries and the types of cooperative activities was not subject to strategic planning. This period was characterised by an "open doors" policy. Teichler's second phase runs from the beginning of the 1980s to the mid-1990s and is called the "first systematic phase". During this period internationalisation became more an object of systematic planning, especially through the onset of EU engagement for European higher education collaboration. The start of the ERASMUS Programme in 1987 is an important landmark in this respect. From 1996² onwards internationalisation became a central issue in German higher education policy. Internationalisation became increasingly important as a basis of legitimacy of higher education reforms since then. In the "second systematic phase", which reaches from 1996 until today, it became increasingly important to build up links with non-European countries. Internationalisation activities are now seen more often in the context of globalisation (BLK 1996). Nevertheless, the Bologna Process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) were important drivers for internationalisation of German higher education, too.

The most important rationale for supporting outgoing and incoming academic mobility is to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the German higher education system. This would appear to indicate that economic considerations have become increasingly important over the last 30 years, but is to a good degree a rhetorical change incoming and outgoing mobility are also still regarded as important foreign policy instruments, useful for build-

² In the context of the ERASMUS Programme the EU asked higher education institutions for the first time to formulate strategic concepts with regard to internationalisation activities/approaches.

ing and maintaining good relations with other countries. Another important function of academic mobility in the German context is to achieve knowledge gains and to strengthen knowledge production. At the national level, student recruitment policy is linked with the country's international trade, cultural and international development cooperation policies, and it has developed an integrated policy framework.

3. Rationales for supporting academic mobility and measurements

The main policy documents dealing with internationalisation and academic mobility were published from 1996 onwards. The first important document, *Studienstandort Deutschland attraktiver machen*, mainly dealt with the question for which reason and how to increase and enhance inbound degree mobility (Kinkel & Rüttgers 1996). According to the authors, inbound degree mobility has an important foreign policy and economic function and should therefore be increased. Considerations of competitiveness played a major role in this respect. At the time, Germany was worried about its reputation with and attractiveness for international (foreign) students, and there were fears of a brain drain of qualified doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows to the US (Teichler 2007). Germany had to position itself vis-à-vis the UK and the US, and to modernise its higher education system through degree and curriculum reforms. In the same year, the heads of the federal and state governments published the joint statement called *Steigerung der internationalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Studienstandortes Deutschland* (BLK 1996). The document stresses the importance of both inbound degree and outbound credit mobility for the internationalisation of German higher education, for the country's international competitiveness and for a strong "knowledge society". Thus, it is the aim to foster and enhance both incoming and outgoing mobility. 1996 also saw the launch of the first "Action Programme" of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), *Förderung des Studiums von Ausländern an deutschen Hochschulen*. In this document, the DAAD proposed various measures in order to reach and implement the goals which had been formulated in the two policy documents before.

In 1999, the heads of the federal and state governments published a follow up statement called *Stärkung der internationalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Studienstandortes Deutschland*. Internationalisation and academic mobility are seen as important drivers for modernising the German higher education system and to secure international attractiveness and competitiveness. Internationalisation is perceived to be the most important driver for higher education reforms in the context of the Bologna Process (e.g. reform of the study structure and degrees). International exchange of students and staff is seen as an important parameter of quality of education and teaching. Thus, inter-

nationalisation is also becoming to be viewed as a quality feature of higher education and higher education institutions.

In 2000, DAAD published its second Action Programme under the title *Stärkung der internationalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Studien- und Wissenschaftsstandorts Deutschland*. DAAD supports the idea that higher education reforms are the main drivers for increasing and enhancing internationalisation and international academic mobility. Internationalisation is seen as increasing the quality of education, teaching and research and thus as a strong argument vis-à-vis foreign students. Further, it is regarded as essential for securing the high quality of research in Germany. International research networks and the exchange of researchers are seen as vital for maintaining high quality standard in research.

Another follow up statement by the heads of the federal and state governments was published in 2001, *Stärkung der internationalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Studienstandorts Deutschland*. Once again it is emphasised that international competitiveness and international attractiveness (for foreign students and staff) are fundamental factors for the development of the whole higher education system and for each single institution. This encompasses a wide range of measures, such as the redesign of the degree structure, the allocation of funding, the development of new curricula, amongst others. Internationalisation is not only seen as a driver of reform in the higher education sector, but also influences the acquisition and administration of institutional funding, the modernisation and increased flexibility of public service law as well as the development of new opportunities to qualify the future academic labour force.

In 2002, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) published a document called *Bildung und Forschung weltweit – Innovation durch Internationalität*, which draws conclusion on what has happened so far and what are the future strategic issues related to the internationalisation of higher education. The ministry contextualises four developments, which have to be taken into account in order to innovate education and science in Germany. These developments are Europeanisation, globalisation, the presence of new media and the demographic development in Germany. According to BMBF, innovation cannot be achieved in isolation from Europe and the global level.

In 2004, DAAD published its third “Action Programme”, *Auf dem Weg zur internationalen Hochschule (2004-2010)*. In this context, DAAD positions itself in relation to the main political rationales and measures for increasing and enhancing internationalisation and international academic mobility. Both for inbound degree and outbound credit mobility DAAD suggest a number of qualitative and quantitative improvements. Further it puts internationalisation

(and mobility) efforts into Germany's wider role with regard to developing countries and emerging economies, and relates them to issues like skills shortages and brain drain. In its fourth "Action Programme", entitled *Qualität durch Internationalität. Das Aktionsprogramm des DAAD 2008-2011*, DAAD presents its main action lines according to the five strategic goals of DAAD.³ The document states that internationalisation has overcome its marginality and become a central concern of German higher education since the mid-1990s.

It claims that the higher education institution of the future will be either international, or cease to exist. In other words, internationalisation and international mobility are seen as essential for institutional survival.

In 2008, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) published a strategy document entitled *Internationalisierung von Wissenschaft und Forschung*. The document presents four strategic goals for the internationalisation of science and research, i.e.

- Strengthening research cooperation with global leaders;
- International exploitation of innovation potentials;
- Intensifying the cooperation with developing countries in education, research and development on a long-term basis; and
- Assuming international responsibility and mastering global challenges.

There are several sub goals which are related to supporting international academic mobility especially within the third overall strategic goal (e.g. Germany has to defend its position as the third most attractive country for international students, increase the attractiveness of Germany as a destination for foreign researchers and avoid brain drain from developing countries to Germany and from Germany to North America). Furthermore, it is discussed whether Germany needs foreign qualified staff in order to reduce skills shortages. The Federal Report on the Promotion of Young Researchers (BuWiN, 2008) is linked to the internationalisation strategy.⁴

³ Scholarships for young international elites to study or research in Germany (scholarships for foreigners), funding for young German professionals and managers to study and research abroad (Scholarships for Germans), Internationalising universities, promoting German studies, the German language and German regional studies at universities around the world, university cooperation with developing and transition countries, dialogue and crisis prevention.

⁴ Further important reports related to the R&D field are the 2010 *Federal Report on Research and Innovation (2010)* and the *Report by Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz Pakt für Forschung und Innovation 2011-2015*.

The Foreign Office's Research and Academic Relations Initiative of 2009 constitutes a more recent strategy supporting external cooperation in higher education. The initiative reiterates that international networking is essential if Germany is to remain at the cutting edge of research and technological progress in a globalised knowledge-based society. One of its key objectives consists in raising Germany's international profile as a centre of learning and research and promoting close cooperation with partners both in Germany and abroad.

At a practical level, the *Research and Academic Relations Initiative 2009* sets out to enhance the existing range of instruments for promoting academic exchange. Its priority action lines are to

- promote academic exchange and the establishment of an enduring network of academics and researchers;
- promote Germany as a study and research destination and attract the best minds by offering good scholarships;
- support cooperation between institutions of higher education and research institutes; and
- raise the profile of Germany as a home of science by maintaining a presence in key locations around the world.

4. Regulatory framework

Articles 91a and 91b of the Basic Law regulate the joint tasks of the Federal Government and the *Länder* with regard to (higher) education. Aspects of internationalisation, coordinated international marketing of higher education and policy formulation with a view to the GATS were added to the catalogue of joint tasks (Hahn 2004). Furthermore, the "European Article" within the Basic Law (Art. 23), which was added as a result of a change of the EU Treaty, regulates activities of the *Länder* with the EU. According to the Basic Law, the *Länder* have legislative power in higher education and science policy (*Landeshochschulgesetze*) within the frame laid down in the Federal Framework Act of Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*). Most Laws of the *Länder* comprise paragraphs on the fostering of internationalisation or international cooperation (*ibid.*). The funding and supervision of the higher education institutions, the majority of which are, is a competence of the 16 *Länder*.

Concrete measures for increasing and enhancing internationalisation and international academic mobility are generally implemented within three fields of action: internationalisation of education, teaching and research, advancement of the legal, financial and cultural framework in Germany and profes-

sional international higher education marketing. It is important to note that the type of national funding for academic mobility provided by intermediary organisations (such as DAAD) has undergone important changes in the past 30 years. While the bulk of funding was in the past provided directly to the mobile individual, today very considerable amounts are being provided to higher education institutions, who decide, with a view to their own strategy, whom to provide scholarships with and what kind of other measures to fund (such as international curricula).

The most important legal changes were the Fourth amendment of the Federal Framework Act of Higher Education, the adoption of a new immigration law, the setting up of coordinated and cooperative measures of higher education marketing on behalf of all academic institutions in Germany and a whole series of changes of the Federal law for student aid (BAföG).

Fourth amendment of the Federal framework Act of Higher Education

The most important measure aimed to increase the international attractiveness of German higher education was the fourth amendment of the Federal Framework Act of Higher Education (August 1998), its implementation in the *Landeshochschulgesetze* and the respective resolutions by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) in 1999. Through these legislative acts, institutions were allowed to introduce Bachelor and Master degrees. The reform of the degree structure was seen as highly important for increasing international competitiveness (Kinkel & Rüttgers 1996, BLK 1996). The introduction the Bachelor Master degree structure, the modularisation of curricula and the system-wide introduction of ECTS were judged, at the federal level, as essential in this respect (Hahn 2004).

Coordinated and cooperative higher education marketing (Konzertierte Aktion)

In order to increase and enhance internationalisation and international academic mobility within the German higher education system, stakeholders opted for systematic international marketing of German higher education. In its document entitled *Internationales Marketing für den Bildungs- und Forschungsstandort Deutschland* (2000), the so-called *Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung*, proposed the creation of an umbrella marketing campaign for Germany as a country for study and research, and to create the “Study in Germany” and the “Research in Germany” brands.

Immigration law and right of residence

In order to increase the attractiveness of Germany as a destination for incoming mobile students, immigration laws and rules pertaining to residence and work permits were adjusted. In 1990, the so-called “Aliens Act” was modified and supplemented in 1999 by a new regulation for the practical application of the law (BLK 1999). The result was easier access to Germany for study and research purposes, inclusive of employment. In 2002, the so called Aliens Act was replaced by the Immigration Law, which entered into force in January 2005.

Recognition of foreign degrees

The recognition of foreign degrees is an important means to facilitate inbound degree mobility. According to BLK (1999), the respective resolutions from the KMK have facilitated access to higher education. The number of foreign students with direct access to higher education has been expanded noticeably (*Studienkolleg, ZAB, Auswahlverfahren*).

Federal law for student aid (BAföG)

2001 saw substantial change to the Federal law for student aid (*BAföG – Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*). The amendment of the law introduced the portability of German state grants and loans to any publicly recognised university in the EU and beyond, on the condition that the recipient had been enrolled at a German higher education institution for at least one year (BMBF 2002). Earlier, rules for portability had been much more restricted.

In addition, a loan scheme, the *Bildungskreditprogramm*, allows students in advanced semesters to apply for an extra state loan, which can be combined with BAföG support, and which is also internationally portable, provided the programme studied abroad is “compatible” with similar ones offered at German higher education institutions.

In 2007, the Federal law for student aid (*BAföG*) was changed once again. According to the amended law, students on full degree studies in another EU member state are entitled to BAföG support for the whole duration of study. The amendment also introduced financial support for internships outside of Europe. Outside of the EU, up to one year of initial support, and a maximum of five semesters, could be provided for education and training.

The 2007 reform also aimed to improve the eligibility of BAföG support for foreign students in Germany. The reform introduced BAföG support for foreign students with a long-term residence permit who had stayed in Germany for a longer period already.

5. Main actors involved in the formulation of mobility strategies

The main actors involved in the formulation of internationalisation and mobility strategies are the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry for Education and Science and the Federal Ministry for Development and Cooperation, as well as the *Länder*. Further bodies for coordination between the federal ministries and the *Länder* play additional important roles in terms of strategic planning, such as the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK), the *Bund-Länder-Konferenz für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung (BLK)*, the *Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (GWK)* and the *Wissenschaftsrat (WR)*. Important umbrella organisations and intermediaries include, for higher education issues generally, the *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK)*, and, in the area of internationalisation, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the *Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH)*. The German Research Foundation (DFG)⁵ is the country's most important research council.

The federal state is responsible for foreign affairs and thus for cultivating international relations in the field of higher education. The responsibility of the federal level for foreign affairs, and the cultural sovereignty of the *Länder* have in the day-to-day routine established the necessity of a close cooperation based on partnership and mutual trust between the Federation and the *Länder*.

The considerable participation of the *Länder* in issues of foreign cultural policy, international cultural relations as well as European cooperation is organised through the *Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)* and in particular its coordination committee in this area, the *Committee for European and International Affairs*.⁶ The committee deals with basic questions of foreign cultural policy and coordinates the positions of the *Länder*.⁷

At federal level, three ministries and the Federal parliament (*Bundestag*) are the main actors in internationalisation and mobility. They include:

The *Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)* launched several activities and drafted strategy papers in order to strengthen the internationalisation of education and training (see above). It is responsible for the implementation of a wide range of political processes that aim at fostering cross-border cooperation in the field of higher education, such as the Bologna Process

⁵ In this context the following institutions should be noted as well: Helmholtz Gemeinschaft, Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Leibniz-Gemeinschaft.

⁶ Kommission für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten.

⁷ EURYDICE, Eurybase – Germany – (2006/07).

(together with the *Länder*) and the Initiative for Excellence.⁸ Moreover it funds, through the afore-mentioned intermediaries, several higher education external cooperation programmes and is monitoring the implementation of the main academic EU exchange programme – ERASMUS.

The Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) is involved in cooperation programmes with third countries. It focuses its support on scholarships for foreign students in Germany, while the BMBF is in charge of German students studying abroad. Furthermore, the *Auswärtiges Amt* supports capacity-building projects in higher education worldwide.

The *Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)* mainly supports capacity building in developing countries. It notably cooperates with *InWent*, a non-profit organisation specialised in worldwide operations dedicated to human resource development, advanced training and dialogue.

As already indicated, the above-mentioned ministries provide policy orientation and funding, but the actual implementation of policy is delegated to intermediary organisations. The most important one amongst these, and certainly in the field of student mobility, is the *German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)*. DAAD is a joint organisation of Germany's higher education institutions and is responsible for promoting international academic relations, primarily through the exchange of students, academics and researchers. For these purposes, DAAD runs a large number of scholarship programmes. It also assists the country's higher education institutions to internationalise structurally, through modern and attractive curricula, and it is the main actor in Germany's global higher education marketing campaign. And it advises the government on matters of mobility and internationalisation strategy. The DAAD's main objectives include:

- encouraging outstanding young students and academics from abroad to come to Germany for study or research visits;
- qualifying young German researchers and professionals at the best institutions around the world;
- promoting the internationalisation of Germany's universities and higher education institutions; and

⁸ The Initiative for Excellence launched in 2005 by the Federal Government and the 16 *Länder* fosters world-class research at universities. The initiative makes an important contribution to the internationalisation of German universities and increases their attractiveness to students and scientists from all over the world.

- supporting the developing countries of the Southern Hemisphere and the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe to establish efficient higher education structures.

These objectives are implemented in over 200 scholarship and other programmes that are predominantly publicly funded by the various ministries mentioned earlier, by foreign governments and by the EU. In addition, DAAD provides a number of services to support the international activities of German higher education institutions. These include information and publication programmes, marketing, consulting and support services, programmes aimed at raising the international profile and worldwide appeal of German higher education institutions. DAAD is also the National Agency for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme in the area of higher education (ERASMUS).

Another important player in the field of academic staff mobility is the *Alexander von Humboldt Foundation*, which provides highly selective scholarships for foreign researchers to pursue studies and research in Germany. The Foundation also supports German researchers to go abroad and establish international research networks.

6. Focus of the current student mobility policy

Rationales for supporting mobility

As is also the case in most other countries of Europe, inbound degree and outbound credit mobility are the types of international academic mobility given most prominence and regarded as a priority in the relevant German strategy documents. According to the online survey conducted for this study (which was completed by DAAD and BMBF) inbound degree mobility and outbound credit mobility are both ranked on the first position in terms of importance.

The main rationales for supporting inbound degree mobility were already touched upon earlier in this chapter. The most important reasons to support and encourage inbound degree mobility stated by German authorities when contacted in the framework of this study, which are likewise reflected in the major policy papers, are to

- increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of German higher education;
- build and maintain good relations with other countries (student mobility as a tool of foreign policy);
- help improve future economic cooperation (trade) with other countries;
- to create knowledge gain and to strengthen knowledge production.

Skilled migration (“reinforce the domestic work force”) and “internationalisation at home” are also mentioned, though less of a priority.

With regard to outbound credit mobility, the most important rationales mentioned by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to increase the competitiveness and/or attractiveness of the national system of higher education, for knowledge gain and to strengthen knowledge production, to present outgoing students with the opportunity to learn from diversity, to provide young professionals with strong “international and cosmopolitan qualifications”.

Geographical focus

The importance of the creation of a systematic network of cooperation’s between higher education institutions in Germany and outside of Europe was already emphasised by Kinkel and Rüttgers (1996) and within the first action programme of DAAD (1996). This applies especially to countries in Asia and Latin America and is in accordance with the governmental concept for the respective world region (e.g. Concept for Asia).

The non-European focus of the above document is, however, to be viewed against the background of already very strong academic links in Europe and Germany’s closer geographical vicinity. The focus on non-European regions is therefore to be seen as a complement (in times of globalisation) to a strong European orientation. This is also underpinned by the fact that a good share of outbound and inbound credit mobility is organised through the ERASMUS Programme, participation in which was limited to the EU member states, EFTA countries and Turkey. In addition, outbound and inbound credit mobility in the framework of bilateral and multilateral partnerships between German and foreign higher education institutions and a wide range of DAAD programmes, such as the New Passage to India or Go East.

Level of study

In the framework of a survey conducted for the present study, the German government stated that it attached equal importance to mobility at the Bachelor, Master and PhD level. Although Germany indeed supports – through its very dense system of scholarship and support programmes – inbound and outbound mobility at all academic levels, we were slightly surprised by the information provided by the government. Overall, we have identified in German mobility policy documents (as well as in the country’s marketing efforts) an increasing emphasis on postgraduate studies (Master and PhD), particularly in the case of (incoming) degree mobility. This shift in emphasis from the Bachelor level in the 1990s (when the Bachelor degree was anyway largely non-existing in Germany) to the Master level today is also reflected in the pro-

grammes established since by DAAD and other German organisation (*BLK 1999 Modellprogramm „Master plus-Programm“, BMBF 2002 Promotionskandidaten and Postdocs, DAAD 2004 & 2008*), as well as in all governmental policy documents of the last decade, such as the internationalisation strategy of BMBF (BMBF 2008), which proposes to put the focus of global marketing efforts at this level. This development also marks a shift from a quantitative to a more qualitative approach with regard to inbound degree mobility.

Quantitative targets

There are national quantitative targets for outgoing and incoming mobility, which were defined within the policy documents presented earlier in this chapter.

BLK 1996 aimed at increasing the number of incoming students especially at universities of applied sciences. Concrete shares and absolute numbers were presented by DAAD in the second Action Programme in 2000. It was the aim of DAAD to double the number of foreign students enrolled at a higher education institution in Germany until 2004.

Currently, it is the aim of the federal government that every tenth student enrolled at a higher education institution in Germany should come from abroad. As an interim target to be reached by 2012, there should be 300 000 inbound mobile students in Germany (DAAD 2008, BMBF 2008). This target applies for all types of mobility, there is no minimum duration defined. It comprises incoming mobility for studies, internships and other study and research related activities. The target is applicable to foreign students at all levels.

Regarding outgoing mobility, the federal government aims at a minimum, either for study, research-related activities or an internship of 50% of all higher education graduates. At least 20% (or two fifths of the 50%) should have studied for at least one academic term at a foreign higher education institution. An interim target, to be reached by 2012, is that 100 000 German students should study abroad annually (DAAD 2008, BMBF 2008). This latter goal has already been reached.

Support programmes and incentives

Germany employs a wide range of measures to foster student mobility (see earlier in this chapter). With regard to inbound degree mobility, the following measures exist, of course next to Germany's impressive range of scholarships:

- programmes taught in English;
- recognition of foreign entry qualifications;

- German language classes;
- marketing and recruitment;
- simplification (easing) of visa and residence regulations;
- permits for part and /or full-time work while enrolled;
- work permits to work after graduation to foreign students that graduated in Germany;
- good conduct codes at the national level to ensure a minimum level of service provision⁹;
- provision of funding for higher education institutions to improve their services to foreign students; and
- subsidies for accommodation.

With regard to inbound credit mobility most of the measures are in place as well.

Concerning outbound credit mobility, the following measures are in place, again next to the ample provision of scholarship programmes by DAAD (and other providers):

- portability of grants and loans;
- ERASMUS grants;
- support for the linguistic preparation of domestic students to study abroad;
- promotion campaigns for study abroad (Go Out!); and
- creation of “mobility windows” (i.e. study abroad periods integrated into the curriculum).

With regard to outbound degree mobility, most of these measures are also in place.

In collaboration with BMBF, DAAD launched a so-called “Bologna Mobility Package”, which is a series of programmes aiming to foster mobility in a structured way by implementing integrated exchange programmes, based on inter-university agreements, double-degree programmes, so-called Bachelor Plus programmes (4 years, of which one spent abroad), as well as mobil-

⁹ DAAD & HRK, *National code of conduct on foreign students at German universities*. http://ic.daad.de/accra/download/11_Code_of_Conduct_German_Universities.pdf.

ity programmes supporting “free movers”. With the help of additional BMBF funding DAAD also launched a new programme which aims at increasing outbound short term mobility at a large scale (PROMOS).

7. Staff mobility

Germany has national action plans to foster the international mobility of research, teaching and administrative staff in higher education. These are presented in the internationalisation strategy of BMBF and put into practice within the DAAD Action Programmes (most recent one *Quality through internationality – The DAAD Action Programme 2008-2011*), but of course, for researcher mobility, much more still in policy documents (and funding opportunities) of DFG, the *Alexander von Humboldt Foundation* and other research-oriented organisations. There is a wide range of programmes to foster the mobility of researchers and staff (*International Promovieren in Deutschland (IPID)* and *Bi-nationales Promotionsnetzwerk (PhD-Net)*).

Germany contributed to the European Commission’s Communication to the European Parliament and the European Council *Better Careers and More Mobility: A European Partnership for Researchers*. In this context, it provided insight into the national situation and national projects in the context of existing, extended or new measures and how to improve the career situation of researchers in Europe and how to increase the mobility of researchers. The German objectives and measures are based on the priority lines of action formulated in the Commission’s Communication:

- systematic and open recruitment;
- meeting the needs of mobile researchers with regard to social insurance and supplementary pensions;
- improving employment and working conditions in order to enhance the attractiveness of scientific careers; and
- improving the training, skills and experiences of researchers.

Important policy documents and initiatives include the *Federal Report on the Promotion of Young Researchers* and the *Information and Communication Platform for Young Researchers (KISSWIN)*.

Foreign academic staff at German higher education institutions

In 2009, 28 593 foreign employees were working at German higher education institutions. This corresponds to 9.5% of all staff at higher education institutions in Germany. Almost 6% of foreign academics and researchers are professors. 63% of the foreign staff is employed full-time.

Foreign academics and researchers receiving funding in Germany

A total of 29 757 foreign academics and researchers financially supported by 35 German scientific and research organisations spent time in Germany in 2009. This represents an increase in the number of funded visits by around 3 500 in comparison to the previous year (2008). The rise in funding opportunities is the result of intensified efforts made by organisations such as DFG (German Research Foundation), the Helmholtz Association, DAAD and the Max Planck Society in particular. Academics and researchers from European countries have seen the greatest increase in this respect, with this group accounting for one in two funded visits.

German academics and researchers receiving funding abroad

A total of 6 291 German academics and researchers funded by 26 scientific and research organisations spent time abroad in 2009. This marks a new record in the number of funded internationally mobile academics and researchers. Most of their funding was provided by DAAD and DFG, which finance over two thirds of the funded visits.

8. Policy measures vs. actual mobility trends

Mobility trends are mainly in line with national policies and respective measures. Recent surveys on international mobility reveal that both incoming and outgoing mobility is on the increase. In a ten-year comparison, we find that both the number of foreign students in Germany and of German students abroad increased noticeably, the latter even more strongly than the former. Between 1998/99 and 2008/09, the number of foreign students enrolled at German higher education institutions (foreign nationality and inbound mobile) increased by about 44%. In the same period, the number of study abroad students almost doubled (+95%).

As mentioned earlier, the relevant policy documents set up targets for incoming and outgoing mobility. With regard to incoming mobility, the government's aim is that every tenth student enrolled in German higher education should have a foreign nationality (BMBF 2008). In the academic year 2009/10, the total foreign enrolment stood at about 245 000, which corresponds to a share of 11.8% of the total student body. In other words, the 10% target set by the government has already been reached. The government does not intend to set a new level-unspecific overall target, but it intends to increase foreign enrolment shares of foreign Master and doctoral students. On top of that, counselling and support for foreign students already in the country is to be improved.

The *DSW/HIS Social Survey* (2010) asks foreign non mobile and foreign inwards mobile students, amongst others, which if and which difficulties they

encountered at university and in daily life. Most frequently, foreign inwards mobile students in Germany have difficulties finding their way through the study system (40%), financing their stay in Germany (39%) and getting in contact with German students (37%). Over time (i.e. compared to earlier editions of the survey), there are no noticeable changes except for the item orientation in the study system. Compared to 2003, the share of students who have problems in this regard increased about 6%. Around one third of all foreign inwards mobile students surveyed indicated big problems with finding accommodation. However, fewer foreign inwards mobile students reported problems related to work permits (2006: 26%, 2009: 23%) and the recognition of degrees and qualifications obtained abroad (2006: 25%, 2009: 21%). We should be aware that the DSW/HIS survey ultimately measures satisfaction, which is, by necessity, a rather subjective measure.

With regard to outgoing mobility, the federal government aims at a rate of 50% of graduates who spent a period of several months abroad, two fifth of these in the form of study at a higher education institution of at least one academic term. An interim target is 100 000 German students (per year) abroad by 2012 (BMBF 2008). This latter target has already been reached (there were, according to the Federal Statistical Office, 102 800 German (degree) students enrolled abroad. In relative terms, the KOAB graduate survey (2010) shows that around one third of those who graduated in 2008 had a study related stay abroad during their course of studies.¹⁰ This applies to 28% of graduates who received a Bachelor degree and 37% of those on single-cycle “long” degrees. This could be seen as an indication that the government is on the way to achieve its target, even though the KOAB requirement for a study-related stay abroad might be regarded by some as rather “soft”.

¹⁰ The *DSW/HIS Social Survey* (2010) produced similar findings, i.e. 29% of Bachelor students in advanced semesters and 37% of students aiming for a Diplom degree in advanced semesters. Unlike the KOAB graduate survey, the DSW/HIS Social survey collects data from students still enrolled. In order to compute mobility patterns, HIS extrapolates the mobility rate for students in upper semesters in order to get a picture of the international mobility of students during the entire duration of study.

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VII. The Netherlands

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1. Introduction

In this chapter we first give an overview of the milestones in the mobility policy of the Netherlands, starting in the year 1987, with the policy paper *Internationalisation in education and research*, all the way to the 2011 strategic agenda for higher education. In this context, the main rationales for supporting student and staff mobility are presented, as well as the regulatory framework, and the main actors in the process of formulating mobility policy and strategy. To continue, we will describe the main focal points of current (and past) student mobility policy, focus countries and support instruments. Part 4 is dedicated to staff mobility policy, while in part 5 we draw some conclusions on the relationship between policy, measures and traceable mobility trends. But first, we will present some key information on the Dutch higher education system.

Higher education in the Netherlands is currently provided by 14 research universities and 39 universities of applied sciences (*hogescholen*). At research universities, Bachelor and Masters' studies are offered, as well as PhD trajectories. In turn, universities of applied sciences offer mainly Bachelor-level studies. The number of English-taught degree programmes offered by Dutch higher education institutions is presently amongst the highest in continental Europe. Over half of all Masters' degree programmes are taught in English. In 2010/11 Dutch institutions offered more than 1 500 international programmes. Of these, nearly 850 were English-taught Masters' programmes and close to 250 were English-taught Bachelor programmes. A few Dutch institutions also offer full degree programmes taught in German, primarily targeting German students.

In 2011, the number of foreign (*degree-seeking and credit mobile*) students in the Netherlands stood at about 82 000. The total student population in The Netherlands was approx. 650 000 in the same year. Further, in the 2007/08¹ academic year, 42 500 Dutch students studied abroad. Of these, 16 000 were inbound degree-seeking students. The main countries of origin of *foreign students* are the neighbouring countries Germany and Belgium, and China. Popular *destination countries* for Dutch students are the United Kingdom, Belgium and Germany.

¹ This was the latest year for which we had international data at the time of writing.

2. Milestones

2.1 Rationales for supporting student mobility

At the start of the first Dutch internationalisation strategy (1987²), the main objectives of the Dutch Ministry of Education were quality improvement of Dutch education and the adequate preparation of future employees for work in an international context. Student mobility in general, and study abroad experiences of Dutch students as well as the process of guiding and educating foreign students in the Netherlands, in particular, were seen as playing a vital role in reaching these overarching goals. The government at the time considered it important that students become internationally-oriented and that they work together in an international environment. In this context, there was an acknowledgement that Dutch higher education institutions had to open up, in particular to *foreign students*.

An important incentive towards the development of the first internationalisation strategy in the Netherlands (of which supporting student mobility became an important part) were European initiatives in the area of international cooperation in education. In 1986 the European programme Comett was established, aimed at encouraging cooperation between universities and enterprises in the field of technology, while 1987 marked the start of the now famous ERASMUS Programme. The earlier publication of an OECD report in 1985 on the state of Dutch education also gave an impulse for the development of an internationalisation strategy. The report assessed that the Dutch higher education system was threatened by parochialism and that it showed a lack of (international) competitiveness.

Until 2001, no major changes of rationales and objectives are documented. Subsequent action plans and policy papers stress the importance of student mobility to improve the quality of Dutch higher education and to help better prepare future graduates for the labour market. In this period, the cultural development of students and staff also received some attention, parallel to the notion of European citizenship, often mentioned in the European discourse. According to the Education Ministry, as national borders were seen as fading³, learning in the Netherlands had to become a borderless experience⁴, to deliver European and global citizens.⁵

² Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen (1987). *Internationalisering van Onderwijs en Onderzoek*. Zoetermeer: OenW. Before 1987, international activities in the area of education were mainly limited to the field of developmental cooperation.

³ Ministry of Education and Science (1992). *Widening horizons; Netherlands policy to promote the internationalisation of education*. Zoetermeer: OenW.

⁴ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (1997). *Onbegrensd talent; internationalisering van onderwijs*. Zoetermeer: OCenW.

⁵ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (1999). *Kennis: geven en nemen; Internationalisering van het Onderwijs in Nederland*. Zoetermeer: OCenW.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the notion of an international higher education market is mentioned for the first time in the governmental internationalisation strategy.⁶ Government documents explicitly state that (higher) education is becoming more and more a marketable good, and as a result the Dutch higher education institutions should seize the opportunities that this market offers, and: improve the quality of education (for example through the inflow of talented foreign students), give an impulse to the macro-economic growth (again with the help of foreign students), and build an international reputation for the Netherlands as a country of knowledge and culture.

A few years later, competitiveness became the catchphrase. Internationalisation, including student mobility, was seen as playing a major role in strengthening the international competitiveness of the Netherlands. The international experience acquired by students during their higher education studies came to be regarded as ‘a must’ for young people who had to live and work in an increasingly international environment. In a new strategic document⁷ the Ministry explicitly refers to two initiatives that also stress this conviction – the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Agenda of the European Union. And although the internationalisation of (higher) education was not a new phenomenon in the Netherlands, these European developments have managed to accelerate this process.

In parallel, the Ministry of Education describes the growing importance of (border) regions for increased cooperation with the neighbouring countries Germany and Belgium, but also with other European regions like the Baltic States or the EU candidate countries.

Another rationale for supporting student and staff mobility in the Netherlands was the perceived necessity to react to the emergence of new economic powers like China and India. These countries were internationally regarded as not having sufficient education capacity at home to meet the growing demand, and as a result their students had to look for higher education provision abroad, especially in Western countries. According to discourse of the Ministry of Education, Dutch higher education institutions had to anticipate this development and position themselves strategically.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education referred to four global developments that underlined the importance of internationalising higher education, including student and staff mobility⁸:

⁶ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (2001). *Onderwijs voor wereldburgers*. Zoetermeer: OCenW.

⁷ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2004). *Koers op kwaliteit; internationaliseringsbrief hoger onderwijs*. Den Haag: OCW.

⁸ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2008). *Internationaliseringsagenda ‘Het Grenzeloze Goed’*. Den Haag: OCW.

- The increased competition for educated workers on the international labour market, especially as several Western countries started to face a decline of qualified personnel in certain sectors. Increasingly, they had to look for talented people abroad.
- Not only was the competition for graduated workers increasing, but the competition to attract *foreign students* and researchers was equally growing.
- Also, the internationalisation of the Dutch labour market demanded new (international) competences.
- Last but not least, increasing global challenges such as climate change, the exhaustion of energy sources, and safety and security concerns need increasingly more international cooperation to solve them effectively.

In the *Strategic agenda for higher education* (2011), the Dutch government referred again to the increasing international competition in higher education and the necessity to adjust the higher education system to this development. The government pleads in this document for a higher education system that enjoys an international reputation, excellent research that attracts scientific talent, and for strengthening the international position of Dutch industry.⁹ An important element in this ambitious agenda is to attract talented students and excellent staff from abroad.

2.2 The regulatory framework

The steering policy of the Dutch Ministry of Education respects the autonomy of the higher education institutions. The task of the Ministry is to provide universities with adequate conditions to facilitate and stimulate international orientation and cooperation. An example of this is the adjustment of the restrictive immigration policy in the 1980s, in order to stimulate the participation of *foreign students*, teachers and researchers in Dutch higher education.

The Education Ministry has the power to set priorities for internationalisation (including student exchanges), but the universities have the freedom to set their own objectives. Higher education institutions make their own choices regarding the launch of new partnerships, while Dutch students and researchers are given a large amount of freedom to design their own study and career paths. An additional important governmental task is to play a role in the communication and reputation management of the Dutch higher education

⁹ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2011). *Kwaliteit in verscheidenheid; strategische agenda hoger onderwijs, onderzoek en wetenschap*. Den Haag: OCW.

abroad. And last but not least, stimulating international mobility by providing appropriate scholarships is another task that belongs to the central level.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education, anticipating the strategic choices of Dutch higher education institutions, announced an important change in the national law – higher education institutions in the country were for the first time granted the possibility to set up joint degree programmes in partnership with foreign universities. These programmes must nevertheless be accredited by the *Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO)*.

2.3 Main actors in the formulation of national-level mobility strategies

In the Netherlands, the primary responsibility for strengthening international orientation and cooperation lies with the higher education institutions themselves, as already stated in the policy paper *Internationalisation of Education and Research* of 1987. The government expects the universities to actively implement policies that enhance international cooperation and orientation for researchers and students, and to act on the mutual recognition of degree qualifications and study periods abroad, on facilitating internships abroad, and on facilitating the stay of *foreign students* in the country. The government has, on the other hand, the task to provide the conditions and incentives that support institutions in carrying out their internationalisation policies.

In the preparatory phase of policy-making, there is a tradition of cooperation between the Ministry, the *Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU)* and the *Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad)*. Institutions, experts and student organisations also have a role in this process. Other stakeholders include ministries (social, foreign, and economic affairs) and the executive agencies *Nuffic (The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education)* and *NWO (the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research)*. Nuffic, as intermediary organisation for internationalisation in higher education, has a central role in the *implementation* of government policies.

The Ministry of Education

Within the Ministry, the Directorate for higher education and the Directorate for international policies are the most important units when it comes to internationalisation and mobility in higher education. The Ministry actively invites stakeholders to take part in the policy-making process, and takes part in several networks related to the internationalisation of higher education.

The Association of research universities

The *Vereniging van Universiteiten (VSNU, Association of research universities)* is one of the prominent participants in the formulation of internationalisation and mobility policies. Within the association, several working groups are functioning, and consist of board members of the research universities. One of these working groups functions as a preparatory and advisory body for international affairs. Next to this working group, VSNU hosts a consultation platform for the policy officers responsible for international affairs within the universities.

The Association of universities of applied sciences

The *HBO-raad*, the Association of the universities of applied sciences has a structure similar to that of the VSNU: a working group with university board members and a consultation platform for policy officers and heads of “international offices” within the institutions.

In the policy development process, the Ministry works to identify (to the extent possible) common interests and to develop a mutually beneficial strategy. Understandably, the various stakeholders do not at all times agree with the government’s view, but they are at least involved in this consultation process and have a place to voice their opinions. Furthermore, the Ministry relies on cooperation with the higher education institutions and the other categories of actors consulted for implementing the policy agenda and for developing concrete action plans.

3. Focus of the past and current student mobility policies

3.1 Rationales for supporting different types of mobility

In the first Dutch internationalisation strategy (1987), both incoming and outgoing (credit and degree) mobility were focal points. The Ministry provided institutions with extra funds to develop an international orientation of students, to organise *study abroad*, to adequately support *foreign students*, and to work for a better recognition of study programmes and degrees across borders. The main policy objectives were to create an international mind set among universities and students, to strengthen the international competences of students and to increase the overall quality of their education.

Currently, the specific rationales behind the promotion of the four main types of mobility are as follows.

Inbound degree mobility

The Dutch mobility policy focuses primarily on *inbound degree mobility*. *Foreign degree-seeking students*, and especially the talented ones, are seen as

very important for strengthening the Dutch education and research system. The quality of incoming students is thus an element of major weight. The presence of *foreign degree-seeking students* is further seen as essential as it helps create an international context in the Dutch higher education (“internationalisation at home”), it compensates for possible “brain drain”. Last, *foreign students* are also seen as future ambassadors of the Netherlands and the Dutch higher education system in their home countries or elsewhere in the world.

Outbound credit mobility

Outbound credit mobility is considered very important as well, for the cultural, personal and professional development of Dutch students. A stay abroad is generally regarded in the Dutch policy documents as an enrichment of the education and a means to acquire international competences. An advantage of promoting this kind of mobility is also that Dutch universities can keep track (and thus maintain contact) with their students, because in most cases the students return to their home institution after their stay abroad at a partner university.

Inbound credit mobility

Inbound credit mobility is in general not portrayed as a top priority in the Dutch policy documents, although the internationalisation of the classroom is actively supported by the Dutch government. “Internationalisation at home” was and continues to be seen as providing Dutch students who do not go abroad with an international experience, which will help them become global citizens and employees in the future. However, *inbound degree mobility* is by and large seen as better contributing to this end than *incoming credit mobility*.

Outbound degree mobility

Outgoing degree mobility is not a focus area as such, either, as the Ministry of Education considers outbound degree mobility a matter that should be addressed by the students themselves, and not an area for government intervention. This type of mobility gets nevertheless a certain importance at the national level, whenever the idea of a balance between incoming and outgoing degree students is brought up, and linked to negative financial consequences that imbalances can cause.

3.2 Geographical focus – target regions and countries

European students are seen as particularly important in the Dutch higher education context, for two main reasons. Firstly, European students are those that contribute the most to the international classroom, according to the Ministry. Secondly, the main competitors of Dutch universities are other higher

education institutions within Europe. As a result, Dutch institutions have developed a tendency to regard Europe as their “home market”.

Outside of Europe, the main target regions of the Netherlands are the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the former Dutch colony Indonesia, but also Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam and Mexico. This selection of target countries was the result of a market analysis carried out by Nuffic in the 1990s, and can be regarded as the start of the future NESO-programme (i.e. The Netherlands Education Support Offices). The Nuffic NESO offices operate in target regions and countries that are strategically important for the Dutch higher education system. Their main task is to promote Dutch higher education and foster international institutional cooperation in order to increase student and staff mobility and related international activities. South Africa has been a focus country until recently, but due to the impossibility to start a NESO office there, policy attention has faded (at least at the national level).

3.3 Targets by mobility type

While no national level target has been set for inbound credit mobility up to now, concrete benchmarks have been set for the remaining three mobility types. In 2008, the Ministry announced that it strived for an increase in the share of Dutch students that spent part of their studies abroad (*outgoing credit mobility*), from 17% to 25% by 2013¹⁰. For this type of mobility, a broad range of study related activities are counted towards the target: not just study abroad, but also internships, summer schools and language courses.

In 2010, the Ministry also set 2 targets for degree mobility. More concretely, it aimed to have, in this particular year, 7.4% of all students in the Netherlands with a foreign nationality (*incoming degree mobility*), and in parallel, to have 6% of the total domestic student population enrolled towards a degree abroad (*outgoing degree mobility*).

No specification is made for any of these targets on the target nationalities or regions of destination, nor about the prioritised level of study (i.e. Bachelor, Masters or PhD).

3.4 Support instruments and incentives

The Dutch Ministry of Education, together with its most important stakeholders, developed several instruments to support the international mobility of

¹⁰ These percentages refer to the analysis method and results of the Dutch Student Monitor. First-year students have not been taken into account. Since experience abroad is often gained at the end of the study programme, and as graduates are presumably more mobile than the average student, higher results are shown in graduate surveys.

students and staff. In most cases, these instruments (be they programmes, campaigns, or projects) are administered by Nuffic. The current instruments to promote student and staff mobility can be divided into four categories: promotion and information, accessibility, quality and transparency, and financing.

3.4.1 Promotion and information

Study in Holland campaign

Very similar to other European countries that implement such programmes, *Study in Holland* is an ongoing campaign to provide foreign students with information on the possibilities to study in the Netherlands. The campaign consists of the *Study in Holland* logo, a *Study in Holland* website, participation in fairs and international promotional events, the development and use of promotion material, a YouTube channel and visibility on social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook). The *Study in Holland* campaign is carried out by Nuffic.

WilWeg (going abroad)

WilWeg is a campaign aimed to raise the awareness of Dutch students about the advantages and added value of study abroad. The campaign consists of a website, folders, posters and a promotional video. Every year Dutch higher education institutions receive from Nuffic, which is in charge of the campaign, an updated package with information. This includes information about scholarships, practical information for preparing a stay abroad, as well as specific country information. Testimonials of mobile students about their experiences abroad are also part of the campaign.

The Netherlands Education Support Offices

The NESO-programme is the main government programme to promote Dutch higher education abroad. As indicated above, NESO stands for Netherlands Education Support Offices. Currently, Nuffic runs NESOs in ten countries around the world¹¹ (see Figure 1). The main tasks of these offices are the promotion of Dutch higher education abroad and the strengthening of the cooperation between Dutch higher education institutions and the institutions in NESO countries. The NESO offices also function as information points for Dutch but also foreign students who want to collect information about the education system and the possibilities to study in a certain country.

¹¹ Nuffic's network of Nuffic Netherlands Education Support Offices (Nuffic Nesos) operates in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Taipei, Thailand and Vietnam.

Figure 1: The location of Dutch NESO offices



Note: NIASD Damascus, NIHA Ankara and NIMAR Rabat are information offices for Dutch education in general. To a certain extent, they have the same tasks as the Nuffic NESOs, but they are not part of the NESO-programme.

In addition to the tasks listed above, the NESO offices are also in charge of providing market information and analysis, and of developing and maintaining the *Holland Alumni Network*.

3.4.2 Accessibility

New to Holland

To remove mobility obstacles (*mobstacles*), the Dutch Ministry of Education works together with Nuffic, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders, such as the Dutch immigration service and other ministries. An important result of this cooperation is the website *New to Holland*, which hosts a sub-site designed for foreign students. It provides information on several issues, from housing, visa regulations and application procedure, to residence permits and diploma evaluation.

Red Carpet

Specifically aimed at higher education is the programme *Rode Loper* (Red Carpet). This is an initiative of eight organisations, including the associa-

tions of universities (VSNU) and universities of applied sciences (*HBO-raad*), Nuffic, the Dutch immigration service and organisations involved in the collection and publication of student and education data. The aim of the programme is to simplify the administrative process of admission of foreign students to Dutch higher education. The programme is financially supported by the Ministry of Education.

3.4.3 Quality and transparency

Instruments within the framework of the Bologna Process

Transparency is one of the key words of the Bologna Process. As an active member of this reform process, the Netherlands has implemented most of the measures developed in this international context. All these instruments aim to stimulate international student mobility by making information on education and study results more transparent and comparable between different countries. The *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System* (ECTS), the *Diploma Supplement (DS)* and the *National Qualification Framework (NQF)* are fully in place in the Netherlands, although full recognition is not yet accomplished in practice. The same holds true for most other European countries that have implemented similar measures.

The evaluation of credits and diplomas issued abroad is undertaken in the Netherlands by Nuffic.

Code of Conduct

The Dutch higher education institutions initiated the development of a Code of Conduct for foreign students in Dutch higher education, which came into effect in 2006. This code guarantees the quality of Dutch higher education to *foreign students*. The Dutch government has decided that the signing of the Code of Conduct by the higher education institutions is a prerequisite for having access to certain instruments and services offered or administered by Nuffic, such as the Nuffic NESO offices. Further, the institutions that did not adhere to this code cannot ask for residence permits for the non-EU citizens that enrolled in higher education studies with them.

Recognisable titles

In the 2011 *Strategic agenda for Dutch higher education*, the government announced that it would make adjustments in the official titles of degrees that can be obtained in Dutch higher education institutions. The most important change is that research universities no longer have the exclusive right to use the degree extensions “of Arts” and “of Science”. Under certain conditions, graduates of universities of applied sciences can also obtain these titles. The

main reason for this adjustment was to increase the international visibility of the universities of applied sciences.

3.4.4 Financing

Scholarships

The most prestigious publicly funded national scholarship scheme in the Netherlands is the *Huygens Scholarship Programme (HSP)*. This programme aims to attract talented students from abroad to The Netherlands, and to give Dutch students the opportunity to study at prestigious universities abroad. HSP started in 2006 with an initial budget of € 5 million a year. At present, the budget grew to 10 million/year. Despite the success of this scholarship scheme, the Dutch government announced in 2011 that it would terminate the programme as of 1 January 2012.

Portability of grants and loans

In 2007, the Netherlands was one of the first countries in Western Europe that made the international portability of grants and loans possible. This was the result of a process that started in 1998. The Ministry of Education had been very determined to facilitate study abroad. To anticipate possible obstacles and negative side-effects, the ministry first commissioned a study to analyse the consequences of portability of grants and loans, as well as a pilot project to test this measure in practice. Grants and loans can be currently taken to all countries in the world, as long as the destination institution is officially recognised in its own country.

Stimulus fund for joint degrees

In 2009, the government provided € 7 million for the period 2009-2013, to stimulate the establishment of joint degree programmes by the Dutch research universities. The association of universities (VSNU) administers the stimulus fund for joint degrees, and Dutch universities can apply for funding.

RAAK internationaal

RAAK (Regional Attention and Action for Knowledge circulation) is a government-funded programme to improve knowledge exchange between small and mediums size enterprises (SME's) and universities of applied sciences. One of the sub-programmes is RAAK International, which stimulates knowledge exchange across borders. One of the objectives of this programme is to increase international student and staff mobility.

4. Focus of the national staff mobility policy

In contrast to student mobility, the mobility of university staff plays a minor role in the internationalisation strategy of the Netherlands. Staff mobility is mentioned here and there in national-level policy documents, but references are scarce compared to student mobility.

In the few policy statements that are available, the Ministry of Education states that for an international profile of higher education, internationally-oriented staff is needed. The main responsibility for staff development, however, lies within universities. The Ministry simply refers to the availability of EU-funds for teaching staff mobility, for which institutions have to apply, anyway. Within the programme RAAK International (with a total budget of 5 million euro for the period 2010-2013) some (limited) financial support is available for teacher mobility. One of the conditions for project proposals is that the project should stimulate international staff mobility.

In the *Strategic agenda for Dutch higher education*, the importance of staff mobility is more clearly underlined. Especially for teachers at universities of applied sciences, it is considered very important to regularly update international knowledge and development within their area of expertise.

5. Policy, measures and actual mobility trends

The Netherlands is one of the very few countries within Europe whose national approach on international student mobility is actually worthy of the name “policy”. The Dutch policy for the international mobility of students and staff is perfectly embedded in the internationalisation strategy for higher education. Most attention goes, as we have seen above, to *inbound degree-seeking students*, and to *outbound credit mobility*, both types of mobility being explicitly mentioned in policy documents and addressed by concrete measures. *Inbound credit* and *outbound degree mobility* appear to be less important in the Dutch context, an approach which is consistent with that observed in the majority of European countries analysed in this study.

The policy measures taken by the Dutch government are generally in line with the policy objectives. Several instruments have been developed for different purposes, namely to increase the attractiveness of the Netherlands as a study destination, and to inform foreign students about this. There is a balanced mix of instruments for promotion and information, a decent amount of measures to make higher education more transparent and accessible for foreign students, as well as extra funding for promoting international mobility. The relatively low number of instruments for staff mobility is in accordance

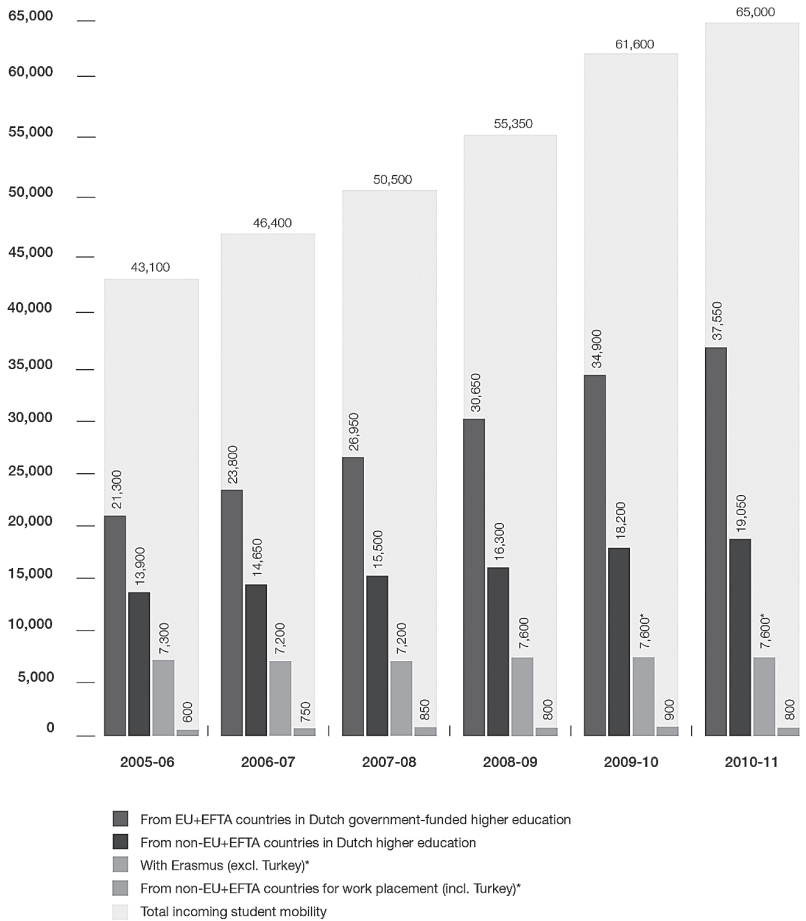
with the modest attention that this type of mobility receives in the national strategic documents.

When comparing the 3 mobility targets with the actual mobility picture, we observe the following:

- In 2008, the Ministry announced that it aimed for an increase of the percentage of Dutch students that spend a part of their higher education studies abroad (*outgoing credit mobility*), from 17% to 25% in 2013. The most recently documented percentage stood at 19% in the academic year 2008/09.
- The target for *inbound degree mobility* was actually surpassed in the academic year 2010/11. While the Ministry aimed for 7.4% *foreign students* of all students in the Netherlands in 2010, available statistics showed already a share of *foreign students* of 8%.
- The most recent target for outbound degree mobility, set by the Ministry of Education, was 6% of the total Dutch student population in 2010. The most recent percentage stood at 2.7% (2007/08). This number increased from 2.4% in 2003/04 to 2.7% in 2007/08, with a slight drop (to 2.3%) in 2004/05.

Overall, the number of students coming from abroad to the Netherlands has been constantly increasing over the past years (Figure 2).

While we see convergence between many of the policy objectives and the observed mobility trends in the Netherlands, it remains very difficult to assess to which extent policy strategies and measures have actually influenced mobility flows into and out of the Netherlands. Over time, the market share of the Netherlands of the total student population mobile every year has moderately increased. This share grew from 0.7% in 2000 to 1.2% in 2008. We are nevertheless tempted to believe that this increase is, at least in part, due to the concerted efforts of the Ministry of Education and other national stakeholders to promote the Netherlands as an attractive study destination for foreign students. Also, the geographical focus and the support measures (such as the NESO-programme) seem to have had a positive effect as well, if we were to assess this based on the related figures. The total number of *incoming degree* and *credit mobile students* from the target countries increased in the period 2006-2010 from 2 100 to almost 9 900 students.

Figure 2: Origins of foreign students in the Netherlands (2006-11)

Data source: Nuffic (2011), Mapping Mobility 2011; international mobility in Dutch higher education.

Nevertheless, though most mobility figures show a positive trend, there is room for some critical remarks. When looking at these numbers in closer detail, it turns out that 40% of all foreign students in the Netherlands are from the neighbouring country Germany. This high dependence on one source country may pose a serious threat for Dutch higher education institutions on the long run, especially if the number of German degree-seeking students in the Netherlands was to fall substantially and abruptly. Further, this excessively high number of *foreign students* from one source country is clearly not fully in line with the internationalisation strategy of the country, which aims to sup-

port, amongst others a truly international classroom at home. To conclude, it is clear that even in relatively advanced countries like the Netherlands, there is room for improvement.

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VIII. Norway

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1. Introduction: Norwegian higher education

Norway avails of a modern and highly performing higher education system, which has evolved over the decades. It is mainly state-run and publicly funded, but there is a small private sector, which enrolls about one eighth of all students. The essential binary system consists of universities, ‘specialised’ university-level institutions, and university colleges.

The country’s seven universities¹, all of them public, combine a teaching with a research function and are – in tendency – comprehensive, i.e. multi-disciplinary institutions. Some of them are “upgrades” from earlier university colleges. In addition, there are six mainly discipline-based university level institutions – five of them state-run² and one, the Norwegian School of Theology, private. Further, there are 24 public and two private university colleges, which, the Ministry stresses, have an important role in “decentralising access to higher education”. This sector predominantly offers three-year professional Bachelor programmes (engineering, nursing, social work, etc.). There are also professional programmes of varying lengths, from one to five years, for example in teacher training and business administration. Several university colleges also offer Masters programmes and three have the right to award PhD degrees in a small number of subject areas. Finally, in addition to the private specialised institutions at university level and the two private university colleges, there are 25 private higher education institutions receiving public funding for all or some of their programmes.

The 2003 *Quality Reform* largely laid the foundations for the structural and organisational traits of the present higher education system. Through it, Norway implemented the Bologna reforms, introducing the three-cycle Bachelor-Masters-PhD structure, a new grading system (better compatible with ECTS), and a system of and an organisation in charge of quality assurance (NOKUT). As part of the same reform, Norway’s internationalisation agency, SIU, was also established in its present form, even though it had a predecessor before 2003.

¹ The University of Oslo, the country’s oldest and largest, University of Bergen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, in Trondheim), University of Tromsø, University of Stavanger, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB, in Ås) and University of Agder.

² The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, the Norwegian Academy of Music, the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science the Oslo School of Architecture and Design.

In 2009, Norway had a first-time graduation rate of over 40%, above the average of OECD countries.³ Higher education in Norway had not always been able to enable such a big share of its young people to access higher education. In the post-WWII years, the system was not quantitatively strong enough to absorb all of the country's young people, particularly in some subject areas. As a result, many young Norwegians sought and found study opportunities abroad. It is fair to say that high *study abroad* rates in the early post-war years were not motivated by a desire for an "international education", but rather by a shortage of provision in Norway. In other words, they were ultimately 'forced', as is today still the case in many developing countries, or, in Europe, in Cyprus and, partly, in Greece.

2. Mobility trends

This section tries to depict the overall picture of mobility into and out of Norway – as a "snapshot", but also regarding developments over time. In order to make comparisons with other countries possible, most data are taken from the study *Mapping mobility in European higher education*⁴, which refer to the academic year 2006/07.

2.1 Degree mobility

Inbound degree mobility (study of foreigners)

We are here using data on students with a *foreign nationality* as a proxy for incoming mobility. We are aware that nationality data are usually inferior to data on genuine mobility, measured in terms of country of prior residence or county of prior education. Norway provides such data, but we have serious doubts about their validity and comparability and we are therefore not using them here.

In the academic year 2006/07, 15 618 *foreign students* enrolled at Norwegian higher education institutions. Norwegian total enrolment stood at 215 237. The share of foreign amongst all students (Norwegians and foreign nationals) amounted to 7.3%. This rate is slightly higher than the Europe-32 average, which is 6.9%. Ignoring very small countries with atypical mobility patterns, foreign enrolment shares in Europe range from 19.5% at the high end (UK) to 0.8% at the low one (Turkey).

³ Cf. OECD (2011), *Education at a Glance*, Paris: OECD, p.63.

⁴ Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011), *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*, 2 vols., Bonn: DAAD (Dok&Mat 69, 70).

In the period between 1998/99 and 2006/07, the number of *foreign nationality students* in Norway rose by 6 614, from 9 004 to 15 618. This represents an increase of 73.7%. The average growth value for the 32 European countries covered in the *Mapping mobility* study is difficult to ascertain, due to not all countries providing data for the two reference years. But it is safe to say that Norway's growth is definitely not below the Europe-32 average.

As to source countries (nationalities), the foreign student body is diverse. The top 10 nationalities account for slightly over one third (37.4%) of all foreign students. Slightly more students have a non-Europe-32 nationality (6 296) than one from this region (5 345). The usefulness of this nationality breakdown is somewhat undermined by the fact that the nationality of 3 977 students is unknown. In any event, the nationality distribution is roughly in line with the overall Europe-32 distribution, where the majority of students has a non-Europe-32 nationality.

Norway's *foreign student* population diverges somewhat from the European distribution across broad subject areas. The share of *foreign students* in Norway in *social sciences*, business and law is lower than in the Europe-32 region (29.3% : 34.2%) and considerably lower in *engineering* (7.4% : 13.9%). It is higher in *science* subjects (14.6% : 12.8%) as well as in *health and welfare* (15.5% : 12.6%). The latter is somewhat astonishing, given that Norway is still short of capacity in subject areas like medicine and sizeable numbers of Norwegians go abroad to study medicine.

Study abroad

Numbers for *degree mobility* out of Norway, or, to be precise, the *study of Norwegian* nationals in other countries, range slightly below those of foreigners studying in Norway. Altogether, 13 646 Norwegian were enrolled abroad in 2006/07 (compared to 15 618 *foreign students* in Norway). Norway has thus almost a balance of "inflows" and "outflows". The exact in-out ratio is 1.1, whereas the Europe-32 average ratio is 2.2 (ranging from 19.7 in the case of the UK to 0.1 in the case of Slovakia). In other words, whereas on average, the Europe-32 region "imports" more than double as many *foreign students* as it has students of its *own nationality abroad*, in Norway "import" exceeds export only marginally.

However, it must be underlined that the 2006/07 picture is historically atypical for Norway. In the years 1998/99 and 2002/03 (for which we have comparative data), *outflows* from Norway still exceeded *inflows*. In both years, the in-out ratio was 0.7. The change of status from a net exporter to a net importer is due to constantly rising number of *foreign students* in Norway, but also, more recently, a drop in the absolute number of Norwegians enrolled abroad

(1998/99: 12 749; 2002/03: 15 453; 2006/07: 13 646). Over time, Norway has thus developed from a mobility pattern typical of economically less developed countries to one known from economically advanced countries.

The reversed trend notwithstanding, Norway's *study abroad* rate is still high by European standards. Measured against all Norwegians studying in Norway, the study abroad rate of Norwegians is 6.8%. This percentage is double as high as the Europe-32 average (3.3%). There has still been an increase of study abroad numbers of Norwegians in the period from 1998/99 to 2006/07, of 7%. However, this is far below the Europe-32 growth average of 37.1%. As indicated already above, it must also be pointed out that there was even a decline between 2002/03 and 2006/07.⁵

Like nationals of other countries in the Europe-32 zone, the vast majority of Norwegians study in another country of the same zone. The exact percentage is 78.4, which is still slightly below the Europe-32 average of 85.5%. In contrast to the study of *foreign nationals* in Norway, which is highly diverse when it comes to countries of origin, *study abroad* is quite concentrated. The top three destination countries – the UK, Denmark and Australia – account for over half (50.7%) of all Norwegian *study abroad students*, and the top 10 even for over 90%. It is interesting to note that Hungary and Poland, two countries with no strong linguistic, historical and cultural links to Norway, are destinations no. 6 and 7. Although we have no ultimate proof, we believe that many of these are students on English (and partly German) taught programmes in medical studies, in which Norway continues to have capacity limits and for which Hungary and Poland have traditionally provided tuition for foreign students.⁶

2.2 Credit mobility

Outbound

The assessment of the total volume of *credit (temporary) mobility* is difficult in most countries, due to the lack of a comprehensive source to capture this type of mobility. The Norwegian situation is no exception when it comes to inbound credit mobility. In contrast, due to the fact that Norwegians are entitled to support from the *State Educational Loan Fund* also for outbound

⁵ According to data from the Norwegian *State Educational Loan Fund*, the downward trend seems to have been reversed in recent years. In 2006/07, 12 375 Norwegians studied abroad with support from the Fund, whereas the 2010/11 was almost 2 000 higher, at 14 154. Numbers of students supported by the Fund are not identical with all Norwegians studying for a full degree abroad, but the difference is not big.

⁶ A few years earlier, this was anyway what Wiers-Jenssen found. Cf. Wiers-Jenssen, J (1999), *Utledhiget eller utflukt? Norske studenters vurdering av a studere i utlandet*, Oslo: NIFU, p. 21.

credit mobility, Norway can provide good data on outbound temporary mobility. By and large, Norway has above average mobility levels. In the past academic year (2010/11), 7 657 Norwegians received support for *temporary study* outside of their country from the *Fund*. This was an all-time high, even though growth in the past few years has been very modest, indicating that a possible saturation point has almost been reached.

As far as we know, grants and loans from the *Fund* can be combined with those from European, Nordic and other student mobility programmes, meaning that *outbound mobile students* on these programmes should not be added to those of the *Fund*. We avail of exact statistics for mobility in the ERASMUS Programme. In 2008/09, the last year for which we have ERASMUS data, 1 679 students from Norwegian higher education institutions studied abroad on ERASMUS. This was less than 1% of total enrolment in Norway. The number of outbound *credit mobile* students supported by the *Fund* amounted in the same year to 7 129, more than four times that of ERASMUS students. In comparison to ERASMUS, the quantitative importance of other programmes is relatively modest. The Nordic NORDPLUS scheme supported 518⁷ students coming into Norway and 372 Norwegians abroad in the academic year 2009/10. Due to reduced funding, this is far below the programme's peak a few years earlier, at about 1 000 incoming and outgoing students.

Inbound

For *inbound credit mobility*, we have only numbers from the ERASMUS Programme and the Nordic schemes. In 2008/09, 3 403 ERASMUS students came to study in Norway. This number is more than double that of Norwegians studying abroad on the same scheme. Just like in degree mobility, but to a much higher extent, Norway is a net importer of ERASMUS students. Also in parallel to degree mobility, this has not always been so, and Norway has over time changed from a net exporter to a net importer. In 1998/99, the ratio was still 89:100. Since then, there has been almost constant increase. In 2007/08, the trend peaked, at a ratio of 247:100, to fall to the value of 203:100 in 2008/09.

Outflows from Norway in NORDPLUS are comparatively modest (see section on NORDPLUS below). They do not, therefore, substantially impact on the overall balance. There is no way to assess the extent of individual *inbound credit mobility* outside of programmes. An unpublished paper by the present Director of SIU and former high-ranking official of the Ministry of Education and Research claims that 30% of all graduates from Norwegian higher edu-

⁷ Including 173 students on "express" (=short term) mobility.

cation have benefitted from a “study visit abroad”⁸, though it is not clear what the exact meaning of a “study visit” is, especially with regard to duration and purpose of stay.

2.3 Conclusion

By and large, Norway has above average mobility levels. Historically, the importance of *outbound degree mobility* far outweighed that of *inbound degree mobility*. But *inbound degree mobility* has greatly increased in the last years, in fact outperforming outwards movements. Norway has thus developed from a net exporter to a net importer of degree students.

It is less easy to identify a clear trend in credit mobility. Looking at data from the ERASMUS programme only, the same development – from an exporter to an importer of students – applies to *credit mobility*, too. On the other hand, the generous support of the *State Educational Loan Fund* – which funded 7 657 *outbound credit-mobile students* in 2009/10 – is likely to have contributed to a reverse picture for overall *credit mobility*.

3. Mobility policies: history, rationales and recent trends

This section looks at the main changes of mobility patterns in Norway over the post-war period, it reviews the present (and past) rationales for the different types of mobility, and it assesses the most recent trends.

3.1 Mobility in a historical perspective

We do not avail of detailed mobility data for the early and middle years of the period since the Second World War. Digitalised data that we are aware of only exist for a limited time series. Despite this, the main patterns of Norwegian student mobility in a historical perspective are fairly clear, and so are the factors which have impacted on them. According to many comments by interviewees, the key driver of development was an increasing level of growth and economic well-being occasioned mainly by the discovery and the subsequent exploitation of North Sea oil.

In the early post-war years, Norway was – by European standards – a poor country with an economy based on agriculture. In those days, Norway could not afford a comprehensive higher education system which could provide access for all or most of its young generation. The solution, already then with public funding made available by the *State Educational Loan Fund*, was *study abroad*. This made for comparatively large *outflows of degree mobile* Norwe-

⁸ Rasmussen, A. (2010), *Intercultural Dialogue as an element of the internationalisation of education*, Oslo: mimeo (unpublished).

gians – mainly to other Nordic countries, the UK, the US and Germany. The intention was not – anyway first and foremost – to internationalise the study experience of these students. The intention was simply to access higher education capacity where it existed – and that was not in Norway.

Once Norway developed economically, it also started to widen its higher education capacity. By the mid-1980s, an acceptable level of provision had apparently been reached. One might have expected this to reduce *outflows*, since the country was now better able to educate its own youth at tertiary level. Interestingly, this did not happen. Instead of reducing funding for study outside of Norway, the government widened access to *study abroad* funding – through its chief instrument, the *State Educational Loan Fund* – from groups of students in disciplines and areas of “national interest” to ultimately everybody who sought it (mobility for all). The reason was a new rationale – internationalisation. And of course, with the newly arrived affluence, Norway could now even better afford such a move. Thus, outbound degree mobility has remained high over the entire post-WW2 period, though the underlying forces driving this sort of mobility radically changed.

We have no record – in terms of data, but also policies – on *outbound credit mobility* over the last 50 years. It is likely that this sort of mobility was, in the early decades, neither frequent nor based on any explicit government policies. Much speaks for the idea that high levels of *credit mobility* are a sign of mature higher education systems, in a way a luxury phenomenon countries turn their attention to once domestic higher education is well in order and once comprehensive internationalisation strategies are being put in place. This is exactly what happened in Norway in the last ten years. While the government still believes that *degree mobility* is a means to internationalise the education of an individual student, the realisation has been that it does little to internationalise Norwegian higher education *institutions*. And there is also hardly any means to control quality in foreign institutions where Norwegians study. This is why there is now a new focus on organised and integrated inter-institutional exchanges (see remarks on institutional internationalisation further below). For this reason, of all types of mobility, interviewees in ministries, universities and research institutes mostly focused on this type of mobility – even though or perhaps because it is quantitatively not the most important one in Norway.

Inbound degree mobility has played a less than central role in Norway’s government policies. Admittedly, as a tribute to the *Zeitgeist*, the attraction of talent from around the world gets a few honourable mentions here and there. But Norwegian higher education, which until now – unlike almost all of its Nordic neighbours, not to mention dyed-in-the-wool liberalised systems like that of the UK – has fiercely abstained from charging tuition fees, has not

been very aggressive in its attempts at recruiting international students.⁹ The country runs a *Study in Norway* campaign, but this is, compared to the UK's Prime Minister's Initiative or Australia's marketing practice, a fairly gentlemanly promotion effort. *Foreign students* have played a prominent role in governmental policies only when it comes to third-world students. However, Norway does not view its support of this group as recruitment, but as international solidarity and part of its very substantial engagement for capacity building in developing countries.

Inbound credit mobility also hardly gets any mention in government documents – or university mission statements. But this is not surprising and by no means a phenomenon unique to Norway: an earlier ACA study found this to be the case across European countries. *Inbound credit mobility* is, so to speak, the price of *outbound temporary mobility* in reciprocal institutional arrangements and European and Nordic exchange programmes. It is therefore part of the equation and, in a way, too obvious to need mention.

3.2 Rationales

Norwegian government policy on mobility is many-faceted and the major arguments for and rationales of student mobility have changed over time, in line with the shifts in mobility sketched above.

In the years up to the 1980s, the focus was on *outbound degree mobility* and on *increasing higher education access of Norwegians through study abroad*. This was, as outlined earlier, dictated by a shortage of capacity in Norway rather than positive effects associated with study outside of the country. In the 1950s, the share of Norwegians studying for a full degree abroad stood at around 30% (though it was, in absolute numbers, smaller than today).¹⁰

Still with regard to *outbound degree mobility*, this changed in the course of the 1980s, when study in another country gradually came to be seen as a means of *internationalisation*. Over time, the arguments appeared to shift again, in the direction of quality. Possibly, this was less of an outright policy change than a terminological switch. Norway labelled its last comprehensive higher education policy reform (2003) the *Quality Reform*. This overhaul of Norwegian higher education, the core of which was the adaptation of the system to the

⁹ The term "recruitment" comes up occasionally in government documents, but predominantly in the context of research and innovation strategies (and less in educational contexts), linked to staff rather than (undergraduate) students and also often restricted to academic fields where the intake of Norwegians is low.

¹⁰ Cf. Wiers-Jenssen, J.(2003), *Over bekken etter vann? Hvorfor studere I utlandet nard et finnes lignende tilbut I Norge*, Oslo: NIFU.

Bologna requirements, was “heavily cloaked in a language of quality”¹¹, with regard to almost every aspect and not at all limited to internationalisation and international student mobility. Quality meant at least two different things. First, the document initiating the quality reform argued that a purely national delivery of higher education could, in times of globalisation, no longer be regarded as a quality education. Second, it referred to quality as the international academic standard (rather than a purely domestic one), thus making the international state of the art the measuring rod for internationalisation.

However, already the argumentation patterns of the Quality Reform showed *in nuce* a third meaning of quality. This variant entailed an implicit criticism of the high rates of Norwegian students abroad as beyond the reach of Norwegian quality assurance: outbound degree mobility was, by its very nature, that of “free movers”, as documents called them, therefore not embedded in Norwegian higher education, and thus in quality terms largely beyond any Norwegian control. In addition, Norwegian higher education institutions had apparently criticised the high degree of outbound degree mobility and the lavish funding from the *State Educational Loan Fund* that they believed led to “leakage” from the Norwegian system and support to foreign universities from Norwegian taxpayers’ money, which in their view constituted unfair competition. This led to a gradual change in (declared) policy, which started to favour outbound credit mobility within inter-institutional arrangements between Norwegian institutions and counterparts abroad.¹² Through these forms of inter-institutional exchanges, including in the form of joint and double degrees, it was hoped to be able to quality-control study in other countries. It was also pointed out that this way the education delivered by Norwegian higher education *institutions* could be internationalised, which was obviously not the case with degree mobile Norwegians who had no link to the Norwegian system at all. The most recent comprehensive government document with a bearing on international matters, the White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament *Internationalisation of Education in Norway*, (report no. 14, 2008-2009), stresses this aspect very much.

With regard to the study of *foreign nationals* in Norway, the rationales differ very much from those of many other countries in Europe. Due to very generous funding for the mainly state-run higher education system, and due to the absence of tuition fees (for Norwegians and foreign nationals alike),

¹¹ Cf. Gornitzka, A and Stensaker, B. (2004), country chapter on Norway in: Huisman, J. and van der Wende, M., *On cooperation and competition*, Bonn: Lemmens (ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education), p. 86.

¹² It also appears that this swing in policy documents was supported by a modification of the State Educational Loan Fund. Its statistics list funded credit mobility students only from the beginning of the last decade onwards. Cf. http://www.lanekassen.no/Toppmeny/Om_Lanekassen/Statistikk/utlandsstatistikk/Studenter-som-tar-hele-eller-deler-av-en-grad-i-utlandet-Historisk/.

arguments for the attraction of foreign students as a business model or at least a contribution to the funding of Norwegian higher education have been conspicuous by their absence. Norway so far remained immune to the Anglo-Saxon concept of higher education as a tradable good. Its mobility policies have so far stayed strictly non-commercial.

The fact that the Norwegian government – and, more so still, individual higher education institutions – engage in measures of international marketing is no contradiction to this. As mentioned before, Norwegian higher education marketing and recruitment policies are, by international comparison, relatively conservative and non-aggressive. Also, they are driven by the desire to achieve *knowledge or brain gains* in disciplines and thematic areas where national supply of (graduate) students and, particularly, staff and researchers, is insufficient. But overall, our impression is that Norwegian mobility policies are driven by considerations of skilled migration.

The fact is that the by now impressive inflow of foreign degree students into Norway is, most likely, not motivated by any conscious attraction efforts at the Norwegian end, but by the high quality of Norwegian higher education, good learning conditions and a favourable funding environment (also for *foreign students*). One exception to this rule applies to students from developing countries, which Norway systematically favours. The entire post-WWII period is characterised by a considerable commitment to *supporting developing nations develop human resources*, by educating them in Norwegian higher education. In a Norwegian context, these attempts are unrelated to motives of brain gain. The provision of higher education to students from the developing world is a firm part of Norway's generous overall aid policy¹³ and is inspired by rationales of international solidarity, global responsibility and sustainable development (not untypical of its Nordic neighbours, too) and has its roots in the country's Protestant creed.

In policy documents of the last decade, *internationalisation* at home appears as a rationale, but, as the name already indicates, its main thrust is not on mobility of Norwegian students, but rather on the creation of a substitute international experience for non-mobile Norwegians. The internationalisation at home concept obviously also has a link to the study of foreign nationals at Norwegian institutions, since they are viewed as a factor internationalising the campus life.

¹³ According to the website of the Norwegian mission to the United Nations, Norway ranks second among UN donors measured by GNI, outperformed only by Luxembourg.

4. Policy instruments

Lånekassen, the State Educational Loan Fund, is the most powerful single instrument for *study abroad* of Norwegians, whether for a full qualification (degree) or for temporary study. According to the organisation's website, a total of 21 811 outbound mobile students were supported by *Lånekassen* in the academic year 2010/11. Of these, almost two thirds were on degree studies (14 154), the rest (7 657) were credit-mobile students.¹⁴ Access to the scholarships and loans for *study abroad* of the *Fund* is not means-tested against parents' income (but that of students), and therefore more or less the entire Norwegian student body is eligible for support. With the possible exception of Norway's Nordic neighbours and a few oil-rich countries around the world, the Fund is internationally without equal.

The instrument provides funding for *study abroad* degree students who

- fulfil the entrance requirements to Norwegian higher education (upper secondary school leaving examination);
- have an unconditional offer from a foreign university;
- study a programme approved by NOKUT, Norway's quality assurance agency in higher education;
- enrol minimally at the Bachelor level;
- enrol for full-time studies; and
- enrol in presence-based education (i.e., not in online or distance courses).

Funding is also provided for temporary *study abroad*, of up to two semesters' duration and in the framework exchange agreements guaranteeing recognition of credits by the Norwegian 'home' institution. It is ultimately unclear to the author how far back in time funding for outbound temporary mobility has been made available. While the *Fund* provides data back only to the year 1999/00 and some documents even state that only the Quality Reform (2003) made outbound credit mobility fully eligible, information received from the Ministry of Education indicates that funding for this type of mobility was made available as early as 1982/83.

Funding for degree study is limited to a maximum of eight years. No funding is provided for the first (freshman) year of four-year US Bachelor degrees,

¹⁴ Indirectly, the Fund also supports inbound degree mobility, from developing countries, through the Quota Scheme (see further below), which is administered by SIU, the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education.

medical studies outside of Europe, the US, Canada and Australia, and, generally for short-cycle sub-Bachelor qualifications.

The *basic support* is NOK¹⁵ 8 900, for a maximum of 10 months per year. The support is provided in the form of a loan, but 40% of the loan can be converted into a grant if and when the student successfully completes the programme. Students are also entitled to support for tuition fees (except in Nordic countries, where Norwegians pay none), up to a maximum of (normally) NOK 111 170. From the first NOK 57 120, 50% is given as a loan and 50% as a grant in undergraduate studies. At postgraduate level (and for exchange students), 30% is a loan and 70% a grant. In cases where the tuition fee exceeds NOK 111 170, a supplementary grant may be awarded, up to a limit of NOK 60 390, though support of this type is limited to a number of higher education institutions and programmes only.¹⁶ Students may also be granted a *travel allowance* for two return trips home per year, 70% of which is a grant and 30% a loan. Students enrolled in non-English speaking countries (and courses) may receive up to NOK 16 690 a year for *language classes*.

The extremely lavish support of *Lånekassen* is the result of a long evolution. Originally, support was restricted to “fields of national interest”, i.e. disciplines in which Norway lacked higher education capacity. There were also geographical limitations, mainly to countries in Europe and North America. Support for tuition fees was already introduced in the early 1970s. As already pointed out, the creation of by and large sufficient provision in Norway by the mid-1980s did not lead to more restrictive policies, but to a more inclusive approach. Geographical restrictions were lifted in 1993/94, when study anywhere in the world became eligible. Apparently, supplementary tuition fee coverage was still restricted until 2004/05 to certain disciplines and types of programmes.

The recent regulations mirror some of the Norwegian government’s preoccupations with issues of quality. It is interesting to note that the grant share (as opposed to that of loans) for tuition in temporary *study abroad* within exchange arrangements is higher than for “free mover “ *Bachelor study abroad*. The support for language classes in non-English-speaking countries reflects the country’s desire to diversify outflows. One step is still to be taken: the creation of a new list of institutions and programmes eligible for supplementary tuition grants, which would be a selection based on academic excellence. Work on this ambitious and ultimately probably not uncontroversial project is currently under way.

¹⁵ 1 NOK stood at about 0.13 EUR on 25 October 2011.

¹⁶ Cf. <http://www.lanekassen.no/supplementarygrant>.

Compared to the sources of the *Fund*, all other support instruments appear relatively modest. In line with its priority on credit mobility in the past years, the government is providing *institutional funding* for each incoming and outgoing credit mobile student. The amounts in question are, however, relatively low, translating into a few hundred EUR per head only. Gornitzka and Stensaker state that these particular mobility incentives “have a higher symbolic than pecuniary value”.¹⁷

The Norwegian government also attaches importance to the fact that all PhD students in Norway have the status of employees and that the PhD education of every foreign (and of course Norwegian) PhD student is therefore “fully funded”.¹⁸

Next to the *State Educational Loan Fund* and government support more generally, *EU programmes* are a major source for the promotion of (credit) mobility. Apart from the research framework programmes, which are here not of central interest since they do not focus on students but on researchers, the ERASMUS scheme is of key importance in the particular segment of higher education. Research documents state that Norway started to join ERASMUS (and like schemes at the time, such as COMETT) with entry into force of the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement, which laid the foundations for Norway’s ‘association’ to the EU) in January 1994,¹⁹ but in fact the country was already involved in ERASMUS and like programmes on a bilateral basis a few years earlier. In 2008/09, ERASMUS brought 3 403 students into Norway, and it funded the outbound mobility of 1 679 students from Norwegian higher education institutions abroad. These numbers are not negligible, but they range far below those of *Lånekassen*.

Still in terms of EU cooperation, the country also joined the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme at its inception in 2004. Norway has also taken a leading role in the pan-European Bologna Process, in which increased student mobility is a key objective. The country hosted the 2005 Ministerial Meeting (in Bergen).

Nordic cooperation existed far earlier than cooperation in an EU context, with the creation of the Nordic Council (inter-parliamentary forum) in the 1950s and the Nordic Council of Ministers (an intergovernmental forum) in 1971. Concrete (programme) action in the field of mobility in higher education took off only in 1988, when the NORDPLUS Programme was created, as a ‘Nordic clone’ of ERASMUS. In the course of the 2000s, the programme’s

¹⁷ Gornitzka, A. and Stensaker, B. (2004), p. 94.

¹⁸ *Norwegian Progress Report* to the Bologna Secretariat, 2008.

¹⁹ Cf. Ministry of Education and Research (2005) *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education, Country Background Report for Norway*, Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research, p. 98.

geographical coverage was extended to the Baltic countries, for cooperation with which a separate scheme existed earlier on. According to the report of the Ministry of Education and Research in preparation for the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education in Norway²⁰, NORDPLUS had at its peak (1998) funded the mobility of about 1 000 students into and out of Norway. Due to budget restrictions, these numbers were down to 518 incoming and 372 outgoing students (2009/10).²¹

Norway also engages in Northern cooperation beyond the framework of the Nordic institutions. A fellowship programme²² exists for incoming Bachelor and Master students from Russia, Canada and the US into seven higher education institutions in Northern Norway. But numbers in this programme range below 100. There are also exchange mechanisms, in a pan-Nordic context, with the Barents area (North-West Russia).

In a *development context*, Norway's main funding instrument is the QUOTA Scheme. This programme provides scholarships for incoming degree students from the South and countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and in Central Asia. Funds are being provided by *Lånkassen*, but the programme is administered by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU). The programme funds about 1 100 Master and PhD students annually. The conditions are the same as those for Norwegian students funded by the *State Educational Loan Fund*. The loan share is waived if students return to their countries of origin after graduation.

Two other programmes, NOMA and NUFU, provided funds for cooperation with universities in developing countries in the past. However, the main thrust of these programmes was to build capacity at universities in the South and the focus was therefore not on mobility (into Norway). The two programmes will in the future be replaced by the new NORHED scheme.

As we mentioned before, Norway undertakes some efforts to attract international students into the country. Among them are the very attractive and easily navigable *Study in Norway* website (<http://www.studyinnorway.no>) and a related in-ternational information and marketing campaign, both of which we referred to before. Another measure indirectly enhancing mobility is the creation, over time, of a quantitatively sufficient and qualitatively sound offer of study programmes taught in English. In an article dating back to 2001, Wiers-Jenssen had come to the conclusion that Norway offered far too few programmes taught in English to be attractive to non-Norwegian speaking *foreign students*. In the 2009 White

²⁰ *Ibid*, page 98.

²¹ Information provided by the NORDPLUS unit in SIU. Numbers include "express mobility".

²² *Fellowship Programme for Studies in the High North*: <http://www.studyinnorway.no/highnorth>.

Paper *Internationalisation of Education in Norway*²³, the situation is described as much improved, with 200 Master-level English-taught programmes. In a Europe-wide survey of English-taught programmes in 27 countries carried out in 2006 (and published in 2007), Norway occupied rank 7 with regard to the relative number of programmes and students enrolled.²⁴ This underlines, at any rate, that the provision of this type of education in Norway is above the European average, even though it is not nearly as frequent as in the top countries, such as the Netherlands and Finland.

5. Regional foci, actors and targets

5.1 Regional foci

While dealing with scholarships and support mechanisms more widely, we have already touched upon regional priorities and foci. Regions which get explicit mention in official government documents and in research papers are the Nordic (and Baltic) area, the European Union (EU) / European Economic Area (EEA), the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and developing countries. Further, there is a renewed Transatlantic orientation. Overall, there has been an attempt to diversify degree mobility outflows away from the English-speaking world and into other countries.

Nordic focus

Nordic cooperation, in the framework of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, remains a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy in general and stays a pillar of mobility policies in particular. However, its relative importance seems to have waned over time. Its impact on the mobility destination choices of Norwegian students abroad seems to anyway have decreased over time. In the field of inflows, Sweden and Denmark were, in 2006/07, still the single most important countries of origin, but the share of all Nordics of the foreign student population stood only at about 15%. Numbers in NORDPLUS are considerably below their earlier peak, as stated above.

European orientation

On the other hand, the importance of Europe for Norwegian government policies has probably increased. This goes for EU policies and programmes, many of which Norway is de facto subject to through the EEA agreement (a considerable share of EU law is applicable in Norway as a result of this international treaty). But it also applies to European processes in the wider,

²³ English summary version, op.cit., p. 13.

²⁴ Wächter, B. & Maiworm, F. (2007), *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education. The picture in 2007*, Bonn: Lemmens, p. 28.

intergovernmental sense, such as the Bologna Process (European Higher Education Area). It is not by accident that Norway has, in the past two decades, often been more enthusiastic about European cooperation in higher education than a fair number of actual EU member states. Even though there have recently been some signs of a modification of this attitude – Norway is currently contemplating negotiating its involvement in the 8th Framework Programme à la carte, which is not, at first sight, compatible with the EEA Agreement – it is likely that this is a temporary departure from a clear pro-European course. Government policy documents do, anyway, go to great lengths to underscore the country's European commitment.

Developing world

Norway remains staunchly committed to developing countries in the South and in other regions entitled to aid in the country's definition. This commitment has remained equally strong in the past decades, and is thus a historically constant feature of Norway's mobility policy. Understandably, these policies impact much more on incoming than outbound mobility. But it is noteworthy that amongst the top 20 or so temporary mobility destinations in the statistics of *Lånekassen*, one finds, next to 'obvious' destinations like the United Kingdom, Australia and the US, also developing countries and emerging economies such as Tanzania, South Africa, China, Namibia and Ghana.

Non-English-speaking countries

As we mentioned already a number of times, Norway has in the last years been aiming at reducing the strong dominance of English-speaking countries as destinations of Norwegian students. The *State Educational Loan Fund's* support of participation in (domestic) language classes in non-English-speaking host countries is one expression of this intention. It is too early to say if these attempts will ultimately bear fruit.

New partnerships with BRIC-type countries

With reference to the 2009 White Paper on internationalisation of Norwegian higher education, Alf Rasmussen's earlier-quoted paper speaks of new 'strategic' institutional partnerships with universities in emerging economies, such as China, India, Brazil, Argentina and Chile (and, soon, Russia). Memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed between the Norwegian government and its counterparts in the said countries. These are to be institutional partnerships not only serving mobility purposes, but also seeking to further joint research. Co-operation with these BRIC-type countries is Norway's response to changes in the geopolitics of higher education, and to globalisation more in general.

Renewed transatlantic focus

Only at first glance is an initiative to strengthen academic relations and mobility with higher education institutions in the US and Canada in conflict with the stated aim to diversify outflows to non-English-speaking countries. The main thrust behind the North America Strategy (2008-2011) of the Ministry of Education and Research is to favour *study abroad* at *quality* institutions (as demanded by the 2009 White Paper), and the US and Canadian higher education system is viewed as representing top academic quality. The four-year programme, which is to be continued in revised form in the years from 2012 to 2015, sought to increase outflows of Norwegian credit and degree mobile students to North America. Extra funding was provided in this period, for example for information and academic guidance and for scholarships (increase in the allocation for Fulbright scholarships, amongst others). Targets for an increase in transatlantic student mobility under the North America Strategy (first phase) were met in the field of credit mobility and at Bachelor level, though not at Master level.

5.2 Actors

In passing, we have already touched upon the various actors involved in designing and implementing Norway's mobility policies, so that we can keep this section very short.

Overall political responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education and Research. Other sectoral ministries contribute in a small way to funding (and thus also policymaking), but the only other ministry with a sizeable impact is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which is ultimately responsible for higher education cooperation with developing countries (Quota Programme).

The central actors for the implementation of the government's mobility policies are *Lånekassen* (State Educational Loan Fund) and SIU, the *Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education*. The Fund's considerable role has already been described above. It organised, in 2009/10, the funding of 21 811 Norwegians on degree or credit mobility abroad. This number alone underscores its centrality for Norway's student mobility policies. The *Fund* also provides the grants for the QUOTA Programme, though it does not manage the scheme.

SIU, the second big actor, is responsible for the management of the EU education programmes, for NORDPLUS, for a number of national schemes, and for the QUOTA scheme. It was originally a sub-entity of the Norwegian rectors' conference, but was later put under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research.

Other bodies that play a role are NOKUT, the country's higher education quality agency (which might become more central if Norway will really prioritise certain quality foreign higher education institutions over others in the future) and NORAD (under the foreign ministry), the country's aid agency.

5.3 Targets

We are not aware of any quantitative targets which Norway might have set in the area of student mobility, either for degree or credit mobile students. An exception forms the North America Strategy, which we already referred to above. Norway has, of course, endorsed the overall EHEA target of 20% of outbound mobility by 2020, but the mobility to be counted towards that target had not been defined at the time it was adopted, making it a symbolic rather than concrete aim to be reached.

In the course of an earlier survey of research targets of European countries, some governments (for example Luxembourg) had explained they had not set numerical targets, since they had already achieved high or very high levels of mobility. No answer had been received from Norway, but had there been one, it might have been just that. Degree mobility outflows have traditionally been high and in recent years, outbound credit mobility has also picked up markedly. Incoming degree mobility has in recent years expanded substantially. There seems to be no need to set quantitative targets.

6. Consistency of policy and mobility reality

A fair number of countries covered in the present study, as well as in earlier research, pursue largely "declarational" mobility policies. They are full of lofty ambitions, but they lack the support mechanisms to translate ambition into reality. As a result, the policies appear to have only limited impact. This is not the case with Norway.

Norway is serious about its commitment to mobility. Its mobility-enhancing instruments are compatible with the country's ambitions in mobility. One sign of this is the very considerable support Norway grants outgoing students through *Lånekassen*, its chief funding instrument. This applies to both degree and credit mobility. It also applies to incoming degree mobility from developing countries, for which the QUOTA Programme is a powerful implementation instrument. It will be interesting to see if and how the country will manage to steer outbound mobile degree-seeking students to "quality institutions" abroad in the future.

Unlike in outbound mobility, Norway does not have a strong policy for attracting students into the country. It makes some efforts at information and mar-

keting and it provides a by now substantial offer of programmes in English, but it has not put in place aggressive attraction policies. But this is intentional rather than a deficit, and rooted in the country's adherence to a strict not-for-profit approach. In spite of this, inflows have recently increased. We attribute this to the high quality of Norwegian higher education, which is starting to become a brand not in need of advertisement.

The country also seems to be making headway with its policy of the recent decade to favour integrated outbound mobility, in the framework of institutional linkages. The development of outbound temporary mobility – also to non-traditional destinations – is encouraging.

Overall, Norwegian mobility policy is one of the few in Europe which deserves the term and which can be viewed as fully successful.

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IX. Romania

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1. Introduction

The Romanian higher education system has witnessed tremendous changes in the past two decades, many of these transformations having a bearing on the country's approach to international student (and staff) mobility.

First and foremost, the Romanian system experienced a massive expansion at the end of the 1990's, similar to that of other countries in Eastern Europe. In less than ten years, participation in higher education has increased at unprecedented speed. Total enrolment grew, in absolute terms, from just above 400 000 students in 1998/99 (the signature years of the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations) to more than 1 million students in the academic year 2007/08. In other words, the number of students enrolled in higher education studies more than doubled in this period.¹

Coping with this impressive growth in total enrolment was one of the major challenges that (mainly public) higher education institutions had to face in the years following the fall of the communist regime in Romania. The public higher education sector tried to deal with the massive increase in student demand by expanding the size of existing institutions rather than their total number. In fact, the number of public institutions remained more or less constant in this period – just above 50. Despite these efforts, public institutions have not managed to fully match the increasing demand. This gap was rapidly filled by emerging private universities, whose number almost reached that of public institutions by 2007/08.² With the rapid expansion of total enrolment and the almost 'over-night' development of the private sector, the quality of higher education provision in Romania became an area of vital concern.

¹ Nevertheless, participation in higher education in Romania remains below the European average.

² The Romanian higher education system is currently composed of public as well as private universities (*universitati*), institutes (*institute*), academies (*academii de studii*) and schools of postgraduate study (*scoli de studii postuniversitare*). The mission of these higher education institutions is either dual, i.e. both teaching and research, or teaching only. Higher education institutions normally include several faculties, university colleges, departments, chairs and units for scientific research. In the academic year 2007/08 the Romanian higher education system consisted of 56 public higher education institutions, namely universities and academies providing education at the levels ISCED 5A and 6, and 54 private institutions. In the same academic year, the 56 public institutions incorporated 432 faculties, while the private ones comprised only 199. Further information in: EURYDICE (2010), *National summary sheets on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms*, Brussels. Retrieved from: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/EURYDICE/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_RO_EN.pdf.

In parallel to this trend in total enrolment (and to an extent accounting for it), the funding of higher education institutions in Romania went through a serious overhaul at the beginning of the 21st century. Starting from 1999, the allocation principle of funds to public universities gradually moved from being input-based (i.e. linked to the number of academic staff, and more specifically professors employed) to one linked to the number of students enrolled.³ Furthermore, public higher education institutions (which began to enjoy increased autonomy) have been allowed to enrol fee-paying students, and were thus provided with the financial means to cover part of their on-going expansion.⁴ If at the end of the 1990's close to 70% of student places at universities were funded by the state, ten years later the exact opposite situation was observed.

Third, in the context of participation in the Bologna Process⁵, the structure of the Romanian higher education degrees also saw major changes. The Romanian study programmes were restructured in the period under review to match the Bologna-model.⁶ More broadly though, the country's participation in this reform process, as well as its negotiations in the context of EU accession, facilitated the rapid penetration of many of the European themes and objectives in the national context, at least at the level of policy discourse.

2. Student mobility realities

Before portraying the mobility policy framework and approaches in Romania, we find it useful to present the recent mobility trends into and out of the country, in order to be able to assess the magnitude of this phenomenon in the Romanian context. This presentation will cover both degree-seeking students (*diploma mobility*), as well as (though to a much more limited extent) students who are internationally-mobile for short periods of time as part of their on-going higher education studies (*credit mobility*).

³ Starting with 2006, the funding mechanisms incorporated performance based funding (which amounted to 30% of the basic funding and was awarded on so-called "quality indicators"). Nowadays, with the adoption of the new HE Law (no.1/2011), funding of HEIs will be based on the classification of universities and on a new methodology which is currently under development.

⁴ World Bank (2008), *Introducing a student loan scheme in Romania*, Retrieved from: http://sit-eresources.worldbank.org/ROMANIAEXTN/Resources/ENG_Student_Loans_Paper.pdf.

⁵ Romania was one of the 29 original signatories of the Bologna Declaration of 1999. Starting from the academic year 2005/06, both public and private institutions in the country were obliged to implement the 3-cycle structure: Bachelor (3-4 years; 180-240 ECTS), Master (1-2 years; 60-120 ECTS) and Doctorate.

⁶ Starting from 2004.

2.1 Incoming students

Diploma mobility

As discussed in earlier chapters of this publication, most European countries have managed to adapt their data collection systems in recent years to collect student mobility information according to the better proxy for mobility. These countries started, following the recommendation of the three international data collectors (UOE) to document the ‘country of prior education’ and/or the ‘country of prior/permanent residence’ of students enrolled in their higher education system, moving away from regarding the ‘foreign nationality’ of students as the best definition to capture cross-border mobility. So was the case for Romania, which, in the academic year 2006/07 collected for the first time data on students who were educated outside Romania prior to enrolling in the current level of higher education (i.e. on *incoming degree-seeking students*), in addition to the traditional dataset on *foreign students*. Despite this important achievement, because the dataset on *incoming students* is so ‘young’, it is impossible to base an analysis of mobility flows over time on descriptors other than the ‘nationality’ of students. We will thus mostly use the foreign students dataset in this present section, knowing that it overestimates the number of internationally-mobile students to Romania to a certain degree.

In contrast to total enrolment in the country, which saw impressive growth, the number of *foreign students* in Romania, between the years 1998/99-2007/08, experienced great fluctuations (Table 1). The number constantly decreased from 1998/99 (13 279 foreign students) until 2002/03 (9 730 students), and then picked up again until the most recent year available, when national statistics counted 13 857 foreign students⁷, i.e. slightly more students than in 1998/99.⁸ Interestingly, the year with the lowest number of *foreign students* in absolute terms coincides with the one when universities were first allowed to freely charge tuition fees, though a direct link between the two phenomena cannot clearly be established.

If in absolute terms the number of *foreign students* in Romania fluctuated in the observed period, their proportional impact on the national higher education system constantly diminished. While in 1998/99 the share of foreign students of total enrolment in Romania was 3.3%, in 2007/08 this percentage dropped to 1.3%. In a European comparison, Romania is amongst the

⁷ Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B. (2011), *Mapping Mobility in European Higher Education*, 2 vols., Bonn: DAAD (Dok&Mat 69, 70).

⁸ It is clear from these numbers that *foreign students* had no contribution to the rapid expansion of total enrolment in higher education in this country. National sources report that this trend is genuine, i.e. not caused by any changes in data collection definitions.

countries with the lowest shares of *foreign students*. The European average in 2006/07 already stood at 6.9%.

Table 1: Student mobility trends in Romania in 1998/99–2007/08 (ISCED 5/6)

Academic year	Total enrolment in Romania	Total Romanian students	Total foreign students	Share of foreign students of all students	Total Romanian students studying abroad (for a degree)	Ratio of Romanian students abroad to Romanian students at home
2007/08	1 056 622	1 042 765	13 857	1.3%	–	–
2006/07	928 175	915 987	12 188	1.3%	24 597	0.027
2005/06	834 969	823 179	11 790	1.4%	–	–
2004/05	738 806	727 994	10 812	1.5%	–	–
2003/04	685 718	675 232	10 486	1.5%	–	–
2002/03	643 911	634 181	9 730	1.5%	19 174	0.030
2001/02	582 221	571 613	10 608	1.8%	17 202	0.030
2000/01	533 152	521 483	11 669	2.2%	14 633	0.028
1999/00	452 621	440 030	12 591	2.8%	9 726	0.022
1998/99	407 720	394 441	13 279	3.3%	9 247	0.023

Source: UOE

Regarding the origin of foreign students in Romania, Moldavian students remain the largest national group, their presence having increased in the past years both in absolute and relative terms. In 2006/07 for example, Moldavian students represented 48.8% of all foreigners studying in this country (Table 2), while in 2002/03 their share stood at 42.3%.⁹ The extent to which Moldavian students are regarded as foreigners in Romania is however debatable, knowing that these students speak the same language and have followed a very similar educational path to that of Romanian students.¹⁰

⁹ In absolute terms, the numbers grew from 4 111 students to 5 948 students in this five-year period.

¹⁰ The territory which is nowadays known as the Republic of Moldova (previously called Bessarabia) was 'lost' by Romania in the aftermath of the 2nd World War.

Linguistic ties clearly play a significant role in the international flow of students to Romania, as does geographical closeness. In fact, all Romania's neighbours feature amongst the top 10 countries of nationality of foreign students in this country, with the sole exception of Hungary. The top 10 also includes countries from North Africa (Tunisia), the Middle East (Israel, Jordan) and South-Eastern Europe (Albania, Greece). The only Western European country in this ordering is Germany.

Table 2: Top 10 countries of nationality of foreign students in Romania and top 10 countries of destination of Romanian study abroad students (2006/07, UOE)

Countries of nationality of foreign students in Romania				Countries of study abroad of Romanian students			
Rank	Country	Total	%	Rank	Country	Total	%
1	Moldova	5 948	48.8%	1	France	4 617	18.8%
2	Tunisia	767	6.3%	2	Germany	4 373	17.8%
3	Greece	612	5.0%	3	Hungary	3 296	13.4%
4	Israel	555	4.6%	4	United States	3 203	13.0%
5	Ukraine	382	3.1%	5	Italy	2 456	10.0%
6	Serbia and Montenegro	290	2.4%	6	Spain	1 725	7.0%
7	Germany	247	2.0%	7	United Kingdom	1 133	4.6%
8	Bulgaria	222	1.8%	8	Austria	697	2.8%
9	Jordan	206	1.7%	9	Switzerland	584	2.4%
10	Albania	205	1.7%	10	Belgium	414	1.7%
Top ten countries		9 434	77.4%	Top ten countries		22 498	91.5%

Source: UOE

A very typical trait of the Romanian higher education system is that *Health and Welfare* has been for a long time and remains the field of study with the largest enrolment of foreign students. About one third (35.8%) of all foreign students were enrolled in medical and paramedical studies in 2006/07, well above the European average for the same year, at 12.65%. The country has had a long tradition of providing education for foreigners in this subject area, a tradition dating back to the Communist times, when this offer was particu-

larly targeted at rich African and Middle Eastern countries, with whom the regime wanted to build friendly relations.¹¹

According to estimates for the year 2006/07, close to a quarter of all *foreign students* in the country were previously educated here, and subsequently did not enter Romania for higher education studies. The *foreign students* dataset inflates thus the observed inflows into Romania by almost 25%.

Credit mobility

The database for credit mobile students in Romania is, like in most other countries within Europe, fairly limited. Apart from the datasets for the ERASMUS and the CEEPUS¹² programmes, almost no other quantitative overview exists, at the central level, about incoming short-term students.

Romania started to take part in the ERASMUS Programme (which was incorporated into the Socrates Programme at the time) already in 1996, i.e. four years ahead of the official launch of negotiations for its accession to the European Union (EU). Ever since, the number of students annually coming to Romania with an ERASMUS grant, either for study or internship purposes, has rapidly increased, from some tens of students to 1 206 in 2008/09.¹³ In relative terms though, incoming ERASMUS students make for just 0.1% of students in the country.

Summing up the degree-seeking and ERASMUS student numbers, we observe that close to 15 000 students from abroad came to Romania in 2007/08.

¹¹ Nowadays the majority of such programmes tend to be bilingual. They start with the first two years of general courses in English, by which time foreign students should have come to master the Romanian language up to a level that would enable them to continue their education in this language.

¹² CEEPUS is an acronym for *Central European Exchange Program for University Studies* (<http://www.ceepus.info/default.aspx>). It is a mobility programme that facilitates short-term mobility between Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Prishtina/Kosovo. The total number of students that are mobile every year through the programme remains very minor compared to ERASMUS. For example, in 2010/11, the programme 'moved' slightly fewer than 6 000 to other partner countries.

¹³ For a detailed analysis of ERASMUS trends in the Romanian context see Teichler, U., Ferencz, I., and Wächter, B., op. cit.

2.2 Outgoing mobility

Degree mobility

In contrast to the trend in foreign student numbers, the number of Romanian nationals going abroad for full-degree studies (the study abroad students¹⁴) constantly increased from 1998/99 to 2006/07 (the latest year with an available dataset). In fact, their number almost tripled in this period (9 247 students in 1998/99 – 24 597 students in 2006/07) (Table 1).

Also extremely interesting is that Romania has transformed in this period from a *net importer* country of foreign students (receiving more students than it sent abroad) into a *net exporter* state.¹⁵ In relative terms, though, there has been little increase in the percentage of Romanian students going abroad for degree studies of all students enrolled in Romanian higher education. While in 1998/99 the study abroad ratio of Romanian students was 0.023¹⁶, in 2006/07 this ratio stood at 0.027.¹⁷ This means that while the number of Romanians looking to start or continue their higher education studies outside the country is increasing, this remains a modest phenomenon at the national scale. At the European level, in the same year, the average study abroad ratio stood at 0.033. Romania is clearly below the European average for study abroad; and although the Romanian student outflows are higher than the inflows, given the modest size of the study abroad group, Romania is far from experiencing a brain drain situation.

The mobility patterns of *Romanian students studying* abroad are very different from those of foreign students coming to Romania. While the foreign students in the country tend to have nationalities of neighbouring countries or of countries from North Africa and the Middle East, the Romanian students going abroad predominantly enrol in Central and Western European countries and in the United States (Table 2). This comes to prove, once again, the largely vertical nature of degree mobility (i.e. mobile students prefer to go for degree studies to countries with more advanced higher education systems, and which enjoy greater international reputation, in general).

¹⁴ In the context of this study we use the term 'study abroad' in a different sense than in the mainstream American literature. We employ it as meaning study abroad for the purpose of a full degree, not for a short-term experience.

¹⁵ In 2006/07 the in:out ratio for degree-seeking students was 50:100, while in 1998/99 it was 144:100. In other words, if in 1998/99 for every 144 foreign students in Romania there were 100 Romanian students enrolled abroad, in 2006/07 already for every 50 foreign students in the country there were 100 Romanians abroad.

¹⁶ This means that for every 1 000 Romanian students enrolled in Romania there were 23 Romanian students enrolled towards a degree abroad.

¹⁷ And represents actually a decrease compared to previous years, when it stood at 0.030 (2002/03).

Despite these differences, linguistic and cultural ties play a significant role in outgoing mobility patterns as well. About a third of Romanian students abroad study in countries with a Romance language (as is the Romanian language, in fact), namely in France, Italy and Spain, while another third study in countries where the languages of two important ethnic minorities in Romania are spoken, i.e. Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Hungary.¹⁸

Credit mobility

As in the case of incoming credit mobility, fairly limited information exists about outgoing credit mobile students outside mobility programmes such as ERASMUS.

Evidently, the participation of Romanian students in the ERASMUS Programme has steadily increased over the past decade. The number of Romanian students going abroad for an ERASMUS stay has tripled between 1998/99-2008/09 (from 1 250 to 3 744 students). This development was very similar to that observed in other Eastern European countries that joined this mobility scheme in the 1990's. This group of countries, experiencing constant budget increases as well as a steady rise in the number of institutions eligible to participate in the programme¹⁹, saw the highest growth rates amongst all European countries

According to interviewees from the national agency for EU programmes in Romania (see further details about this body in the next sections), the interest of Romanian students in the programme is even greater than the programme can currently support.²⁰ The top destinations of these students are the preferred destinations of most ERASMUS students, i.e. France, Germany, Spain and Italy.

Mirroring the degree mobility trend, the ERASMUS outflows outbalance the inflows in this period, making Romania a net exporter country of students also for credit mobility. The number of Romanian students that went abroad with ERASMUS in 2008/09 was three times higher than the number of ERASMUS students coming to Romania (3 744 outgoing to 1 206 incoming).

To put ERASMUS numbers into perspective though, according to recent estimates of the EUROSTUDENT IV project, of all Romanian students that have had a short study-related stay abroad, only 58% have been mobile with

¹⁸ 6.6% of Romania's population is composed of ethnic Hungarian and 0.28% of ethnic German.

¹⁹ Holding an ERASMUS University Charter.

²⁰ However, the number of ERASMUS places is limited on the one hand by the available budget for grants and more importantly by the number of agreements (and related places) signed between Romanian higher education institutions and partner institutions from across Europe.

ERASMUS.²¹ The number of Romanian students that go abroad every year for a short period is demonstrably higher than the number of ERASMUS students that are annually mobile. In total, the EUROSTUDENT authors found that about 5% of all surveyed Romanian students had already been abroad at some point during their higher education studies for study or study-related activities.²²

3. Past and current policy realities – important milestones

Romania did not have, at the time of writing a clearly articulated policy (at the national level) on international student (and staff) mobility, nor a policy for the internationalisation of the Romanian higher education system more widely. Like most other countries in Europe, it had a number of separate policy elements but not yet a well-developed, overarching strategy. Student mobility has nevertheless been repeatedly referenced, in a direct or incidental manner, in a number of governmental documents throughout the past decades. The lack of a fully-fledged national strategy for mobility (or internationalisation for that matter) is clearly not atypical in the European context, not even in the West of the continent, as other examples in this publication show. What is fairly unusual, though, is a country moves from a very strategic national-level approach to international student mobility to no governmental policy at all. Romania is one such country.

3.1 Pre-1989

From the 1970s to the mid-1980s Romania enjoyed a very articulate policy for the attraction of foreign students. While the possibilities for *study abroad of Romanian nationals* remained very limited in this period, the Communist regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu regarded *foreign students* as a very good instrument to build friendly relations with target countries in Africa, Asia and South America, of (or aspiring to) the same political reality (i.e. Communist). A number of special measures were taken at the time to make sure that Romania became an attractive study destination for nationals of these countries. Such measures included the reduction of tuition fee levels below those of other countries in the region, the granting of scholarships for foreigners, the development of special services available only for foreign students (support in the learning of the Romanian language, preferential access to libraries,

²¹ Orr, D., Gwosc, C. and Netz, N. (2011), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. Synopsis of indicators. Final Report. EUROSTUDENT IV 2008-2011*. W. Bertelsmann Verlag, Bielefeld.

²² According to the *EUROSTUDENT IV synopsis*, study-related activities include on the one hand enrolment abroad and on the other hand non-enrolment periods abroad, namely internships, language courses, research stays, summer schools, and other study-related experiences.

special academic regulations, and special housing facilities). As a result, in 1981 the number of foreign students in Romania reached an all-time-high, of 16 962 students²³ corresponding to 10% of the total student population. Nevertheless, from the mid-1980s onwards, following the tightening of political control in the country, the number of foreigners coming to study in Romania continued to drop every year.

3.2 The start of a transition period

Following the fall of the communist regime in 1989, like many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania entered a long and bumpy transition process from a planned (centralised) economy to a market economy. In parallel, the Romanian (higher) education system has undergone a number of major (and at times inconsistent) reforms, some of which have already been mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter.

The education law of 1995 (law 84/1995) proclaimed for the first time the autonomy of Romanian higher education institutions and their right to make and implement their own policies under the coordination of the Ministry of Education.²⁴ Public higher education institutions²⁵ were to be mainly financed by the state, based on bilateral financial contracts signed by each institution with the Ministry of Education. The enrolment quota supported from the state budget was set every year through a governmental decision. Through the law 441/2001, higher education institutions in Romania were, for the first time, allowed to enrol higher numbers of students than the number of places financed from the central budget, provided that the ‘excess’ students paid tuition fees. Following the introduction of tuition fees, enrolment into higher education in the country saw a rapid growth (as detailed earlier in this chapter).

In this context, it is understandable to a certain degree that the central authorities, and in particular the Ministry of Education – confronted with a significant number of fundamental structural changes and a galloping increase of total enrolment into higher education – did not regard in this epoch the promotion of international student mobility (neither incoming, nor outgoing) as a top priority. Despite these realities, several mobility-related European-level topics have penetrated the Romanian policy discourse.

²³ Nicolescu, L., Pricopie, R. and Popescu, A. I. (2009), “Country differences and the internationalisation of higher education – How can countries lagging behind diminish the gap”, in the *Review of International Comparative Management*, Vol. 10, Issue 5, pp. 976-989.

²⁴ EURYDICE (2008), *Organisation of the education system in Romania 2008/2009*, Brussels, European Commission. Retrieved from: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/EURYDICE/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/RO_EN.pdf.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

3.3 Post 2000

EU accession negotiations

On the 15th of February 2000, during the Portuguese presidency of the Council of Ministers, the European Commission (Directorate General for Enlargement) officially opened the EU accession negotiations with Romania. The EU priorities in the field of education and training, as the priorities in many other (unproblematic) fields, were almost automatically adopted at the national level in Romania. Compliance with the EU *acquis* was the main pre-condition for EU accession. Given that the EU *acquis* in the field of education was considerably thinner than in other areas, it came as no surprise that *Education, Training and Youth* (negotiation chapter 18) was one of the first six chapters where Romania opened negotiations in early 2000 and also amongst the first to be finalised (already in May 2000). Largely, the EU *acquis* in the field of education was composed of the programmes facilitating intra-European student (and staff) mobility, and Romania was already participating in the EU Programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci for several years.

In 2002, the Ministry of Education officially endorsed the Education and Training 2010 (ET2010) work programme of the European Union, which had a fairly strong intra-European and outside of Europe mobility element.²⁶

The Bologna Process and related developments

The fact that Romania was also one of the original signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration of 1999, through its Minister of Education at that moment – Andrei Marga – had an immediate effect on the policy discourse of higher education decision-makers within the country.²⁷ Inspired by the Bologna Declaration, the ensuing *Prague Ministerial Conference* (2001), and by the *ET2010* work programme, the Ministry of Education and Research of Romania launched, for the first time (in 2002) a national strategy for the Romanian higher education system with clear references to the European-level developments and priorities, and with a mobility component. The strategy, covering the period 2002-2010²⁸, makes clear references to:

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Romania has also taken over in June 2010 the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), with main responsibilities for the preparation of the Bologna Process Ministerial Conference to take place in Bucharest in April 2012.

²⁸ Ministry of Education and Research (2002), *The strategy for the Romanian higher education system 2002-2010 (Strategia invatamantului superior romanesc pe perioada 2002-2010)*, Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.ro/download/strategiesuperior.pdf>.

- the necessity of the Romanian higher education system to align to the new degree architecture introduced in the Bologna context (which was perceived as facilitating mobility);
- the necessity to use mobility-enhancing tools like the cumulative and transferable study credit system (of *ECTS* type) and the *Diploma Supplement*;
- the need for a wider participation in the EU programmes Socrates II and Leonardo da Vinci II;
- the need to continue the exchange programmes with francophone countries facilitated by AUF (*Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*); and
- the need for the Ministry of Education to support Romanian universities in establishing broader international contacts and links.

Apart from these general objectives, the strategy does not put forward any concrete courses of action or measurable targets.

Other initiatives

In addition to this medium-term strategy, adopted in 2002, several other (more recent) initiatives and policy documents make reference to international student mobility in the Romanian framework, providing distinct elements of what could become one day a fully-fledged mobility policy. It is important to mention though, in this context, that the Ministry of Education – the main national-level policy actor in the field of international student mobility – sees its role in this area of policy-making as very ‘light’. The ministerial representatives, alluding to the recently-granted *autonomy* of universities, describe their task as limited to setting general objectives. On the other hand, the higher education institutions are not only empowered to choose a more strategic approach to mobility and to define concrete focus areas, actions and instruments, but it is actually their job to do so, according to governmental representatives.

The *Post-accession Strategy*²⁹, adopted by the Ministry of Education for the period 2007-2013, features the explicit objective of contributing to the creation of the “European knowledge-based society”, through initiatives that help build the relevant (international) skills, amongst others of higher education graduates. One of proposed the indicators to measure the level of attainment of this goal was the number of mobile students, teaching staff and researchers via European mobility programmes.

²⁹ Romanian Government (2007), *Strategia de post-aderare a României*, Retrieved from: <http://www.gov.ro/upload/articles/100071/strategie-post-aderare2a.pdf>.

The *Strategy Education and Research for a Knowledge Society (2009-2015)*³⁰, adopted by the Romanian presidency in 2008, sets a number of objectives which will hopefully contribute to increasing the “attractiveness” of the Romanian higher education system, namely having three Romanian universities in the top-500 of world’s best universities, and attracting more foreign students through competitive scholarships in order to have better “internationalisation at home”.

The 2008 Report on the state of national higher education³¹, by the Ministry of Education, sets as a clear priority for the next year “enhancing the international dimension of the Romanian higher education system”, by:

- setting up an *internationalisation* agency to foster student, academic staff and researchers’ mobility and to increase the visibility of the Romanian higher education system abroad;
- encouraging the use of *ECTS* and *Diploma Supplement* by all study programmes, to enhance mobility of students and graduates;
- supporting higher education institutions to get further involved in the *ERASMUS* and *ERASMUS MUNDUS* programmes and to create *joint and double degrees in particular at the Masters and PhD level*;
- encouraging the participation of Romanian PhD candidates in the activities of the European University Institute (through scholarships for this type of mobility: 30 in 2013); and by
- increasing international cooperation with Africa, Latin America and the ASEM countries.

The 2009 edition³² of the same ministerial report sets the objective of “ensuring the quality and stimulating the excellence of higher education (both public and private)” for the year 2010, by, amongst others:

- opening Romanian universities internationally;
- increasing students’ and researchers’ mobility;

³⁰ Romanian Presidency (2008), *Education and Research for the Knowledge Society*, Retrieved from: http://www.presidency.ro/static/ordine/COMISIA_EDUCATIE/EDUCATION_AND_RESEARCH_FOR_A_KNOWLEDGE_SOCIETY.pdf.

³¹ Ministry of Education (2008), *Raport asupra starii sistemului national de invatamant 2008*, Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/10913>.

³² Ministry of Education (2009), *Raport asupra starii sistemului national de invatamant 2009*, Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/12926>.

- developing joint and double degrees; and by
- ensuring that 1 in 5 graduates has an “international experience”.³³

The new National Education Law (Law1/2011)³⁴, adopted by the Romanian Parliament in April 2011 stipulates for the first time the principle of “free national and international movement of students, teaching staff and researchers”. Another related initiative is the recent classification of Romanian universities started by the Romanian minister of education³⁵, which has been pursued in the name of, amongst other objectives, increased transparency of Romanian higher education in the eyes of European partners.

While the national level policy documents clearly show that many European themes have penetrated the Romanian mobility policy discourse throughout the years, it is as crucial to acknowledge that in many instances this was (unfortunately) just an act of *mimetic isomorphism*. Very few of these overarching objectives have been operationalised and consistently pursued at the national level, or supported by appropriate measures. Many of these goals and tentative strategic approaches have fallen victim to the political instability within the country (manifested also in the very frequent change of ministers entrusted with the education portfolio). It was not at all atypical in this period that new ministers made a mission of adopting completely different approaches than their predecessors, and in this sense, initiating contradictory reforms.

A clear example of a relevant, but failed, attempt was the plan to create a national agency responsible for the internationalisation of the Romanian higher education system (and a related strategy). Under the project *Quality and Leadership* (financed through the EU Structural Funds) the State Secretary of Education at the time coordinated a panel on “Universities in the context of globalisation and Europeanisation”. One of the conclusions of this panel was that the creation of a national agency for internationalisation was necessary.

³³ This target is identical to the one adopted by education ministers reunited in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve for the 2009 Bologna Ministerial conference, namely “20% of those graduating in the EHEA by 2020 should have a study of training period abroad”.

³⁴ Law nr. 1/2011, available online at: http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/legea_educatiei_nationale_lege_1_2011.php.

³⁵ With the support of the European University Association (EUA), the Ministry of Education elaborated in 2011 a methodology to classify Romanian higher education institutions in accordance with the specifications of the new law of education. As a result, Romanian universities are divided in 4 categories: universities of education and advanced research, universities of education and scientific research, universities of education and arts, and universities focused on education only. Further information is available online at: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/pressrel/16071>.

Despite the original progress registered in this direction³⁶, which seemed to make of student mobility an important strategic component, the plans to create a national agency and the related strategy collapsed in 2009, when the Romanian government suddenly issued a decision to cut the number of public agencies. Again, internationalisation and, in parallel, international student mobility were not regarded as important as other areas at the central level.

4. Policy actors at the national level

Clearly the *Ministry of Education*³⁷ remains the most important central level entity which has adopted elements of a mobility policy applicable to the totality of higher education institutions within the country, although it defines its role in this area as fairly limited in scope. Two departments within the ministry specifically deal with international matters. One is the *Department for European Affairs*, which is in charge of coordinating and monitoring the participation of the country in EU's education programmes (e.g. the current Lifelong Learning Programme – LLP), in the CEEPUS Programme and in other European initiatives. The other is the *Department for International Relations*, in charge of managing the bilateral cooperation agreements signed with other countries and of setting the regulations applying to international students. At present, Romania has about 200 bilateral agreements with over 30 countries around the world. This department also manages the educational relations with the Romanian diaspora.

Under the direct coordination of the Ministry of Education, the *Agency for Study Loans and Scholarships (Agentia de Credite si Burse de Studii)* is currently in charge of managing the scholarships granted under the bilateral agreements signed by the ministry, as well as six other categories of grants. The number of annual grantees, though, amounts to just 250. In the future, the agency might also be in charge of administering a national study loan system, which is currently under development upon advice from the World Bank.³⁸

Further, like all other countries that take part in the EU's education programmes, Romania has a structure that administers the related funds – The *National Agency for Community Programmes in the field of Education and Training (Agentia Nationala pentru Programe Comunitare in Domeniul Educatiei si Formarii Profesionale – ANPCDEFP)*³⁹. The agency in its present form was created in 2005,

³⁶ Further information about the preparatory work in Pricopie, R. and Nicolescu, L. (2008), *Analiza diagnostic: Universitatile in contextual europenizarii si globalizarii*, Retrieved from: http://www.edu2025.ro/UserFiles/File/LivrabileR1/diagnostic_panel5.pdf.

³⁷ Further information on the ministry's website: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/base/frontpage>

³⁸ World Bank (2008), *op. cit.*

³⁹ Further information is available on the ANPCDEFP website <http://www.anpcdefp.ro/>.

through the merger of two predecessor bodies, which dated back from 1996. Its main say is in the area of European cooperation in the field of education.

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance have occasionally been involved in decision-making over issues that have to do with international student mobility (e.g. in the discussions for setting up a portable loan scheme). Other bodies consulted at times are the *National Rectors' Council (Consiliul National al Rectorilor – CNR⁴⁰)* and the *National Alliance of Student Organisations in Romania (Alianta Nationala a Organizatiilor Studentesti din Romania – ANOSR⁴¹)*.

5. Focus of the current mobility policy

5.1 Mobility rationales

It is very difficult to say in the Romanian context which of the four different types of mobility is regarded as most important, given the lack of specificity of most official documents. Traditionally, though, most importance has been attached to the recruitment of foreign *degree-seeking students (incoming degree mobility)* and, with the participation in the EU mobility programmes, to the *short-term study abroad of Romanian nationals (outbound credit mobility)*. While *inbound credit mobility* is sometimes specifically addressed, as there is more and more an acknowledgement that incoming students (of all types) could play an important role in internationalising Romanian university campuses, *outbound degree mobility* is never mentioned as an area of interest. This is nevertheless consistent with the trend we observed in other countries.

Mirroring the tendency observed in other countries, as well as at the European policy level, student mobility is presented in the Romanian context as a desirable development. The question 'Why mobility?' is literally not addressed in official documents. "Mobility" – referred to in this very generic form – is believed to contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the Romanian higher education system, to building the knowledge-based society, but also to the creation of European citizenship, and largely of the European space of higher education (EHEA).

5.2 Geographical focus – target regions and countries

The few official documents that comprise student mobility references point to Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the ASEM countries as important target regions. This is generally in line with the observed mobility flows *to* and *out* of Romania, although the policy documents never clearly state which of the above regions is targeted for which type of mobility.

⁴⁰ Further information is available on the CNR website: <http://consiliulrectorilor.ro/>.

⁴¹ Further information is available on the ANOSR website: <http://www.anosr.ro/>.

5.3 Priority levels of study

Echoing the policy discourse at the European level, we observe a slow tendency of Romanian policy documents of recent years to favour postgraduate incoming students – i.e. students at Masters and PhD level – be they degree-seeking or credit mobile. This becomes apparent through a number of incentives, e.g. the prioritisation of *joint/double degrees at Masters and PhD level*⁴² or the preferential award of certain *scholarships to Masters and PhD students*.

5.4 Mobility targets

In general, official Romanian documents simply refer to the need to “increase”, “enhance”, or “grow” the overall number of mobile students, with no further specification on an exact target or the type and direction of mobility that should be advanced. The only reference to a more precise *quantitative target* for mobility dates back to the year 2009, and seems to be, most likely, a national endorsement of the Bologna Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve mobility target. The target is formulated as follows: “ensuring that 1 in 5 graduates has an international experience”. Similar to the Bologna mobility target, this national goal makes no reference to the exact type of mobility that will be counted towards it. As this goal does not seem to appear in other official documents, it is uncertain to what extent this is pursued at the national level, if at all.

5.5 Policy instruments

Although Romania does not avail of a national policy framework for international student mobility, the country has been able to use, for a long time, a number of specific instruments to support the development of this phenomenon.

In addition to national-level initiatives, the European-level instruments and mobility programmes are often referenced in the Romanian context in a very prominent way. This is in part due to the fact that national-level measures address only some aspects of international student mobility. But it also has to do with the fact that national authorities have made a mission of proving that Romania is a “quick study” and a rightful member of the European Union and of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As a result, the formal adoption of already standard measures like the ECTS system⁴³, the Diploma

⁴² *National Bologna Stocktaking Report 2007-2009*, retrieved from: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/actionlines/stocktaking.htm>. According to this report, the number of joint degrees at the Masters level in 2008 was 48.

⁴³ This was introduced in Romania in 1997, and became compulsory for all Romanian higher education institutions in 2005.

Supplement, the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention⁴⁴, or the participation in EU mobility programmes (particularly ERASMUS and ERASMUS MUNDUS), is constantly placed at the forefront in national documents.

One other support instrument often mentioned in the Romanian context are the scholarships awarded by the Agency for *Study Loans and Scholarships*, on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The agency grants scholarships to Romanian students for both *outgoing credit* (2-10 months) and *degree mobility*, through six different scholarship programmes.⁴⁵ This body also awards scholarships for outgoing Romanian students, which are granted by foreign countries in the framework of bilateral agreements signed with the Romanian ministry. Although prestigious, these seven types of scholarships reach a very limited number of mobile students every year (about 250), remaining a modest instrument in an international comparison. The share of mobile students they support is very small, below 1% per year.

Financial support for incoming students is even more limited. Apart from the financial support under the *bilateral agreements*, which also bring a number of *incoming credit mobile* and *degree-seeking students* from partner countries, the Romanian government exempts some incoming students from the payment of tuition fees in public universities.⁴⁶ A special grant scheme is targeted at the *reintegration of ethnic Romanians* who live or study abroad, by offering them free higher education studies. Special arrangements also exist for the Moldavian students, who generally get preferential treatment compared to other foreign nationalities. These students are, most of the time, tuition fee exempt. The extent to which they can be considered as truly foreigners, though, is by many standards questionable, as we have earlier argued.

Linguistic measures also play a role in the mobility policy context in Romania, both for incoming and outgoing students. The Romanian Government is allowing, already for a close to two decades, higher education instruction in other languages than Romanian. Several higher education institutions are offering degree courses fully-taught in German and Hungarian. While these programmes were not developed with the original aim to enhance the internationalisation of Romanian higher education (but rather to cater for the needs of ethnic Hungarians and Germans in Romania), they have resulted in

⁴⁴ Through law 172/1998. The *National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CN-RED)* was set up in 1999 and has functioned ever since as a member of the ENIC-NARIC Network.

⁴⁵ These are the scholarships awarded under the H.G. nr. 697/1996, the “Vasile Parvan”, “Nicolae Iorga”, “Titu Maiorescu”, “Theodor Aman” scholarships and the special scholarship of the Romanian Government. Further information is available online, on the website of the agency: <http://www.roburse.ro/>.

⁴⁶ In an international comparison, tuition fees in Romanian higher education institutions remain very low – currently below 1 000 EUR/year on average.

attracting some students from abroad. More recently, the Romanian policy documents have started to discreetly encourage the creation of English-taught programmes. According to recent research results, in 2007 there were about 25 programmes fully taught in English in Romania.⁴⁷

While national policy documents have started to emphasise the need for Romanian higher education to become more visible internationally, promotion activities at the national level are still in their infancy. There is no joint presence at international promotional events yet (though more and more higher education institutions from the country organise this, independently). Also, the 'Study in Romania' brand is clearly not as well-established as similar initiatives in other European countries. A 'Study in Romania' website was created several years ago, but it is not fully operating.

6. National policy for staff mobility

The promotion of *teaching staff mobility* is clearly less frequently mentioned as an objective at the national level. In fact, the only framework in which teaching staff mobility is addressed in a central fashion is in the context of the ERASMUS Programme, which is in fact the main instrument used at the national level to support this type of mobility. Unlike other European countries that highlight the potential of teaching staff mobility for incentivising the future mobilities of students, and for developing institutional partnerships, Romania has not yet reached this level of strategic thinking and planning at the central level. At the level of higher education institutions, though, the link between the mobility of these two categories, especially in institutions that do not yet have a very widespread international network of partners, is starting to be addressed in a more targeted manner. In total, in 2007/08, 1 137 Romanian staff went abroad, while 937 foreign staff came for a short stay.

The international mobility of research staff is addressed in a much more privileged manner. For example, the *National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation (2007-2013)*⁴⁸ was adopted by the Ministry of Education for a period that deliberately coincides with the duration of the 7th Framework Programme of the European Union for Research and Development. The Strategy⁴⁹ highlights the necessity for Romania to become a country of destination

⁴⁷ Wächter, B. and Waiworm, F. (2007), *English-taught programmes in European higher education. The picture in 2007*. Lemmens Medien, Bonn.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Education and Research (2007), *National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation*, Retrieved from: <http://uefiscdi.gov.ro/userfiles/file/ROST/1188314177strategia%20ro.pdf>.

⁴⁹ It is implemented through a specific action plan based on the recommendations of the *National Council for Scientific Research and Higher Education (Consiliul National al Cercetarii Stiintifice din Invatamantul Superior – CNCISIS)*. The plan was drafted in cooperation with 26 research

for scientific excellence, and to attract top-level researchers, irrespective of nationality. One of the indicators taken into account to measure the success of the strategy is the number of researchers coming from abroad. Unfortunately, data for this indicator is non-existent apart from EU programmes that fund the mobility of researchers, such as Marie Curie. The European instruments are mentioned in a prominent way as regards researchers' mobility as well.

7. Coherence between policies, mobility realities and instruments

It is very clear that Romania is a country that still lacks a strategic national-level approach to international student and staff mobility. And though governmental representatives explain this as a function of the autonomy principle at the institutional level, many good examples in Europe have shown that a national policy framework and institutional autonomy are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can, and should be mutually supportive. This seemed to be the view of many non-government interviewees at the national level, who tended to see the development of such a policy as a necessity, in order in Romania to better align the existing (and at times contradictory) initiatives.

Nevertheless, Romania has been very fast at adopting the catchphrases from the European discourse, though less prompt to support them with rigorous measures. While several mobility-enhancing instruments are used at the national level, they manage to address just a very small share of students that are mobile every year, and remain modest in an international comparison. These few instruments were clearly not able to prevent negative developments, as it has happened with incoming degree students in the mid-2000. Recognition, though fully functional on paper, remains one of the main barriers for study abroad, say Romanian students that participated in the EUHOSTUDENT IV survey. The bilateral agreements meanwhile, are continued more for historical reasons rather than for strategic importance for the country. They prove at times more beneficial for incoming students from the developing world (who see Romania as a gateway to the European Union) than for Romanian outgoing students. Even in terms of geography, though, it is clear that Romania will not be able to maintain its attractiveness without serious promotional efforts, as more and more countries target this region as well.

As conditionality has worked to some extent in the Romanian context in the past, it could work again in the near future, as the development of an EU in-

institutes, higher education institutions and enterprises. See Ministry of Education and Research (2007a), *National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation*, Retrieved from: <http://uefiscdi.gov.ro/userfiles/file/ROST/1188314177strategia%20ro.pdf>, and Ministry of Education and Research (2007b), *National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation*, Retrieved from: http://www.mct.ro/img/files_up/1188313421PN2%20ro.pdf.

ternationalisation strategy is expected in 2012. The country has some catching-up to do in following the European trends and really making internationalisation a core element of higher education strategy rather than a marginal concern. Linking the existing policy elements and instruments in a coherent framework could be a good start.

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X. Spain

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1. Introduction

This case study on Spain's international mobility policies and practices gives, the same as all other country reports of this publication, further insights into the interplay between European-level and national policy developments in the field of international student (and staff) mobility, and links these observations to the observed mobility trends. While the focus is on initiatives undertaken at the national level in the last ten years, relevant approaches and elements are traced further back in time.

Higher education in Spain consists of "general higher education" and of "special higher education". "General higher education" includes:

- *enseñanza universitaria* (university education); and
- *formación profesional de grado superior* (non-university higher education).

"Special higher education" does not fall under the official *University Law*¹ and includes:

- *enseñanzas artísticas superiores* (i.e. higher education in the arts, including, music, dance, stage craft, conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, expressive arts and design);
- *enseñanzas de artes plásticas y diseño de grado superior* (i.e. non-university higher education of visual arts and design); and
- *enseñanzas deportivas de grado superior* (i.e. non-university higher education in the field of sports).

Higher education in Spain was delivered, at the time of writing, by 77 universities, 50 of which were public and the rest private. Two universities exclusively offered postgraduate courses. Some of the private institutions function under the patronage of the Catholic Church. Finally, five institutions are distance-learning universities.

¹ Nuffic (2010), Landenmodule Spanje. The Hague: Nuffic. Retrieved from: <http://www.nuffic.nl/nederlandse-organisaties/docs/extranet/landenmodule-spanje.pdf>.

Spain has a central government, with devolved power for 17 autonomous communities (*Comunidades Autónomas*).² In practice, the regional governments are responsible for the administration of schools and universities. Although in this chapter we will focus on mobility policies set at a national level, we will also briefly present one regional example, Catalunya.

2. Mobility policies: rationales, regulatory framework, actors

Like most other countries in Europe, Spain has many instruments in place to support international student (and staff) mobility, but still lacks a comprehensive, fully-fledged mobility policy at the national level. Mobility of students and researchers is nevertheless evoked as one of the current priorities of the Ministry of Education³, and is supported through several programmes.

For a long period, under General Franco (1939-1975), Spain suffered from a *brain drain* of scholars and scientists who found the academic limitations of their country to be counter-productive to their work. In this period, there were few foreign professors in Spain, aside from the occasional visiting professor, and in practice no government-sponsored scholarships for study abroad.⁴

Although the situation gradually improved after the fall of the Franco regime, public funding for higher education has, for a long time been dependent on the number of registered students. No special incentives were given to institutions for the most talented domestic students, let alone to talented *foreign students* which could have nevertheless allowed Spanish universities to compete internationally.⁵

In 1994, responsibility for higher education shifted from the national to the regional level. The Spanish government adopted a positive stance on Europeanization and *study abroad*, but without offering (institutions) any specific (financial) incentives to these ends.⁶ The exchange of students via ERASMUS and other such programmes, the participation in the European University Institute of Florence, and the inclusion of Spain as a potential member of research and working groups sponsored by the European Union, all encouraged a more European orientation of the Spanish education system.

² The central government accounts for just 18% of public spending; the regional governments for 38%, the local councils for 13% and the social-security system for the remainder.

³ Within the period examined by the present study, the *Ministry of Education* frequently changed its name and responsibilities. In 2008, the responsibility for university education was transferred to the newly created *Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación* (*Ministry of Science and Innovation*), but reassigned to the *Ministry of Education* in 2009.

⁴ Peach, M. (2001).

⁵ Spanish Government (2007).

⁶ Adia, E., M. Stowell & M.A. Higgins (1994).

One of the most salient developments at the national level related to international student mobility has been the *University Strategy 2015*⁷, adopted by the Ministry of Education in 2008. This strategy document, defined as an attempt to modernise the Spanish system through excellence, internationalisation and the involvement of the business sector, has a special chapter devoted to the internationalisation of Spanish universities. Under the overall objective to *improve the competitiveness and the international visibility of Spanish universities*, the strategy highlights the necessity to define a national level strategy for internationalisation, and to specifically: increase the *financial support for the ERASMUS Programme (credit mobility)*, increase all types of *(international) mobility*, enhance the attractiveness of Spanish Masters programmes and improve study conditions in Spain through the International Campus of Excellence programme.⁸

2.1 Rationales for supporting student mobility

In the Spanish context, mobility is understood as promoting internationalisation, quality and excellence of human resources in both education and research. More specifically, the Spanish government has been seeking to reach the following goals, through the promotion of student mobility⁹:

- *Enhancing the quality and diversity of education.* Mobility is seen as an appropriate instrument to stimulate the quality and diversification of education.¹⁰ “Mobility” – generally not concretely defined in policy documents – is expected to increase wealth and openness through better quality training. Therefore, by law¹¹, all those involved in university activities are asked to facilitate greater mobility, so that this phenomenon benefits as many citizens as possible.
- *To strengthen a highly internationalised university system and to establish Spain as a high potential country to attract talent.* There is an acknowledgement in Spanish policy circles that the Spanish university system has lagged behind in attracting international talent, and this has prevented existing “communities of excellence” to grow. To counteract this trend, the government initiated the *International Campus of Excellence (CEI) programme*. The main aim of this programme is to strengthen a

⁷ Ministerio de Educacion (2008), *Estrategia Universidad 2015*, available at: <http://www.educacion.gob.es/dctm/universidad2015/documentos/estrategiauniversidad2015.pdf?documentId=0901e72b80049f2b>.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹ Ministerio de Ciencia e Formacion (2009).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Spanish Government (2001b).

highly internationalised university system and establish Spain as a high potential country¹² to attract talent. It is hoped that the new knowledge environments – the international campuses of excellence – will raise the global visibility and reputation of the Spanish university system.

- *To contribute to integration and cohesion*¹³ in the context of a global strategy for higher education.
- To develop a knowledge-based society. The mobility of students is seen to be essential in the creation of a knowledge-based society, as it ultimately facilitates the movement (and transfer) of knowledge.¹⁴

The growing prosperity that Spain has experienced since its integration into the EU in 1986, has been accompanied by a growing international (or at least European) orientation. Currently, the government declares that it wants to speed up Spanish universities' *convergence with Europe*.¹⁵ To that end, the main government priority is an *improved positioning of Spanish universities in the European and international scene*. A key aspect in this endeavour is the *improvement of the international image* of Spanish universities, among other things through international mobility of students, academic staff and researchers. This ambition is closely related in the policy discourse to enhancing the quality of Spanish higher education, by attracting *foreign talent*.

In parallel to this attempt to open up, the Spanish higher education system has been affected, in recent years, by a demographic decline of the university-age population. The total number of students enrolled at universities decreased by 9% between 1999/00 and 2007/08. This decline, combined with the already low population density, and a relatively high number of universities offering almost all subjects, led to an increasing number of available places in universities. This negative change fuelled the ambition of Spanish institutions to attract more foreign students¹⁶ in order to fill the free places, and safeguard income. The focus on the need for a more active recruitment of foreign students started to grow, at least at the level of policy rhetoric.¹⁷

In 2011, the promotion of international student mobility was finally linked with increasing the employability potential of future graduates. International mo-

¹² Ministerio de Ciencia e Formación (2011).

¹³ Ministerio de Ciencia e Formación (2009).

¹⁴ Ministerio de Ciencia e Formación (2010).

¹⁵ OECD (2008).

¹⁶ Adia, E., M. Stowell & M.A. Higgins (1994).

¹⁷ Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (2007).

bility experiences are in this context seen as a proper means to increase accessibility to jobs in an international environment.¹⁸

2.2 Regulatory framework

Although university education in Spain is formally decentralised, giving much autonomy to the regions, international mobility in Spain is generally organised within the national legal framework. National-level regulations have been set on accreditation, recognition and credit transfer systems.¹⁹ Higher education institutions are required to offer the *Diploma Supplement* and degree courses must be accredited by a national organisation. However, the regions do have, within the national legal framework, *vast strategic freedom*. According to the Association of Catalan Public Universities (ACUP) three of the Autonomous Regions in Spain have their own *international mobility policy*: Catalunya, Madrid and the Basque country.

The Spanish university system is governed by the *2001 Universities Act*²⁰, which has, in time, undergone a series of modifications and additions. The most recent one is the *Act to Amend the Universities Act (LOMLOU)*, which came into effect in 2007.²¹ While issues related to student mobility constitute an important element in this legislative document, the references to mobility remain again very generic. Any mobility – outgoing and incoming, degree and credit – seems equally addressed in this policy initiative.²²

In tune with the Bologna Process reforms, Spain introduced the first Masters and Doctoral programmes fully adapted to the EHEA in 2005/06, though the relevant legislation was not in place until 2007.²³ The country has worked on fully implementing the Bologna Process degree architecture ever since, given the general perception that this reform will significantly increase intra-European student mobility. It gradually replaced the previously complex degree structure with three to four-year Bachelor and one to two-year Masters pro-

¹⁸ La contribución del talento universitario en el futuro de la España 2020, Internacionalización, la Excelencia y empleabilidad (2011).

¹⁹ Special pieces of legislation – royal decrees – have been issued, for example, for recognition and validation of foreign qualifications (RD 285/2004), the introduction of European credit and qualifications systems (RD 1125/2003), the introduction of European Diploma Supplement (RD 1044/2003), and the adaptation of the university system to the Bologna Declaration and the introduction of the title ‘Doctor Europe’ (RD 1393/2007).

²⁰ Spanish Government (2001a).

²¹ Ibid.

²² This law also includes changes made in the framework of the Bologna reform such as the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. The law also announced the establishment of a foundation to promote Spanish higher education internationally.

²³ European University Association (2009).

grammes.²⁴ The academic year 2009/10 was the last one in which students were able to start their higher education under the old system.

In practice, however, some of the old types of degrees still exist – several Spanish higher education institutions are still in the process of creating Bologna-compatible degree programmes. The same goes for the mobility-enhancing instruments. Though most of them have been formally endorsed at the national level, not all of them work fully in practice. For example, according to recent reports, the Diploma Supplement is little known in Spain.²⁵ Further, although officially access to Spanish universities is not numerically limited, in practice places are limited by some universities, which set quotas in certain subject fields.

2.3 Main actors involved in the formulation of mobility strategies

In the national level policy-making process for student (and staff) mobility, the Ministry of Education is currently the central actor. It works closely together with the universities, their associations (CICUE-CRUE, social councils, student associations, and university-business foundations), the Autonomous Communities, and economic and social agents, seeking the greatest possible consensus. Many other stakeholders²⁶ can be involved, depending on the exact topic, in the process of policy-making or policy implementation. In this section we will focus on the most influential stakeholders in the formulation of international mobility strategies.

The Ministry of Education

Within the Ministry of Education, the *Secretaría General de Universidades* and the *Dirección General de Atención, Participación y Empleabilidad de Estudiantes Universitarios* play an important role in the development of international mobility, and wider internationalisation policies. The above mentioned directorate houses two offices dealing with internationalisation and mobility: 1) *Subdirección General de Modernización e Internacionalización Universitaria* and 2) *Subdirección General de Becas, Ayudas y Movilidad de*

²⁴ Nuffic (2010).

²⁵ EUA (2009).

²⁶ Ministry of Science and Innovation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, CEGES – Centro de Estudios en Gestión de la Educación Superior – Universidad Politécnica de Valencia <http://www.upv.es/entidades/CEGES/>, CEUES – Centro de Estudios sobre Universidad y Educación Superior <http://www.ceues.unt.edu.ar/>.

Estudiantes. Through a general university conference organised twice a year, the Ministry can directly to consult various categories of stakeholders.²⁷

Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas (CRUE)

The *Rectors' Conference (CRUE)* is an active stakeholder in student and staff mobility policy-making, but more importantly in the policy implementation process. Stimulating cooperation between Spanish and foreign universities is one of its four main tasks. Its commission on International Relations (*Comisión de Internacionalización y Cooperación de las Universidades Españolas – CICUE*)²⁸, implements the internationalisation priorities set by CRUE, through a large number of projects and related activities. CRUE also defines itself as an active participant in the creation of the *European Higher Education Area (EHEA)* and the construction of the *Ibero-American Knowledge Area (Espacio Iberoamericano del Conocimiento)*.

Organismo Autónomo Programas Educativos Europeos (OAPEE)

The National Agency for EU programmes in Spain²⁹ – OAPEE – operates under the guidance of the *Dirección General de Atención, Participación y Empleabilidad de Estudiantes Universitarios at the Ministry of Education (MEC)*. OAPEE is responsible for managing Spain's participation in the different EU programmes, in collaboration with other ministry departments.³⁰ OAPEE also plays an important role in providing the ministry and the autonomous regions with information on European developments in higher education.

The Foundation for the International Promotion of Spanish Universities – Universidad.es

Universidad.es was created in 2008 by the Spanish Council of Ministers, as one of the main initiatives under the *University Strategy 2015* related to the internationalisation of the Spanish higher education system. Although a fairly young body, the Foundation is becoming an important actor in the Spanish mobility landscape. Its mandate is to: increase the international dimension of the Spanish university system; establish Spain as a leading destination for foreign students and researchers; increase the presence of Spanish students and researchers throughout the world; encourage transnational education under the leadership of Spanish universities; and help universities to develop

²⁷ See Spanish Government Website (2011). <http://www.educacion.gob.es/horizontales/ministerio/organos/conferencia-general-universidades.html>.

²⁸ CICUE is the successor of the *Comité Español Universitario de Relaciones Internacionales (CEURI)*.

²⁹ Organismo Autónomo Programas Educativos Europeos Website (2011).

³⁰ OECD (2008).

their internationalisation strategies and to promote university development cooperation projects.³¹

Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA)

The *National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation* was established in 2002 with the aim of integrating the Spanish system into the EHEA. The agency is responsible for the quality assurance of Spanish higher education, and for providing public authorities with relevant information for decision-making. As input for the policy-making process, ANECA analyses and compares the situation on the recognition of qualifications in the Spanish regions.

Example of regional policy: Catalunya

The region of Catalunya is one of the most active Spanish regions in the field of internationalisation of higher education. The *Internationalisation Plan of the Catalan Public Universities 2010-2015* describes the internationalisation strategy of the *University of Catalunya*. This is a brand name for the 8 public universities cooperating in the *Association for Catalunya Public Universities (ACUP)*³². The main objective of the plan is to address the challenges of today's global society through the important role that universities can play in this process. One of the overarching goals of this regional body is to increase and improve the quality of student, teaching and research staff through international mobility.

An important aim of all public universities in Catalunya is to increase the number of students that spend one or two semesters abroad. Language competencies are considered to be of great importance for reaching this goal. Therefore, great emphasis is placed in regional policy documents on the necessity for good foreign language training prior to study abroad. Regional policy documents also highlight the importance of international institutional partnerships to ensure good quality mobility, i.e. prevent a

³¹ The board of the Foundation is formed by representatives of several ministries: Science and Innovation, Culture, Justice and Health and Social Affairs, as well as the *Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)*, the Spanish Chambers of Commerce Abroad (ICEX) and the Instituto Cervantes. Finally the CRUE and the Carolina Foundation are *ex officio* members of the board. Further information is available on the website: <http://www.universidad.es/>.

³² ACUP includes the eight public universities of Catalunya: the *Universitat de Barcelona (UB)*, the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)*, the *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)*, the *Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF)*, the *Universitat de Girona (UdG)*, the *Universitat de Lleida (UdL)*, the *Universitat Rovira I Virgili (URV)* and the *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)*.

delay in study time due to the stay abroad, and ensure the recognition of credits obtained abroad. The relevance of adequate information (on study abroad opportunities, scholarships etc.) is also underlined in this context.

A separate strategic document focuses on the attraction of foreign students and researchers. The improvement of student services (particularly regarding housing) is devoted special attention in this document.

As part of its strategic approach, ACUP tries to engage in promoting internationally the higher education institutions it represents.

3. Focus of the current national policy on student mobility

3.1 Rationales and priority level by type of mobility

International mobility enjoys a very positive connotation in the Spanish context. As a result, like most other countries within Europe, the Spanish government wants to *increase* the total international mobility of students, teachers and researchers from and to Europe, as well as with the wider world.³³

Inbound mobility is generally seen as important because it can contribute to the creation and maintenance of a highly-internationalised (Spanish) university system, i.e. through “internationalisation at home”. The recruitment of *foreign students (incoming degree mobility)* and staff thus seems a top priority in the Spanish context.

Outbound credit mobility is very important as well, according to the Ministry of Education³⁴, because it is expected to result in:

- improved personal competencies, such as the ability to work in a team and to adjust to new situations;
- improved intercultural competencies that are necessary in the globalised world;
- improved language skills;
- better employability; and
- movement to higher levels of education (i.e. students continuing in postgraduate programmes).

³³ Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (2007).

³⁴ Spanish Government (2011).

In fact, the national *University Strategy for 2015* sees it as essential that students develop competencies that will allow them to work in an international environment.

Spanish policy documents remain though, as we have previously emphasised, rather unspecific when it comes to the exact type of mobility that is being targeted. We found in this sense no specific references to the importance of *incoming credit* and *outgoing degree mobility*. We interpret from this that, as in other countries in this study, these two types of mobility are rarely a policy priority at the national level.

3.2 Geographical focus – target regions and countries

The *Royal University Decree of 2007* states that student mobility is stimulated both within Europe and with other parts of the world. While the Spanish policy documents remain vague about the exact type of mobility that is targeted in particular world regions, they do emphasise the European Higher Education Area (and above all the two neighbouring countries France and Portugal), Latin America, Asia, and to a lesser extent North Africa, as priority areas for international student mobility.

Several national level actors have a more explicit regional approach. For example, CRUE focuses on Europe and the Ibero-American region as fundamental pillars of its internationalisation policy. The promotional activities of Universidad.es also address particular target regions and countries. For example, in 2010, the Foundation attended higher education fairs in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania and Russia), Asia (South Korea, India, Thailand and China) and South America (Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico).

Apart from the governmental priorities, different regions in Spain pursue their own geographical targets. For instance, the region of Andalucía has had for a long time strong links with the North African countries, and it comes as no surprise that its prime focus is in this area.

3.3 Prioritisation by levels of study

Government policy documents generally talk about the promotion of mobility of all students, without further specifications on levels of study: Bachelor, Masters or PhD. Nevertheless, several of the instruments used at the national level seem to focus on the attraction of *incoming postgraduate students*, which makes us think that this is becoming a level of importance in the national policy approach. For example, *Universidad.es* participates in higher education fairs, of which most are targeted at the recruitment of *degree-*

seeking postgraduate students from abroad. Furthermore, several financial instruments are available at the central level to stimulate the international mobility of doctoral students. One of them is the programme of the Ministry of Science and Innovation that promotes student participation in inter-university doctoral programmes which have a *research component abroad* for both inbound and outbound doctoral students.

3.4 Targets by mobility type

The government's *University Strategy 2015* sets the aim of *increasing all types of mobility*, and in particular the ERASMUS mobility, without detailing the order of the desired growth, however. To date, no quantitative targets have been set for any of the four main types of mobility referenced throughout this study.

3.5 Support instruments and incentives

To promote international inbound as well as *outbound student mobility* in higher education, the Spanish government developed a number of specific instruments.³⁵ These can be divided in five main categories: promotion and information instruments, recognition-enhancing measures, financial support, mobility programmes and internationalisation of the curriculum – joint degrees.

3.5.1 Promotion and information instruments

The Spanish promotional efforts abroad are coordinated by the *Universidad.es Foundation*, whose creation in 2008 marked an important milestone in Spain's internationalisation policy development. The foundation now runs the website www.universidad.es, which provides *international students and researchers* with *information* about studying, living and working conditions in Spain. It also guides them through the application process and offers a forum for exchange of experiences and information. The foundation also regularly participates in *international higher education fairs in target countries* (see above), with the prime purpose to help recruit talented degree-seeking students from abroad.

To complement the efforts of *Universidad.es*, Spain uses, like most other countries, its embassies, consulates, but also the AECID offices, the Cervantes Institute, and the Ministry of Education office abroad to represent and promote the Spanish higher education system internationally.

³⁵ OECD (2008).

3.5.2 Recognition-enhancing measures

As a signatory of the Bologna Declaration and a member of the European Union, Spain has endorsed most mobility instruments developed in these supra-national fora. Apart from the introduction of the Bologna three-cycle structure of study programmes, which in itself was seen as a mobility-enhancement tool Europe-wide, the country has embarked on a number of changes to ease the national recognition of study periods abroad (*outbound credit mobility*) and to increase the recognition of Spanish and foreign qualifications (supporting thus *outgoing and incoming degree mobility*). In concrete terms, the ministry has:

- endorsed the *ECTS system* and urged higher education institutions to make public their recognition regulations;
- worked to ensure that all outgoing credit mobility takes place in the framework of a *learning agreement*;
- introduced by national law in 2007 (decree of 13th August 2007) the requirement that all higher education institutions grant the *Diploma Supplement* to all their graduates. In 2008, 60% of universities awarded the *Diploma Supplement*, which represented 52% of students.³⁶ More recent data are unavailable;
- created a *national qualifications framework* for higher education, based on the Dublin Descriptors.³⁷ This was set by the Royal Decree 1393/2007 of the Ministry of Education and Science and has been formally implemented. In addition, the Spanish Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Lifelong Learning will be implemented as of 2012.³⁸

Spain also acknowledges study abroad through the final title graduates receive upon graduation. For example, doctoral students in Spain can obtain the honorary mention of a *European Doctorate*³⁹, if they comply with several criteria concerning international components of their thesis work. One of them is that they have spent at least three months outside of Spain carrying out studies or conducting research.⁴⁰

³⁶ Mora, J., et al. (2009).

³⁷ Universitat Oberta de Catalunya Website (2011).

³⁸ Ministerio de Educación Website (2011).

³⁹ Ministerio de Educacion (2010).

⁴⁰ Ministerio de Educacion (2011f).

3.5.3 Financial support

Student mobility is encouraged by both the national government and the autonomous regions through grant, scholarship and student loan programmes which complement EU programmes.⁴¹

Outbound credit mobility is supported through:

- a *top-up system for ERASMUS grants*. Since the Spanish student support system is limited, with a minority of students qualifying for a means-tested grant, the government contributes the equivalent of a third of the ERASMUS grant to all ERASMUS students. The regions also make a significant contribution. Free-movers (i.e. those students studying abroad outside of the ERASMUS programme) are not entitled to this support, however.
- *scholarships and grants offered by the Ministry of Education*. These include the *Predocctoral Grants for Training in Health Research (PFIS)*⁴², which support periods of study or research, in Spain or abroad, or the *ARGO Global grants*⁴³, which facilitate supplementary training of Spanish university degree holders through internships in European, American, Canadian, or Asian companies.
- *scholarships and grants awarded by other ministries, namely:*
 - the *Culturex* grant by the *Ministry of Culture* for Spanish youth to do an internship abroad in organisations with international relevance or in Spanish Embassies and consulates.⁴⁴
 - the *FPI* research grant to undertake a doctoral or postgraduate study abroad sponsored by the *Ministry of Science*.

Scholarships for incoming students are generally offered in the framework of *bilateral agreements* signed by the Spanish government with other countries (e.g. with China, Russia, Slovenia, Romania, Singapore, Qatar). An important addition to these grants are the ones offered by the *Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID)*, which has considerably increased funding in recent years for inbound mobility to Spanish universities. For example, there is a grant offered in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC-AECID) to foreign non-Spanish-speaking

⁴¹ Spanish Government (2001b).

⁴² Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación Website (2011).

⁴³ Becas Argo Global Website (2011).

⁴⁴ Ministerio de Cultura Website (2011).

students who want to take summer courses in the Spanish language and culture at Spanish universities. Another example are the *Tordesillas grants* to enable Brazilian students to take official specialisation courses at Spanish universities which are members of the Tordesillas Group.

Another important set of instruments are the *partially portable study grants* and loans, primarily for doctoral students. Nevertheless, while student loans are portable for all study levels, undergraduate students still could not take their study grants abroad as of 2009.

Many of these instruments and incentives are combined in the *International Campus of Excellence (CEI) programme*⁴⁵, which was launched in July 2009. The programme seeks to encourage international mobility and international staff recruitment, as well as the internationalisation of curricula. The Programme is managed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Innovation (in the 2009 and 2010 Calls) and with the Ministry of Housing (in 2010), and has the support of the Spanish autonomous communities.

In addition to the grants meant to directly fund international mobility, the Ministry of Education has in recent years increased its activities to stimulate the learning of foreign languages, as the lack of linguistic skills remains one of the biggest obstacles for the international mobility of Spanish students. The Ministry offers several grants for language courses, namely:

- English, French or German language courses during a three-week programme abroad⁴⁶, and
- English courses at the *Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo in Spain*.⁴⁷

The Ministry has also started to stimulate foreign language acquisition in secondary education⁴⁸, as poor foreign language proficiency is a problem that is understood to start before higher education.

The types of financial support at the national level for outgoing and incoming students are very varied and address some of the target regions for international mobility. However, it was impossible to obtain an estimate, for the purpose of this study, of the total number of students that benefit from at least one form of support every year. As a result, the assessment of the impact of

⁴⁵ Ministerio de Educacion (2011c).

⁴⁶ Ministerio de Educacion Website (2011g) and (2011h).

⁴⁷ Ministerio de Educacion Website (2011i).

⁴⁸ Ministerio de Educacion Website (2011d).

financial support measures on the international mobility trends in the Spanish context remains incomplete.

3.5.4 Mobility programmes

In addition to its participation in the EU's ERASMUS Programme, which is often emphasised in national policy documents, Spain is a member country of several other mobility programmes and regional initiatives meant to support this phenomenon, as follows.

Spain participates in the *Academic Mobility and Exchange Programme (PIMA)*, which was established in 1999 by the *Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Sciences and Culture (OEI)*.⁴⁹ This programme is organised into networks of at least three universities from different countries working on specific themes, and which exchange students amongst them. Courses of study completed in the host university must be recognised by the home university. The three rounds of exchanges organised to date show a steadily growing number of (mainly public) participating universities from 18 Ibero-American countries.⁵⁰

Another initiative with the Ibero-American region is the *Programma Iberoamericana* – an international programme including the majority of Latin American countries. Under this programme, two initiatives promote mobility in higher education:

- The *Programa Pablo Neruda*⁵¹, a mobility programme arranged by themes which are set by universities from at least three of the participating countries. This is the first official initiative within the Ibero-American Knowledge Area (*Espacio Iberoamericano del Conocimiento or EIC*).
- The *Programa Iberoamericano de Ciencia y Tecnología para el Desarrollo (CYTED)*⁵², which was created to stimulate cooperation in applied sciences, and to encourage technological developments through knowledge transfer and mobility of scientists and experts.

Spain also participates in the *Mediterranean Office for Youth*⁵³ initiative, which set up a pilot programme (2011-2014) for the mobility of students and young professionals. The pilot includes a *Mediterranean Office for Youth excellence grant* and a *Mediterranean Office for Youth label*. Participating countries

⁴⁹ Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos Website (2011). URL: <http://www.oei.es/index.php>.

⁵⁰ OECD (2008).

⁵¹ Espacio Iberoamericano del Conocimiento Website (2011).

⁵² Secretaría General Iberoamericana Website (2011).

⁵³ *Office Méditerranéen de la Jeunesse Website* (2011).

make an effort to facilitate sojourns in their country for this specific group of students.

Another regionally-focused initiative is that of creating Border University campuses with France and Portugal, but also with Morocco, announced by the Spanish Ministry of Education⁵⁴ in 2011. This initiative is expected to also lead to mobility between the respective countries.

3.5.5 Internationalisation of the curriculum – joint degrees

Since the year 2005, Spain has set aside funding to encourage staff and student mobility through participation in joint study programmes.⁵⁵ Currently, *joint degrees* are most common in the second and third cycle.⁵⁶ At the time of writing, there were approximately 250 joint programmes in Spain. A special system of grants is meant to help students participate in joint degree programmes, particularly at the masters and doctoral level.

As all EU member states, Spain also takes part in the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme⁵⁷, but unlike ERASMUS, this programme is not supported through additional funds from the national government.

4. Mobility realities

A brief look at student mobility trends in the Spanish context will help us see to what extent the policy objectives and instruments are in line with actual mobility developments.

4.1 Degree mobility

Inbound mobility (foreign degree-seeking students)

In contrast to the number of Spanish-nationality students in Spain, which decreased from 1 631 475 in 1999/00 to 1 438 695 in 2008/09, the number of *foreign degree-seeking students* in the country increased continuously in this period, to reach 65 581 in 2008/09 (from 18 030 in 1998/99). The decrease of total enrolment in Spain can be attributed, as we have commented above, to a drop of 18.3% in the population of 18 to 24 years old during the last decade. The high increase in the number of foreign students on the other hand is partly linked to a refinement of the data collection process at the national

⁵⁴ La contribución del talento universitario en el futuro de la España 2020, Internationalización, Excelencia y empleabilidad (2011).

⁵⁵ Working Group of the Bologna Follow-up Group (2007).

⁵⁶ Mora, J., et al. (2009).

⁵⁷ Ministerio de Educación Secretaría General de Universidades (2010).

level. Despite this constant growth, foreign students accounted for just 3.3% of total enrolment in Spain, while the European average stood at 6.9% in the same year (2006/07).

The list of the top 10 nationalities of foreign students in Spain in 2008/09 was made up of six Latin American countries, two geographically close countries (Portugal and Italy), the North African country with which Spain has the longest cooperation track record and one Eastern European country that also figures amongst the top migrant communities in Spain (Table 1).

Table 1: Top 10 nationalities of foreign degree-seeking students in Spain in 2008/09 (ISCED 5/6)

Rank	Country of nationality	Total	% of all foreign students in Spain in 2008/09	Increase/Decrease 2006/07-2008/09
1	Colombia	5 643	8.6%	46.5%
2	Morocco	4 861	7.4%	9.8%
3	Italy	4 383	6.7%	50.6%
4	Mexico	4 224	6.4%	8.0%
5	Portugal	3 366	5.1%	22.2%
6	Argentina	3 347	5.1%	25.5%
7	Brazil	2 977	4.5%	48.0%
8	Peru	2 925	4.5%	38.4%
9	Venezuela	2 720	4.1%	46.2%
10	Romania	2 490	3.8%	109.2%
Total top ten nationalities		36 936	56.3%	30.5%
Total all nationalities		65 581	100.0%	33.5%

Source: UOE

Outbound mobility (study abroad students)

In the academic year 2006/07, the number of Spanish students enrolled towards a degree abroad (*study abroad students*) stood at 29 027. The study abroad ratio of Spanish students in the same year was 0.020, well below the European average of 0.033. This means that in this particular year there were 20 Spanish students studying abroad for a degree for every 1 000 Spanish students enrolled at home. Between 1998/99 and 2002/03, the number of

study abroad students fluctuated and reached its lowest level in 2002/03 (22 447 students).

While almost every third foreign student in Spain is from Latin America, Spanish students prefer to go for a full degree programme to other (mostly Western) European countries and to the United States. No Latin American country appears among the preferred destinations of Spanish degree-seeking students abroad.

Table 2: Top 10 host countries of Spanish study abroad students in 2006/07

Rank	Country of destination	Total	% of all study abroad students
1	United Kingdom	8 930	30.8%
2	Germany	4 974	17.1%
3	France	3 860	13.3%
4	United States of America	3 654	12.6%
5	Switzerland	1 496	5.2%
6	Sweden	1 195	4.1%
7	Belgium	1 101	3.8%
8	The Netherlands	821	2.8%
9	Portugal	648	2.2%
10	Italy	519	1.8%
Total top ten countries		27 198	93.7%
Total all study abroad students		29 027	100.0%

Source: UOE

Very interestingly, in just ten years, Spain changed from being a main export country of students (sending more students abroad than it received) to a net importer of foreign students (in:out ratio in 2006/07 of 100:59).

4.2 Credit mobility

Like most other countries in this publication, the *credit mobility* data are mostly restricted to the ERASMUS Programme, which nevertheless plays an important role in the Spanish context.

Incoming credit mobility

Spain has been the favourite destination of ERASMUS students in Europe for close to a decade. What is more, ERASMUS students (27 831) accounted for as much as a third of all inflows (including foreign degree-seeking students) into Spain in 2007/08. The ERASMUS students represented 1.9% of all students enrolled in Spain in the same year.

Outgoing credit mobility

In turn, ERASMUS supported about 1.6% (23 107) of all Spanish students in 2007/08 for a short study-related stay abroad. Furthermore, ERASMUS supported about 45% of total Spanish outflows in 2006/07.

As in the case of degree mobility, Spain is a net importer country of *credit mobile students*. While the country is not a major recipient of European degree-seeking students, it is the top destination of ERASMUS students in Europe.

5. Focus of the current national policy on staff mobility

The mobility of university staff plays a modest role in the Spanish internationalisation strategy. Staff mobility is mentioned here and there in national-level policy documents, but references are scarce compared to student mobility.

Overall, the Spanish government aims to increase the total international mobility of lecturers and researchers *from* and *to* Europe and the wider world. *Inbound staff mobility* in particular is considered to be important, since it is seen as one way to enhance the quality and strengthen the international image of Spanish universities.

International staff mobility is supported, in a modest way, through the *Universidad.es* foundation, which aims to establish Spain as a leading destination not only for students, but also for *foreign lecturers* and *researchers*. This is done, for instance, by offering web information on living and working conditions in Spain. The foundation also encourages outgoing staff mobility.

Since 2005, national government funding has been made available to stimulate *international mobility of lecturers* and *professors* through participation in joint course programmes. In addition, international staff recruitment is encouraged through the national government's International Campus of Excellence programme. International mobility of scientists is promoted through the *Programa Iberoamericano de Ciencia y Tecnología para el Desarrollo*. Overall, national government initiatives to support academic staff mobility are present, but modest, and the Spanish government has not set any quantitative targets for staff mobility.

6. Policy, measures and actual mobility trends

Spain has experienced a major change during the past century, from a government approach which, unintentionally, resulted in academics permanently leaving the country, to a policy reality where both inbound and outbound student and staff mobility are promoted to enhance the overall quality of the Spanish university system. The accession to the European Union and the Bologna Process-related reforms have constituted a clear incentive for the Spanish government to (start) internationalising its higher education system, by, amongst other things further promoting international student and staff mobility.

The Spanish government has set in recent years a series of objectives for the internationalisation and modernisation of Spanish higher education through international student mobility, although a comprehensive national policy to promote inbound and outbound mobility is still lacking in Spain. In practice, concrete mobility policies are set, at best, by each university.⁵⁸

The government has nevertheless taken important steps to open up the Spanish university system, and to increase its international visibility. The promotion agency *Universidad.es*, for example, was created to attract more students from abroad, though it is not always clear in the Spanish context which type of mobility constitutes the number one priority.

As the Spanish government has not yet developed a detailed international mobility strategy, nor set any quantitative targets for international student and staff mobility, it is difficult to determine the effects of Spanish national policy efforts and instruments on the actual mobility flows. The various types of instruments that were developed at the national level seem to be, by and large, focused on Spain's target regions and countries, namely Latin America, North Africa and its neighbouring countries. However, as it often proved impossible to estimate the number of students that benefit from the different types of support, we cannot safely say to which extent the increases that we observe over time in all types of mobility into and out of Spain have been determined by these measures.

It is nevertheless clear that the good start, especially with the *University Strategy 2015*, will have to be maintained through enhanced and more specific measures, if Spain wishes to remain an important mobility player in the European context.

⁵⁸ 2010 EURYDICE questionnaire.

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XI. United Kingdom (England)

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1. Introduction

This case analysis is meant to give further insights into the national policy and practices on international student and staff mobility¹, into mobility trends and the interplay between European-level and national developments. While the focus is on the initiatives undertaken in the last ten years, we will also bring in more distant developments to the extent they are relevant.

This country chapter is based on the English system only. This is because each of the four higher education systems of the United Kingdom (English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh) is subject to a different administration (i.e. separate higher education funding councils, which were set up in accordance to the 1992 Higher and Further Education Act²). Because of this administrative separation there are some areas of divergence between the four systems, in matters such as student fees, grants and loans, and the teaching quality assurance system, which require separate analysis. In case of aspects which relate to all of the four systems to the same extent, the term UK will be used.

2. UK higher education system and student body

Traditionally, universities have been legally independent entities and any influence that governments have had over their strategies and management has been indirect – through exhortation and public funding, which became the largest source of institutional income in the 1940s. Each university has its own charter, which sets out its legal basis. With this the higher education institutions are able to enter into contracts with the government or any private agency, and set their own curricular structures and research priorities. Through this, the government is not able to intervene directly in the affairs of any individual university, not even in financial matters. Two acts of Parliament extended this financial and academic autonomy to all higher education institutions in 1988 and 1992. Since the early 1980s, the proportion of university and college income provided by the state has declined from an average of

¹ In the English case the main feature of internationalisation is the recruitment of overseas students.

² With the 1992 Higher and Further Education Act higher education institutions obtained a similar autonomous legal status to the universities and all public funding for HE courses became the responsibility of the relevant higher education funding council.

about 80% to approximately 40% in the 2000s, and continues to decrease ever since.³

Such considerations are particularly important in any consideration of public policy with respect to the internationalisation of higher education in the UK, as since 1980, universities have received decreasing public subsidy for the recruitment of students in general, and also *foreign students* and any other international activity. Thus internationalisation, globalisation and to a large extent Europeanisation are, in England, largely a matter for individual universities. At the national policy level internationalisation is rarely mentioned. Because of the autonomy of British higher education institutions and their long-standing involvement in international activities, there are few specific or explicit government policies concerning the internationalisation of higher education.⁴ In fact, the very term “internationalisation” is rarely mentioned in the UK context.

Concerning the size of the system, in the winter semester 2009/10, the UK had a total of 165 public higher education institutions (England: 131, one of the higher education institutions is a non-publicly-funded institution voluntarily providing data to HESA⁵) which include universities, higher education colleges and university colleges.

In the 2009/10 academic year, the total number of students enrolled at (public) higher education institutions in the UK stood at 2 493 420 (England 2 093 635). *Country of prior domicile* is used by HESA to identify *incoming degree-seeking students*. In 2009/10, 405 805 *non-UK domiciled students* were registered at higher education institutions in the UK (England 334 960) which corresponds to a share of 16.3% of the whole student body at higher education institutions in the UK (England 15.9%). The share of *incoming degree-seeking students* among all students enrolled in higher education institutions in the UK almost tripled between 1998/99 and 2009/10. This applies especially to non-EU students. In 2009/10 the number of non-EU students is twice as high as the number of EU-students (UK: Other EU 125 045 vs. non-EU 280 760 and England: Other EU 98 060 vs. non-EU 236 900). It should be noted that these HESA data exclude students in UK transnational higher education (TNE) programmes offered abroad. As the UK offers many more

³ Huisman, J. and Wende, M. v. d. Eds. (2004), *On cooperation and competition. National and European Policies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education*, ACA Papers on international cooperation in education, Lemmens, Bonn.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education in the UK.

TNE *programmes* than other European countries, the total number of overseas students in UK higher education programmes is much higher than the above numbers suggest.

According to the international data collection of UNESCO, OECD and EURO-STAT (UOE) the number of degree study abroad students from the UK stood at 23 393 in 2006/07, which correspond to a share of 1.5% of all home students enrolled in UK higher education institutions. With a very high percentage of incoming students (16.3% of all students enrolled in higher education in the UK) but a very small study abroad rate - 1.5% - the UK is the country with the highest difference between inflows and outflows in absolute terms.

In the 2009/10 academic year, 1 480⁶ persons moved from abroad to enter the full-time academic staff population in UK higher education. This corresponds to 0.8% of the total number of academic staff in UK higher education. In turn, 905 full-time academic staff members in the UK higher education system moved abroad in 2008/09. In 2007/08, 17% of permanent academic staff in UK higher education was from outside the UK, and this figure is rising. 27% of those newly appointed in that year were non-UK nationals. A study carried out in 2008 found that 75% of UK universities reported to have funded international research collaborations in place, with nearly 90% having international research links.⁷

3. Milestones

3.1 Rationales for supporting academic mobility and measurements

The economic rationale underpins the historic and current government agenda with regard to the internationalisation of higher education and the recruitment of overseas students in particular. Securing and diversifying sources of funding of higher education institutions was the main rationale for recruiting overseas students to the UK since the mid-1980s. Through a series of *White Papers* on raising the UK's international economic competitiveness since 1993, the government has promoted higher education and internationalisation as a central means to produce a highly qualified workforce able to compete on a global level. One of the more explicit aims has been to create the best qualified workforce in Europe.

⁶ Inflow to UK HE full-time academic staff population 2009/10, Full-time academic staff at 1 December 2009, Not at a UK HEI (inflow). Retrieved from: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1898&Itemid=239 (Table D).

⁷ BIS (2009), *Higher Ambitions. The future of universities in a knowledge society*, London.

This rationale was reinforced in the government's 2003 *White Paper on the Future of Higher Education*.⁸ The White Paper suggests that competition from other countries is increasing, and concern is expressed that on an international level the participation rate in UK higher education is proportionally lower than in many other developed countries. A particular concern of the White Paper is how to recruit internationally and retain the best researchers.

Besides the economic rationale, another government objective in relation to recruiting overseas students is to enhance quality in education and especially in research.⁹ This means mainly to reduce shortages in specific research fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM fields), which experience a lack of home students at postgraduate level. EU students are of great interest in this respect because their presence is expected to increase the quality of education and research, as well as student diversity on campus.

At a national level, the first and second *Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education* provided important guidance with regard to the internationalisation of higher education. The *First Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI 1, 1999-2005)*¹⁰ aimed to increase the number of international students in the UK for economic and quality reasons. Efforts were made in order to strengthen the position of the UK within the increasingly competitive international education market. The economic benefits of international student recruitment for institutions, students and the economy were emphasised.

The *second Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI 2, 2006-2011)*¹¹, was meant to continue what was initiated in the first phase. The rationales of the initiative remained the same. However, PMI 2 also initiated a process of rethinking internationalisation in a broader perspective, apart from the narrower focus of overseas student recruitment. In this respect, stakeholders became convinced that international student recruitment to the UK is an important element within the internationalisation strategy, and that the ability to attract overseas students increasingly depends on the international reputation of UK higher education. Attention shifted not only to the

⁸ DfES (2003), *The future of higher education*, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by Command of Her Majesty.

⁹ Ibid. and DTI (2000), *Excellence and Opportunity a science and innovation policy for the 21st century*, Stationery Office Books.

¹⁰ Prime Minister's Initiative to attract more international students to the UK (1999), retrieved from: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2-about.htm>.

¹¹ Prime Minister's Initiative for international education (2006), Retrieved from: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2-about.htm>.

quality and value of education, but also to the contribution UK makes globally and the strength of the strategic partnerships developed by UK higher education institutions.

With regard to the rethinking process, the government expects a new commitment to internationalisation from higher education institutions.¹² The Government expects that many, if not all, universities will incorporate internationalisation into their senior management structures and take a more strategic approach to internationalisation (BIS 2009).¹³ The motive for this is to ensure long-term stability in student recruitment to the UK, which requires a balance in overseas activity between recruitment, partnerships, research and capacity building (ibid.)¹⁴. The government has started to recognise that efforts need to be made to overcome the perception that UK universities are solely interested in international students as a source of revenue. Higher education institutions should collaborate more with other UK institutions and create international strategic partnerships, particularly in the area of research to enhance research quality. In addition to its emphasis on inbound degree mobility, the government also highlights the important role of helping to internationalise the experience of UK students through promoting outbound mobility. The main rationales for supporting outbound mobility are to enhance student employability and giving home students a deeper understanding of other ways to think and express ideas.

Besides decreasing state funding, higher education institutions in the UK face a demographic decline. According to Universities UK, UK universities will face a shortfall of 70 000 students by the end of the decade as a result of a decline in the number of young people in the UK.¹⁵ Simultaneously, there is an increasing need for highly skilled workers for the UK's knowledge economy, which means that immigrants – including talented international students who graduated from a UK university – are needed to fill gaps in the labour market (particularly in STEM fields). Thus, overseas student recruitment will be crucial for UK higher education and economy.

¹² BIS, op. cit. This conclusion is mainly based on the contributions made by Professor Sir Drummond Bone to the higher education debate on internationalisation (D. Bone 2008 & 2009).

¹³ BIS, op. cit.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ UUK (2010), *Universities UK Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013*, London.

3.2 Regulatory framework

PMI 1 and 2 measures

Several measures were undertaken within the *PMI 1* to increase international student recruitment, including (i) streamlining of the administration involved in the application process for international students (entry procedures and work rules for overseas students), (ii) an improved marketing effort of UK institutions abroad (investment in a UK education marketing campaign managed by the British Council), and (iii) an increase in the number of scholarships (e.g. the *Chevening Scholarships*). Furthermore, the British Council created the core marketing strategy called Education UK to promote the UK in the world as an attractive place to study.¹⁶

Within *PMI 2* new measures were implemented to create new and to strengthen existent *strategic partnerships* in countries where well-established ties already exist and to identify new target markets. Within these strategic partnerships, *student and staff exchange as well as research collaborations* were to be enhanced and promoted. The strategy sets out four interconnected strands, namely: (i) UK positioning through marketing and communicating a strong national brand ensuring the quality of the international student experience, (ii) building strong strategic partnerships, (iii) market diversification and (iv) market consolidation based on greater understanding of the countries UK universities operate in. To achieve these objectives the Programme is underpinned by Marketing¹⁷ and Student Experience Projects¹⁸.

Besides the government funds for strategic partnerships building in the context of *PMI 2*, the government provided significant funding for the development of additional partnerships. The most important of these funding initiatives are:

- UKIERI, the UK-India Education and Research Initiative¹⁹;

¹⁶ British Council (2000), *Realising Our Potential. A strategic framework for making UK education the first choice for international students*, Manchester. And British Council (2003), *Education UK. Positioning for success, Consultation document*, Manchester.

¹⁷ This project leads on marketing and communications strategies to position the UK as a leader in international education.

¹⁸ This is intended to contribute to maintaining the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for international students.

¹⁹ The UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) is a five-year initiative (2006-2011) to facilitate education and research cooperation between the UK and India, to include 50 collaborative research projects; 40 UK award programmes delivered collaboratively in India; 300 additional Indian research students and staff having worked in the UK; 200 UK researchers and 200 UK undergraduates having studied in India; 2000 Indian research students will complete collaborative degrees in the UK.

- EPA, Education Partnerships in Africa;
- DelPHE, Development Partnerships in Higher Education programme – this is specific to higher education only;
- INSPIRE, International Strategic Partnerships in Research and Education – this is specific to higher education only;
- Skills for Employability in Near East and North Africa – this is specific to further education only;
- BRIDGE, British Degrees in Russia – at the time of writing, funding is no longer available.

Tuition fees for non-EU and EU students

Full cost fees for non-EU students were introduced in the UK in the mid-1980s. At a time of severe financial stringency and sharply reduced government expenditure per UK student, *foreign student recruitment* changed from being a peripheral activity performed as a public service function, to a major marketing process to raise institutional income from external sources. Although there have been differences in the level of tuition fees between home and overseas students since the 1960s, in the mid-1980s, *non-EU students* were seen as a new revenue source for UK higher education institutions. For institutions, overseas tuition fees form an important source of income because it is not earmarked funding linked to research and education target agreements, but institutions can use it for their own purpose.

Tuition fees for non-EU/EEA²⁰ students in the UK are among the highest in Europe, and range from £ 6 210 to £ 8 130 a year in science programmes to £ 15 660 a year in medical programmes for Bachelor students. Tuition fees for international Masters students range from approximately £ 8 950 to £ 12 219 a year. EU/EEA fees are, until 2012 approximately £ 3 145 a year for undergraduates and approximately £ 3 800 for postgraduates, with some programmes, such as Master of Business Administration (MBA) courses, charging up to £ 16 750 a year for home and EU/EEA students. From 2012/13 onwards universities may charge EU (and home) students up to £ 9 000 for an undergraduate programme.

Institutional use of public funding

UK higher education institutions are free to use public (funding council) funds to finance activities that may support international students, such as English-language centres in the UK. However, they are not allowed to use funds al-

²⁰ i.e. students from outside of the European Union and European Economic Area.

located to them by one of the funding councils for education or research activities that take place outside of the UK.²¹ Institutions may fund international exchanges from funding council money if a significant element of the activity takes place in the UK. All other international activities undertaken by UK higher education institutions (such as the large number of TNE programmes they offer abroad) must be self-funded. These international activities must be self-funded and generate sufficient income to be sustained.

Student immigration and employment

All universities that want to enrol international students must have a license issued by the *UK Border Agency* so that they can “sponsor” international students to study in the UK. One of the major efforts of this body was directed at identifying the genuine students from the bogus ones – individuals that want to enter the country with a student visa, but have no intentions to study. In 2009, a new points-based UK visa system (Tier 4) was introduced to streamline the visa application process (Acton 2011).²² Tier 4 of the points-based system governs immigration to the UK from outside the EEA for study. Tier 4 migrants (which include non-EU/EEA students in the UK) must be sponsored by an accredited education institution, must demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to support themselves, and have no recourse to public funds. Student visas allow students to work a maximum of 20 hours a week during their period of study and up to 40 hours a week during the holiday period.

From autumn 2009, the system was tightened with the introduction of a sponsor management system, which makes it easier for universities to inform the *UK Border Agency* if their students fail to enrol or miss more than 10 sessions.²³ In 2010, a new *Highly Trusted Sponsor* register was introduced. Highly Trusted Sponsors are able to sponsor students for a wider range of courses (including for instance those with a work placement component) and must demonstrate a strong track record of student retention and compliance.

There is also a separate visa category called “student visitor”, which was introduced in 2007 for short-term students who come to the UK for up to 6 months (up to 11 months for English language students). Student visitors are not counted as migrants because they stay in the UK for less than a year.

²¹ UK Higher Education International and Europe Units 2009.

²² In this context the UK Border Agency was created. UK visas are coordinated by the Home Office Department. The Joint Education Taskforce was created to include external agencies such as the British Council, UKCISA, Association of Colleges, Universities UK, English UK etc. to consult on the proposed measures and to enhance student and staff mobility.

²³ UK Higher Education International and Europe Units 2009.

Besides the new arrangements for student immigration, new regulations for international students who have studied in the UK were introduced in 2008. Under Tier 1 visas (Migrant, Investor, Entrepreneur and Post Study Work), students who have obtained a degree or higher level qualification in the UK are able to stay and to work for two years on completion of their UK studies without requiring a work permit.²⁴

From April 2012, the following changes in student visa regulations will be implemented:

- Any UK higher/further education institution wanting to “sponsor” (enrol) students needs to be accredited by an inspection body;
- International students coming to the UK to study at degree level will need to demonstrate a higher English-language proficiency;
- Only postgraduate students at universities and government-sponsored students will be able to bring their dependents; and
- The total time that can be spent on a student visa will remain 3 years at lower degree levels, but will be limited to 5 years at higher levels.²⁵

The new visa and immigration regulations for non-EU/EEA students are part of wider objectives for immigration policy of the government. The government’s overall objective is to reduce total net immigration to the UK “from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands” by the end of the current Parliament (Home Office 2010).²⁶ For this, net migration via routes over which the government does have control, including student migration from outside the EEA, will have to be cut by substantially more than a half in order to meet this overall objective. According to the Home Secretary this should help to

²⁴ To apply under the new points-based system and be accepted into the post-study work category, applicants must, again, pass a points-based assessment. Applicants must score 75 points for “attributes” such as: a UK qualification, study at a UK institution, having immigration status during UK studies and/or research, and the date of the qualification; 10 points for English language skills; and 10 points for available funds (UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit 2009).

²⁵ UK Border Agency (2011) *Government outlines overhaul of student visas*, 22 March. Retrieved from: <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/march/54-student-visas>.

²⁶ Home Office (2010) *Extension of Labor market restrictions*. Retrieved from: <http://www.home-office.gov.uk/media-centre/press-releases/extension-labour-market>

reduce abuse and non-compliance in the students' visa system.²⁷ Further, the immigration minister promotes a more selective approach, according to which students are permitted to enter the UK, with priority given to “the brightest and the best”, i.e. those students wanting to pursue their education at one of the UK's elite universities.²⁸

These changes were clearly not welcomed by all parties concerned. According to Mulley and Sachrajda (2011)²⁹ the government's proposals for reforms to the student visa regime are based on limited or unreliable evidence, and it poses the risk of overstating both the problem and the likely impact of its proposed measures.

Government's National Languages Strategy

Sufficient foreign language proficiency and the availability of helpful information are crucial in supporting *outbound mobility*. Compared to other European countries, however, the foreign language proficiency of UK students is low. As part of the *Government's National Languages Strategy (2010)*, the higher education sector is working closely with schools through the *Routes into Languages* programme to raise the number of students wanting to study languages at university. Languages will be again compulsory in primary schools from 2011.

3.3 Main actors involved in the formulation of mobility strategies

Several actors are involved in the formulation and implementation of policies related to the internationalisation of higher education (especially with respect to PMI 1 and 2). The most relevant actor is the government *Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)*. Two other government departments are involved in internationalisation strategies: the *Department for International Development (DfID)*, which oversees many links with developing countries, and the *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, which has an interest in the con-

²⁷ There is no reliable data on the contribution that student immigration makes to net migration (as opposed to total immigration), but the best evidence available suggests that a relatively small proportion of student migrants – around 20 percent – stay in the UK for five years or more and that an even smaller proportion settle in the UK permanently (no more than 10 percent). The vast majority of international students stays in the UK only temporarily. This means that even drastic reductions in student immigration will deliver only small reductions in net migration. The British economy is expected to suffer as a result of a drop in student numbers. International students make significant economic contributions not only to the institutions at which they study, but also to the communities and regions that they live in, and to the wider UK economy.

²⁸ Home Office, op. cit.

²⁹ Mulley, S. and Sachrajda, A. (2011), *Student migration in the UK*, Institute for Public Policy Research Report, London.

tribution that higher education can make to the advancement of the country's foreign policy interests.

The links between BIS and English higher education institutions are mediated by the *Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)*, which distributes the main government financial allocations. HEFCE's *International Collaboration and Development Office*, which was established in the 1990s, has three broad aims in its international strategy: (i) learning from other countries, (ii) supporting national systems development and (iii) facilitating opportunities for international collaboration and development.

The *British Council* is the principal government agency involved in promoting the international relations of universities and colleges, and it reports to the *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*. It has a quasi-autonomous status and a widespread network of offices worldwide.

The *UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit*, which is part of *Universities UK* – the representative organisation of all UK higher education institutions – became an important stakeholder in recent years. The Unit is a central intelligence unit on internationalisation of higher education and works to support the development and sustainability of the UK higher education sector's influence and international competitiveness. The unit was the result of a merger of two separate units. The former *UK Higher Education International Unit* was created in 2007 to respond to the growing demand of UK universities for timely information on, and analysis of, all aspects of higher education internationalisation. The former *Europe Unit* was launched in 2004 to raise awareness of the European issues affecting UK higher education and to co-ordinate the UK's involvement in European initiatives and debates such as the Bologna Process and EU educational policies. In 2010, the International and European units merged to facilitate and to co-ordinate process of communication and action.

Another important actor is the *UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)*. The council aims to promote and facilitate *international student mobility to and from the UK*, to help students (and others involved in international education) develop a global perspective, and to contribute to human development, political stability, economic prosperity and greater intercultural understanding. Another organisation, which also promotes international mobility to the UK, with the special focus of attracting international students to come to the UK to learn English (i.e. English learner students) is *English UK*.

As mentioned above, any kind of immigration, study and employment issues with regard to international non-EU students, important actors are managed by the *UK Border Agency (UKBA)* and the *Home Office Department*.

4. Focus of the current student mobility policy

Rationales for supporting the respective type of mobility

Inbound degree mobility is by far the most important type of mobility emphasised in national government documents. Outbound credit mobility is mentioned to be of additional, secondary importance, although in practice, it is not strongly emphasised by the government.

According to our survey results, the key rationales to support inbound degree mobility are (i) to generate additional institutional income from overseas tuition fees, (ii) to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the higher education system, (iii) to build and maintain good relations with other countries (i.e. using student mobility as a foreign policy instrument), (iv) to help improve future economic co-operation and trade with other countries, (v) to gain new knowledge and strengthen knowledge production, and (vi) to promote “internationalisation at home” (see section 3.1 for more detailed information).

The most important rationale for supporting outbound credit mobility is to build and maintain good relations with other countries by using outbound students as a foreign policy instrument. Other rationales are to enhance the employability of graduates, to help improve future trade relations with other countries, and to gain new knowledge and strengthen knowledge production.³⁰

Geographical focus – target regions and countries

While former UK colonies remain important targets for student recruitment, the key target international student markets of the UK are shifting away from only colonial ties to large emerging powers, such as China. Approximately half of the UK’s target recruitment countries consist of former colonies, but the other half are those with no colonial ties to the UK and with new economic markets.³¹ In addition, diversification of target recruitment countries is considered necessary because until recently, the majority of the international activities of UK universities focused on a small number of countries, which carries a high financial risk. In 1999, for instance, five countries provided 36% of all international students in UK higher education, and by 2004, this proportion had increased to 47%.

The *second Prime Minister’s Initiative* identified the following target markets: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Ghana, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region (SAR)), India, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico,

³⁰ These benefits have been also identified within a recent study conducted by the Council of Industry and Higher Education (Fielden 2007).

³¹ UK Higher Education International and Europe Units 2009.

Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the US and Vietnam.

As the UK's recruitment strategy is strongly focused on generating income from non-EU/EEA student fees, its target countries are outside the EU and EEA. In consequence, the majority of overseas students in the UK are from outside of the EU/EEA.

Outbound credit mobility is mainly organised through the EU's ERASMUS Programme, which naturally curtails the countries of destination to the EEA countries and Turkey. Outbound credit mobility outside this region takes place within bilateral and multilateral partnerships between UK higher education institutions and higher education institutions in other countries in programmes, such as UKIERI (with India). Additionally, the government has funded summer schools in China and India which have been highly successful and oversubscribed. The main target countries for *outbound credit mobility* outside of Europe are thus China and India. This is also the case for *inbound credit mobility*.

Prioritisation by level of study

National statistics do not specify these data in detail. The available evidence suggests that UK universities attract much larger proportions of non-EU/EEA students than EU/EEA students, both to their Bachelor and Master programmes (see Table 1). International students even make up over half of all masters students in the UK.

Table 1: Proportions of EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA students at Bachelor and Masters level in the UK

EU/EEA students on Bachelor programmes	Non-EU/EEA students on Bachelor programmes	EU/EEA students on Master programmes	Non-EU/EEA students on Master programmes
40% of all international bachelors students in the UK	60% of all international bachelors students in the UK	24% of all international masters students in the UK	76% of all international masters students in the UK
4% of all bachelors students in the UK	6% of all bachelors students in the UK	17% of all masters students in the UK	53% of all masters students in the UK

Source: UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit

Outbound credit mobility takes place mainly in undergraduate courses, i.e. at Bachelor level.

Quantitative targets for different mobility types

Quantitative targets for incoming degree-seeking students were set within the first and second Prime Ministers Initiative, as absolute numbers. In *PMI 1* targets were set to attract an additional 50 000 international students to higher education by 2004/05, which was exceeded ahead of schedule, with an extra 93 000 in higher education in 2006. *PMI2* aimed to attract an additional 70 000 international students to UK higher education, and an additional 30 000 international students to UK further education.

According to BIS, the UK supports the Bologna Process aim that by 2020, 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a period of study or work experience abroad. However, this has not become a national target. There is no national target for *outbound mobility* in this respect.

Support instruments and incentives

There are several *competition-based scholarships* available to international students in the UK, for example, through the British Council and the *Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan*. However, international students studying in the UK are not generally entitled to financial support. Some UK government scholarships are available, for example the *Chevening Scholarship* scheme administered by the *Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)*³², and the *Commonwealth Scholarship* scheme funded by the *FCO/DIUS* and the *Department for International Development*. Another type – the *Scholarships for Excellence* – enable 50 top-class PhD and post-doc researchers to come to UK universities every year from China, and the *Graduate Work Experience Programme* allows graduates from China to spend up to one year working and living in the UK. Higher education institutions have the freedom to provide bursaries and fee waivers to international students, and many of them do so.

Financial support is not generally provided to domestic students who aim to obtain a full degree abroad. *Fee loans* and *maintenance grants and loans* are available for outbound credit mobile students. Funding for outward mobility

³² The Chevening Scholarships are funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and administered by the British Council. These are prestigious awards that enable overseas students to study in the UK. Scholarships are offered in over 130 countries and enable talented graduates and young professionals to become familiar with the UK and gain skills which will benefit their countries. The Chevening programme currently provides around 2000 new scholarships each year for postgraduate studies or research at UK HEIs. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/india-scholarships-britishchevening.htm> and <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/scholarships/>.

of students has been included on a pilot basis within the *Prime Minister's Initiative*, the *UK India Education & Research Initiative* and the *UK China Programme*.

Another important tool in order to support *outbound credit mobility* is the *ERASMUS tuition fee waiver*. In this context, *HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council of England)* continues to provide additional funding to the UK's higher education institutions to compensate them for the lost fee-revenue of students undertaking ERASMUS student mobility. UK students undertaking ERASMUS mobility don't pay fees abroad (according to ERASMUS regulations), and are entitled to retain their student grant or loan, and normally qualify for a larger loan. Some institutions make additional funding available to outgoing students, and most institutions also subsidise their staff mobility and the overheads arising from the administration of mobility. However, until now it is unclear whether this type of support will be available still from 2011/12 onwards.

Accommodation for foreign incoming students and staff is a matter for each higher education institution to decide. Many higher education institutions provide on-campus accommodation for all international students throughout their studies. Many UK institutions make allowance for accommodation needs of incoming ERASMUS students and staff through their available housing stock. Most have Accommodation Offices which will provide information and support to students and staff before their arrival.

For *inbound degree mobility* there are measurements in place in order to recognise foreign entry qualifications as well as conclusion of agreements with other countries, to ease recognition. Further *inbound degree-seeking students* are allowed to work part/full-time. Foreign students that graduated in the UK are granted permission to work upon graduation (see section 3.2).

To attract more international students, many UK higher education institutions offer transnational higher education programmes. In 2008/09, there were 388 000 students studying for a UK qualification outside of the UK. This figure is higher than the total number of international students that were enrolled in UK programmes within the UK in that year (369 000).³³

Furthermore, many higher education institutions offer one- or two-year foundation programmes in collaboration with for-profit providers, such as *Study Group*, *INTO University Partnerships*, and *Kaplan*. These programmes prepare international students for entry to undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, and they give guaranteed entry to a specific degree at the university on successful completion of the programme. These foundation

³³ UK Higher Education *International Unit (2010) International higher education in facts and figures, Summer 2010* (London: International Unit).

programmes are a way to attract international students whose knowledge and language and academic skills would otherwise not have been sufficient for entry into a UK degree programme.

5. Policy, measures and actual mobility trends

Clearly, the UK has a very articulate policy when it comes to the recruitment of *foreign degree-seeking students* (through in the UK context this is rarely seen as support for student mobility *per se*). The *Prime Minister's Initiatives* aimed to increase international student recruitment to the UK. These initiatives were accompanied by corresponding *marketing initiatives* (e.g. creation of the brand *Education UK* within the first phase of the *Prime Minister's Initiative*) and an initial relaxation of visa restrictions in order to encourage growth (visa regulations have been tightened only recently).

Already before the launch of the PMIs, from the mid-1980s onwards the number of overseas students in UK universities grew spectacularly. Between 1990 and 1994 alone, UK universities attracted a 153% increase in international student enrolments. However, the first and the second phase of the PMI catalysed the increase significantly. In the past decade, the number of international students in the UK has doubled, and OECD figures show that since 2000, the number of international (EU and non-EU) students in UK universities has increased by 48%. This growth is partly due to the UK's competitive approach and targeted branding and promotion initiatives by organisations such as the *British Council*. Currently, the UK has a market share of approximately 12% of the world's international students; it is second after the US. In fact, the UK's market share has declined from 16% to approximately 12% since 1998, although in the last few years it has remained stable. This relative decline is likely due to the increased number of competing countries in the global market for mobile students.

International student recruitment remains very important to the UK and to UK higher education institutions, and even gains importance in the light of decreasing state funding for higher education, demographic decline in the relevant age group and the need for highly qualified workers. However, various recent developments might challenge overseas student recruitment in the near future: PMI 2 ran out in March 2011, the increase in tuition fees for EU (and domestic) students and government tightening of immigration and visa restrictions.

The potential impact of tuition fee increases, decreased public funding, and stricter visa regulations

The growth trend in international students may change in the coming years with the increase of tuition fees. From the academic year 2012/13, home and

EU/EEA students have to pay £ 9 000 for undergraduate and graduate courses per academic year (this corresponds to an increase of £ 6 000). There have been suggestions that declines might be as high as one-third for undergraduates, but with some recovery in time, as EU students will learn how to better access the various loan programmes available. For postgraduate enrolments comments were mixed: although most analysts expected declines, with UK institutions losing out to continental institutions that are offering English-medium degrees, there is also some optimism for recovery. However, future fees for postgraduate programmes are most likely to increase as well, to match those for undergraduates. For the moment, the precise effects remain to be seen.

This must also be seen in the context of wider funding cuts to the education sector. In October 2010, the government announced 40% cuts to university teaching budgets. The decisions of the comprehensive spending review will see the higher education budget cut from £ 7.1 billion to £ 4.2 billion by 2014.³⁴ Given the uncertain funding situation faced by many educational institutions, it is unsurprising that many UK further and higher education institutions have attempted to attract more overseas students in recent years. If changes in the student visa regime make these increases impossible, many institutions' financial planning will be thrown into chaos (*ibid.*).

The income from tuition fees paid by non-EU students constitutes 9% of the sector's total fee income. However, for some universities the figure will be far higher and can represent up to 30% of total income, according to UKCISA. In total, universities are estimated to earn £ 2.5 billion a year in fees from international students. The loss of fee income from international students could in turn result in job losses in the education sector. Loss of fee income could also result in some courses or departments no longer being viable. In STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in particular, many courses are only made viable by a substantial proportion of enrolments from outside the UK and EU. It is likely that there will be closures, mergers and private sector buying higher education institutions. Institutions will react with different measurements, e.g. closing up certain fields of subjects such as humanities and arts.

With respect to outbound credit mobility, it can be expected that decreasing state funding for the higher education sector will have an impact in the way that outbound mobility will be less promoted and supported at the institutional level. In the last ten years the number of outbound credit mobile students going on European schemes such as ERASMUS has fallen from 9 500 to 5

³⁴ Mulley & Sachrajda, *op. cit.*

500.³⁵ However, according to Fielden, the main obstacles to outbound mobility are of cultural and academic, and not of a financial nature.

Regarding the link with the European level developments, for the UK there is clearly little convergence. In 1992 the Department of Education (DfE) stated that the government's aim was to embed the European dimension in the daily practice of all higher education institutions without being specific about the means.³⁶ As far as European links are concerned there has traditionally been very little direct higher education policy interest. The general feeling has been that there are few national UK higher education objectives that are of purely European interest, and it has been seen as a matter for individual universities and colleges.³⁷ With regard to the Bologna Process and in comparison with several other European signatories, Bologna has not yet made a significant impact on higher education policies in the UK. Bologna is not yet making a significant impact in terms of changing policies or practices, and initially the UK response was based on the assumption that it would not require major changes in its higher education system. The gradual realisation that the 3+1 model in the UK might fall short of the longer 4+2 degree programmes in Europe is now receiving more attention.³⁸

Nevertheless, the Universities UK's International and Europe Unit will work to ensure that the EU's and EHEA's higher education policies develop in line with UK sector priorities. This is particularly true in the area of European research policy, as issues such as Joint Programming and the development of a successor to the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7) will be discussed as we approach the next EU funding period 2014-2020. So Europe does matter, but only to some extent.

³⁵ Fielden, J. (2007), *Global Horizons for UK Universities*, London.

³⁶ Huisman & van der Wende 2004.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

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XII. Concluding thoughts

1. The interrelatedness of European and national policy-making

One of the main aims of this study has been to identify if and to what extent national-level mobility policies are in line with European-level developments in the area of student and staff mobility, i.e. to what extent they converge or diverge. While we are able to provide a tentative answer to this question in the pages to come, it proved impossible during this exercise to say who is ultimately in the driving seat, i.e. whether EU policies influence national initiatives or the other way around. That is because these two levels are closely interlinked, and influences probably work in both directions.

The European Union and the Bologna Process are clearly not some abstract entities that dictate policy objectives “from above”, but rather two lively aggregations of different member countries, with different national agendas, that meet under these wider umbrellas to make supranational policies. Governmental officials and ministers of education from EU member states meet regularly in the *Education, Youth and Culture (EYC) Council*. The members of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), generally composed of higher education officials from the signatory countries, meet on a regular basis too to prepare the bi-annual Ministerial Conferences that decide the future course of action of the Bologna Process. This gives individual countries a direct way to get infused with the “European agenda”, but also a direct channel to influence it.

2. The discourse euphoria

In the European context, student mobility has received a level of attention not known anywhere else in the world. Grand slogans like “mobility for all” have become a common feature of official EU policy documents and have been promoted in recent years as nothing less than an EU-wide objective, in an effort to make mobility “the rule rather than the exception”. Mobility is promoted as an uncontested positive, which all European countries are collectively expected to support.

But to what extent do different European countries, confronted on a daily basis with different mobility realities, see mobility in a positive light? Clearly, they do so only to some extent. While maintaining a very positive view about mobility in general, countries have proven much more cautious in adopting extremely ambitious goals for their higher education systems, and show in general less euphoria. In fact, we notice that the level of realism in setting mobility-related objectives increases, as government representatives gradually move from the flexible, inter-governmental Bologna context, to the much more formalised context of the European Union, and last but not least to the

national framework, where they are subject to the close scrutiny of domestic constituencies. National officials are much more “generous” and “enthusiastic” in the Bologna context (that has many “carrots” and close to no “sticks”), but they become much more modest when having to make national policies, for which they can ultimately be held accountable.

Despite this generally positive attitude towards mobility in Europe, we also notice in recent years that a number of countries have become preoccupied with the unintended negative consequences of mobility. If sporadic *brain drain* cries were heard of already, a few European countries have become equally worried about being over flooded by foreign students of particular nationalities and in specific subject areas (see chapter 3). This comes to show that the extremely positive attitude towards mobility is sometimes shadowed by more gloomy national concerns. In contrast to the European-level discourse, some countries have come to discover that not “all mobility” is actually good.

3. Confronting the two “rhetorics”

By comparing the trends in European- and national-level policy-making with regards to mobility, we were able to identify some areas of similarity and convergence between the two levels. In previous chapters we have called these areas “policy elements”.

Types of mobility

Overall, we see similarities in the *types of mobility* that are considered most important at the European and national level. The EU focus on intra-European credit mobility, through programmes that mainly fund *outgoing credit mobility* (and inevitably support also incoming students, as the outgoing students “come” to another European country) is very clear, as is the general preference of national governments to support *outgoing credit mobility*, for the benefits this is believed to have for the individual and the country at large. The second priority of most national governments and the EU are *incoming degree-seeking students*. If we were to compare the efforts though, the current EU instruments (mainly the ERASMUS MUNDUS Programme), while prestigious, clearly pale in comparison to the comprehensive array of national measures. While national governments have long paid special attention to this type of mobile students (some even exclusively, like the UK), the EU only recently came to see the “attraction” of foreign students as a necessity for the good functioning of the Union as such.

Rationales

Further, while the main rationale for supporting mobility in the EU context is to enhance European integration and identity, this is rarely a priority objective

for national governments. Countries generally support mobility because they deem it contributes to the internationalisation of their higher education system, it increases the overall quality of education, it creates graduates that can function in international work environments, and it helps them develop good relations with other countries. Also, despite the fact that European countries constantly highlight in their policy-documents European-level initiatives and programmes, like ERASMUS, which have this ambition of creating a European identity, they do not regard the European Union as a major actor in the area of national-level policy-making. Mobility policy-making remains a national prerogative (beyond EU Programmes).

Quantitative targets

Many national targets for *outgoing mobility* have not only preceded the recent European-level benchmarks set in the Bologna and EU contexts (20% of graduates with an international experience by 2020), but are also in some cases more ambitious – 50% in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, 25% in The Netherlands. Equally though, many countries have adopted, at least in their discourse, the European benchmarks, although the overall ambiguity on how to define the indicators and measure progress remains, for the moment. We therefore have doubts about the seriousness of these endorsements.

For *incoming degree mobility* it is clear that close to a third of European countries had set a clear target, long before the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration have thought of formulating one for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a whole.

Levels of study

We notice some convergence though between the priorities expressed by individual countries for levels of study of mobile students and those formulated in European policy documents. While Bachelor level students seem to be supported primarily for (outgoing) credit mobility, foreign Master and PhD students are a prime target for incoming degree mobility.

Support measures and instruments

The participation in EU mobility programmes is one of the main instruments highlighted by national governments in their policy documents. Participation as such is nevertheless not astonishing – it comes as an automatic advantage of being an EU member state. Interestingly though, the countries that emphasised the most the EU initiatives, are generally the ones that have few instruments of their own in place to support mobility. In this respect, we tend to think that the extent to which EU instruments are mentioned in the national

context is not always an indication of the level commitment of the respective country.

Other European-level initiatives like the ECTS, the Diploma Supplement and the Bologna Process 3-cycle structure, are often mentioned in the national contexts as efforts taken to enhance student mobility. Evidence shows though that while many of these measures have been fully adopted on paper, much remains to be done to fully remove the obstacles they were meant to address. Reality also shows a much wider variety in modes of implementation than one would tend to think. In other words, very often convergence happened on paper and diversity in practice.

In contrast, an area where the European-level policy could use the national expertise is *promotion and marketing*. As incoming degree mobility is increasingly entering the European higher education agenda as a policy objective, the EU will certainly be expected to do more in the near future in this area. Countries like the UK, Germany, or The Netherlands, could be seen as models for a similar European-level campaign.

Annex

Interviewees

Austria:

- Gottfried Bacher, *Austrian Representative in the Bologna Follow-up Group, Federal Ministry for Science and Research*
- Barbara Weitgruber, *Director General for Scientific Research and International Relations, Federal Ministry for Science and Research*
- Gerhard Volz, *Head of ERASMUS Unit, National Agency for Lifelong Learning, OeAD*
- Heidi Esca-Scheuringer, *Consultant, Representative of the Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences*
- Ines Maria Breinbauer, *Dean, Faculty of Philosophy and Education, University of Vienna*
- Harald Edlinger, *Bologna Coordinator, University of Vienna, Center for Teaching and Learning*
- Helmut Holzinger, *Managing Director, University of Applied Sciences bfi (Vienna) and President of the Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Science*
- Eva Werner, *Rector, University of Applied Sciences IMC Krems*
- Maria Felberbauer, *Head of International Office, University College of Teacher Education KPH Vienna/Krems, Bologna Expert*
- Juliane Soyka, *ÖH Bologna Expert*

Cyprus:

- Andreas Demetriou, *former Minister, Ministry of Education and Culture*
- Andreas Papoulas, *Senior Education Officer, Department of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education and Culture*
- Panikos Giorgoudes, *Senior Education Officer, Department of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education and Culture*
- Roula Kyrillou-Ioannidou, *Coordinator, ERASMUS & Leonardo da Vinci, Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes*
- Thasos Michaelides, *Chairman, Cyprus State Scholarship Foundation*
- Panos Razis, *former Chairman of Governing Board Open University of Cyprus, former President, Cyprus Rectors' Conference*

- Kyriakos A. Tsioupanis, *former President, Pancypriot Federation of Student Unions*
- Elena Avgoustidou-Kyriacou, *Senior University Officer for International Relations Section, Research and International Relations Service, University of Cyprus*
- Emilios Solomou, *Vice-President for Administration, University of Nicosia (private university)*
- Kartakoullis Nicos, *Vice President for Development and University Relations, University of Nicosia (private university)*
- George Kriticos, *General Director, Global College (private non-university institution)*
- Marios Amerikanos, *Director, American College (private non-university institution)*

Germany:

- Peter Greisler, *Ministerialdirigent, Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF)*
- Birger Hendriks, *Ministry of Science, Economic Affairs and Transport, Schleswig-Holstein*
- Christian Bode, *former Secretary General, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)*
- Irene Jansen, *Head of Communication and Marketing, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)*
- Klaus-Dieter Habbich, *Coordinator, Go Out! Initiative, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)*
- Ulrich Heublein, *Senior Researcher, Higher Education Information System (HIS)*
- Monika Kramme, *Head of the Section European and International Co-operation, Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research, Nordrhein-Westfalen*
- Regina Neum-Flux, *Director, International Relations, University of Potsdam*
- Herbert Grieshop, *Director, Center for International Cooperation, Freie Universität Berlin*

Norway:

- John Andersen, *Head International Relations Office, Norwegian School of Economics*

- Astri Andrésen, *Vice Rector International, University of Bergen*
- Gunnar Christensen, *Vice-Rector International, Norwegian School of Economics*
- Peter Maassen, *Professor, Coordinator HEDDA, University of Oslo*
- Vidar Pedersen, *Head of Section for Nordic and European Cooperation, Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU)*
- Ragnhild Skalid, *Senior Adviser, Ministry of Education and Research*
- Gro Beate Vige, *Director, Ministry of Education and Research*

Romania:

- Magdalena Jianu, *General Director, Agentia de credite si burse de studii (The Agency for Study Loans and Scholarships)*
- Cristina Berezovski, *Deputy Director, Agentia de credite si burse de studii (The Agency for Study Loans and Scholarships)*
- Radu Stoika, *Responsible for OM, IP and Centralised Projects, ERASMUS Department, ANPCDEFP*
- Madlena Nen, *Coordinator of the ERASMUS Department, ANPCDEFP*
- Remus Pricopie, *Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, SNSPA (former State Secretary for Higher Education and Adviser to the Minister of Education)*
- Carmen Iftime, *General Director for European Affairs, Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports*
- Paraschiva Dobre, *Director, International Relations, Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports*
- Mircea Dumitru, *Vice-rector for International Affairs, University of Bucharest*

Spain:

- Mercedes Chacón Delgado, *General Director, University Education and Career Advice, Ministerio de Educación*
- Encarna Cuenca Carrión, *Director, Organismo Autónomo Programas Educativos Europeos*
- Isabel Ortiz, *Director, International Relations Office, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingenieros Industriales*
- José Gines Mora, *Institute of Education, University of London*
- Maite Viudes, *Deputy Director General, Universitat Pompeu Fabra Foundation*

- Claudi Alsina Català, *Secretary General, Generalitat de Catalunya, Consell Interuniversitari de Catalunya*
- Joseph Vilalta, *Director Associació Catalana D'Universitats Públiques (ACUP)*
- Alicia Betts, *Project Manager, ACUP*
- Juana Amoros Carmona, *International Office Complutense Universidad Madrid*

The Netherlands:

- Marlies Leegwater-Van der Linden, *Coordinator International Affairs, Directorate for Higher Education, Ministry of Education*
- Tamara Wanke, *Policy Adviser, HBO-raad (Association of Universities of Applied Sciences)*
- Emiel de Groot, *Policy Adviser, HBO-raad (Association of Universities of Applied Sciences)*
- Charlotte van Hees, *Policy Adviser, VSNU (Association of Research Universities)*
- Jodien Houwers, *Policy Adviser, University of Groningen*
- Hans Vossensteijn, *Senior Researcher, Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente*
- Wessel Meijer, *Head, International Office, Fontys University of Applied Sciences*

The United Kingdom:

- Peter Baldwinson, *Team Leader, HE International (Europe) Team, BIS*
- Mary Gurteen, *Team Leader, HE International Team, BIS*
- Neil Kemp, *Visiting Fellow, Institute of Education, University of London*
- Peter Scott, *Professor, Institute of Education, University of London*
- Shaun Curtis, *Director International, Exeter University*
- Kevin Van-Cauter, *Higher Education Adviser, British Council*
- Liz Dempsey, *Higher Education Adviser, British Council*
- Steve Woodfield, *Institute of Education, Kingston University*
- Alexandra Jenkins, *Policy Adviser, UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit, Universities UK*
- Elizabeth Farnell, *Communications and Public Affairs Officer, UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit, Universities UK*

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Founded in 1993, the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) is a not-for-profit pan-European network of major organisations responsible in their countries for the promotion of internationalisation in education and training. Current membership is comprised of 21 such organisations in 16 European countries, as well as associate members from the Americas and Australia. ACA's secretariat is located in Brussels, Belgium, in easy reach of the European institutions.

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The promotion of international student and staff mobility has over the past decades become a major policy objective of the European Union. Large-scale mobility programmes, such as ERASMUS, have been created, and ambitious mobility targets (20% of all students) have been set at the European level, to ensure that more and more European students become internationally mobile. Have these European efforts been mirrored by similar attempts at the national level? Are national policies and strategies in line with the European mobility ambitions, and if so, on which issues and to what extent? More generally, is there cross-country convergence in the mobility policies, priorities and instruments of individual European countries? These are some of the questions the present study explores. It was produced by the Academic Cooperation Association in cooperation with NUFFIC and DAAD, and with financial support from the European Commission. The study finds that very few European countries have a fully-fledged mobility policy in place. Most European countries have a rather piecemeal mobility approach. The book explores similarities and differences between national approaches with regard to type of mobility, quantitative mobility targets, priority regions/countries, and policy making actors, amongst others. Next to a Europe-wide overview, the study contains in-depth explorations of eight European countries.

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