



Exchange

students' rights

Results of Erasmus Student Network Survey 2006*

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Exchange

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INTRODUCTION

The ESNSurvey 2006 aimed at exploring the issue of the exchange students' rights. Main organiser of the research was Erasmus Student Network and the main partner of the project was Università Bocconi from Italy. The research was conducted from May to July 2006. More than 12,000 exchange students from Europe, as well as foreigners studying at European universities filled in the online questionnaire. Quantitative results are accompanied by the qualitative data - descriptions of students' experience.

Nowadays, more and more students decide to spend a part of their studies at a foreign university. Even if they are a natural element of contemporary university, they sometimes receive a differentiated treatment. Their rights and privileges may differ from the ones of local students or even other exchange students.

The mission of the **Erasmus Student Network (ESN)** is to **foster mobility** under the principle of students helping students. Therefore, one area of activity of ESN concentrates on the **evaluation of the quality of student exchange**. The ESNSurvey project, which took place already in 2005 and 2006, aims at analysing the situation of exchange students in Europe and creating practical recommendations for stakeholders. The analysis includes **all exchange students in Europe**: those who studied abroad through the Erasmus Programme and those who went abroad through other schemes.

In this report, after describing the characteristics of the respondents and their motivation for studying abroad, we concentrate on the analysis of the **situation of exchange students' rights in Europe**. We look at issues such as: recognition of academic and non-academic achievements from abroad, migration and visa issues, fees, financial support and others. We examine whether the Erasmus University Charter, signed by the institutions participating in Erasmus exchange is being respected. Additionally, the last chapters describe students' **satisfaction with stay** in a foreign country and **satisfaction with support of ESN and other student organisations**.

This project was partly **funded by the European Commission**, Directorate General for Education and Culture, under the Socrates Programme - Accompanying Measures.

KEY RESULTS

Students' characteristics. Our respondents went abroad mostly through the **Erasmus Programme** (91%). Highest numbers of students came from Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Czech Republic and Austria. **Erasmus students came from less privileged socio-economic background** comparing with non-Erasmus students: they have parents with lower educational attainment, and the income of their families is lower as well. Still, when it comes to the family financial situation, only 9% of respondents described their family's (parents') income as below the country's average.

Students' motivation. The two most important reasons for students to go abroad were: *to have new experiences* and *to practice a foreign language* - nearly 80% of respondents said these two reasons were very important. The least important were: *to be independent*, *to improve academic knowledge* and *to enhance future employment perspectives*.

The two student groups with different motivations were identified as: **career-oriented and experience-oriented**. Female respondents, students whose family income is lower than country's average, students who were older while starting stay abroad and students from Central and Eastern Europe were more often career-oriented.

Exchange students' rights

Recognition: About half of the respondents (52%) had all their courses recognized by their home university after coming back from abroad. 28% had most of the courses recognized, 13% only a few courses. 7% of students did not receive any recognition. Problems with recognition are the biggest in the new member states of the European Union as well as in Germany, Greece and UK. **28% of respondents lost a semester** of their studies at home university because they went on exchange

Free choice of courses: 79% of respondents were able to freely choose courses at the host university.

Language issues: More Erasmus than non-Erasmus students were offered the opportunity to participate in a language course before their stay abroad. 27% of Erasmus students said that all courses at the university were in English, comparing to 37% of non-Erasmus.

Fees and tuition: About half of the students, did not have to pay any fees (56% of Erasmus respondents and 44% of non-Erasmus respondents). **Non-Erasmus students declared that the fees were favourable for the local students**, whereas Erasmus students more often believed that they had to pay similar fees or that they have been treated favourably.

Financial situation: The grant that students received covered only partially the overall expenses abroad. **74% of students covered their additional expenses with the support of their parents.** Parents from Southern European countries and Belgium supported their children extensively. In Northern European countries a lot of students took a loan e.g. in Sweden 45%.

Standard of living: Most of students believed their standard of living is similar to the standard of living of the local students (64%). For the respondents from Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and other new EU countries, the standard of living of local students was often higher or much higher.

Provision of information: Students were **not satisfied with provision of information at home university** - they rated it as 3 (measured on the scale from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied). The least satisfied were students from Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain.

Unjust treatment: 7% of students stated that their host university or their host country institutions treated them unjustly. 19,5% of students **felt discriminated** during their stay abroad, mostly because they were foreigners (8%).

Satisfaction with stay. Most of the students (98%) declared that they would recommend going abroad to their friends. Students felt **more positive about their stay than about their studies.** While 61% of the students were very satisfied and 32% rather satisfied with their stay, the respective values for satisfaction with studies were 27% and 47%. Students were most satisfied with atmosphere of the city and country where the university was located and with social life. At the same time they were least satisfied with their financial situation and information they have received from their home university.

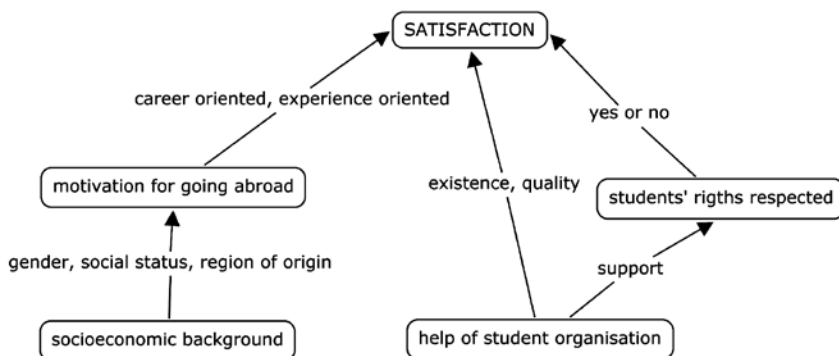
Satisfaction with ESN. Most of the students were satisfied with the services of ESN and other student organisations (nearly 70% declared that they were either very satisfied or rather satisfied). Respondents rated ESN and other student organisations in a similar way. Students were most satisfied with social aspects of ESN help. The satisfaction was lower with problem-solving aspects and with helping in getting in contact with local students.

METHODOLOGY

The survey has been conducted by ESN Survey team, led by the ESN Vice President Ewa Krzaklewska. The questionnaire was formulated on the basis of ESN Survey 2005 research tool. It was available **online from May to July 2006** on the ESN website at www.esn.org/survey. Students were able to complete the survey entirely online and only in English.

The **conceptual structure of the questionnaire** is presented in the image below. In order to describe students' satisfaction, firstly, we took into account

some contextual factors (socio-economic background, students' motivation for going abroad), and secondly, areas where action is possible and might be necessary. If exchange students' rights are not being respected, the support from a university or a student organisation is necessary.



The information about the survey was disseminated through local branches of Erasmus Student Network and other associations concerned with educational issues, as well as through the international offices of single universities. Students received emails notifying them about the project and were informed about the possibility of winning 5 travel vouchers each worth 100 Euro if they fill in the questionnaire. For verification purposes respondents were supposed to use the code at the beginning of the questionnaire. Summing up, more than **12 000 respondents** participated in the survey.

Additionally, we collected **qualitative data**. Erasmus students were invited to upload the descriptions of their experience as Erasmus students on the special website www.20erasmus.eu. Students had to provide a title to their experience, and they could upload text, images, films and voice files. Experiences were moderated. We gathered around **200 experiences** in the period from the 15th of December 2006 to the 10th of February 2007. Qualitative data was analysed in order to serve an illustration of the quantitative results. Quotes are included throughout the report and in the colourful part "The Erasmus Experiences". Texts are used in the original form with small spelling corrections.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

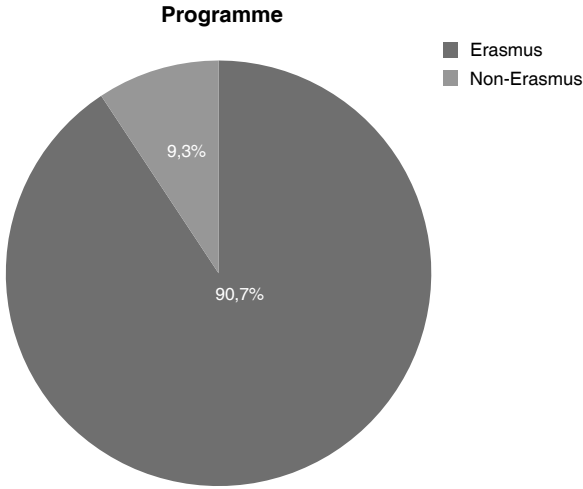
We would like to thank **ESN local sections** for helping us in reaching the exchange students. Special gratitude goes to our main partner **Università Bocconi** from Italy, as well as all the **supporters of the project**: Central

European Exchange Programme for University Students (CEEPUS), student organisations such as AEGEE, ESIB, JADE, and educational organisations such as European Association for International Education (EAIE), Academic Cooperation Association, Coimbra Group of Universities, Compostela Group of Universities, Conference of Italian University Rectors, UK Socrates Erasmus Council and UNICA. In addition, we thank all the **20 Years of the Erasmus Programme Project Team** for their enthusiasm and dedication: Davide, Magda, Antonio, Zahira, Emanuela, Francesco, Jakob, Paul, Diana and Tiina.

STUDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Our respondents went abroad mostly through the **Erasmus Programme** (91%). 5% of respondents went abroad through the **bilateral agreements between universities**. 1,4% of students **arranged their stay by themselves**. Others went through **governmental programmes** (0,6%), **CEEPUS** (0,3%), **private foundations** (0,2%) or other exchange programmes (1,3%). For purposes of this report, we divide students into two groups - Erasmus and non-Erasmus students.¹

Figure 1. Two groups of respondents according to the programme through which they studied abroad (N=12102).



¹ If not mentioned differently, the results concern all the respondents. In order to pinpoint the differences between students from different programmes, we make comparisons throughout the text. Please note that the group of non-Erasmus students is smaller, as well as it includes students from very different categories.

Demographic profile

Most of the respondents ranged from 20 to 24 years old. Average age of the respondents was 23 years old.

Students came from several countries. Main countries, where their **home university** was located, were Spain (14%), Italy (13%), France (9%), Germany (9%), Czech Republic (6%) and Austria (6%).

Figure 2. Country of the home university of the respondents (N=11964).

Country of home university	Percent	Number of responses
Spain	14,4	1720
Italy	12,9	1538
France	9,1	1085
Germany	8,9	1070
Czech Republic	5,8	699
Austria	5,6	671
Poland	5,4	640
Netherlands	4,4	524
United Kingdom	4,2	504
Slovenia	2,4	281
Hungary	2,3	279
Finland	2,3	275
Belgium	2,0	238
Greece	1,9	221
Ireland	1,8	217
Turkey	1,7	207
Sweden	1,6	195
Switzerland	1,6	194
Denmark	1,4	168
Portugal	1,3	153
Rumania	1,2	142
Bulgaria	1,1	129
USA	1,0	124

65% of respondents were **female** and 35% were **male**. There were more male students (43%) among non-Erasmus respondents, and especially among those who went abroad through a private foundation (46%) and who arranged the

stay by themselves (46%). As far as the country of home university is concerned, the highest percentage of male students was among the Portuguese respondents (53%) and the lowest among the Finnish respondents (21%).

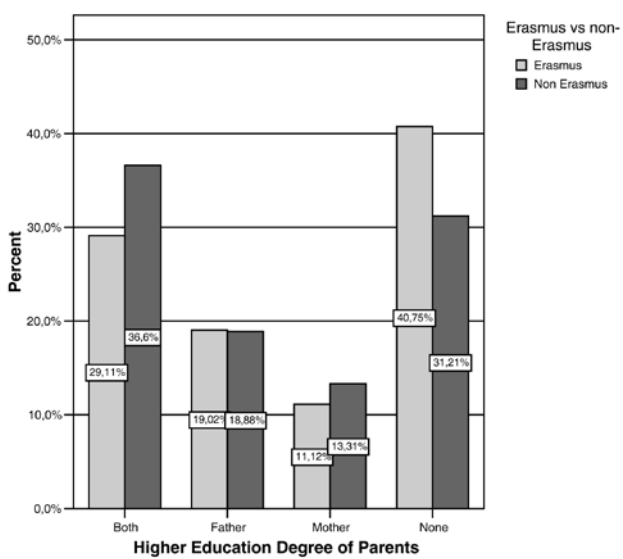
BA (3-4 years) students constituted 48,4% of all respondents, MA (5-6 years) students - 49,2%, PhD, doctoral - 2,4%. There were more MA students among Erasmus respondents (50% of all Erasmus respondents) than among non-Erasmus respondents (45% of all non-Erasmus respondents).

Students mainly did: **business studies, management studies** (22%), engineering, technology (14%), languages and philological studies (12%), and social sciences (9%). Female students were much more frequent in the areas such as: languages and philological studies (88% out of all respondents from this area of study) and education, teacher training (84%), but also in art and design, humanities and law. **Male students prevail extensively in engineering, technology** (65% of them were male students), and in mathematics (54%), not to mention natural sciences and geography.

Socio-economic background of respondents

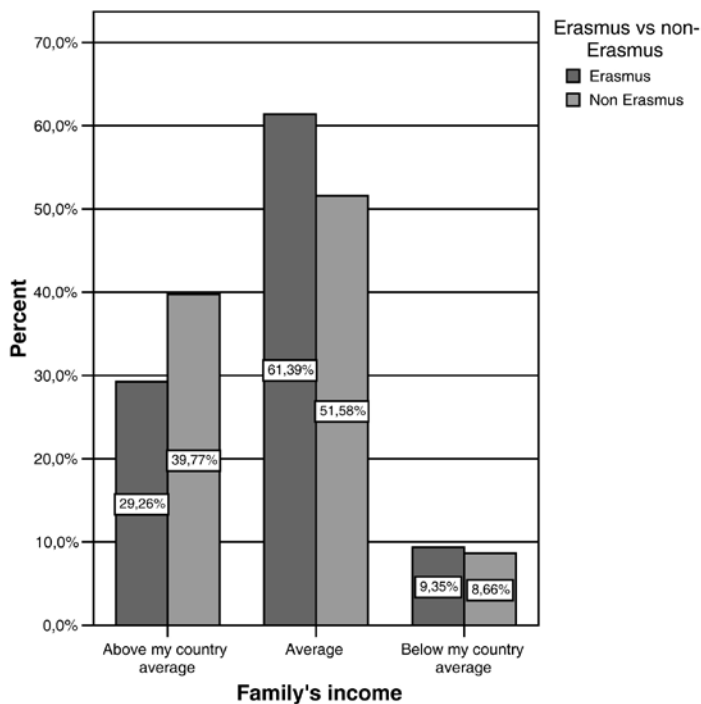
40% of all the respondents declared that **none of their parents had a higher education degree** (such as a university degree). 30% both parents, 11% mother, 19% father. Among Erasmus students, there were more families in which none of the parents had higher education degree (41% comparing to 31% of all non-Erasmus). Non-Erasmus students' families with **both educated parents** constituted 37%, compared to 29% of all Erasmus students' families.

Figure 3. Parents' educational attainment for Erasmus and non-Erasmus respondents (n=11935).



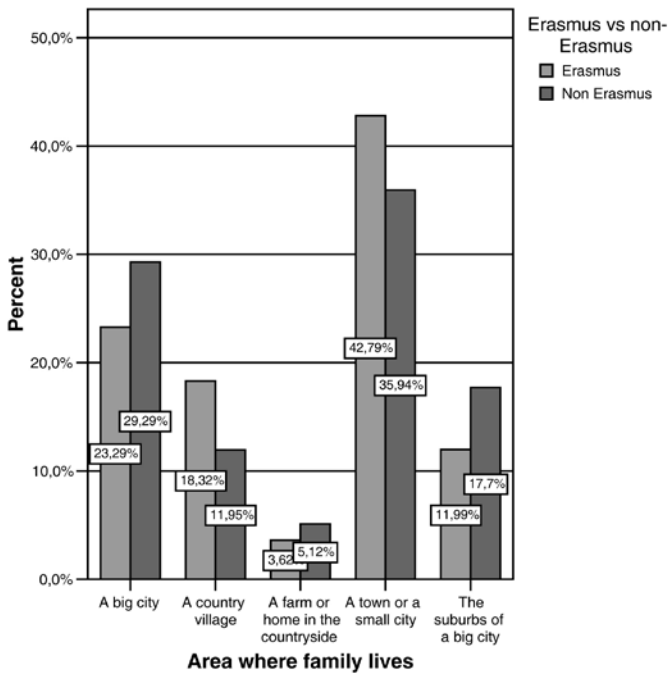
When it comes to the **family financial situation**, 9% of respondents described their family's (parents') income as below the country's average. 40% of non-Erasmus respondents described it as above the country's average, comparing to 29% of Erasmus students. 61% of Erasmus students and 52% of non-Erasmus respondents described it as average.

Figure 4. Family's income for Erasmus and non-Erasmus respondents (n=11935).



Erasmus students came from **big cities** (23%), suburbs of a big city (12%), a town or a small city (43%), a country village (18%) and a farm or home in the countryside (4%). **Non-Erasmus students came more often than Erasmus students from big cities (29%) and from suburban areas (18%).** Less often they came from a town or a small city (36%) or a country village (12%).

Figure 5. Area where family lives for Erasmus and non-Erasmus respondents (n=11935).



Summing up, Erasmus students had less privileged socio-economic background comparing with non-Erasmus students: they had parents with lower educational attainment, and the income of their families was lower as well. Moreover, respondents came from privileged living areas such as big cities less frequently.

Exchange destinations

The countries that our respondents have chosen most frequently as exchange destinations were Spain (11%), France (10%), Germany (10%), Italy (9%), the Netherlands (8%) and the United Kingdom (8%), Sweden (6%) and Finland (6%).

Figure 6. The host countries of respondents (N=11711).

Spain	1402	11,3%
France	1290	10,4%
Germany	1278	10,3%
Italy	1078	8,7%
United Kingdom	962	7,8%
Netherlands	960	7,8%
Sweden	789	6,4%
Finland	740	6,0%
Austria	532	4,3%
Belgium	383	3,1%
Denmark	349	2,8%
Poland	280	2,3%
Portugal	277	2,2%
Norway	237	1,9%
Ireland	227	1,8%
Switzerland	190	1,5%
Czech Republic	168	1,4%
Greece	110	0,9%
Turkey	89	0,7%
Hungary	80	0,6%
Estonia	73	0,6%
Lithuania	41	0,3%
Slovenia	35	0,3%
Rumania	29	0,2%
Malta	28	0,2%
Slovakia	24	0,2%
Latvia	22	0,2%
Iceland	17	0,1%
Bulgaria	14	0,1%
Cyprus	6	0,0%
Luxembourg	1	0,0%

* Only for the countries participating in the Erasmus Programme in 2005/2006 as well as Switzerland.

Students' stay abroad began mostly in 2005 (55%), 2006 (30%) and 2004 (11%). For 4% of students, their stay abroad started before 2004. On average, they have stayed abroad for two semesters (9 months). Students from Erasmus



Programme stayed for the shortest period of time - 9 months in general. Students who arranged their stay by themselves stayed for the longer period - almost 11 months (but in these cases the length of studies differed the most among students).

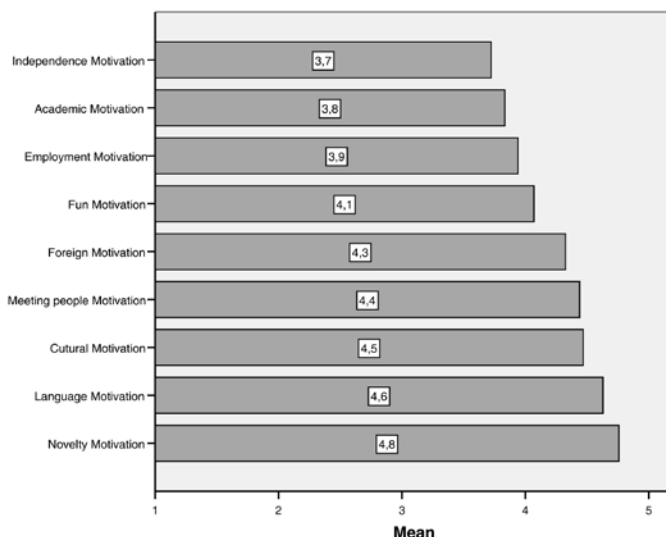
The characteristics of the respondents do not significantly differ from the survey conducted in the last year edition. Erasmus respondents' characteristics are also comparable to the general characteristics of the Erasmus population.

STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO GO ABROAD

"(...) Some foreign students' main target is just to have fun. I know that any reason is good for enjoying this exchange opportunity, but sometimes this leads to a misconception about those students who are interested in working and do their best, so that they have to study harder in order to make a difference."

Given nine reasons to go abroad², students were asked to indicate which ones were important for them. **The two most important reasons for Erasmus students to go abroad were: *to have new experiences* and *to practice a foreign language* - nearly 80% of respondents said these two were of greatest importance. The least important were: *independence*, *improving academic knowledge* and *enhancing future employment perspectives*. The figure below indicates results for all nine reasons which students were supposed to rate.³**

Figure 7. Students' motivation to go abroad (N=10976, scale 1 - not important at all, 5 - very important).



² Question nr 7 of the ESNSurvey 2006 questionnaire (annex 1).

³ The results are consistent with other studies and the previous edition of the survey.



The nine reasons were grouped into 2 categories⁴ (respective statements from the questionnaire in brackets):

- a) **to experience something** (*to have new experiences, to learn about different cultures, to have fun, to meet new people, to be independent, to live in a foreign country*);
- b) **to maximise career chances** (*to improve my academic knowledge, to enhance future employment prospects, to practice foreign language*⁵);

According to their answers to nine reasons of going abroad, students can be divided into two groups:

- those **experience-oriented (53% of Erasmus students)** – for whom experiencing something was more important than maximising career chances;

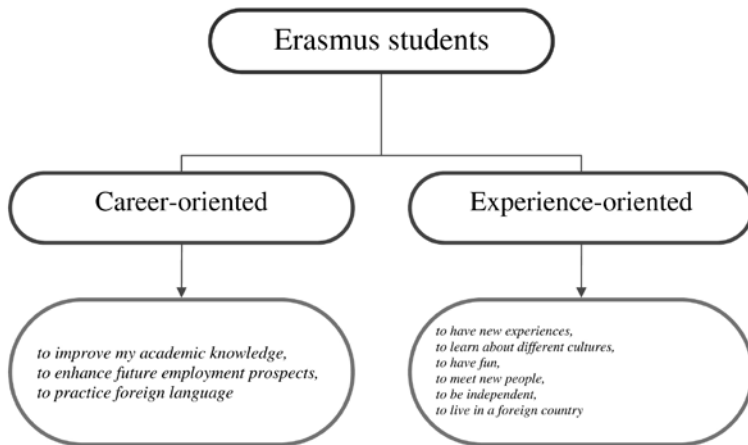
“I was so excited at the idea of discovering a new country and culture, that I could barely wait to arrive.” Beliza

“I always wanted to smell freedom and independence.” Katerina Markova

- those **career-oriented (47% of Erasmus students)** - for whom maximising career chances was more important than experiencing something.

“With my Erasmus program I had the opportunity to start an international work career” Bruno Fernandes

“I knew another way of learning, in other university, with different methods, that is something important for me.” Antonio de Antonio Martín



⁴ The categorisation process was based on Principal Component Analysis. Both components explained 45% of variance.

⁵ Practicing foreign language was only slightly more important for career-oriented students. It shows that practicing language can be treated as the aim for both maximising career chances and experiencing something.

We can clearly see these two groups of students also emerging from the qualitative data. The titles of the Erasmus Experiences represent experience-oriented students („I experienced a new life”, „I saw a little more of the world”, „I discovered joy”) as well as career-oriented students („I enlarged my range of opportunities”, „I discovered what I wanted to do in life”).

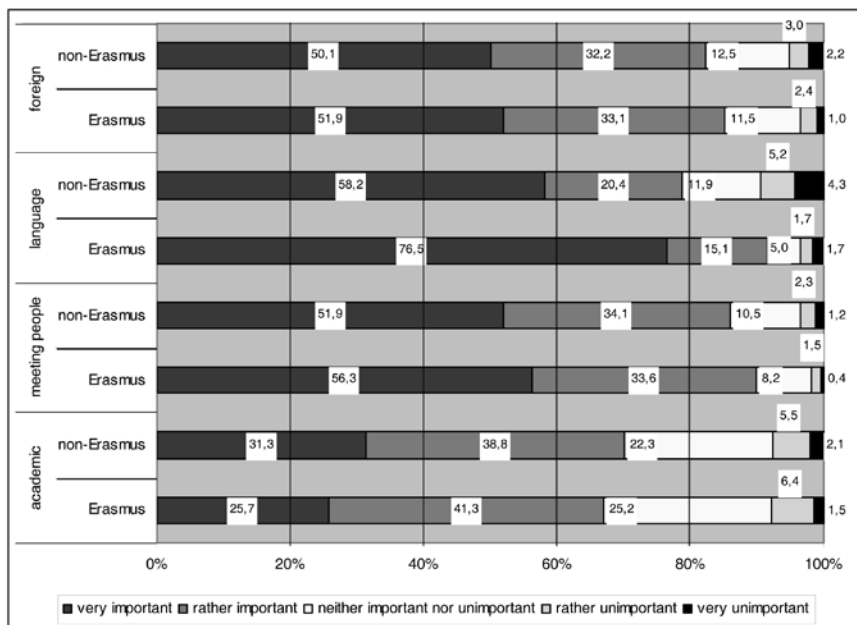
Differences between Erasmus and non-Erasmus students

When comparing Erasmus students with non-Erasmus students, the following differences are observed:

- **non-Erasmus students were more academically-oriented** (improving academic knowledge was more important for them);
- **meeting new people, practicing foreign language and living in a foreign country were more important for Erasmus students.**

The differences are presented in figure 8. The fact that practicing foreign language is more important for Erasmus students is partly explained by their relatively lower foreign language skills before departure in comparison with non-Erasmus students.

Figure 8. Motivation of Erasmus and non-Erasmus students (N=12376).



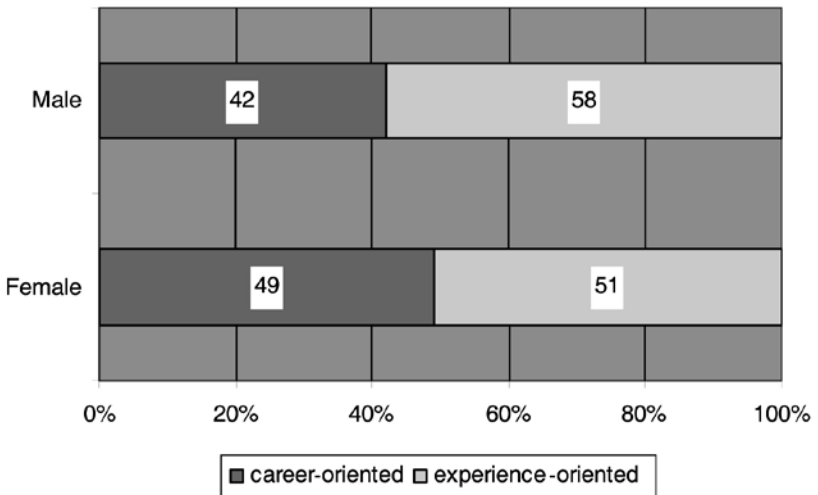
The results show that **Erasmus students are less academically-oriented but more engaged in non-formal skills development**. This fact is confirmed by the qualitative data. In their descriptions students often list skills they have learned abroad (both of academic and non-academic character). As Christof, a Belgian student, says: *“Not only did I discovered a new place in Europe, I also learned a new language, I became a windsurfer, I made a lots of friends all over Europe, I finished my Master thesis during Erasmus, I became a PhD-student on the topics I investigated during my Erasmus.”*

Career-oriented and experience-oriented students

There were five main characteristics that differentiated students from both groups:

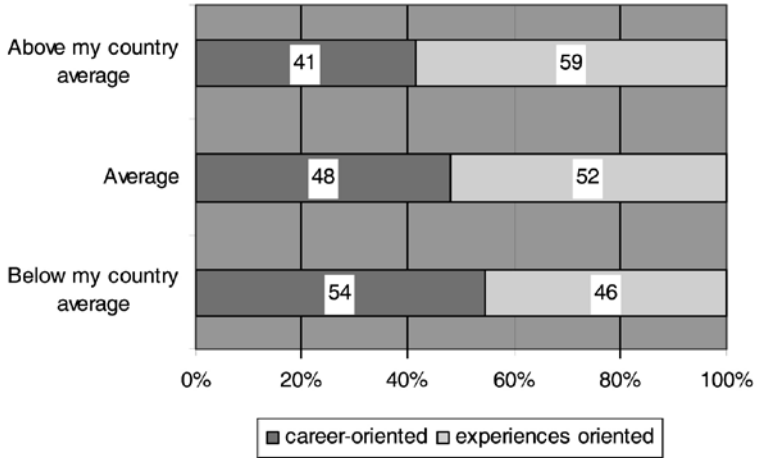
- **gender** – female students are more often career-oriented;

Figure 9. Erasmus students’ motivation for male and female respondents (N=10722).



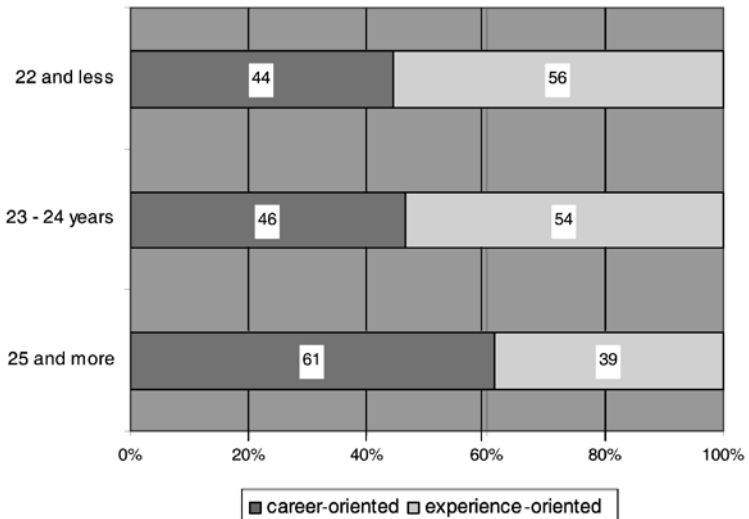
- **respondents’ family income** – students whose family income is lower than country’s average are more likely to be career-oriented;

Figure 10. Erasmus students' motivation for respondents with diverse family income (N= 10667).



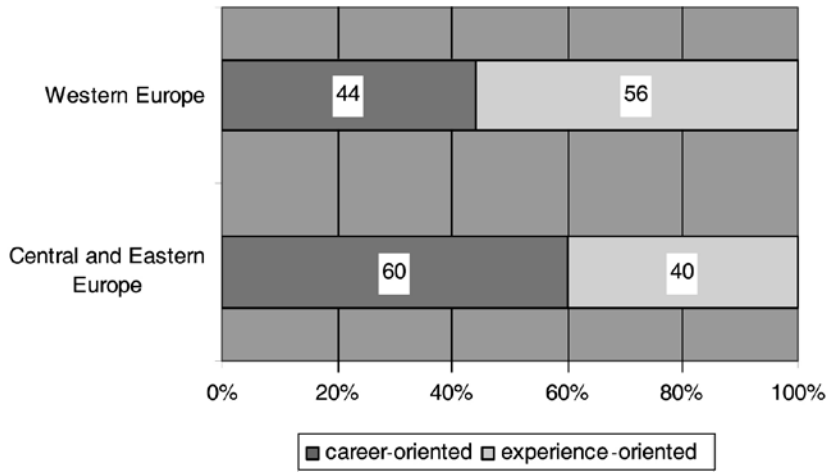
- **age of respondents at the beginning of their stay abroad** – students who are older when beginning stay abroad are more likely to be career-oriented;

Figure 11. Erasmus students' motivation for respondents in different age categories when starting stay abroad (N=10202).



- **the region of home university** – students from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are more career-oriented than respondents from Western Europe⁶.

Figure 12. Erasmus students’ motivation for students from CEE and Western Europe (N=9829).



Influence of home and host country on students’ motivation

Figure 13 presents the ratios of students who belonged to the career-oriented group and the experience-oriented group according to students’ home country⁷. The **career-oriented students most frequently came from the new member states of the European Union** (Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, and Hungary) as well as from Turkey. The experience-oriented students were most frequent in the Western European countries.

⁶ In this report, Western Europe category includes Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. Central and Eastern Europe category includes Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia.

⁷ Only for countries represented by more than 100 students.

Figure 13. Erasmus students' motivation for students coming from diverse countries (N=10482).

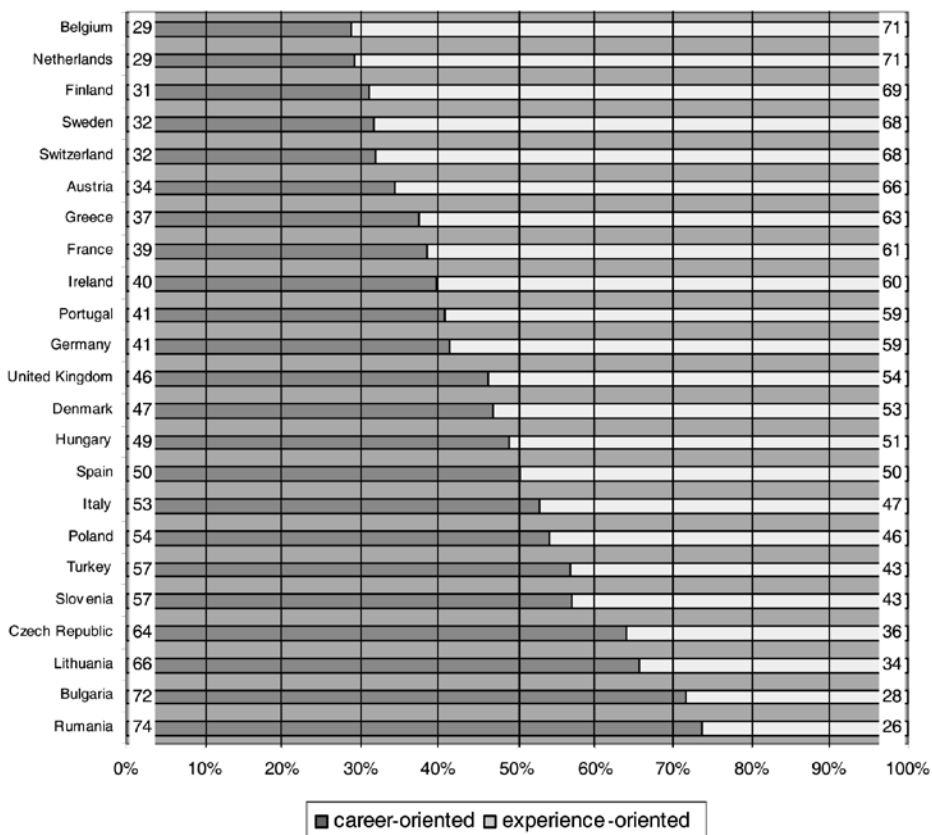


Figure 14 presents ratios of students who belonged to career-oriented group and experience-oriented group for the most popular host countries⁸. The **experience-oriented students went more often to study abroad to Czech Republic and to the Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal), as well as to Norway and Sweden.** The percentage of the career-oriented students was the highest in Germany.

⁸ Only for countries represented by more than 100 students. It applies also to all other tables concerning home and host countries.

Figure 14. Erasmus students' motivation for respondents studying in different European countries (N=10340).

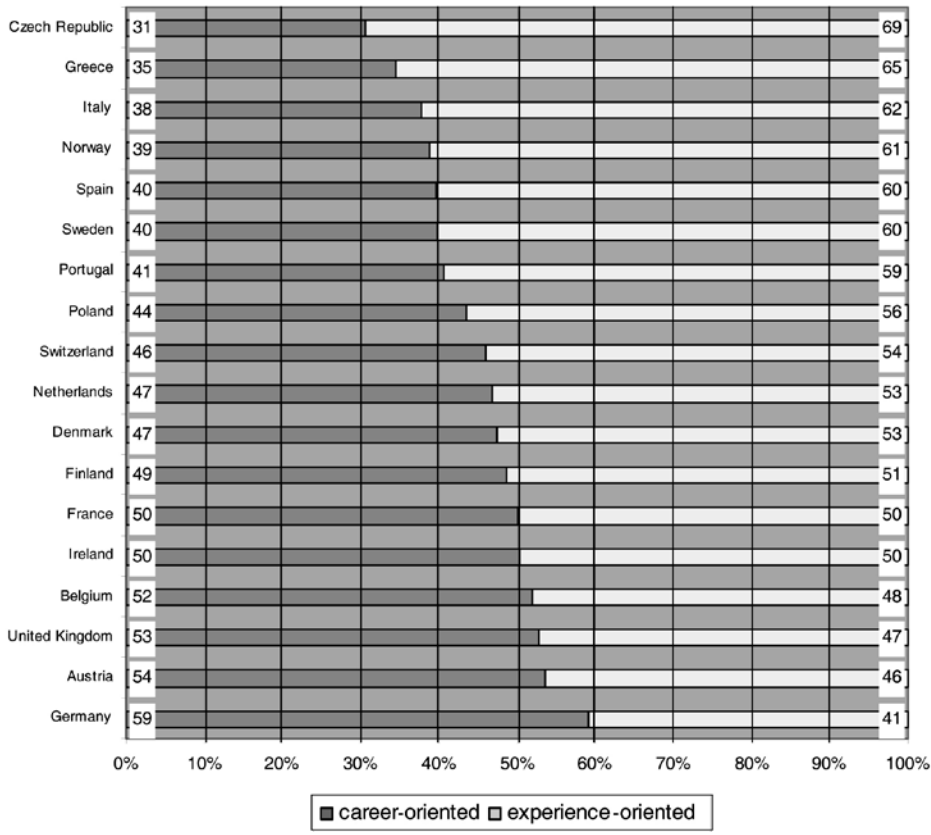
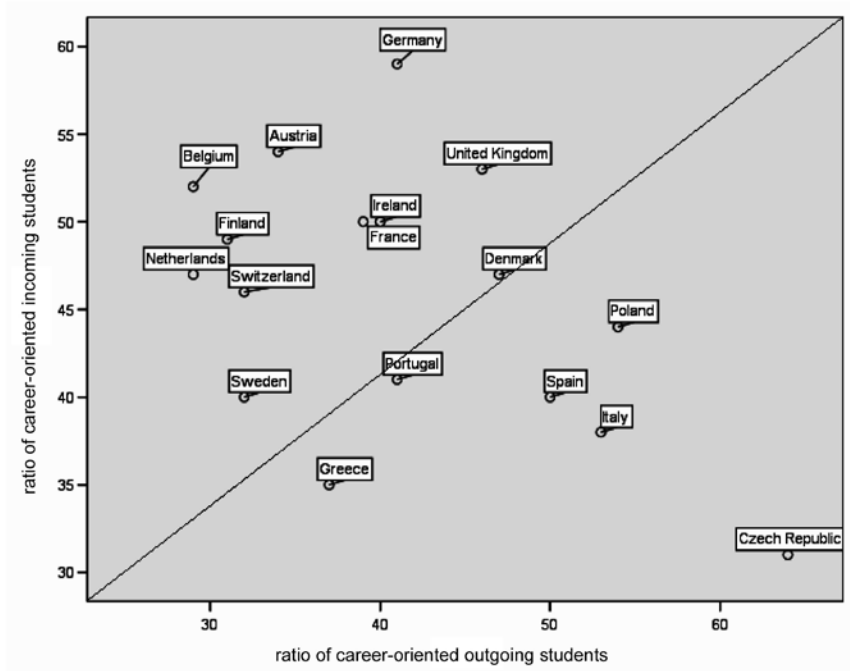


Figure 15 summarises differences in motivation for incoming and outgoing students.⁹ The countries in which there are more career-oriented incoming students are situated in the upper-left corner of the figure. These are Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK). In contrast, the countries in which there were more outgoing students who were career-oriented are situated in the bottom-right corner of the graph. The line on the graph divides

⁹ Data presented for countries represented by more than 100 students coming from it and more than 100 staying abroad in it.

both groups. The graph shows that New Member States (Czech Republic, Poland) and South European countries (Portugal, Greece, Spain, Italy) are the ones where there were more outgoing career-oriented students than incoming ones.

Figure 15. Ratio of incoming and outgoing career-oriented students for diverse countries (N=10202).



EXCHANGE STUDENTS' RIGHTS

Every university which takes part in the Erasmus Programme is expected to follow the guidelines included in the **Erasmus Charter**. It highlights some distinguishing features of Erasmus mobility: **free tuition and full recognition of studies abroad**. Other points, included in the Erasmus Charter are: **usage of ECTS or comparable system, linguistic preparation, provision of information, integration of incoming students, assistance in looking for accommodation** and many others. These rights of each and every Erasmus student going abroad are distinguishing traits of the Erasmus Programme. In the future, they could become also the rights of every exchange student.

In the following report we examine how these points are being put into practice and how the situation looks like in the eyes of exchange students. We also compare the results of Erasmus students with non-Erasmus ones. Additionally, we look at the feelings of exchange students about their situation: do they feel more or maybe less privileged than local students?

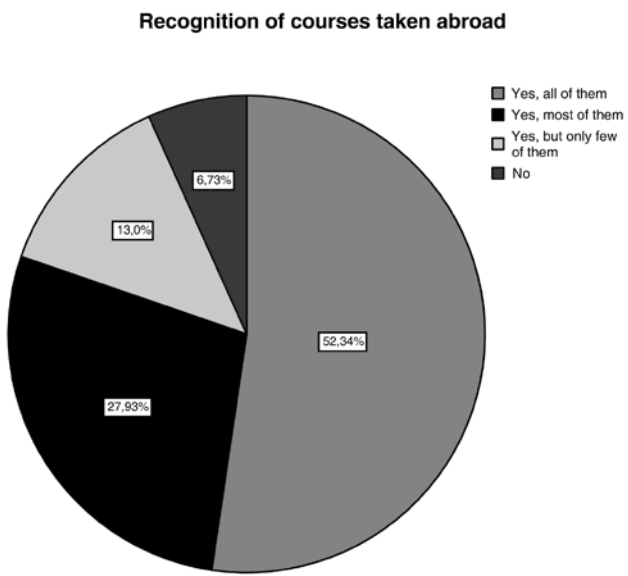
Recognition

'I got a B for my all semester in Estonia and they recalculated my semester abroad and put me an E saying that you can not compare our school to the university in Estonia.'

During the stay abroad almost all students take courses and participate in the curricula of the hosting university (according to the ESNSurvey 2005, 94% of students take courses at a host university). Since a stay abroad period should be a part of their regular study course, the recognition of academic achievements obtained abroad is crucial.

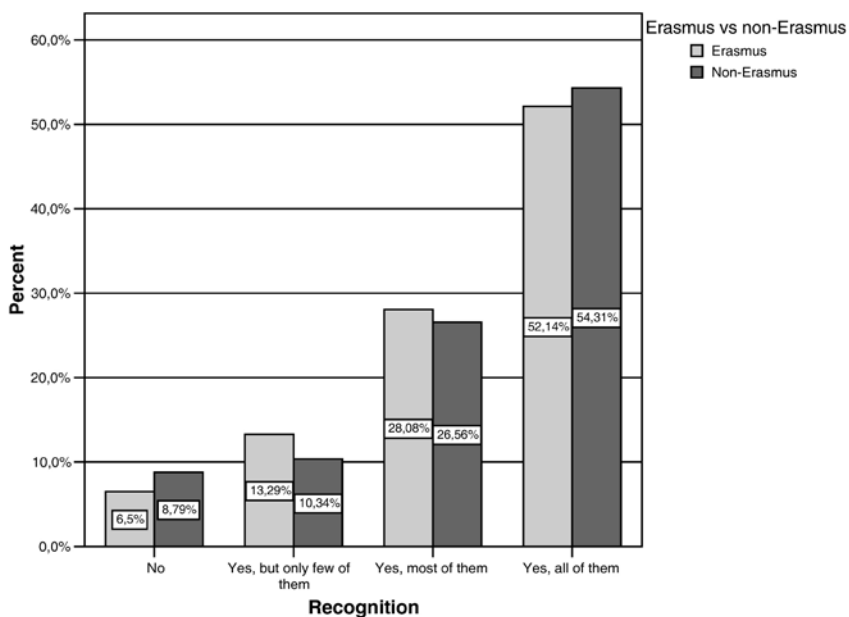
As our survey indicates, **not all students received full recognition for their courses taken abroad**. About half of the respondents (52%) had all their courses recognized by their home university after coming back from abroad. 28% had most of the courses recognized, 13% only a few courses. 7% of students did not receive any recognition.

Figure 16. Recognition of courses taken abroad (n=11907).



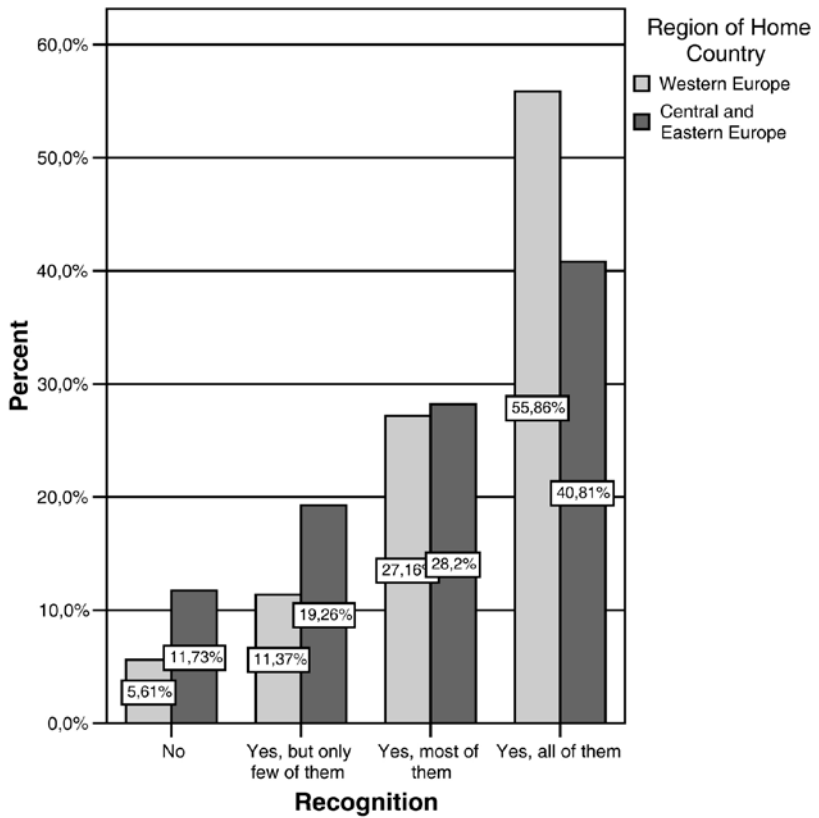
There are differences between Erasmus and non-Erasmus students, but they are not very big. Erasmus respondents more often received some recognition (only 7% did not receive any recognition compared to 9% of non-Erasmus), but non-Erasmus students more often received full recognition (54% compared to 52% of Erasmus). That shows that recognition of academic achievements is not the distinguishing trait of the Erasmus Programme.

Figure 17. Recognition of courses taken abroad for Erasmus and non-Erasmus students (n=11888).



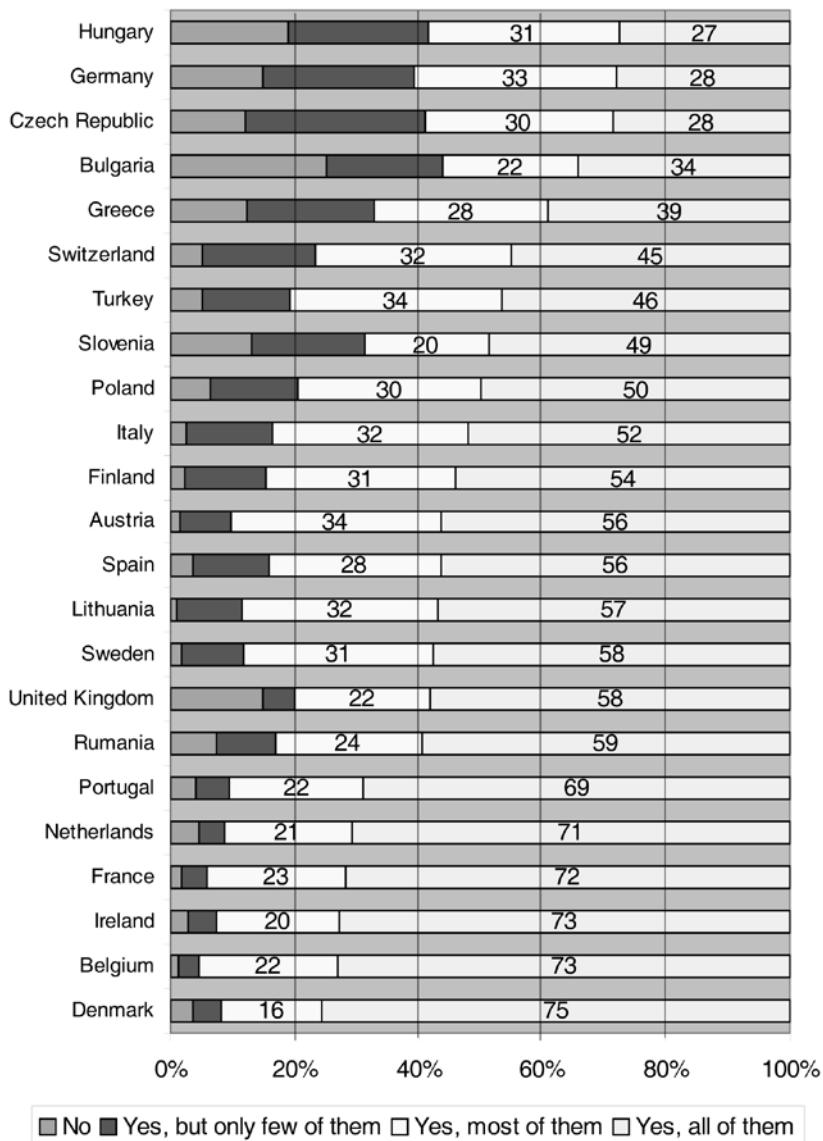
The recognition is granted by the home university upon the return of the student. Generally speaking, students coming from universities located in the Western European countries more often gained full recognition (56% compared to 41%) than students coming from the universities located in the Central and Eastern Europe. The latter ones also more often did not receive any recognition (12% compared to 6%).

Figure 18. Recognition of courses taken abroad for students from the Western European countries and from the Central and Eastern European countries (n=10478).



Situation, though, differs even within the regions. We see understandable problems with recognition in the new Erasmus countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Poland. More worrying are the difficulties with recognition in the countries that already have experience in the programme: Germany, Greece and the UK. Problems might be caused by several conditions: rigidity of curricula, lack of flexibility of professors, personal choice of students. Problems with recognition are also present in Switzerland.

Figure 19. Recognition of courses taken abroad for Erasmus students from different European countries¹⁰(n=10466).

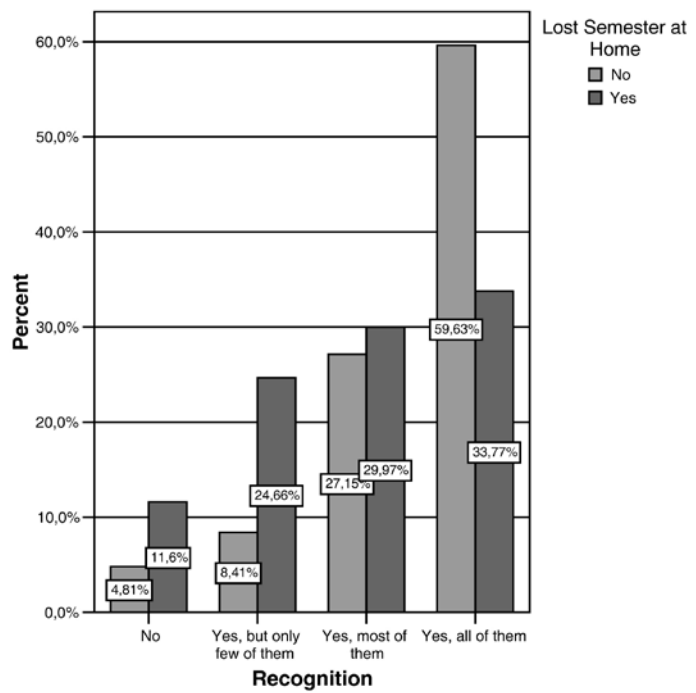


¹⁰ Results for the home countries with at least 100 respondents.

Respondents from certain majors of studies more often received full recognition. 61% of respondents from the medical studies received full recognition as well as 58% of those from the engineering and technology. The smallest percentage of students gained full recognition in the area of education and teacher training (34%).¹¹ Also, a higher percentage of BA than MA students gained full recognition (54% of BA compared to 50% of MA respondents).

Resulting from the lack of recognition, students might prolong their study course at the university. 28% of respondents lost a semester/s of their studies at home university because they went on exchange (compared to 29% of Erasmus students). We can see that in the group of those who lost a semester of their studies only 34% had received full recognition for their academic achievements, and 11% of them did not receive any recognition. The results demonstrate that lack of recognition might lead to the prolongation of the study course.

Figure 20. Recognition of courses taken abroad for students who lost semester/s because they went on exchange (n=11846).



¹¹ The results have to be treated with reserve as among some majors we did not receive substantial response.

Out of those students who **did an internship**, 49,5% of them were granted ECTS credits for it. At the same time, out of those who **did volunteer work**, only 14% received ECTS credits. More Erasmus than non-Erasmus received recognition for their non-formal learning experience.

Summing up, **recognition remains an issue that needs a lot of improvement**, especially in some countries and within certain study majors. This is the major right of Erasmus students, and might remain a big obstacle for mobility. The data also shows that those who received full recognition were more satisfied with their studies and with their stay.

Usage of ECTS

“I know an example, when a person got less ECTS points just because his German was not so good. And even though the person spent a lot of time studying for the course and trying to do his best, he only got 50% of the ECTS points and had to repeat the whole course at home.”

“Exchange students (at least Erasmus) didn't have to do all exams or essays, and yet they got the same amount or even more ECTS-points as local students.”

ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) is often used in European Universities¹². ECTS credits are awarded for successfully completed courses or study programmes. 73% of respondents knew that their home university was using ECTS, 22% said it was not. Only 4% of Erasmus students did not know what ECTS is (comparing to 12% of non-Erasmus).

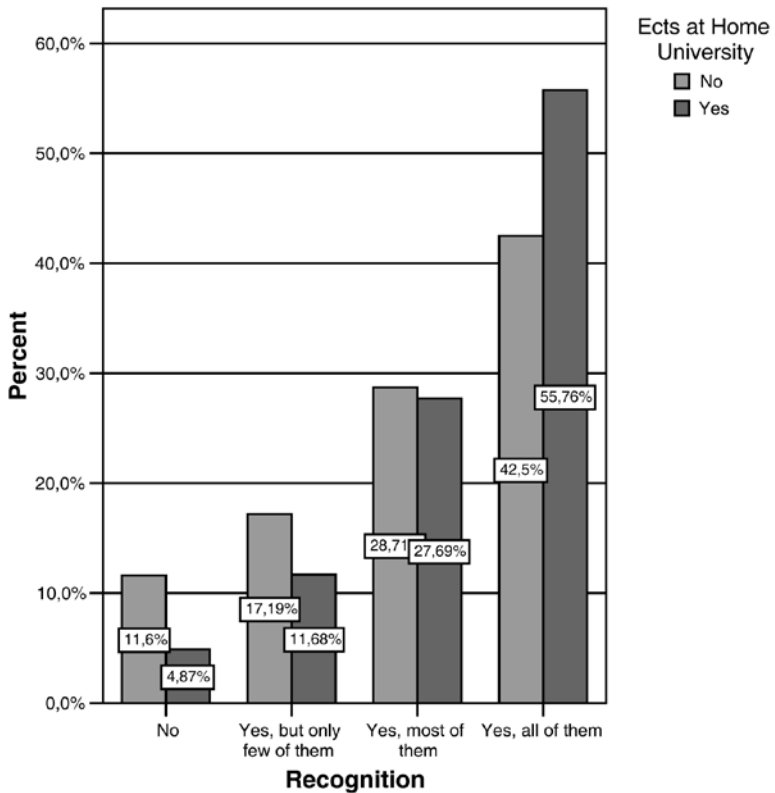
“I had to get more points so take more subjects because of the difference in the credit system.”

There are different opinions about the amount of work at the host university required to have the certain amount of ECTS credits in comparison with their home university. Out of those respondents who received ECTS credits, 34% believed they worked the same. 37% of students believed they worked more at home university than at host university for the same number of ECTS credits. 29% that they worked more at the host university.

Importantly, respondents whose **home universities were using ECTS** gained full recognition more often: 56% of students comparing to 42,5% of those whose university was not using ECTS.

¹² ECTS is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education in the European Union. Usually, one year of studies corresponds to 60 ECTS credits.

Figure 21. Recognition of courses taken abroad for students whose home university was using ECTS and for those whose home university was not using ECTS (n=11377).



Free choice of courses

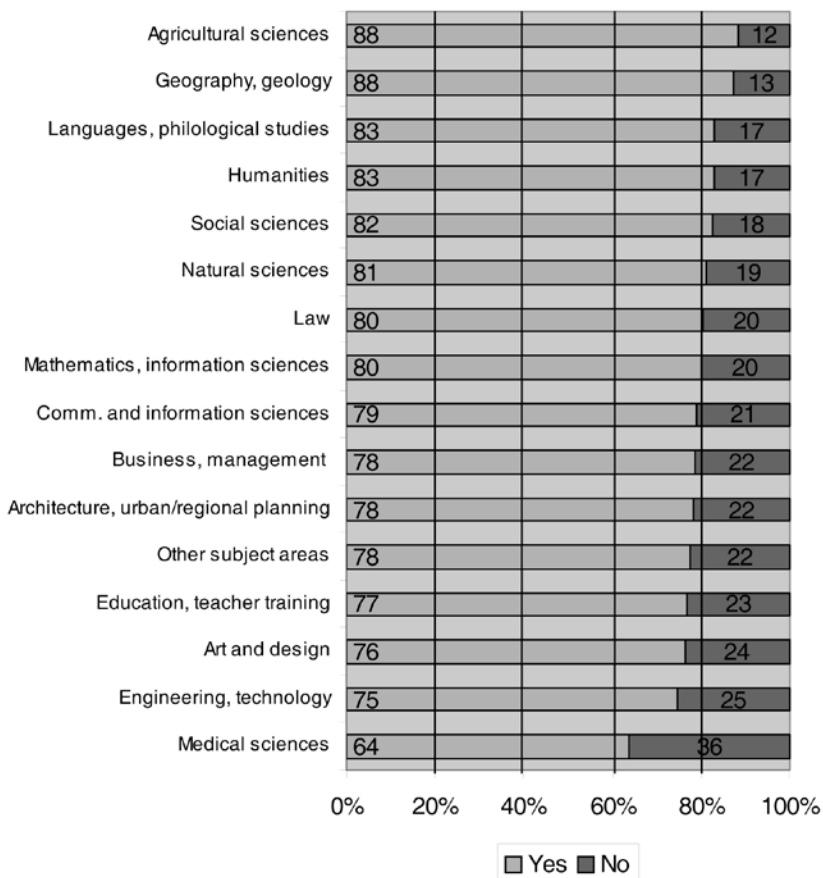
“A professor refused to let me in a course and the only explanation that I get was that I am an exchange student and resident students are with privilege about this course.”

“Exchange students weren’t allowed to take certain classes, they had to choose from a specific list, which didn’t always match their needs.”

79% of respondents were able to freely choose courses at the host university (within their subject area). Two majors from which students rarely could freely choose courses were medical sciences (37% of medical students could freely

choose courses) and engineering and technology (25%). Non-Erasmus students might have not been able to freely choose courses as they could have been enrolled in a strictly defined study course.

Figure 22. Free choice of courses for Erasmus students from different fields of studies (n=10742)



Students who were able to **freely choose courses** more often received full recognition (53% compared to 50%). Interestingly, students from medical sciences and engineering, the fields of studies within which students could not so often freely choose courses, received full recognition more often than students within other fields. That might be caused by the fact that students, before leaving, prepare well the programme of studies abroad.

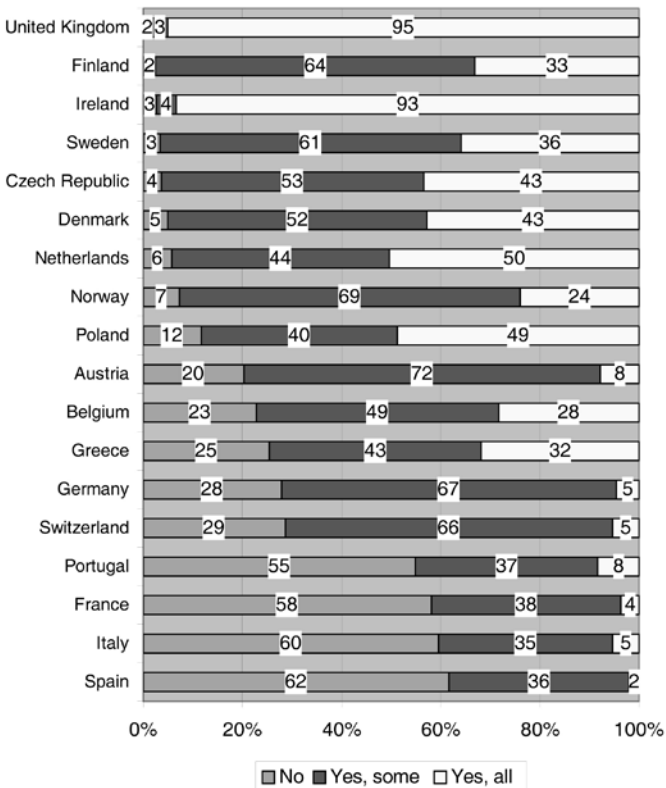
Language issues

'I couldn't take a Dutch course because the host university thought that Spanish people must improve their English first before trying to learn another language.'

62% of Erasmus students and 48% of non-Erasmus students were offered the opportunity to participate in a **language course** before their stay abroad. 54% students participated in it. More Erasmus than non-Erasmus students were granted ECTS for the participation in the language course.

27% of Erasmus students said that **all courses at the university were in English** (comparing to 37% of non-Erasmus), 41% that some of the courses, 29% that they did not have any courses in English (comparing to 16% of non-Erasmus). Already, in some Scandinavian countries and in some Eastern European countries about half of the students had all their courses in English. There were fewer courses in English in Spain, Italy, France and Portugal.

Figure 23. Courses in English at the host university (N=11138).



We notice that English is becoming a very popular teaching language. On one hand, this aspect can be perceived as a negative outcome of mobility, leading to language homogenisation. On the other hand, students might chose to go abroad, only if there are courses available in English.

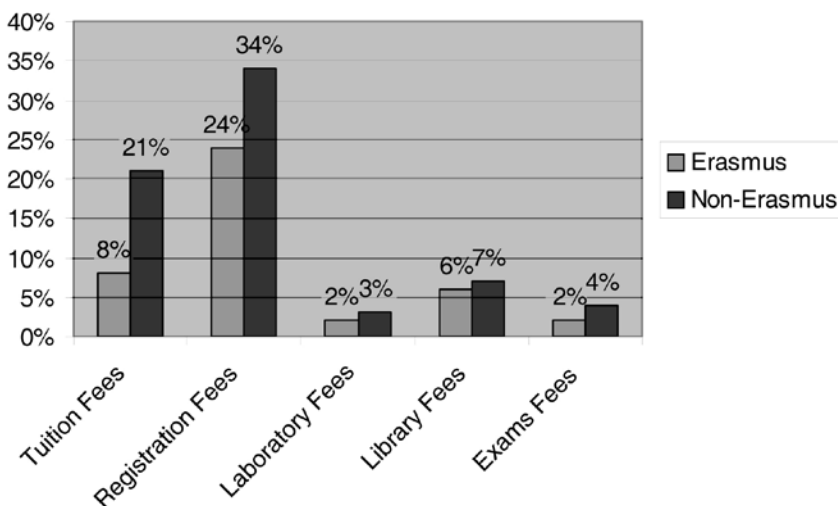
Fees and tuition

“Exchange students do not have to pay the term fees, only the registration fees (15 Euro/semester).”

“I also had my own school fees from my home university to pay.”

About half of the students, 56% of Erasmus students and 44% of non-Erasmus students did not have to pay any fees at host university. 8% of Erasmus students compared to 21% of non-Erasmus students had to pay some tuition costs. 24% of Erasmus students and 34% of non-Erasmus had to pay registration fees. Very few students had to pay for access to laboratory, examinations and access to library.

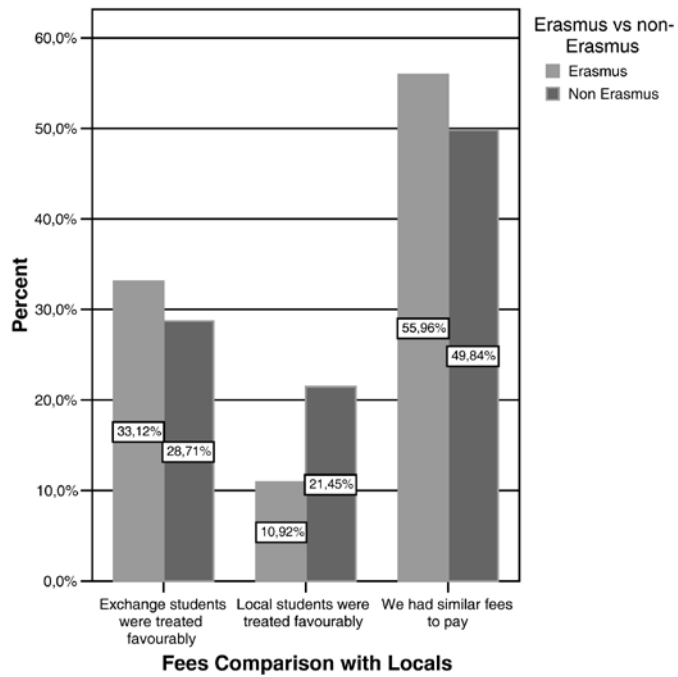
Figure 24. Fees paid for Erasmus and non-Erasmus students (N varies from 10749 to 11071).



According to the exchange students who paid some fees, the fees for them and local students were comparable (55%) or even favourable for foreign guests (33%). Non-Erasmus students declared than the fees were favourable for the

local students, whereas Erasmus students more often believed that they had to pay similar fees or that they have been treated favourably because of being an exchange student.

Figure 25. Comparison of fees for Erasmus and non-Erasmus students (N=5373).



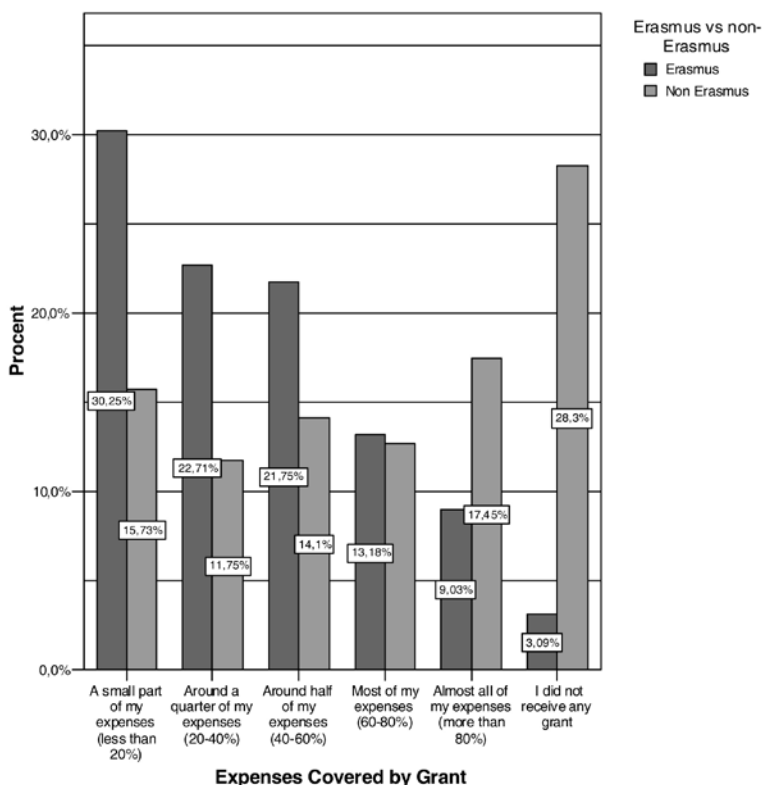
Financial issues

“The scholarship is far not enough to live on exchange! I didn’t have money not even to pay the bus!”

Financial situation of the students abroad might differ from the local students since they have to face additional costs of moving abroad. Erasmus students on exchange usually receive a small grant to cover those additional costs (insurance, travel, higher costs of life etc). Their grant covers just a very small part of their expenses (30%), a quarter (23%) or about a half of their expenses (22%). Only 3% of Erasmus students did not receive any grant. For non-Erasmus students, the situation is different: 28% of non-Erasmus students did

not receive any grant. Still, the percentage of students whose expenses were largely covered by the grant is relatively high (17,5%).

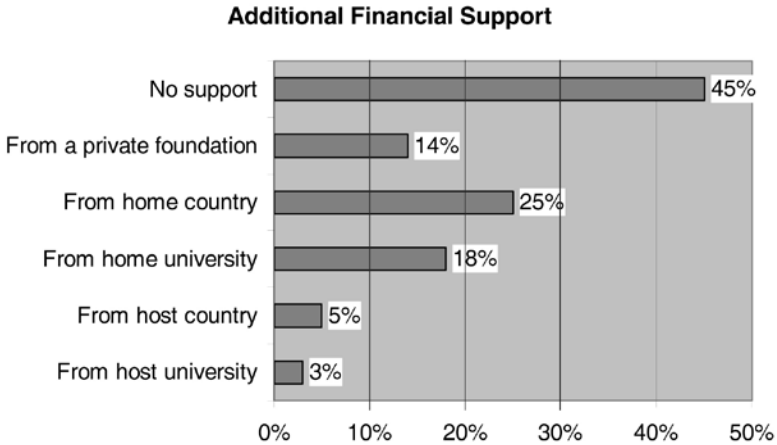
Figure 26. Part of expenses covered by the grant for Erasmus and non-Erasmus students (N=11 936).



“I got scholarship from host country and governmental aid to students for living in foreign country.”

As the grant did not cover all expenses we might ask from where the additional funds for students came. **About half of the students (45%), did not receive any additional support besides their main scholarship** (e.g. Erasmus grant). 24% of respondents received help from the home country and 18% from the home university. Less common was to receive the support from the host country (5%) and from the host university (3%). 14% of students received financial support from a private foundation.

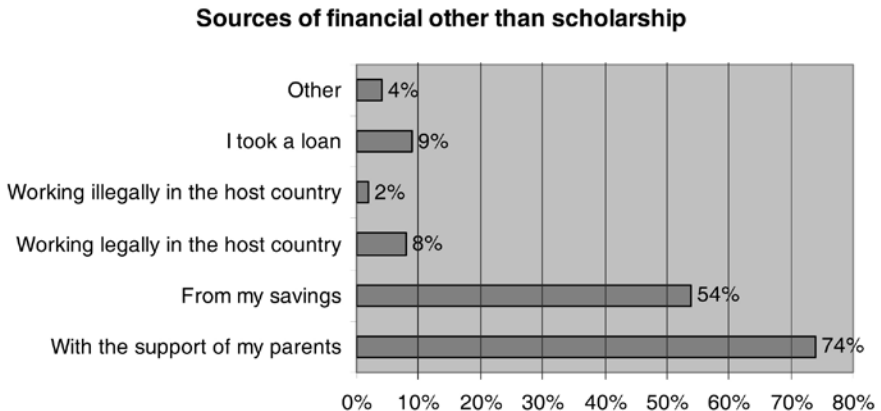
Figure 27. Additional financial support for students besides their main scholarship/ grant. Graph shows the percentage of students who answered 'yes' (N=12374).



“In order to live and do what I was used to do in my home country, my parents helped me the most.”

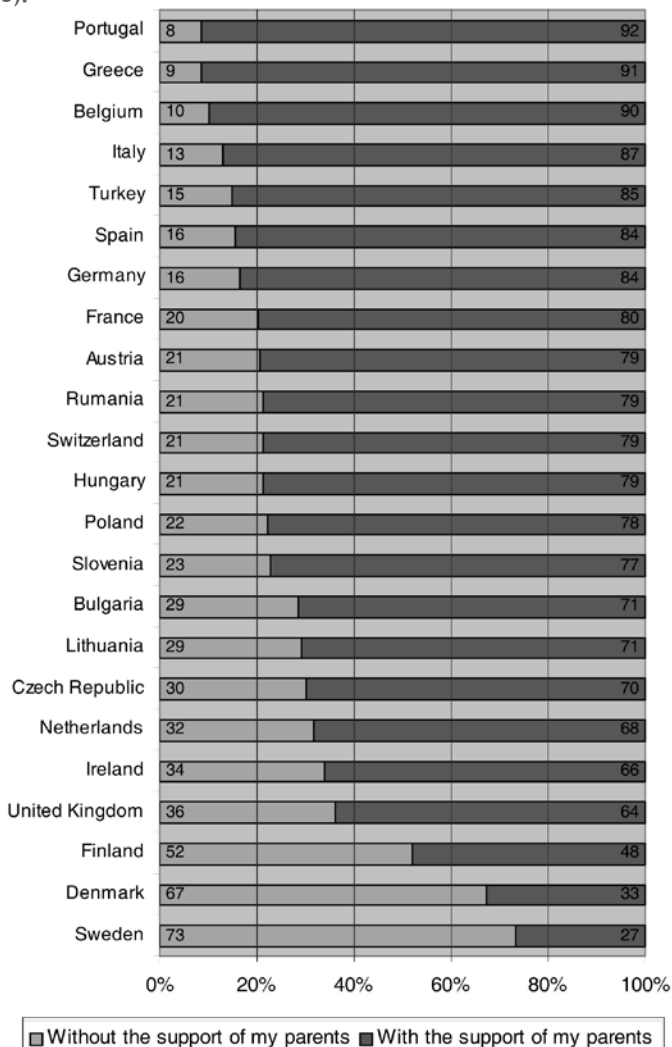
The expenses not covered by a scholarship or grant were covered from several sources. 54% covered the additional expenses from their savings. **74% (!) of students covered their additional expenses with the support of their parents.** This might explain why students mostly came from financially well-standing families.

Figure 28. Other sources of financial support besides their scholarship or grant (graph shows the percentage of students who answered 'yes') (N=12374).



Not in all the countries parents were equally eager to cover additional expenses connected to the stay abroad. **Parents from Southern Europe and Belgium supported their children extensively** (about 90% of students received support from their parents in these countries). In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, a much lower percentage of parents supported their children's stay abroad.

Figure 29. Support from the parents for students from different European countries (N=11263).



“The Swedish state offers all Swedish students a scholarship (~25%) combined with a loan (~75%).”

Generally speaking, 8% of respondents **took a loan**. In some countries a lot of students did it: Sweden (45%), UK (40%), the Netherlands (34%), Finland (32%), Denmark (28%), Ireland (23%). In other countries very few students took a loan (2-3%). We see that in the countries where students' loans are popular, students did not have to rely on the support from their parents.

8% of respondents worked legally in the host country and 2% of them worked illegally. Students from Poland (14%), Hungary (13%), Czech Republic (12%) and UK (12%) used most often this mean for supporting themselves abroad. Actually, **36% of students did not even know if they can work legally in the host country**. 16,5% of students believed they are not allowed to work legally in the host country and 47% that they are.

In order to pay the rest from the part of expenses not covered by the grant, students might have also received support from other family members, partners or a husband. Some students used bank or credit card overdraft. Many students **had saved money before going abroad** (*“I worked so hard the year before to be able to afford all my expenses without my parents help.”*). There were also students who worked through Internet, being employed in the home country (*“Working in the home country (translation) by using the Internet to stay in contact.”*).

Accommodation

One of the biggest expenses abroad is accommodation. Exchange students face a lot of problems concerning this issue. Certainly, the biggest problem is the price for the room. 17% of our respondents believed they were **charged more than the local students for their accommodation**. 62% said they were not charged more and 17% did not know.

“We were fooled on accommodation prices, and paid more or less 50% more than local students.”

“In terms of accommodation, we, as exchange students, had to pay sensibly more than local students (approximately 100 euros more for the monthly rent) and the University never gave us an explanation for it.”

When students arrive to the country where they do not know anybody, they might face **high costs of the accommodation for the first few nights** e.g. in the hostel.

“We did not have a place to sleep the first days”.

Second problem concerns quality of accommodation. If students want to be sure to have accommodation before arrival (in order not to pay for a hotel), they are **forced to accept contracts without checking the rooms beforehand.**

“We signed a contract for our accommodation in Austria before the start of our studies in GB. This house, which was on a list of accommodations recommended by the university, was really disgusting and full of mould. The Landlady didn't release us from the contract, therefore we lost our deposit of 240 GBP after we moved in a new house.”

“University provided me an accommodation (...) the worst thing is that they made us sign a contract and took our money without telling us that since November start some works in the building, works that made a hell living there. When some of us wanted to move out, even if they gave the proper one month notice, they didn't give them their deposit back.”

It was sometimes very difficult for exchange students **to get the room deposit back** when they were already in their home country.

“It also took 4 months to send the deposit which should have been 458Euros, but was only 108 Euros.”

“With the deposit of the apartment, it is not too easy to get back the deposit to a student that in this moment it is not in the country.”

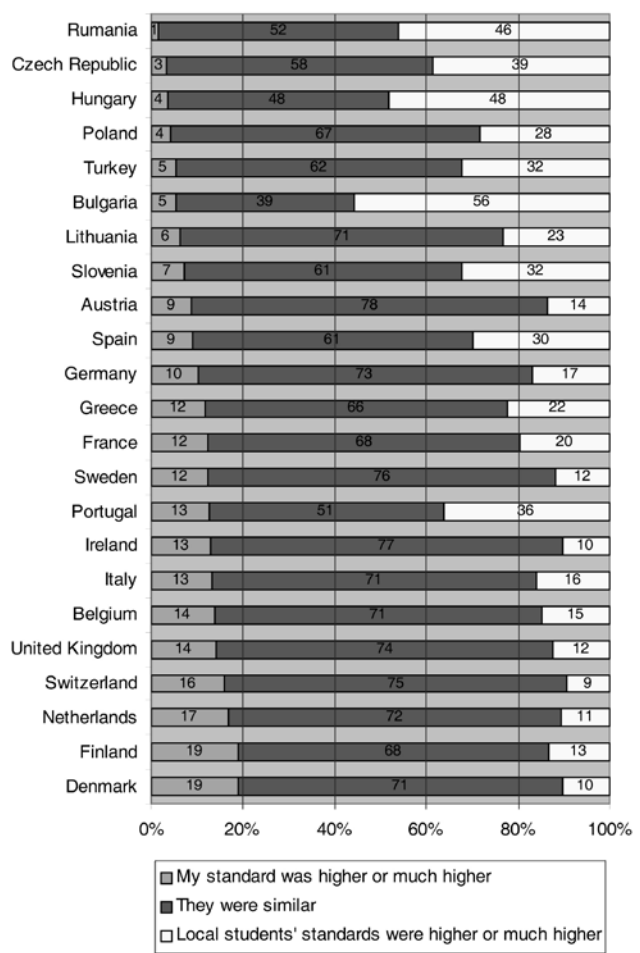
“The student house-association inspects exchange students' rooms more carefully after they moved out than Swedish students' rooms, and therefore I had to pay about 55 Euro for extra cleaning although I cleaned the room and it was in the same state as when I moved in.”

Standard of living

Most of students believed their standard of living is similar to the standard of living of the local students (64%). 10% of respondents believed their standard of living was higher than of local students and 3% that it was much higher. 18% of exchange students said local students' standard of living was higher and 5% that it was much higher.

For respondents from Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands their standard of living was more often higher or much higher than the one of the local students. **For the respondents from Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and other new EU countries, the standard of living of local students was more often higher or much higher.**

Figure 30. Standard of living of exchange students in comparison to local students for respondents coming from different European countries (N=11212).



Visa and migration matters

“I wanted to work legally in the host country, but I wasn’t able, because of the need of work permit.”

After the accession of the new member states into the European Union, smaller number of countries require visas or permits of stay from students. Most of the students (87%) did not have any problems with the visa or stay permit.

The situation looks a bit different if we look at the home countries of students. Firstly, among **Erasmus students who came from non-EU countries**, students less frequently declared lack of problems with visa and permit of stay, 73% of Bulgarian students, 68% of Romanian and 48% of Turkish students did not have any problems with obtaining visa/permit of stay.

Secondly, we clearly see that the students **from outside of Europe faced more difficulties in obtaining visa/permit of stay**. 60% of students coming from outside of Europe declared that they did not have any migration problems (compared to 93% of Western European students and 89% of students from Central and Eastern European countries). This aspect has to be improved in order to make Europe attractive for students from outside the continent.

There were several kinds of problems with visa/permit of stay:

- **435 respondents (3,5%) had to wait very long for a visa/permit of stay:**

“The Consulate was the main responsible for the 3-months delay in receiving the study visa, and the treatment was very unjust.”

- **335 students (2,7%) had to pay very much for visa/permit of stay:**

“Very expensive for students not in the EU and a resident permit wouldn't come for 6 months.”

“We didn't get informed of the registration procedure at arrival, which led to me registration weeks too late and having to pay an additional fine. This was the only thing they 'forgot' to tell us, and it happened to all the exchange students.”

- **534 (4,3%) stated that the process was complicated:**

“There was huge bureaucracy - despite the fact, that I was in Denmark as the citizen of new EU-member country. I didn't need to have “classical” permit, nevertheless the process was almost the same.”

“The resident permit was quite hard to get therefore I needed to leave Sweden every three months...”

“In the migration office of the ministry for internal affairs, where I had to apply for the permit of stay, the information about the very complicated procedure was available only in Bulgarian, and nearly nobody of the staff was speaking English.”

- **436 respondents (3,5%) reported other various problems:**

“The student visa was issued only for one entry.”

“Yes, I had a problem because of the visa type. In France, the “Erasmus” visas are not allowed to receive an official permit of stay (translated: titre

de sejour), that caused me a lot of trouble and I lost a permission of financial support.“

“My identity card was took away for 3 months.”

“I had a problem with the landlord to get a contract (...). If you don't have a contract, you can't register at the city council, if you're not registered you don't get a SOFI number, if you don't have a SOFI number, you can't open a bank account, if you don't have a bank account you pay every time too much money on fees when you get money from the machine with your foreign card.”

Provision of information

“Some information was just available in Norwegian, especially about some “hidden” rules regarding exams.”

“People from the international office are definitely incompetent: they barely speak English and they don't know anything about the rules of the university! It seems that there was absolutely no communication between people of international office and even the day of our arrival nobody was able to help us.”

Students were not satisfied with provision of information at home university - they rated it as 3 (measured on the scale from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied). The least satisfied with provision of information at the home university were students from Italy (2,79), Ireland (2,82), Greece (2,85) and Spain (2,87). The most satisfied were students from Lithuania (3,43) and Finland (3,39).

Figure 31. Satisfaction with provision of information at home university (N=11179).

Info at Home Sat			
Country where home university is located	Average	N	Standard Deviation
Austria	3,14	665	1,130
Belgium	3,08	235	1,114
Bulgaria	3,05	127	1,119
Czech Republic	3,29	696	1,076
Denmark	3,29	168	1,129
Finland	3,39	274	1,033
France	3,01	1078	1,143
Germany	3,00	1062	1,069
Greece	2,85	220	1,105
Hungary	3,26	278	1,015
Ireland	2,82	217	1,151
Italy	2,79	1529	1,156
Lithuania	3,43	113	1,034
Netherlands	3,18	522	1,051
Poland	3,30	631	1,098
Portugal	3,08	150	1,162
Rumania	3,30	140	1,110
Slovenia	3,09	275	1,081
Spain	2,87	1707	1,125
Sweden	3,03	192	1,139
Switzerland	3,28	192	1,132
Turkey	3,27	205	1,126
United Kingdom	2,95	503	1,189
Total	3,04	11179	1,130

As far as provision of information at host university was concerned, students rated it as 3,5 (measured on the scale from 1 to 5). The least satisfied with provision of information at the host university were students from Greece (2,96), Italy (2,99) and France (3,09). The most satisfied were students from Finland (4,15).

Figure 32. Satisfaction with provision of information at host university (N=10388).

Raport

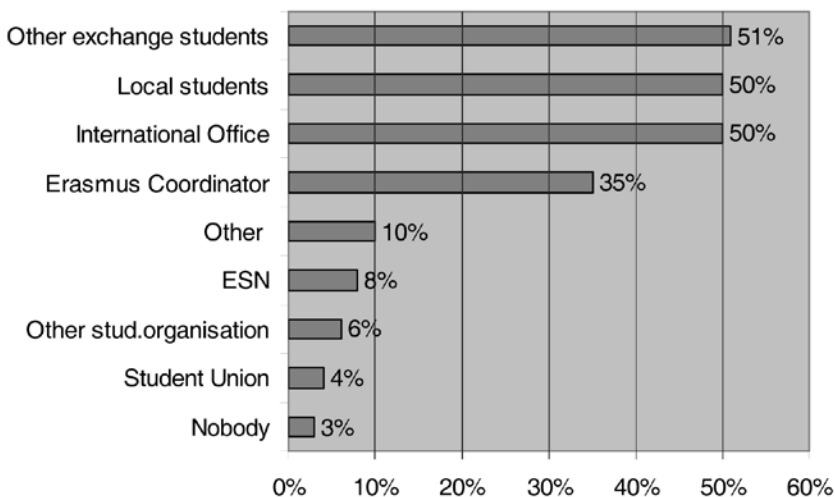
Info Host Sat

Host country	Average	N	Standard Deviation
Austria	3,78	497	,957
Belgium	3,57	373	1,015
Czech Republic	3,66	157	1,024
Denmark	4,04	308	,900
Finland	4,15	649	,862
France	3,09	1216	1,110
Germany	3,57	1208	1,050
Greece	2,96	108	1,143
Ireland	3,73	216	,942
Italy	2,99	991	1,133
Netherlands	3,67	815	1,034
Norway	4,00	206	,921
Poland	3,65	253	1,061
Portugal	3,26	267	1,046
Spain	3,25	1351	1,039
Sweden	4,05	713	,879
Switzerland	3,74	148	,997
United Kingdom	3,74	912	1,017
Ogółem	3,54	10388	1,086

63% of students who were very satisfied with provision of information at their home university gained full recognition more often than those who were very dissatisfied (43%). Similarly, 56% of students who were very satisfied with provision of information at the host university gained full recognition more often than those who were very dissatisfied (48%).

In case of problems, students most often asked either other exchange students for help (51%), local students (50%), the International Office (50%) or the Erasmus Coordinator (35%). They less often asked for help: Erasmus Student Network (8%), another student organisation that took care of exchange students (6%), or student union (4%). 3% of students did not know whom to ask for help.

Figure 33. Whom students asked for help when facing problems (N=12374).



It is important to remember that a lack of information can influence other aspects of student life e.g. financial aspect:

“Access to information about news or changes during the semester was unsatisfying. So I got my student ID 2 months late. I didn’t receive my marks via the web, as all other students because of lacks in the information system. This caused trouble and complications for me in terms of financial support by the government. I couldn’t prove my status as a student on time and they stopped support payments. I was lucky to have a father who is dentist who always could cover my outgoings.”

Equal and just treatment

56% of respondents agreed that **exchange students had the same rights as those of the local students**. 8% stated that local students were treated favourably. 11,5% of respondents believed that exchange students were treated favourably. 25% of students did not know.

Students who believed that local students were treated favourably, mentioned differentiated prices for accommodation, voting rights at the campus, access to lectures, use of university facilities, provision of information, discount on transportation, services and meals.

*“There were different rights, like **voting on campus**. (...) because I was an international student I was not allowed to vote on campus.”*

*"When it comes to borrowing books or using some **research facilities** in the university, Erasmus students' rights were limited. E.g. in some **libraries**, exchange students cannot borrow books. "*

*"They [local students] were **better informed** about cancellation of lectures and other such issues. Also some of the exams were only for local students."*

*"They had a different student card which would allow them to have their **transportation fees free** (or huge discounts)."*

Other respondents believed that exchange students were treated favourably. It was mostly because of their lower language skills, that they were given more attention during courses.

*"We were treated in a particular way only because we had to **study in a different language** than our mother tongue. So professors asked us to study hard, but they understood our difficulties about comprehension."*

*"Teachers were also more **flexible** with course requirements with exchange students."*

35% of respondents believed that the **students from outside the European Union had the same rights as those from EU**. 18% of students thought that students from inside EU were treated favourably and 2% of students thought that students from outside EU were treated favourably. The rest of 45% did not know.

Students who believed that students from EU were treated favourably, mentioned mostly the fact that students from EU had no or less movement restrictions: they did not need a visa/permit of stay. They could use European Health Card and most of them could work legally in other EU countries.

*"You don't need a pass to get a **resident permit in EU** (just an ID), official things are in general easier for EU students."*

*"Working was illegal for some non-EU students, **opening a bank account** was harder for them"*

*"When it came to **going to the doctor** and having to buy pills from the pharmacy..."*

*"We've had more problems with the **French bureaucracy** and more difficulties to get the same contributions like students from inside EU but these contributions once received were higher than for the inside EU students"*

"We (...) received a subsidy for accommodation."

"We had cheaper German courses than people from outside UE"

*"We could eat at the **restaurant of the university** for a cheaper price than Italian students and non European students."*

Some respondents believed that students from outside the EU were treated favourably. Still, they noticed that some of them (probably non-Erasmus students) paid high fees for the services offered.

*“They were given first **preference for accommodation** and filled up all the student residences. They had the possibility to join **free English lessons**, they had a **proper office** where they could go in case of problems.”*

*“Students from Turkey received **much more money and free entrances** for museums,... from their government”*

*“They were treated favourably with finding a room (did not have to go looking for a room themselves, university arranged that for them while the EU students had to arrange it themselves). **But they did have to pay much higher fees** (cause they did not have the Socrates-Erasmus exchange)”.*

7% of students stated that they were treated unjustly by their host university or their host country institutions.

19,5% of students felt discriminated during their stay abroad:

- because of their origin 3%
- because of their religion 0,5%
- because of their language skills 6,5%
- because of their gender 1%
- because they were foreigners 8%
- because they were exchange students 4%

Just some examples:

“When I needed urgent medical treatment, I was rejected by two hospitals who claimed that I had to be placed in a list, even though it was an emergency! (...) Fortunately I got some help from a local student/friend (...) who guided me to a hospital that accepted me.”

*“Unjust isn't the correct word. **NEGLECT** is more appropriate since we spent the first 2 months without our grants and its very difficult since neither me nor my roommate come from rich families. We spent 2 months not paying our rent, begging the Erasmus organisation in Malta to give us our money.”*

“The university charged my room mate and me 200Euros to replace a door we damaged, citing they would not hand our credit over to our home university unless we paid. So we unhappily paid the amount. When we visited friends at the university a year later we noticed the door had not been replaced. In other words, they just took our money unfairly by blackmailing us.”

Conclusion

Exchange students' rights in Europe are partially guarded. Even if most of the students felt that they had the same rights as local students, there was still a significant percent of students who felt discriminated or treated unjust. The biggest issue is a lack of recognition for courses taken abroad. This is the most worrying fact, as it also happens among countries which have already participated in exchange for many years. Secondly, the provision of relevant information to exchange students also appears to be a serious issue, as it may exclude students from the local community and make them feel insecure.

According to all exchange students, Erasmus Student Network shall focus on intervention in the areas of:

1. financial issues 29%
2. access to exchange programmes 16%
3. information about mobility possibilities 16%
4. recognition of academic and non-academic achievements 12%

SATISFACTION WITH STAY

Students' satisfaction with their stay was measured by the use of four categories of questions concerning: satisfaction with stay, satisfaction with studies, recommendation to a friend to spend some time abroad (which is treated as an indicator of satisfaction) and satisfaction with twelve elements of stay¹³.

Answers for the first three questions are summarised in figure 34. Most of the Erasmus students (98%) declared that they would recommend their friends to go abroad.

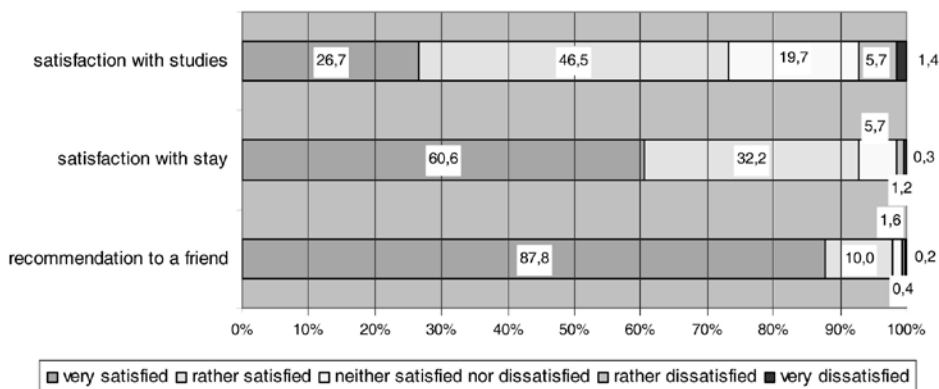
"I was writing long e-mails back home because I wanted everyone to have a piece of my experience, unbelievable time of my life. (...) few people got even encouraged by my mails to go abroad themselves so I feel I succeeded in my goal." Tiina Naskali

"So, if I can give you just one advise, don't hesitate. Just go... You don't have anything to loose." Loreta

Students felt **more positive about their stay than about their studies**. While 61% of the respondents were very satisfied and 32% rather satisfied with their stay, the respective values for satisfaction with studies were 27% and 47%.

¹³ Overall satisfaction, as well as satisfaction of specific aspects was measured on the five point scale from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied.

Figure 34. Erasmus students' satisfaction indicators (N=10881).

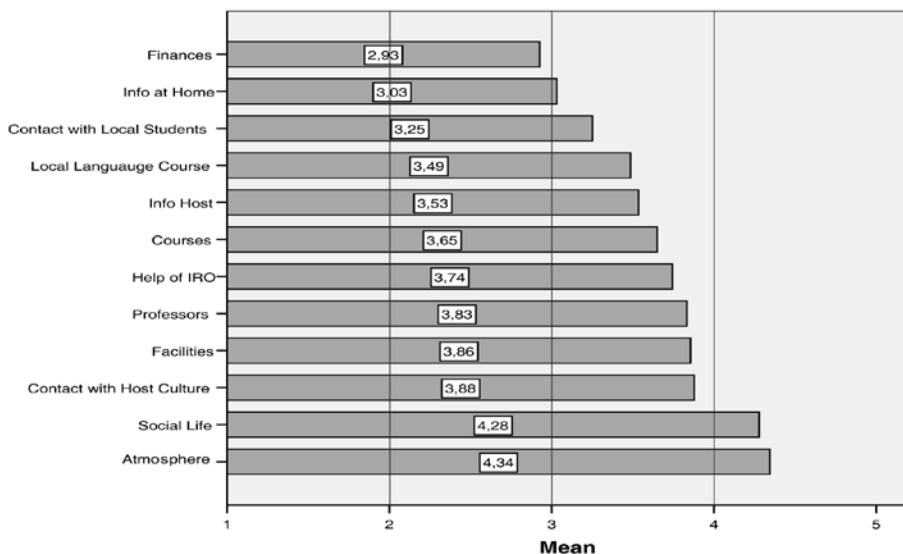


Twelve elements of stay were differentiated while designing the questionnaire (question 8):

- Courses at the university (courses);
- Professors (professors);
- University facilities (facilities);
- Local language courses at the university (local language courses);
- Sufficiency of information prior to the studies abroad (info at home);
- Sufficiency of information while studying abroad (info host);
- Help from International Office at the university (IRO);
- Financial situation (finances);
- Contact with local students;
- Contact with the host country's culture;
- Social life;
- The atmosphere of the city and country where the university is located (atmosphere);

Figure 35 presents the summary of questions about Erasmus respondents' satisfaction with the aspects of stay. Students were most satisfied with atmosphere of the city and country where the university was located and with social life. At the same time they were least satisfied with their financial situation and information they had received from their home university.

Figure 35. Students' satisfaction with elements of stay (N=10715).



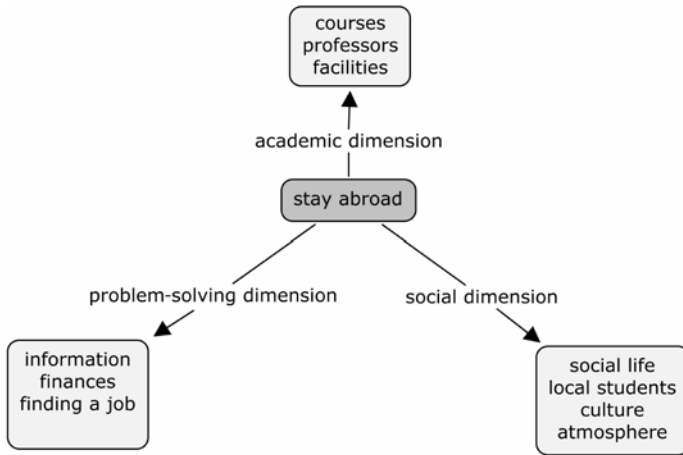
When comparing Erasmus and non-Erasmus students, the following differences were observed: (1) non-Erasmus students were more satisfied with: information they received at their home university, help of International Relations Office, financial situation, contact with local students; whereas (2) Erasmus students were more satisfied with social life.

Even though Erasmus students were more satisfied with less significant aspects of stay, their overall level of satisfaction with stay was slightly higher.

As shown in the previous edition of the survey, students' answers enabled differentiation of **three dimensions of stay: social, academic and problem-solving**.¹⁴ The first factor reflects the academic dimension of stay and it

¹⁴ In order to interpret the data a principal component analysis was conducted on the correlations of the twelve aspects of stay. Three components were extracted from eigen values of more than one. The factors were rotated with both varimax and direct oblimin, giving essentially similar results. The three factors accounted for 58% of the total variance. Satisfaction with local language courses at the university was excluded from the analysis.

includes such elements as: professors, courses and university facilities¹⁵. The second factor represents the social dimension with elements such as: social life, contact with local students and atmosphere of the city and the country where university is located. The third factor represents the problem-solving dimension (with elements such as: the information provided, help from the International Office and financial situation).



Students were most satisfied with social dimension of their stay (mean score 4) and least satisfied with problem-solving dimension of their stay (mean score 3,3). The mean satisfaction with academic dimension amounts to 3,8. In comparison with Erasmus students, the non-Erasmus students were more satisfied with problem-solving dimension of the stay (mean score 3,8).

In order to analyse the influence of the motivation on the Erasmus students' satisfaction, a parallel analysis of data stated below has been made:

- a) general questions concerning satisfaction - figure 36,
- b) dimensions of stay abroad - figure 37.

¹⁵ The academic dimension highly correlates ($r=0,62$) with answers to the question about satisfaction with studies.

Figure 36. Satisfaction indicators for students with diverse motivations (N=10780).

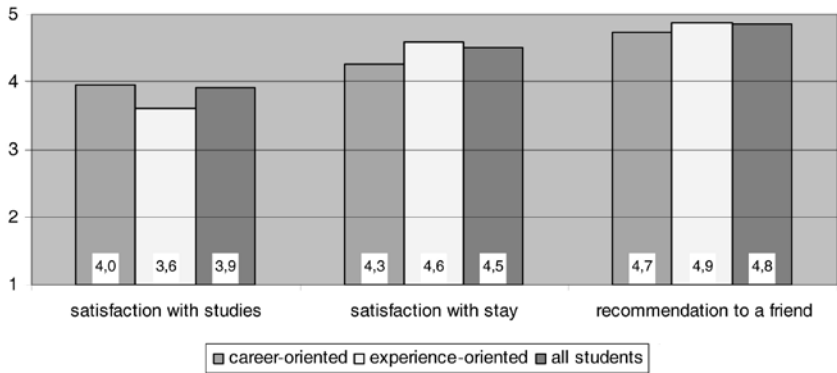
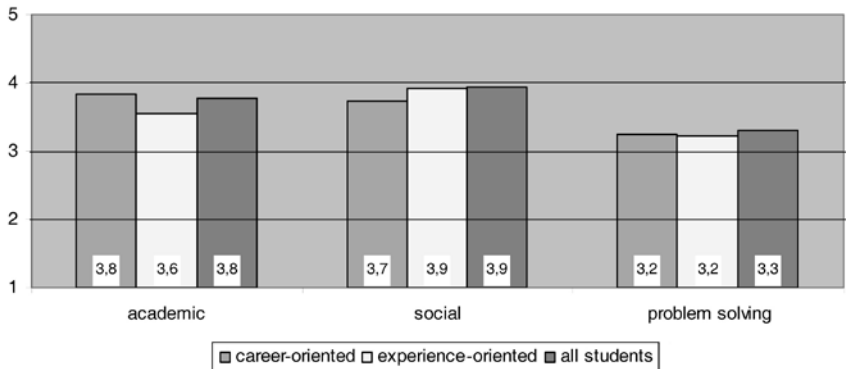


Figure 37. Satisfaction with the dimensions of stay for students with diverse motivations (N=10669).



Both figures show that **career-oriented students were more satisfied with academic dimension of their stay (studies) while experiences-oriented students were more satisfied with social dimension of their stay (overall stay).**

The possible explanation of this correlation is that students' choice of the place of their study and of their activities is often based on the information they receive:

a) those more interested in studies choose countries which they perceive as offering better universities with more challenging courses, and during their stay they choose more academically oriented activities;

b) those more interested in new experiences choose universities (and cities) with more attractive student life and behave in more social way during their stay.

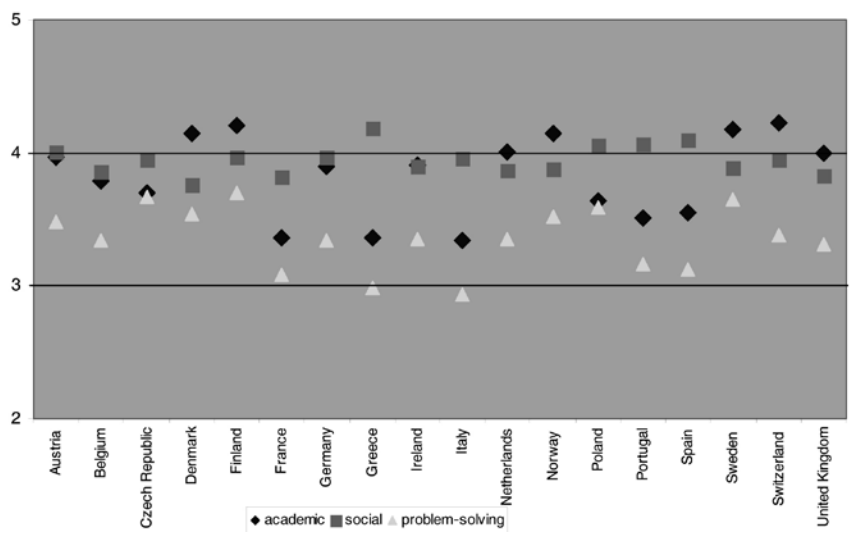
However, the hypothesis stated above needs further investigation.

As figure 38 shows, the satisfaction strongly depends on the host country.

1. There are countries (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK) where students are most satisfied with the academic dimension of their stay (the mean scores above 4).

2. There are countries where more students were more dissatisfied rather than satisfied with the problem-solving dimension (Italy, Greece).

Figure 38. Satisfaction with dimensions of stay for diverse host countries (N=10202).



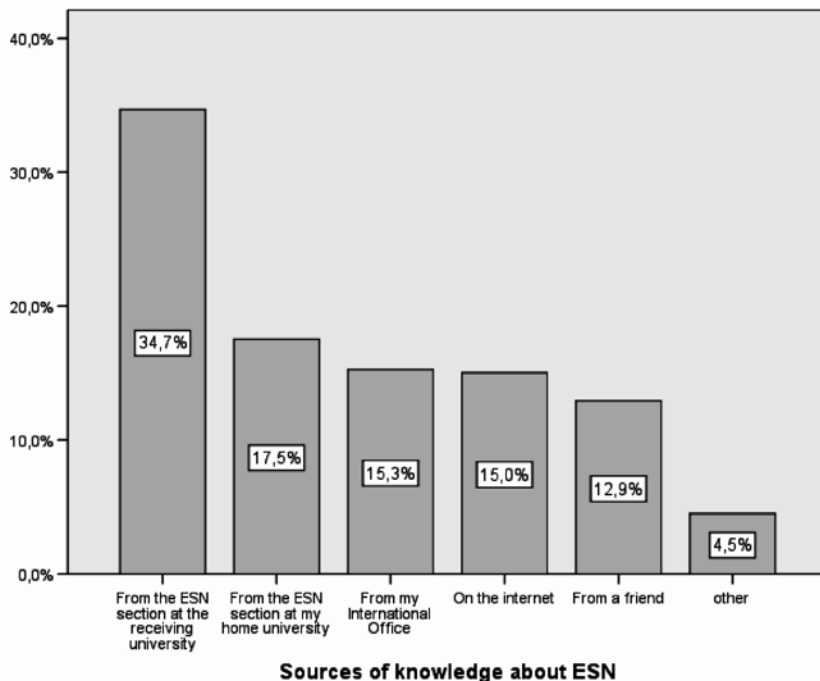
SATISFACTION WITH STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

“I meet a bunch of nice Swiss people too, some of them working for a student organisation called ESN - I did not know at that time.”

Almost half of the Erasmus students have heard about Erasmus Student Network. Most of them learned about it from the ESN section either at the receiving (36%) or host (17%) university. Internet, International Relations Offices (both 15%) and friends (13%) were other important sources of information. The

results are consistent with answers collected within ESNSurvey 2005 and show that ESN itself is most active in providing information about ESN.

Figure 39. Sources of knowledge about ESN (N= 5178).



4 233 Erasmus students (35% of all Erasmus students) declared that there was a helpful student organisation for the foreign students at their host university. Most of them were acquainted with ESN sections, but some of them also knew about other student organisations such as: AEGEE, Erasmus Societies in UK, local Students' Unions and local organisations for international students.

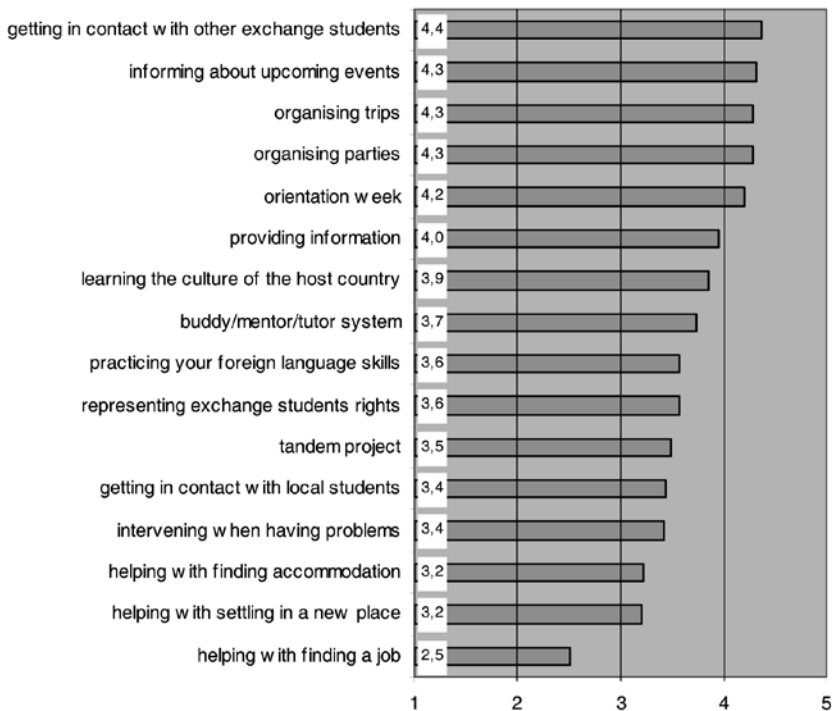
Most of the students were satisfied with the services of ESN and other student organisations (nearly 70% declared that they were either very satisfied or rather satisfied).

Figure 40 presents mean scores of students' satisfaction with elements of ESN service. Graph shows that students are most satisfied with social aspects of ESN help. Importantly, provision of information by ESN, which was rated low for the universities, received a high score (informing about upcoming events

- rated 4,3; providing information - rated 4). Also orientation weeks and the buddy/mentor/tutor were evaluated as satisfying. This result suggests that support of ESN in this aspect might be very helpful.

The satisfaction rate is lower for other problem-solving aspects and for the help in getting in contact with local students. The lowest score was observed in the aspect of help in finding a job. This is the sole element in which the mean score indicates dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction.

Figure 40. Erasmus students' satisfaction with elements of ESN service (N=2000).



Noteworthy, when comparing opinions about student organisations and stay abroad, we may observe that satisfaction with student organisations (both ESN and others) had the strongest correlation with satisfaction with problem-solving aspect of stay. Keeping in mind the fact that this dimension of stay (problem-solving) has the lowest ratings among students we shall conclude that both universities and student organisations actions should focus on providing significant help in the field of the problem-solving dimension.

RECOMMENDATIONS


In our understanding there are three main issues that require action of several partners (universities, Erasmus National Agencies, European Commission, national governments, students' organisations):

1. Recognition

- **Universities have to take full responsibility of granting every student recognition for studies abroad** (as the recognition is granted in the Erasmus University Charter, it cannot remain a matter of taste and prejudice of certain professors)
- **Universities should introduce the ECTS credits** (or an adequate credit system) for easy recognition
- **Host universities should allow students to freely choose courses** within their subject area
- **Learning agreement should be well prepared** in case of students that have more rigid requirements concerning their curriculum (electronic processing on the place of snail mail would improve and simplify the communication)
- **Volunteer activities should be considered for being granted ECTS credits** as a part of the study course

2. Financial issues

- **Better financial support** for students should be considered in order to allow more students, especially from disadvantaged groups and Eastern Central Europe to study abroad, as well as to prevent the drop in standard of living
- **Nation states should participate in covering expenses** of stay abroad
- Students should be **offered convenient loans** to cover the raise in expences
- Universities and student organisations should provide more **help in finding inexpensive and decent accommodation**, and offer support especially right after arrival
- **Easier and faster visa procedures** and residential permits that could allow students to work part time to make their living during the stay



3. Provision of information

- Universities should improve the **quality of providing information**, both for outgoing and incoming students
- Universities should **provide information not only in local language**, but also in English if students are studying in that language
- **Universities and Erasmus National Agencies should collaborate with student organisations** with regards to information provision.

These actions should allow students to fully participate in the life of the university and student community. It will also give them a chance to consider their stay abroad as a recognizable element of their studies, not a gap-year or extracurricular experience. Finally, even if exchange students are only temporarily at a university, they should have their representation: they should be able to elect student representatives as well as have a representation at the institution (e.g. association such as ESN). That would help them manage difficult situations especially when they are treated unjust or discriminated because of their status as an exchange student.

YOUR STAY ABROAD AND YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT ESN SURVEY 2006

PART 1. YOUR STAY AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

1. Through which programme did you study abroad? *(please refer to your most recent exchange or the one you are completing now)*

- a) Socrates/Erasmus Programme
- b) CEEPUS
- c) Bilateral agreement between universities
- d) Governmental programme
- e) Private foundation
- f) Arranged by myself
- g) Other:

2. Country where you studied in as an exchange student? _____

3. City where you studied in as an exchange student? _____

4. The university you studied at as an exchange student?

5. When did you start your stay abroad? Month: _____ Year: _____

6. How long was the period of your stay there? _____ Months

7. Please indicate how important for you were the following reasons to go on exchange

	not important at all	not important	neither important nor unimportant	important	very important
To improve my academic knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
To have new experiences	1	2	3	4	5
To learn about different cultures	1	2	3	4	5
To have fun	1	2	3	4	5
To meet new people	1	2	3	4	5

To practice a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
To be independent	1	2	3	4	5
To live in a foreign country	1	2	3	4	5
To enhance future employment prospects	1	2	3	4	5

8. Please evaluate the following aspects of your stay abroad

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
a) Courses at the host university	1	2	3	4	5
b) Professors	1	2	3	4	5
c) University facilities	1	2	3	4	5
d) Local language courses at the university	1	2	3	4	5
e) Sufficiency of information prior to your studies abroad (from home university)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Sufficiency of information while studying abroad (from host university)	1	2	3	4	5
g) Help from International Office at the host university	1	2	3	4	5
h) Financial situation	1	2	3	4	5
i) Contacts with local students	1	2	3	4	5
j) Contact with the host country's culture	1	2	3	4	5
k) Social life	1	2	3	4	5
l) The atmosphere of the city and country where the university was located	1	2	3	4	5

9. What is your overall level of satisfaction with your studies as an exchange student?

Very dissatisfied

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
----	----	----	----	----

 Very satisfied

10. What is your overall level of satisfaction with your stay abroad as an exchange student?

Very dissatisfied

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
----	----	----	----	----

 Very satisfied

11. Would you recommend a foreign exchange to your friends?

Definitely no

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
----	----	----	----	----

 Definitely yes

12. What are the factors that most influence your choice of the programme abroad? (*please choose up to 3 answers*)

- a) Country/city where the university is located
- b) Reputation of the faculty
- c) Tuition fee
- d) Prestige
- e) Courses taught in English
- f) Opinion of people who have studied there
- g) Programme offered

13. Which criteria are the most important for a university to be considered **European**? (*please choose up to 3 answers*)

- a) Professors of different European nationalities
- b) European student body
- c) Courses taught in English
- d) Courses taught in different European languages
- e) Being located in few European cities
- f) Giving students opportunities of exchange abroad
- g) Cooperating with other European universities
- h) Being known around Europe

PART 2. EXCHANGE STUDENTS' RIGHTS

14. Were the courses you took abroad recognised by your local university?

- a) yes, all of them
- b) yes, most of them
- c) yes, but only few of them
- d) no

15. Does your home university use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I do not know what ECTS is

16. Were you granted any ECTS credits for an internship?

- a) I did not do an internship
- b) yes
- c) no

17. Were you granted any ECTS credits for volunteer work?

- a) I did not do a volunteer work
- b) yes
- c) no

18. Were you given an opportunity to participate in the language course at the host university before starting your studies?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I do not know

19. Did you get ECTS credits for participation in the language course at the university before starting your studies?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I did not participate in it

20. Compare the host and home university: did you get the same number of ECTS credits for the same amount of work?

- a) yes
- b) no, I worked **more** at the host university
- c) no, I worked **less** at the host university
- d) I did not receive any ECTS credits

21. Did you lose semester/s at your home university because you went on exchange?

- b) yes
- c) no

22. Were you able to choose freely any course at the host university (within your subject area)?

- b) yes
- c) no

23. Was there an opportunity to take courses in English?

- a) yes, all courses at the university were in English
- b) yes, some courses at the university were in English
- c) no

24. Did you have to pay fees for:

Tuition at host university	Yes	No
Registration	Yes	No
Examinations	Yes	No
Access to laboratory	Yes	No
Access to library	Yes	No

25. As far as fees were concerned how would you compare your situation with local students:

- a) We had similar fees to pay;
- b) Local students were treated favourably;
- c) Exchange students were treated favourably;
- d) I did not have to pay any fees

26. Amount of received grant/scholarship? _____ Euros/month

27. Besides your main scholarship (e.g. Erasmus grant), please mark other sources of financial support:

- a) My host university
- b) My host country
- c) My home university
- d) My home country
- e) A private foundation
- f) I did not get support from any of those

28. What part of your overall expenses did your overall grant cover?

- a) Almost all of my expenses (more than 80%)
- b) Most of my expenses (60-80%)
- c) Around half of my expenses (40-60%)
- d) Around a quarter of my expenses (20-40%)
- e) A small part of my expenses (less than 20%)

27. How did you pay for the expenses that were not covered by your scholarship/grant?

- a) Working legally in the host country
- b) Working illegally in the host country

- c) From my savings
- d) With the support of my parents
- e) I took out a loan
- f) Other:

30. Were you able to work legally in your host country?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I do not know

31. Were you charged more than the local student for your accommodation?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I do not know

32. How would you compare your living standard with that of the local students?

- a) My standard was much higher
- b) My standard was higher
- c) They were similar
- d) Local students' standard were higher
- e) Local students' standard were much higher

33. Whom did you ask for help while facing a problem?

- a) The International Office
- b) The Erasmus Coordinator
- c) The Erasmus Student Network
- d) Another student organisation that took care of exchange students
- e) The student union
- f) Exchange students
- g) Local students
- h) Other
- i) I did not know whom to ask for help

34. Did you have any problems with visa or permit of stay?

- a) No
- b) I had to wait very long for a visa/permit
- c) I had to pay a lot for a visa/permit
- d) The process was very complicated
- e) Other (please describe): _____

35. Did you notice whether the students from outside the European Union had different rights than those from EU?

- a) They had the same rights
- b) Students from inside EU were treated favourably
- c) Students from outside EU were treated favourably
- d) I don't know

If you chose b or c please explain: _____

36. Did you notice whether the exchange students had different rights from those of the local students?

- a) They had the same rights;
- b) Local students were treated favourably;
- c) Exchange students were treated favourably;
- d) I don't know

If you chose b or c please explain: _____

37. Were you ever treated unjustly by your host university or your host country institutions? Please describe.

- a) Yes
- b) No

If you answered yes, please explain: _____

38. Did you feel discriminated during your stay abroad?

- a) No
- b) Yes, because of my origin
- c) Yes, because of my religion
- d) Yes, because of my language skills
- e) Yes, because of my gender
- f) Yes, because I was a foreigner
- g) Yes, because I was an exchange student

39. Select one area of intervention you would like ESN and other student organisations to work on for the exchange students in the next months.

- a) Access to exchange programmes
- b) Recognitions of academic and non-academic achievements
- c) Information about mobility possibilities
- d) Quality of education at the host university
- e) Visa issues
- f) Financial issues
- g) Language issues
- h) Discrimination
- i) Legality of work

PART 3. ABOUT ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK (ESN)

40. Have you ever heard of Erasmus Student Network?

- a) Yes
- b) No ☞ Go to question 46

41. If yes, how did you learn about it?

- a) From a friend
- b) From the ESN section at my home university
- c) From the ESN section at the receiving university
- d) From my International Relations Office
- e) On the internet
- f) Other:

42. Is there an ESN section at your host university?

- a) Yes
- b) No ☞ Go to question 46
- c) I don't know ☞ Go to question 46

43. Please evaluate the help of ESN in the following areas

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
a) providing information	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) helping with finding accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) helping with settling in a new place (visa, banking)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d) intervening on your behalf when having problems	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) getting in contact with local students	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) getting in contact with other exchange students	1	2	3	4	5	NA
g) learning the culture of the host country	1	2	3	4	5	NA
h) practicing your foreign language skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
i) representing my rights as an exchange student	1	2	3	4	5	NA

44. Please evaluate the services of ESN

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
a) Buddy/mentor/tutor system	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) Tandem project/language exchange programme	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) Orientation week/welcome days	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d) Organising trips and visiting tours	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) Organising parties and informal meetings	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) Informing about upcoming events	1	2	3	4	5	NA
g) Helping with finding a job	1	2	3	4	5	NA

45. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the help provided by the Erasmus Student Network?

Very dissatisfied

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
----	----	----	----	----

 Very satisfied

46. Was there any other student organisation at your host university helping exchange students? *(please refer to the one that helped you most)*

- a) Yes - name of organisation: _____
- b) No ➡ go to question 49
- c) I don't know ➡ go to question 49

47. Please evaluate the help of this organisation in the following areas:

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
a) providing information	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) helping with finding accommodation	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) helping with settling in a new place (visa, banking)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d) intervening on your behalf when having problems	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) getting in contact with local students	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) getting in contact with other exchange students	1	2	3	4	5	NA
g) learning the culture of the host country	1	2	3	4	5	NA
h) practicing your foreign language skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
i) representing your rights as an exchange student	1	2	3	4	5	NA

48. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the help provided by this student organisation?

Very dissatisfied

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
----	----	----	----	----

 Very satisfied

PART 4. PERSONAL INFORMATION

49. Age: _____

50. Gender:

- a) female
- b) male

51. Country where your home university is located:

52. City where your home university is located:

53. Home university: _____

54. Level/type of studies:

- a) BA (3-4 years)
- b) MA (5-6 years)
- c) PhD, doctoral studies

55. Major/area of studies: _____

56. Year of graduation: _____

57. Do you plan to continue your university education?
(please choose up to 2 answers)

- a) Yes, at two-year Master of Science programme
- b) Yes, at one-year Specialized master programme
- c) yes, at PhD programme/doctoral studies
- d) yes, at MBA studies
- e) No
- f) I do not know yet

58. Are you a disabled student?

- a) Yes
- b) No

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

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

60. Which phrase below best describes the area where your family lives?

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

61. How would you describe your family's income?

- a) Above my country average
- b) Average
- c) Below my country average

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE!!!



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ABOUT ESN

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a young, dynamic and independent organisation, aiming at supporting and developing student mobility in Europe and beyond. With more than **240 sections** in universities based in **31 countries** we are representing the interests of over **150,000 exchange students** on a local, national and international level. ESN was founded in 1990.

Our mission is to foster student mobility in Higher Education under the principle of **Students Helping Students**. ESN is the advocate of exchange students' rights before the European Union and Higher Education Institutions. The values we believe in are **integration, respect of diversity** and, above all, **friendship and openness, coupled with tolerance**.

In synthesis, ESN:

- works in the **interest of exchange students**.
- works to improve the **social and practical integration** of exchange students.
- represents the **needs and expectations** of exchange students on a local, national and international level.
- **provides relevant information** about academic exchange programmes and ESN resources.
- works with the **reintegration** of homecoming students.
- contributes to the **evaluation** of different exchange programmes.

ESN's activities comprise of **hundreds of projects** developed at local, as well as national and international level. On the international level we organise events and meetings to develop the network, integrate members, and a number of ongoing projects:

- **ESN Card** distributed by ESN sections to their members. It offers discounts for them at a local and European level including other services opportunities.
- **ESN Survey** - a European-wide research on exchange students. It concerns quality of studies abroad (2005 edition) and rights as an exchange student (2006 edition)
- **ESN Factory** - trainings organised in cooperation with Università Bocconi in Milan, aiming at developing ESN members' management and knowledge skills.
- **ESN Galaxy** - online community for internationally open-minded students.

More information about ESN: www.esn.org

Contact: secretariat@esn.org

On the 18th and 19th of January, 2007, Erasmus Student Network (ESN) opened the celebrations of the **20 Years of the Erasmus Programme** with a two-day conference in Brussels during which we evaluated the development of the programme. Throughout this year, more than **100 Erasmus Days** will take place all over Europe to celebrate the Erasmus birthday and to promote student mobility. **Erasmus Van will tour around Europe** to spread the Erasmus spirit and collect comments on how to improve the programme in the future.

More information about Celebrations at:

www.20erasmus.eu

Contact: secretariat@20erasmus.eu

ABOUT UNIVERSITÀ BOCCONI

Università Bocconi is one of Europe's leading universities for economics. The university is structured around five major schools: Undergraduate School, Graduate School, Law School, PhD School, and, with a larger degree of autonomy, SDA Bocconi School of Management.

Bocconi grants Bachelor Degrees, Masters of Science, and PhDs in Management, Economics, Law, Statistics, and other disciplines. It also offers a number of post-experience programs, and administers hundreds of advanced courses to managers and professionals in all realms of private and public management.

Bocconi University, founded in 1902, was the first Italian university to grant a degree in economics.

For a century, Bocconi has played a leading role in Italy's social and economic modernization, by remaining true to its founding values of being a major research university, democratic and open to the world, as well as financially and politically independent.

At the outset of the 21st century, Bocconi contributes to the advancement of European higher education, by teaching business and economic knowledge to prospective managers and researchers from all over the world.

Today, Bocconi is a research university of international standing in business, economics, and law. Its research projects are funded by national and supranational institutions. By virtue of being a major node in the European and global network of business and economics universities, Bocconi exchanges faculty and cooperates on large projects with like-minded European and American universities and business schools. Bocconi has close relations with major corporations and international agencies, as well as their managers and officials, and constantly interacts with the business and economic environment to assess new issues, implement new techniques, and start new research endeavours.

In keeping with the ideals of its founders, Bocconi seeks to address the research and education needs of the European and global economy, by favouring cultural progress, international exchange, and economic integration. Bocconi conceives higher education as a continuous process that spans the entire professional life of an individual. The University promotes both economic advancement and civic values, by instilling in Bocconi students solid analytical skills and a strong emphasis on ethics, so that they can contribute to the innovation and development of European business and society.

We are looking forward to introducing you to unique educational offer.
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