



Results of **ESNSurvey '08**

EXCHANGING

Cultures ◀

S. Bauwens, W. Bonifazi, V. Boomans, E. Krzaklewska,
N. Lopez, T. Nikolic, D. Pederiva and M. Tokova ▼

INDEX

Introduction	3
Key Results	5
Recommendations	8
Methodology	10
Students' Characteristics	11
Exchanging Cultures	21
Personal Development	35
Satisfaction with stay and study	39
Satisfaction with ESN and other student organisations	43
Annex 1: Questionnaire	47
Annex 2: About ESN	70
Annex 3: Winners ESNSurvey 2008	74
List of figures	77
Acknowledgements	79

Copyright © 2009 by the Erasmus Student Network AISBL. All rights reserved.

Exchanging Cultures. Results of ESNSurvey '08

By Simon Bauwens, Walter Bonifazi, Veerle Boomans, Ewa Krzaklewska, Nacho Lopez,

Tajana Nikolic, Danilo Pederiva, Marketa Tokova

Published by: Erasmus Student Network AISBL

Design: Łukasz Buchała, www.buchersdesign.pl

Editing: Leo Smith

This information can be freely used and copied for non-commercial purposes,

provided that the source is acknowledged (©Erasmus Student Network)

For ordering additional copies of the publication, please contact secretariat@esn.org or write to:

Erasmus Student Network AISBL

Rue Hydraulique 15

1210 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 256 74 27

Free electronic version of this report is available through www.esn.org



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

INTRODUCTION

Dear reader,

You have in front of you the final report of the ESNSurvey 2008: **Exchanging Cultures**. It is already the fourth edition of the annual project of Erasmus Student Network. The survey has developed over the years – changing the topic, graphics, ESNSurvey team members – but the core has not changed. The enthusiasm and devotion of young people who are working on the survey and who are making this unique project happen stays high.

Thanks to the ESNSurvey, international and exchange students from all over the world have an opportunity to share opinions, experience and feedback on their study abroad period. At the same time, it provides Erasmus Student Network with enough information to represent the real needs and concerns of the international students towards the stakeholders, such as European universities, institutions of the European Union and other educational associations.

The topic of ESNSurvey 2008 is the **exchange of cultures**. Discovering foreign cultures, integrating with local people and adapting to new cultural conditions are key aspects of any exchange. The main aim of the survey was to investigate if such processes are really taking place during the time spent abroad – be it a short-term study abroad, a full-degree mobility or a working experience in a different country. Moreover, impacts of living abroad while studying or working were analysed, dealing with topics such as intercultural and social skills, cultural shock and its implication or integration in the local community.

Understanding better what students are experiencing during their mobility period will enable both them and international relations officers at universities to be prepared for possible difficulties related to the **cultural diversity of Europe** and prevent negative feelings or drop-offs. In the end, it is the international students who act as ambassadors of other cultures in their home environment and who may well spread the word of the richness and opportunities other cultures offer.

In March 2009, Erasmus Student Network adopted a new vision at its Annual General Meeting – **enrichment of society through international students**. It is a beautiful goal but it can only be achieved if we equip international students sufficiently with what to expect while encountering new cultures, new traditions and new people. I sincerely hope that this report and its recommendations will be taken into consideration by the respective stakeholders in the international education and that they will contribute to the improvements of the Erasmus and other mobility programmes in and beyond Europe.

I wish you, dear reader, an interesting read and hope that the ESNSurvey report will bring answers to your questions on “exchanging cultures.”

With kind regards,

Marketa Tokova
President of ESN AISBL

KEY RESULTS

Students' characteristics. Most of our respondents were exchange students (72%). 19% of the respondents studied in a foreign country as regular students and 9% of the respondents did an internship abroad. Among the exchange students, 91% did it through the Erasmus Programme and 51% of interns through Erasmus Placement.

The respondents were more often female and on average 23 years old. The most frequent area of study was business and management studies in all three groups, although in general exchange and regular students showed similar interests, while interns were more oriented on other areas. The majority of regular and exchange students were Bachelor (BA) students while interns were mostly Master (MA) students. Usually the stay abroad for exchange students lasted from 4-6 months (55,2%). Regular students either stayed from 4-6 months or 9-10 months. 75% of interns stayed abroad 3-6 months.

In terms of socio-economic background, most of the respondents declared that none of their parents had a higher education degree. Generally, the family financial situation was in line with the country's average. The majority of the respondents came from a town or a small city.

Exchanging cultures. Our respondents felt quite informed about the host country's culture before exchange e.g. they knew what kind of food is typical in the host country, knew about the main differences regarding contacts with other people, knew the stereotypes of the host country. Many had also experience with the host country, interestingly, about half of the students had already visited the host country where they were going for the exchange. Interns had generally more experience with a host country and more new local people from the city they were going to stay.

Students felt in general very positive and confident about their stay and the exchange students had more positive expectations than other groups. Still, they encountered troubles in adapting to the new environment that could cause some negative feelings towards the local culture. Students which have had higher score on the positive attitude scale towards the stay in general, had lower scores on the negative attitude scale towards the local culture.

Exchange students created more contacts with exchange students and other foreigners, spent more time with them as well as more other worked or lived with them, while interns had more opportunities to work with people of the host country and created local networks. International students, due to the period of their stay which usually is for the whole degree, abroad created widest networks. Even if they stay abroad is a very sociable period of life, some students faced feeling of isolation or felt they did not have a person to turn with personal problems to. Wide networks can help prevent a student against the feeling of isolation and negative attitudes towards local culture.


Interns had more opportunities to work on a project or task together with people of the host country, while exchange students most often worked on a project with foreigners. Exchange students most often participated in the classes with both local and foreign students, but the situation differs among the countries: in the countries were Erasmus usually participate in the courses for Erasmus which are taught in English, students more often studied just with other foreigners. Exchange students a bit often than other groups of students stayed with other foreigners, international students – with people of their own nationality, interns lived alone or with local people.

Students communicated in different languages during their period abroad. Exchange students more often talked in English than other groups, and international students more often spoke in a host country language. At the beginning of the stay, the knowledge of English was on average much higher than the knowledge of the host language – 2 compared to 3,5. Still, the average progress made in the knowledge of the host country language was bigger the progress in English.

Personal Development. Respondents mainly felt that their personality had changed during the stay abroad and before the end of the stay, they felt that the host country had become their second home.

Most of the respondents after their period of stay abroad would consider moving somewhere in Europe or in the world. The stay abroad has made them feel more flexible, self-confident, open to dialogue and more tolerant. They learned how to communicate with the people of different cultures and they had experienced teaching methods of a different university.

Satisfaction with stay and study. Students' overall satisfaction with their studies or internship and with their stay was high. Students evaluated most positively their satisfaction with the atmosphere and the social life of the city



Exchanging Cultures

and of the host country, and the lowest satisfaction was associated with, both, the information they received before the departure, and their finances.

Satisfaction with ESN and other student organizations. 41% of the respondents participated or used services of ESN or another student organization. Students declared that help of ESN and other student organisations was most important in helping them to get in contact with other exchange students and providing them with information. Around 70% of students were satisfied with ESN and/or other student organisation at their host university.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Exchanging Cultures as a topic of ESNSurvey 2008 was chosen based on personal experience and direct feedback from many exchange and international students who have been evaluating the intercultural aspect of the stay abroad very positively. Discovering foreign cultures, integrating with local people and adapting to new cultural conditions are considered as main objectives of any exchange. Therefore, the ESNSurvey 2008 analysed the real impact of studying, working and living in a foreign country on personal abilities of young people to adapt to cultural differences and benefit from the new cultural environment.

The respondents of the ESNSurvey 2008 claimed that their personality has changed and that the period abroad has made them more flexible, more self-confident, open to dialogue and more tolerant towards the others.


Based on the results and findings, ESN sees three main areas where actions are needed from involved actors (universities, National Agencies, national and European institutions and student organizations) in order to improve the overall quality of the exchange experience:

Information provision:

- Students need more information which will facilitate their adaptation and integration – especially about the host country's culture, main differences regarding the contacts with other people and stereotypes of the host country.
- It is crucial that this information is provided to students prior to departure and as complete and up to date as possible. Students who have sufficient information and feel comfortable in the host country from the beginning tend to judge everything else in a more positive way.
- We are alarmed by the fact that the problem of information provision occurs every year and no actions have been taken yet. We call especially upon the universities to take appropriate measures and improve the preparatory stage of exchange.

Role of student organisations:

- Student organisations should be more involved in the work with exchange and international students – such as support during the stay abroad or



Exchanging Cultures

representation of their rights. In our experience, peer to peer support is the most efficient as students can more easily understand needs of other students.

- Student organisations can be a great source of information for the exchange and international students, especially concerning the non-academic matters. This additionally allows for interaction and integration between local and international students.
- We encourage international offices of universities to collaborate and support local student organisation as the cooperation is beneficial to everyone involved.

Integration to the local community:

- One of the most effective ways of integration and adaptation of international students among the local ones is common accommodation. If the international students are isolated and assigned to stay with their co-patriots or other international and exchange students, it is evident that the integration will not take place. Therefore, we strongly encourage and advocate for mixed accommodation for its beneficial influence on the adaptation.
- We suggest that when possible, classes should be for both local, exchange and international students. This will facilitate integration and foster intercultural abilities and skills of local students. The support and preparation of the professor is key for success of these classes.
- Students should be encouraged to go on exchange despite low or no knowledge of the local language. As the ESNSurvey results show, majority of students have not spoken local language at the beginning of their stay but through interaction with local, other exchange and international students, they improved their knowledge. At the same time, the universities should organize language courses to intensify the learning process.

Despite the fact the overall satisfaction of respondents was high, they were not satisfied with the information received before the departure and their financial support. Therefore, ESN will investigate into these two topics in the upcoming editions of ESNSurvey in 2009 and 2010.

METHODOLOGY

The survey has been conducted by ESNSurvey Team, led by Veerle Boomans and Ewa Krzaklewska. The theme of this edition was “Exchanging Cultures”.

While building the questionnaire, questions from previous editions of ESNSurvey were taken into account in order to be able to compare the results to each other.

The questionnaire was available from May to September 2008 on the ESN website at www.esn.org/survey. The only language version available was English. In order to ensure the quality of the study, respondents were supposed to use the code at the beginning of the questionnaire.

The survey was filled by three groups of students based on their most recent experience:

- **Exchange students** – this were the students which had been exchange students in the foreign country for at least 3 months;
- **Interns** – the students who did an internship stage in a foreign country for at least 3 months and are within one year after their university graduation;
- **Regular students** – the students who study/studied at least 3 months in a foreign country at a foreign university as a regular students.

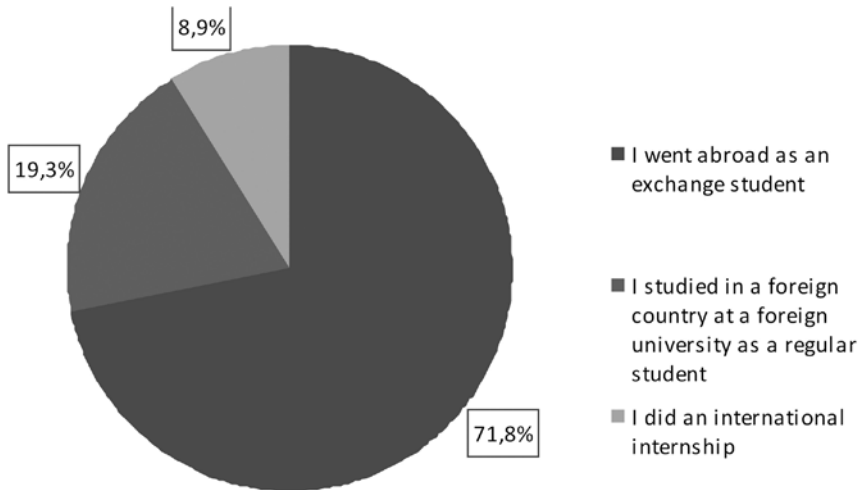
Some of the questions were different for each group of the students, as their experience had differed in some aspects

The information about the survey was disseminated through the local branches of Erasmus Student Network and other associations concerned with educational issues. Moreover, international offices of single universities participated in promoting the research. Students received emails notifying them about the project. As the result of this intensive dissemination, more than 8 000 students completed the survey.

STUDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

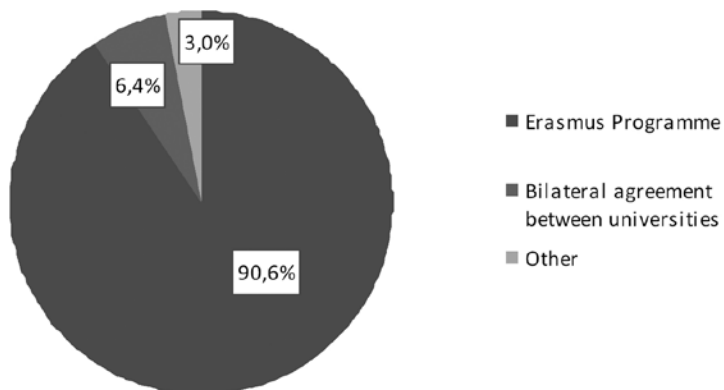
Among the students who answered our questionnaire 71,8% were **exchange students (we call them later on 'exchange students')**, 19,3% were studying in a foreign country as **regular students (we call them later on 'international students')** and only 8,9% were doing an **internship abroad (we call them later on 'interns')**.

Figure 1 What was your most recent experience? (n=8283)



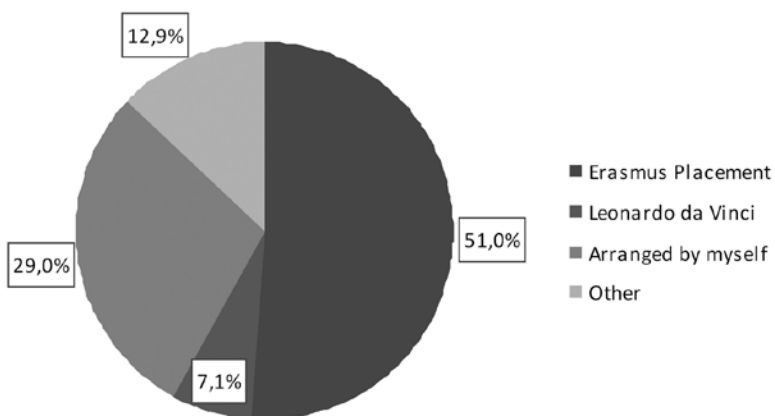
Among the exchange students, most of the respondents (90,6%) went on exchange through **Erasmus programme**, 6,4% went abroad through the bilateral agreements between universities. 0,5% arranged the stay by themselves. Others went through governmental programmes (0,3%), private foundations (0,2%) or other exchange programmes (2%).

Figure 2 Programmes through which exchange students went abroad (n=5939)



Among the interns most of the respondents went in the foreign country through **Erasmus Placement** (51%). 29% arranged the stay by themselves, 7% through Leonardo Da Vinci programme and 13% other programmes.

Figure 3 Programmes through which interns went abroad (n=735)



Exchanging Cultures

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The three groups of respondents showed similar results. Around 70% of respondents in all 3 groups were between 21 and 24 years old. The average age is **23 years**, as in previous editions of ESNSurvey. Interns had slightly higher age. Also the gender was in line with the previous findings, since there were more **female** (68%) than male (32%) respondents in all the groups. The highest percentage of male students was among Turkish (56% female and 44% male) and the lowest among Polish respondents (75% female and 25% male). The main countries where the students' home universities were located were Italy and Spain (12%) followed by France (10,7%).

Table 1 Countries of the exchange students' home universities (n=5932)

	Country of home university	Percent	Number of respondents
1	Italy	12,5	743
2	Spain	12,2	725
3	France	10,7	636
4	Poland	6,4	382
5	Germany	5,9	352
6	Turkey	5,7	338
7	Finland	5,5	324
8	Netherlands	5,5	324
9	Czech Republic	4,5	268
10	Austria	3,8	225

The main countries where the interns' home universities were located were France (20%), followed by Spain (15%) and the Netherlands (11,4%).

Table 2 Countries of the universities where the interns graduated (n=725)

	Home country	Percent:	Number of respondents:
1	France	20,3	147
2	Spain	15,0	109
3	Netherlands	11,4	83
4	Austria	10,3	75
5	Italy	8,7	63
6	Finland	6,6	48
7	Germany	4,7	34
8	United Kingdom	4,4	32
9	Poland	4,1	30
10	Romania	2,8	20

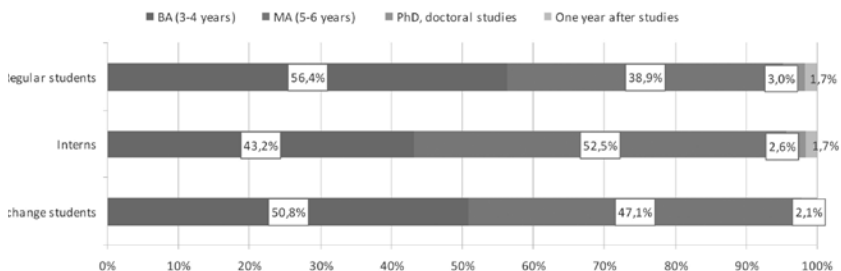
Regular students were mostly from France (17,6%), Spain (15,7%) and Italy (15,2%).

Table 3 Country of origin of the regular students (n=1589)

	Country of origin	Percent	Number of respondents
1	France	17,6	279
2	Spain	15,7	249
3	Italy	15,2	241
4	United Kingdom	7,5	119
5	Germany	7,0	112
6	Czech Republic	4,5	71
7	Ireland	4,0	63
8	Poland	3,3	52
9	Rumania	3,3	52
10	Turkey	2,8	44

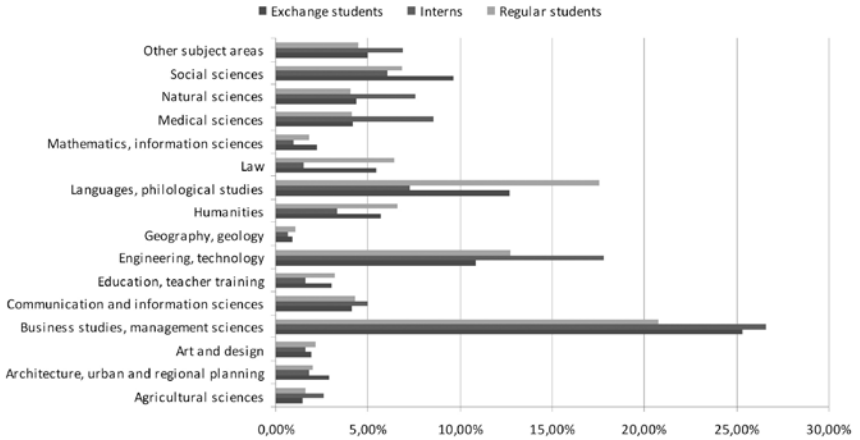
Concerning the level of studies of our respondents, 56,4% of regular students and 50,8% of exchange students were Bachelor (BA) students, while Interns were mostly Master (MA) students (52,5%).

Figure 4 Level of studies of the respondents(n=8186)



Exchanging Cultures

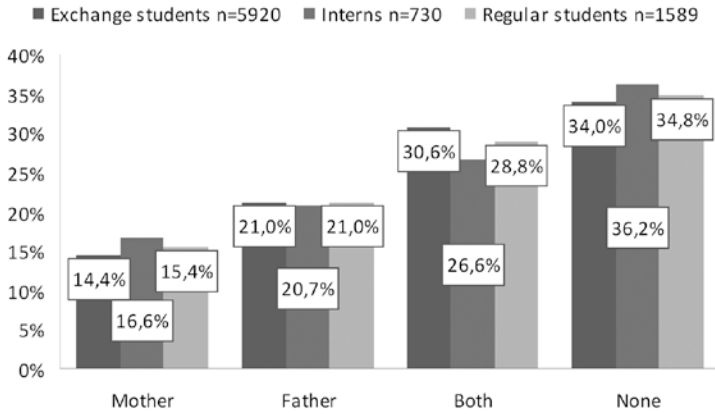
Figure 5 Area of studies of the respondents



The most popular areas of studies of our respondents were business studies, management studies – more than 25% of interns and exchange students, and around 20% for regular students had studied in those areas. Languages and philology were second most popular for exchange (17%) and regular students (12%), but not that popular among interns (only 7%). Interns were more interested in engineering and technology (17%). As we can see from the graph, exchange and regular students showed similar interests while interns came from other fields (more often from natural and medical sciences).

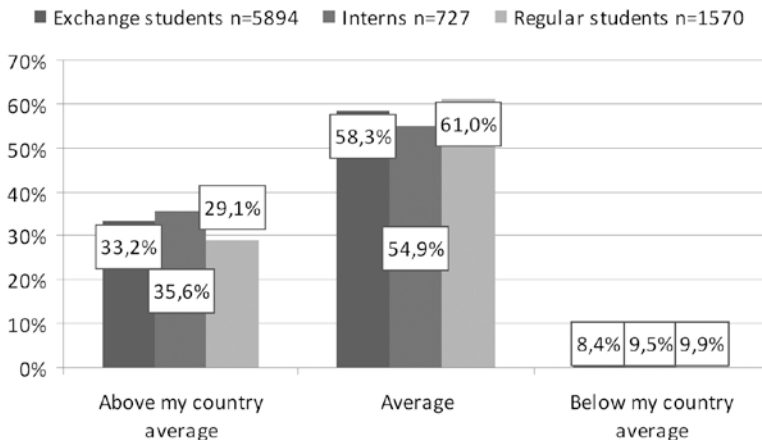
SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 6 Parents' educational attainment



Analyzing the higher education degree of parents, the 3 groups showed similar results. Most of the respondents declared that none of their parents had a higher education degree, followed by the statement that both of the parents had a higher education degree. Among Interns there were a bit more families in which none of their parents had a higher education degree. The results are similar to the results of previous ESNSurveys.

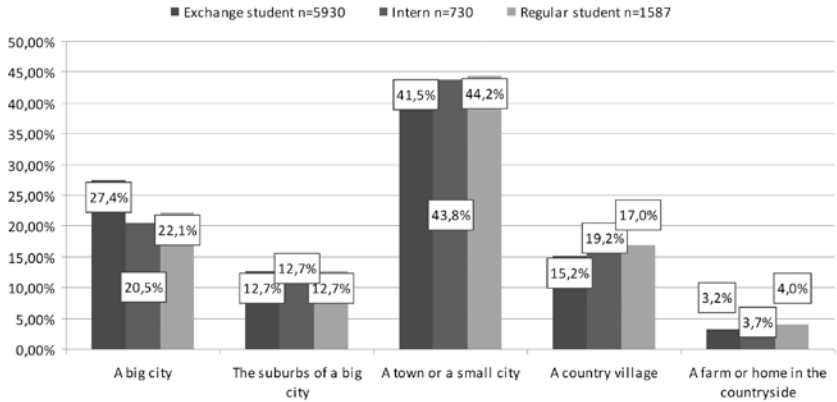
Figure 7 Family's income



Exchanging Cultures

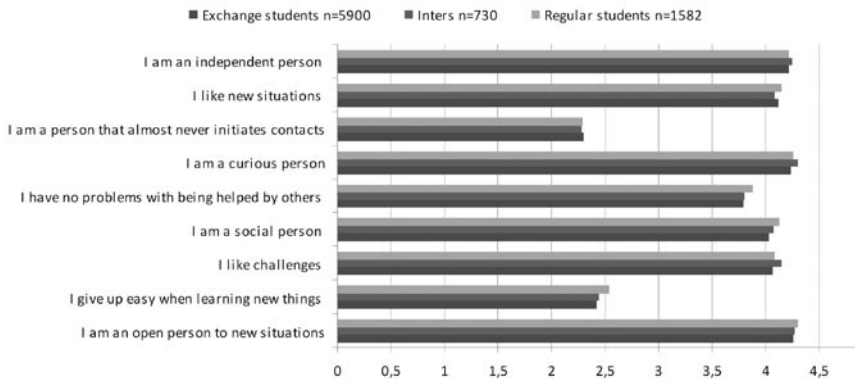
In terms of financial income only 9% described their family's income as below the country's average, 33% as above country's average and 58% as average. The regular students were the ones who most often declared average income, and interns most often described their family's income as above average.

Figure 8 Area where family lives (%)



Most of the respondents came from a town or a small city (more than 40%) or from a big city (about a quarter). Respondents that came from a farm house in the countryside represent a minority (3,2%-4,0%).

Figure 9 Character of respondents (mean)



The respondents before their departure would describe themselves as independent, curious and social people, who like new situations, challenges and are open to new situations. As we can see from the graph there is no significant difference between the three groups of respondents.

EXCHANGE DESTINATIONS

Most of exchange and regular students began their stay abroad in 2007 and 2008. Most of the exchange students stayed abroad for 4 to 6 months (55%), 36% or regular students stayed from 4 to 6 months and 40% of them from 9 to 10 months. 75% of interns stayed abroad in between 3 to 6 months.

Table 4 Country of the exchange students' host university

	Country of home university	Percent	Number of respondents
1	Germany	13,8	818
2	Spain	10,0	597
3	United Kingdom	8,2	486
4	France	8,0	473
5	Italy	7,3	436
6	Sweden	7,1	420
7	Finland	6,5	388
8	Austria	6,2	370
9	Netherlands	4,5	266
10	Belgium	3,4	202

Table 5 Country of the university from which interns had graduated

	Country of home university	Percent	Number of respondents
1	Germany	15,2	111
2	Spain	11,1	81
3	United Kingdom	10,1	74
4	France	9,4	69
5	Belgium	6,3	46
6	Italy	6,0	44
7	Sweden	3,3	24
8	USA	3,3	24
9	Finland	3,1	23
10	Austria, Netherlands	2,7	20

Exchanging Cultures

Table 6 Country of origin of the international students

	Country of home university	Percent	Number of respondents
1	Spain	16,3	253
2	France	13,2	206
3	Germany	12,9	201
4	Italy	10,5	163
5	United Kingdom	9,6	149
6	Finland	3,9	60
7	Netherlands	3,3	52
8	Portugal	3,3	51
9	Austria	3,2	50
10	Belgium, Ireland	3,0	46

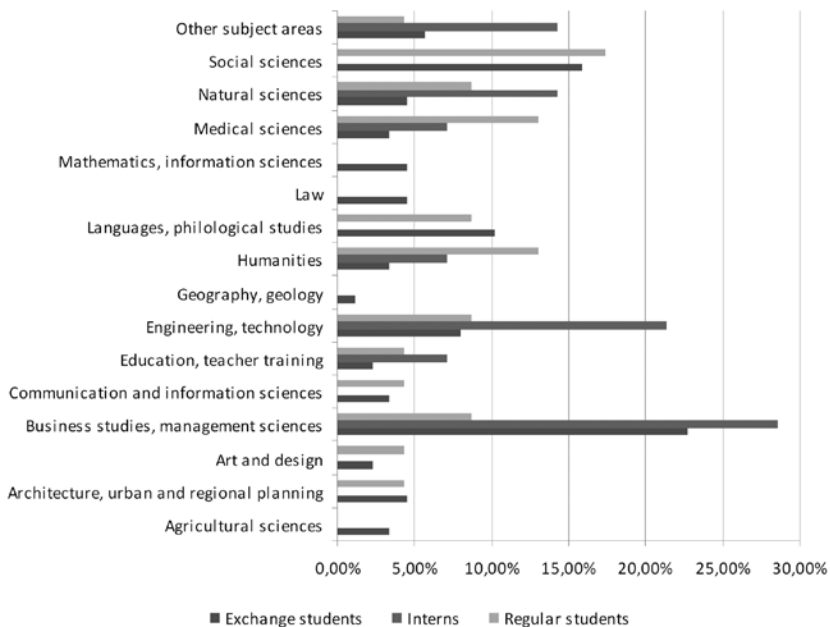
The countries that exchange students and interns chose most frequently as exchange destinations were Germany (14%), Spain (10,5%) and UK (9%) while regular students chose more Spain (16%), France (13,2%), Germany (12,9%) and Italy (10,5%).

DISABLED STUDENTS

Disabled students constituted 1,5% of regular and of exchange students, while there was a little bit higher percentage of interns with disabilities – 2%.

The results in most questions were similar to all the respondents, but there were some differences, e.g. when it comes to gender, home and host countries, as well as area of studies. There were fewer female students (60%) than among all the respondents. The home countries of exchange students were most often Spain (13,6%), France (11,4%) and Netherlands (11,4%); of interns: Finland (21,4%), France (14,3%), Netherlands (14,3%) and Turkey (14,3%), and of regular students France (17,4%), UK (17,4%) and Spain (13%). Also host countries differed. As host countries exchange students were choosing more Spain (13,6%), Germany (12,5%) and Finland (8%), interns Germany (21,4%), France (14,3%) and UK (14,3%), while regular students chose Germany (17,4%) and France (13%).

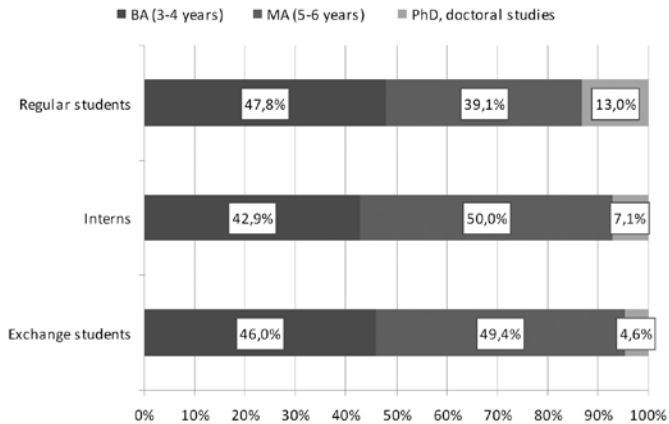
Figure 10 Disabled students – Area of studies



Compared to all the respondents there were quite a lot of differences as far as the area of the studies of disabled students is concerned. Regular students were more interested in Social sciences, Medical sciences and Humanities. Interns were more interested in Education, Natural Sciences and other subject areas and less interested in communication and languages (0%). Exchange students were the ones who followed more or less the same trend as all the respondents, but they were less interested in business studies and languages.

Exchanging Cultures

Figure 11 Disabled students – Level of studies



As far as the levels of studies are concerned we can see that the percentage of the Ph.D. students among disabled students is higher in all three groups. We can also notice that this percentage is most different among regular students. Ph.D. students constituted 13% of respondents with disabilities. The percentage of Bachelor students is lower 47,8% than among respondents overall

EXCHANGING CULTURES

CULTURE SHOCK


The focus of this year's survey is on the **culture shock** which exchange students experience when they go abroad for an extended period of time. Culture shock is very often defined as a rather negative reaction to contact with a culture that is different from our own. It is something that most people who move or temporarily go abroad experience, and exchange students are not unique in this. As a result, culture shock is actually an intensively studied topic in the social sciences. To get a better understanding of what culture shock really is, which dimensions and which different stages there are in it, we will take a look at some of the most established theories on this topic. To measure the reaction of the person going abroad, this survey and many other studies focus on 3 different dimensions, namely:

- The **socio-cultural dimension**, which relates to social functioning of the individual, his or her relation with others, the attitude towards the host culture, the need to learn new social roles and meeting new demands from other people;
- The **psychological dimension**, characterizing the psychological well-being in the hosting country;
- The **physical dimension**, connected to changes in physical well-being, for example due to the change of the climate, time change or organization of daily activities. This dimension includes physical problems such as sleeplessness or tiredness.

STAGES AND EMOTIONS

Culture shock as a concept that carries rather negative connotations. This is however not necessarily true. The best example to show this is perhaps the famous theory of the U-curve model, and the, later improved, W-curve. These theories describe the stay abroad as a process with several phases, of which the culture shock is just one of them (e.g. Adler, 1975). First comes the honeymoon stage, leading to feelings of initial euphoria. Second is culture shock, resulting from feelings of disorientation. Third, hostility towards the host culture, leading to feelings of resentment. Fourth, initial adaptation, leading to a sense of autonomy within the host culture, and fifth, assimilation into the host culture, leading to a sense of belonging to both the host and home culture (Sobre-Denton, Hart; 2008).

Despite being very popular, critiques on this theory are widespread. One major critique being the fact that some people don't go through all stages, or they experience them in different orders. This brings us to two important remarks for the results of this ESNSurvey. The first one being that we did not measure any feelings in time, we only ask about culture shock after the exchange was over or nearly over, and a second, that we avoided the critique of staged models because of a more general approach. Our point of departure was more than just to ask if the students did experience a shock or not, as it is more linear process than a sole event. Together with this we tried to pick out some other traits that we – based on literature – thought to have an effect on how easily an exchange student would adapt, and thus experience less of a shock.



Exchanging Cultures

ANXIETY, UNCERTAINTY, TRANSITION AND STRESS-ADAPTATION GROWTH

Moving away from the U-curve model, our research also tried to incorporate some elements we find in another famous theory. From the anxiety or uncertainty management theories (e.g. Gudykunst, 2005) we incorporated the fact that culture shock is actually not all that bad, but it is rather a step in the process to reduce anxiety and uncertainty (Sobre-Denton, Hart 2008). Thanks to some shock effects, students make an effort to adapt, which is usually one of the goals of an exchange. This is, for example, reflected in the questions about feeling prepared and knowing about local habits and stereotypes.

From the transition model (e.g. Bennett) we took over the idea that the researcher should pay attention not to lose the individual in the study. Despite a common line that may be found in the form of certain stages or coping mechanisms, every individual handles their exchange in her/his own way. Culture shock may push somebody to make an effort to adapt, but this might be less likely to happen when a student is particularly shy (Sobre-Denton, Hart; 2008). This factor was unfortunately impossible to incorporate in the survey as the shyness of a person is rather a psychological matter which deserves more appropriate means of measure.

Finally, coming from the stress-adaptation growth theory (e.g. Kim, 2001; 2005), we incorporated the language issue. As was illustrated above with shyness, language too may be some kind of filter for the behavior on exchange. However extrovert a student may be, if they are unable to communicate, it would be hard for him/her to adapt to the local culture. Often language is even considered an important part of the culture, so it is vital to the adaptation process. Kim (2005, in Sobre-Denton, Hart; 2008) points out how adaptation occurs through communication and the building of networks, again showing the importance of language.

OUR INTERPRETATION

It has become clear that the survey does not really fit into one particular model as described above. The survey was not built up to fulfill a merely theoretical function. Rather we like to see it as a tool to measure which culture-shock related problems and emotions occurred for the majority of students. With the information acquired by this survey we hope to improve the conditions for exchange students, so that culture shock does not have to be a bad thing, but rather a step towards integration and appreciation of other cultures.

LEARNING CULTURES

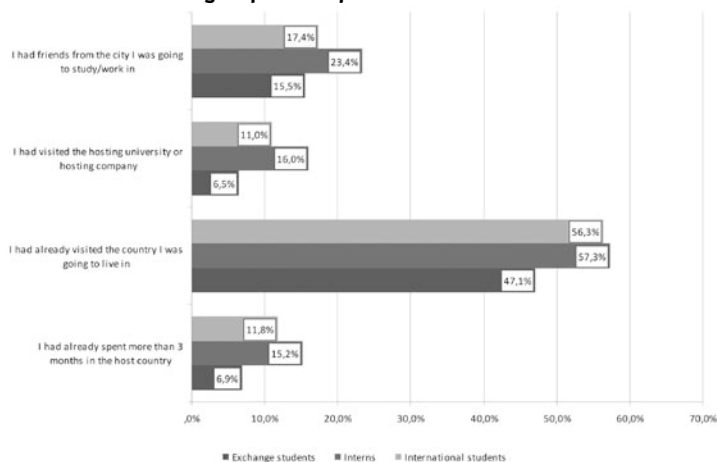
Before leaving

Better prepared or informed student would, theoretically, go through less of a culture shock. And most of our respondents felt quite informed about the host country's culture before exchange. Students who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements confirming their knowledge about the host country were in majority:

- I had enough information about the host country's culture – 67.4%
- I knew what kind of food is typical in the host country – 66%
- I knew about the main differences regarding contacts with other people – 56.2%
- I knew the stereotypes of the host country – 63.8%

Moreover, most respondents had various experiences with the host country prior to the exchange period. About two thirds of the students had talked to people who had already studied or worked in the host city. About half of the students visited the host country where they were going for the exchange. Fewer students though had friends in the city where they were going (17%), had visited the host university or company before going (10%) or had already spent 3 months in the host country before (10%). Generally, for the majority of the students, the place, the host university or company were rather new, but many of them tried to gather information about it.

Figure 12 Experiences with the hosting country or city before going for different groups of respondents. N=8262



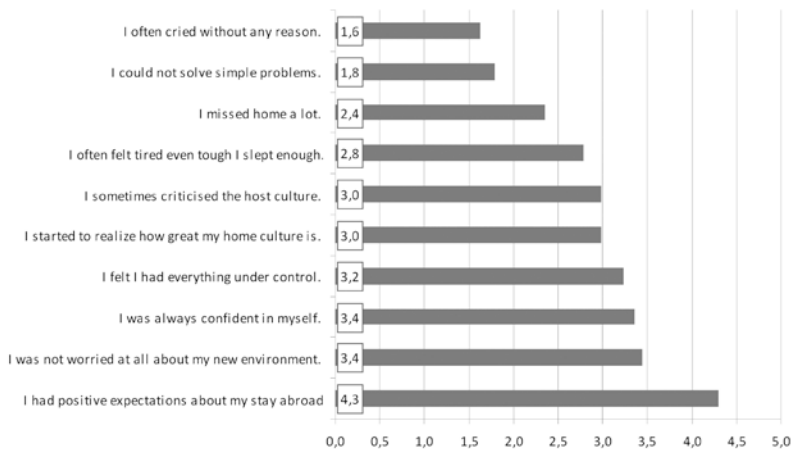
Exchanging Cultures

Among the respondents we can distinguish two groups: one of which members have had a deeper experience with a host country before going on exchange (visited it, have spent 3 months there, had friends in a host country, and visited university or company) and a group that had less experience with a host country (talked to people who studied or worked there and made contacts through internet with local students or young people). Interns generally had more experience with the host country, e.g. 15% of them have lived in a host country for more than 3 months, or 23% had friends in the hosting city.

IN A NEW CULTURE

Most of the students had positive expectations concerning their stay abroad (89%) – and the exchange students had higher expectations than other groups. More than half of respondents were not worried at all about their new environment and about half of the respondents said that they were very confident about themselves. Still, many respondents encountered some troubles in adaptation which had effects on their physical well-being, as they often felt tired even if they slept enough (32%). Some of them missed home a lot (16%) – this was more common for international students who usually stay longer in a foreign country. It happened to some respondents to cry without any reason (7%). Also, some discontent with local culture was revealed at the beginning of the stay: some students agreed and strongly agreed that they criticized the local culture (42%) and many agreed with the statement that they started to realize how great their home culture is (43%).

Figure 13 Students' feelings and attitudes at the beginning of the stay abroad. N=8192 to 8245.



We can see the experience of students in two dimensions: one concerns positive attitudes towards the stay, and the second the negative feelings towards the local culture. The scales are correlated negatively – the higher the score on the positive attitude scale the lower the score on the negative attitude scale towards the local culture¹. Different groups of students had rather similar scores for both scales, still:

- exchange students and interns had a bit higher score than international students on the attitude towards the stay scale;
- international students had higher scores on the attitude towards local culture than exchange students and interns – most possibly due to longer periods away from home.

Attitude towards the stay	Attitude towards local culture
I had positive expectations about my stay abroad.	I sometimes criticised the host culture.
I felt I had everything under control.	I started to realize how great my home culture is.
I was always confident in myself.	I missed home a lot.
I was not worried at all about my new environment.	

SOCIAL NETWORKS

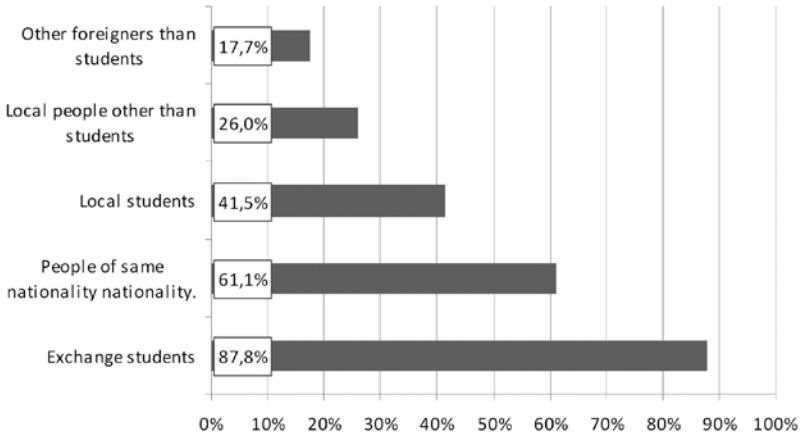
Friendships and interactions with other students are crucial part of the exchange experience.

At the beginning of the stay abroad students and interns were looking for contacts mostly with foreign students and local students and local young people and rather not looking for contacts with people of their nationality. But, summing up the experience of stay abroad, almost all of the students spend most of their time or most time with other foreign students (87,8%) or with people of their nationality (61%). The patterns of exchange and international students are very similar, with one difference: international students spent more time than exchange students with local and foreign people other than students.

¹ Pearson's corr=-, 0274, sign =0,000

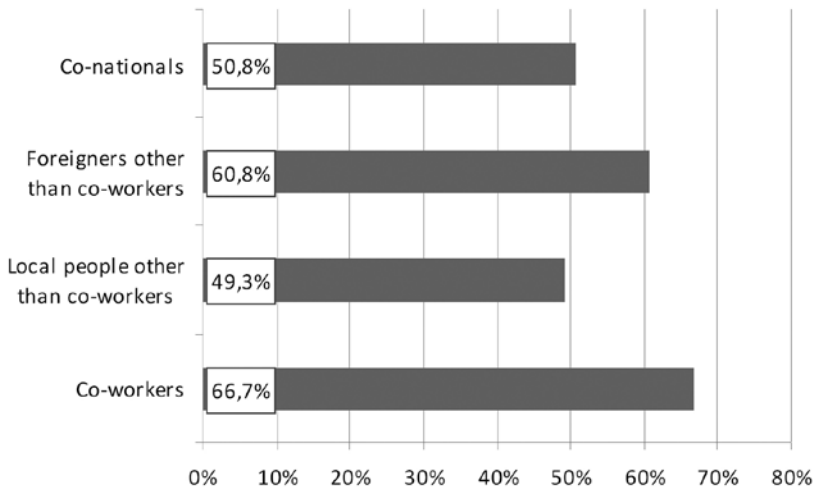
Exchanging Cultures

Figure 14 Percentage of exchange and international students that spent most of their time or much time with selected groups of people (n=7470 to 7502)



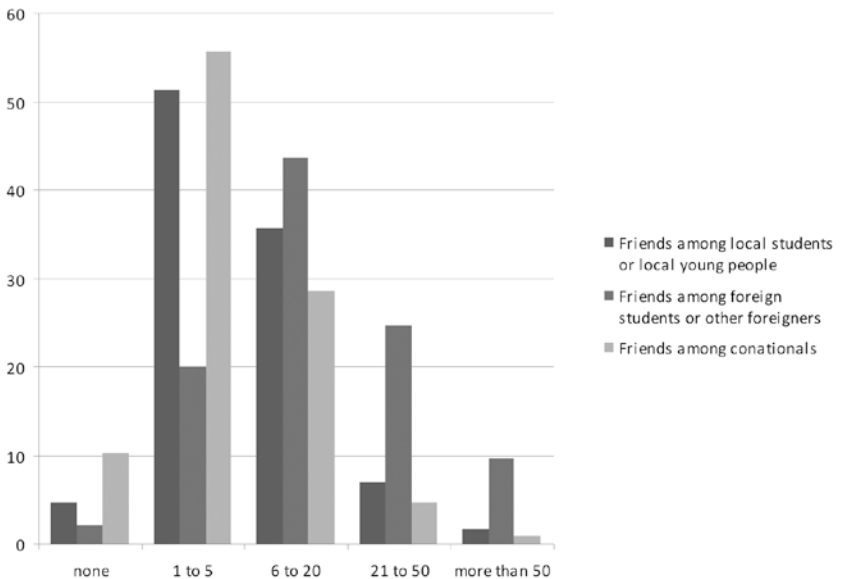
When it comes to interns, they spent most of their time with the co-workers (66,7%). But, they also spent relatively much time with representatives of local community, other foreigners and co-nationals.

Figure 15 Percentage of interns that spent most of their time or much time with selected groups of people (n=726 to 734)



The friendship networks are quite wide. In more than half of the cases co-nationals' network and local students' network consisted of 1 to 5 people and in about 30% of cases from 6 to 20 people. Networks of foreign students are wider ¼ of respondents said these networks consisted of 21-50 foreign students, and in 10% of cases of more than 50! Generally speaking, international students have widest networks, most probably due to the length of their period of residence in a host country. Exchange students though create relatively wide networks among foreign students and co-nationals. Interns in comparison to exchange students created smaller networks with foreigners, but they had more friends among local students.

Figure 16 Size of the friends networks for different groups of respondents n=8262 (%)

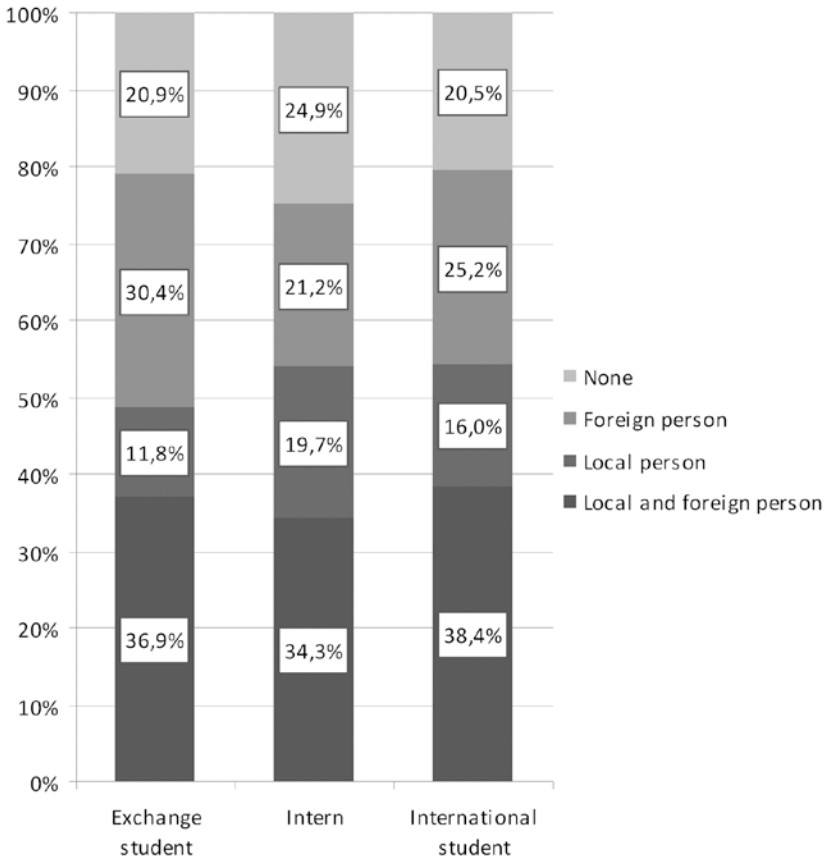


Some people manage during their stay to establish a close relationship with someone from a host country or from among the foreigners group. While 21% of respondents did not manage to establish a close relationship with a representative of any of both groups, 37% did with both a local and a foreigner. Again, exchange students had better contacts with foreigners – they establish

Exchanging Cultures

most often close relationships with other foreigners, while interns most often with a host country nationals. Close relationship with a host national or other foreigner makes students have more positive attitude towards the local culture.

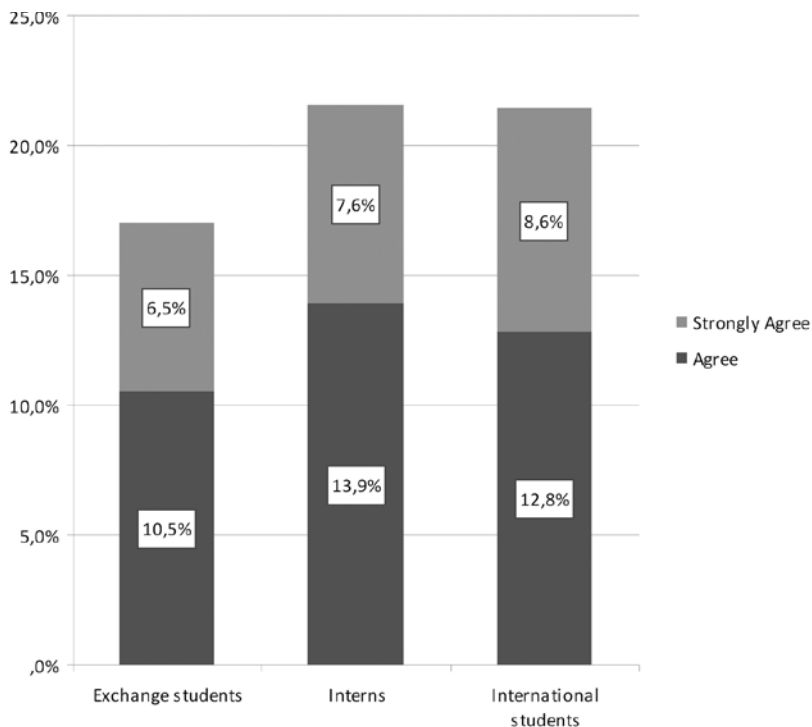
Figure 17 People with whom respondents have had a close relationship n=8226



Even if Erasmus is perceived as a very sociable period in life, some students felt isolated or alone during their stay. 22% answered that there had been a period that they felt isolated during their stay abroad, and 18% of students answered they did not have anyone to turn with personal problems to. Feeling isolated

and not having person to turn with personal problems to happened more often to interns and international students – possible thanks to the wide networks exchange students had faced this issue a bit less often, still even among them 16% did not have a person to talk too when facing troubles.

Figure 18 Percentages of students who did not have a person to turn with personal problems to, by different groups of respondents n=8234



Summing up, exchange students created more contacts with exchange students and other foreigners, spent more time with them as well as more other worked or lived with them, while interns had more opportunities to work with people of the host country and created local networks. International students, due to the period of their stay which usually is for the whole degree, abroad created widest networks. Wide networks can help prevent a student against the feeling of isolation as well as international networks hindering negative feelings towards the local culture.

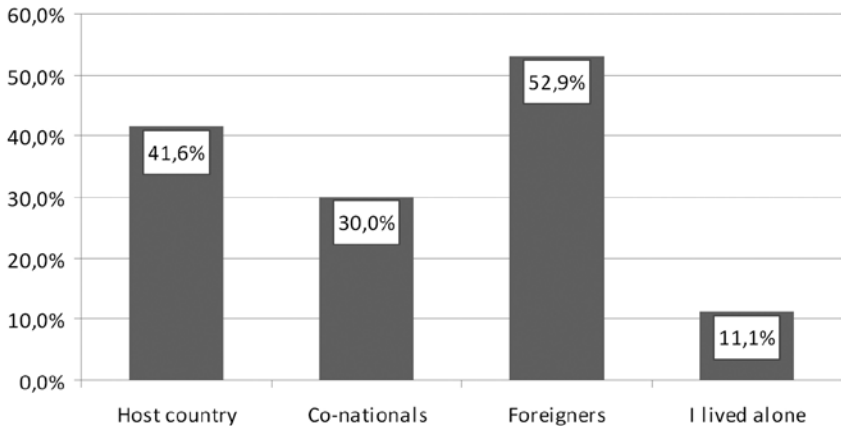
Exchanging Cultures

SOCIAL NETWORKS

What can foster the creation of the relationships and contacts with other people is a fact of living together, having classes together or working together on a project or task.

Respondents most often shared flats with foreigners (53%) and people from the host country (41,6%). Only 11% of respondents lived alone. Interns most often stayed alone (14% compared to 11% for exchange students) and more often with local people (48% compared to 40% for exchange students). Exchange students a bit often than other groups of students stayed with other foreigners, and international students – with people of their own nationality.

Figure 19 People with whom respondents shared their flat/house (%)



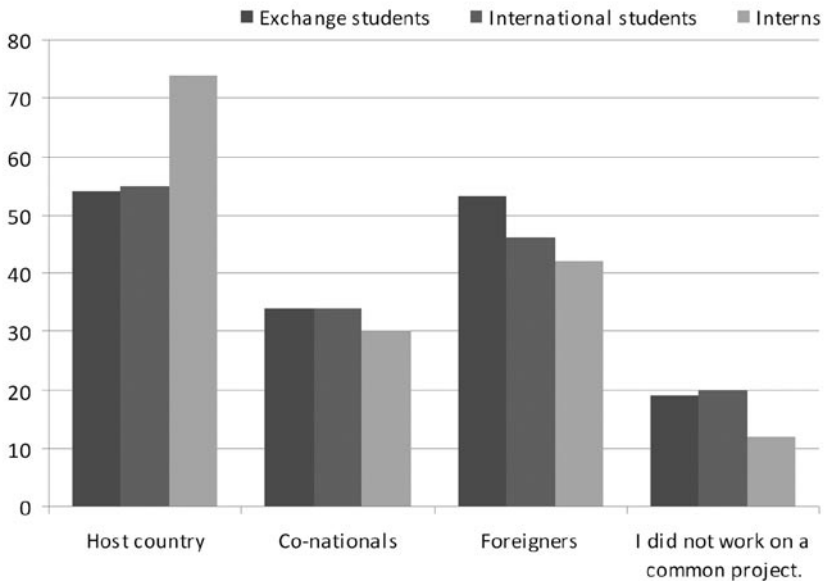
When it comes to studying, most people had classes with both local and foreign students (77%), but 16% just with local students and 7,5% just with other foreigners. The biggest amount of exchange students who studied just with other foreigners was in Czech Republic² – 31%, but also in Sweden, Poland, Denmark and Belgium. In those countries there were about 15% of students who studied just with other foreigners. Relatively more students who did their exchange period in Italy, Germany, France or Spain had just classes with local students (in Italy 29%), as these are countries which on the contrary to the

² We only considered the countries that had more than 100 respondents.

previous groups do not offer courses in English but require a students to know a local language.

When it comes to internships, 86% of interns worked with a people of the host country, 35% with co-nationals, and 49% with other foreigners. As we can see, interns had more opportunities to work on a project or task together with people of the host country, when exchange students most often worked on a project with foreigners. Among interns, there was also the smallest group of those who did not participate in any project.

Figure 20 The fact of working on a project or task together with locals, co-nationals and foreigners for different groups of respondents n=8262 (%)



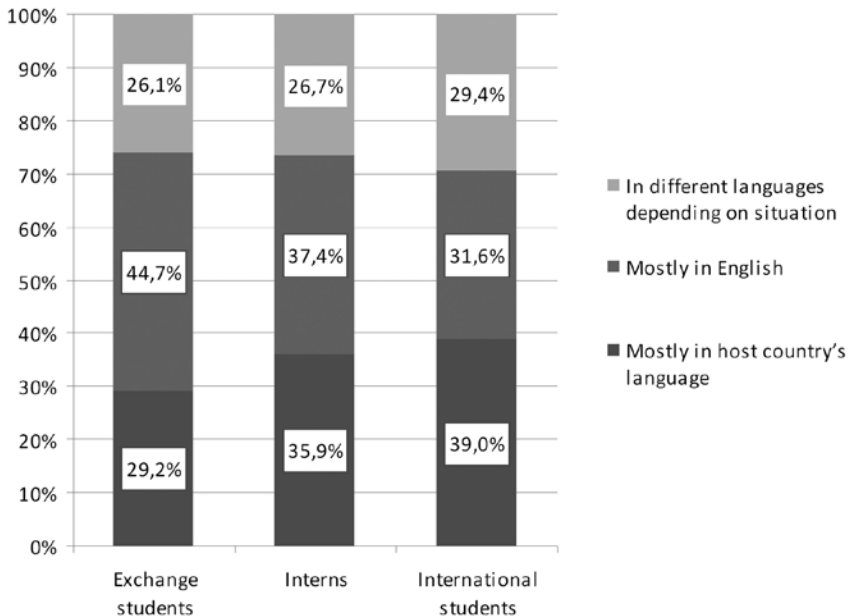
In Summary, interns had more opportunities to work on a project or task together with people of the host country, when exchange students most often worked on a project with foreigners. Students most often participated in the classes with both foreign students are foreigners, but the situation differs among the countries: in the countries were Erasmus usually participate in the courses for Erasmus which are taught in English, students more often studied just with other foreigners.

Exchanging Cultures

SPOKEN LANGUAGES

The students communicated in different languages during their period abroad. Exchange students more often talked in English than other groups, and international students more often spoke in a host country language. Nevertheless, we see that international students talked quite often in different languages depending on situation, this is probably as they had wide networks of both local and co-national friends.

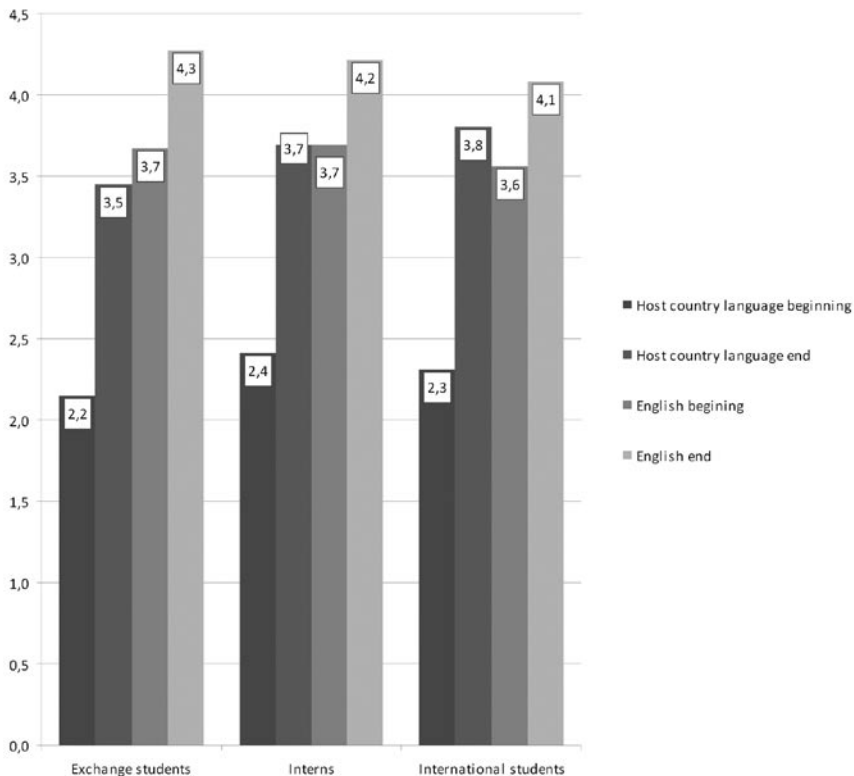
Figure 21 Communication for different groups of respondents n=8253



When it comes to the knowledge of languages that people used, the knowledge of the host language was rather low at the beginning of the stay (average about 2 on the scale where 1 meant not at all and 5 – very well). The knowledge of English at the beginning of the stay was on average much higher (about 3,5). Still, the average progress made in the knowledge of the host country language was bigger the progress in English (almost 1,5 points average, when in English – 0,5). The progress was a bit bigger for those who are international students,


which is understandable due to their longer period spent in a foreign country. On average, interns did a bit smaller progress, but they also had the highest level of the local language at the start.

Figure 22 Knowledge of the host language and English at the beginning and at the end of the stay for different groups of respondents n=8253



Those who had in average better progress in the knowledge of the host language:

- have had a close relationship with someone from a local culture;
- had spent most time or much time with local students;
- shared the flat with other host country people;



Exchanging Cultures

- had classes with the local students;
- interns who worked with host country people.

Those who had classes with other foreign students, relation with a foreign person and in general more contact with rather foreign ambiance improved more their English language skills.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

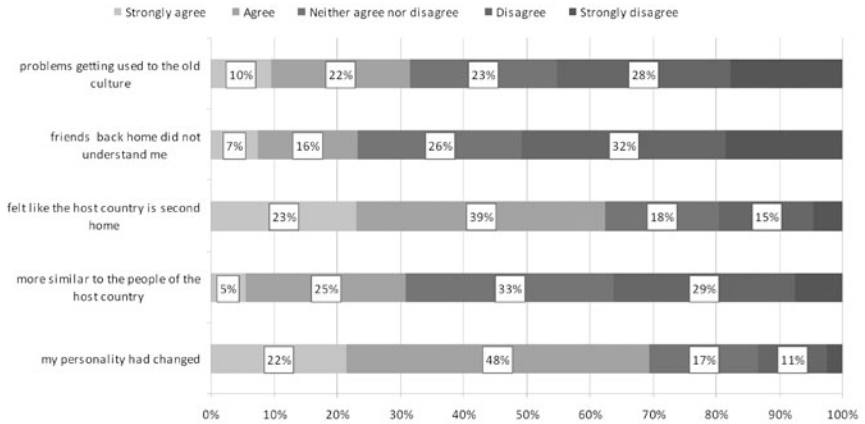
To see if the students adapted to the new culture and developed a certain autonomy within the new culture, like the fourth stage of W-curve predicts, we asked them some questions about how they felt at the end of their stay and after they got back home. According to the theory, in the fifth stage, a student experience a sense of belonging to both the host and the home culture (Sobre-Denton, Hart; 2008). Therefore we asked them if they felt like the host country is like their second home, or if they feel similar to the people of the host country.

There were no significant differences between interns, exchange or international students. 70% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that **their personality has changed** during their stay abroad. But only 23% agreed or strongly agreed that their friends didn't understand them back home, indicating that the personality change was not that big and was mostly perceived by students themselves.

Although the students agreed or strongly **agreed (62%) that the host country felt like their second home at the end of the stay abroad**, only 30% of them felt similar to the people of the host country.

When turning back home the students didn't seem to have big problems in getting used to their old culture, only 32% agreed or strongly agreed having difficulties with it.

Figure 23 Adapting to the new culture (n=8182 to 8224)

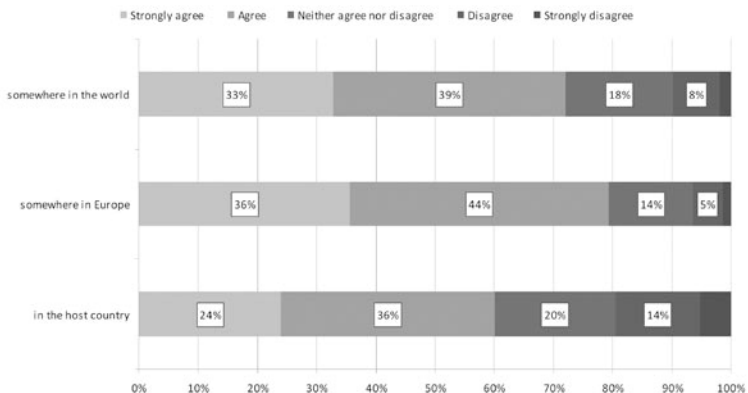


Students were also asked if they were willing to have a relationship with a person from another country and how they felt about moving abroad. This gives us an idea of how students feel about different culture and if they are somehow open minded to spend their life in close contact with or in a different country.

Students agreed or strongly agreed that they **would consider having a serious relationship** with a person from another country (68%), and many would consider having a serious relationship with a person from the country they spent their time abroad (57%).

Instead most part of the students agreed on **considering moving abroad**. The students seem to be more willing to move somewhere in Europe (80%) then somewhere else in the world (72%). And only about 60% of the students would consider going back to the host country to live there.

Figure 24 Percentage of students considering to live abroad (n=8205 to 8211)



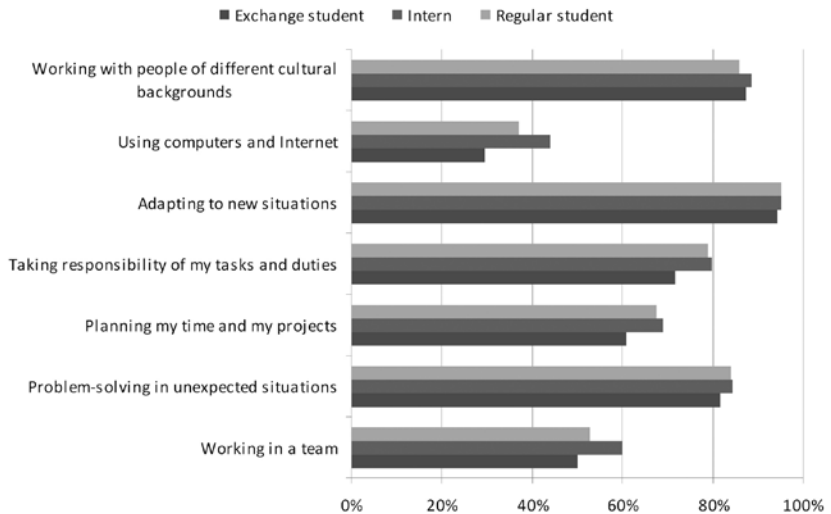
Exchanging Cultures

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

During the exchange period students don't only improve in academic aspects, but they also improve in some specific **skills** and they gain new **knowledge** outside the academic world.

Students agreed or strongly agreed that their stay abroad helped them improve the most in the ability of **adapting to new situations**, working with people from different cultural backgrounds, as well as solving problems in unexpected situations. More international and intern students and less exchange students felt that they are taking more responsibilities of their task and duties after a period abroad (respectively 77% and 71%) and they developed in planning their time and projects (respectively 67% and 61%). Interns more often mentioned skills such as working in a team and using computers and internet.

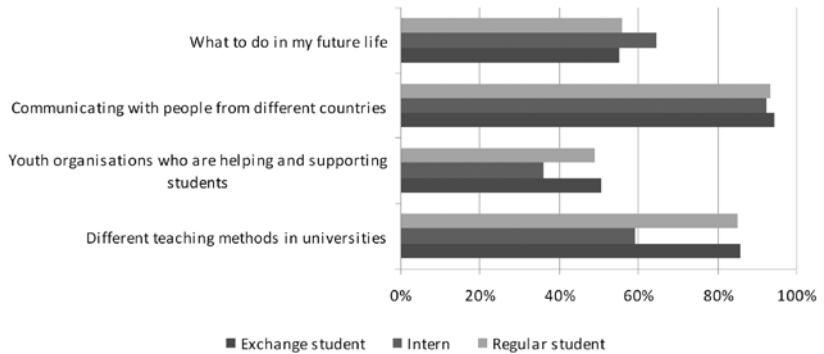
Figure 25 Percentage of students and their improvement in certain skills (n=8202 to 8209)



When we take a look at the improvement of knowledge outside the academic world, students agreed or strongly agreed most on an improvement of their knowledge in **communicating with people from different countries** (93%). Students, understandably, learned more about the existing teaching methods in universities (85%). Instead more intern students have a better idea after their stay abroad about what to do in their future life (61%), most possibly because

they do the internship at the end of their studies, so this force them to make some reflections.

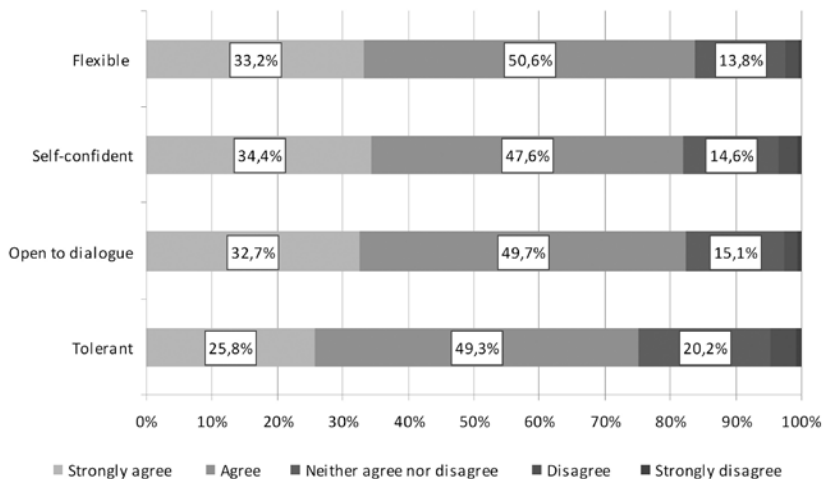
Figure 26 Percentage of students and their improvement in following knowledge (n=8191 to 8204)



PERSONALITY

Staying abroad makes personal characteristics of the students change. 82% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that after their stay abroad they felt more self-confident. Students often felt more tolerant (75%). There are no big differences for intern, international and exchange students.

Figure 27 Personality change after stay abroad (n=8209 to 8217)



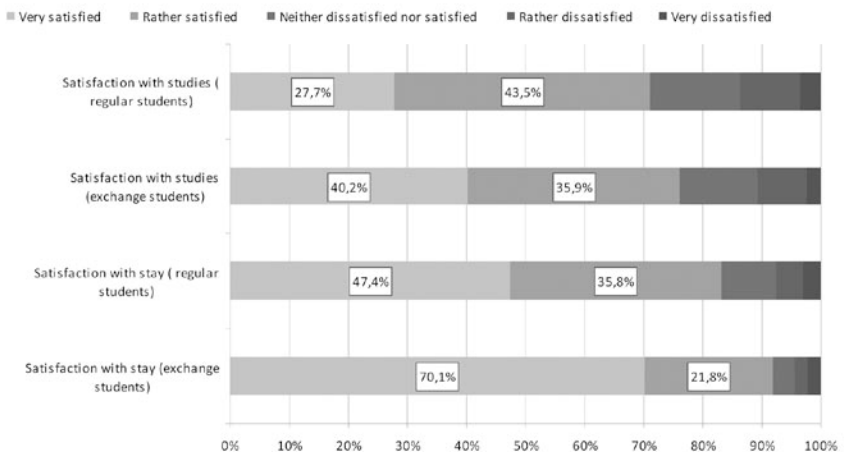
SATISFACTION WITH STAY AND STUDY

Student’s satisfaction with their stay abroad was measured using questions concerning overall satisfaction with stay, overall satisfaction with studies, satisfaction with twelve different aspects of stay (all used five point scale from 1 – very dissatisfied to 5 – very satisfied)

For overall **satisfaction with studies**, 76% of the exchange students and 71% of regular students gave a positive answer (“very satisfied” and “rather satisfied”) and for the **overall satisfaction with stay**, 92% of the exchange students and 83% of regular students gave a positive answer (“very satisfied” and “rather satisfied”). Only 11% of the exchange students and 14% of regular students gave a negative answer (“rather dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”) for the overall satisfaction with studies, and 4% of the exchange students and 8% of regular students gave a negative answer (“rather dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”) for the overall satisfaction with stay.

As previous ESNSurvey studies showed, students were more satisfied with their stay abroad than with their studies abroad³.

Figure 28 Students’ overall satisfaction with stay and study (exchange students n=5922, regular students n=1585)



³ The Paired-Samples T-Test shows that the differences are statistically significant.

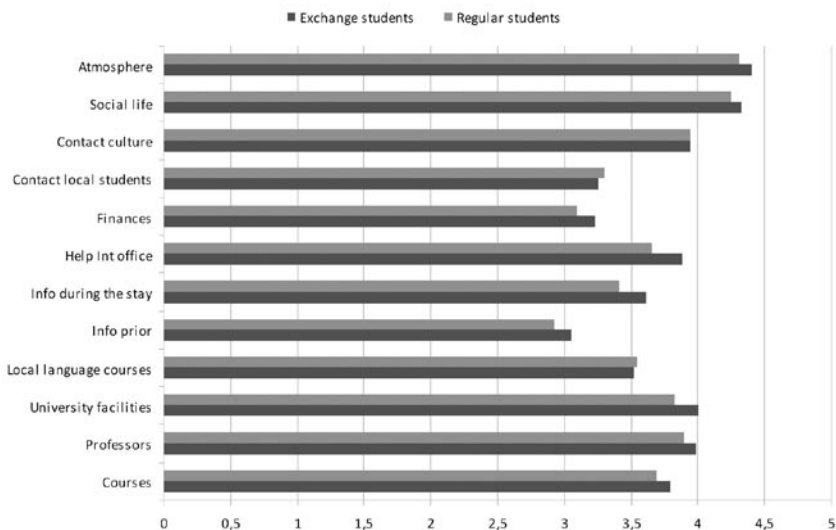
Students additionally indicated their level of satisfaction with twelve different aspects of staying abroad.

Students had the highest mean score of **satisfaction with atmosphere of the city and country where the university was located** (4,40 for exchange students and 4,30 for regular students) and the lowest mean score of **satisfaction with information prior the studies abroad (from home university)** (3,06 and 2,93 respectively).

The three elements that achieved the highest level of student satisfaction were: 1) the atmosphere of the city and country where the university was located; 2) social life; 3) university facilities (for exchange students) and contact with the host country's culture (for the regular students). At the same time, students are least satisfied with: 1) sufficiency of information prior to your studies abroad (from home university); 2) finances; 3) contact with local students.

These results are very similar to the results of the ESNSurvey 2007. The most relevant differences are the position of some factors: university facilities was at the 5th position last year, now it is at the third position for the exchange students. The opposite happens to the contact with local students. 'Finances' was at the worst position last year, now students are least satisfied with sufficiency of information prior to their studies abroad (from home university).

Figure 29 Mean students' satisfaction with different aspects of stay (exchange students: n=5908, regular students: n=1585)



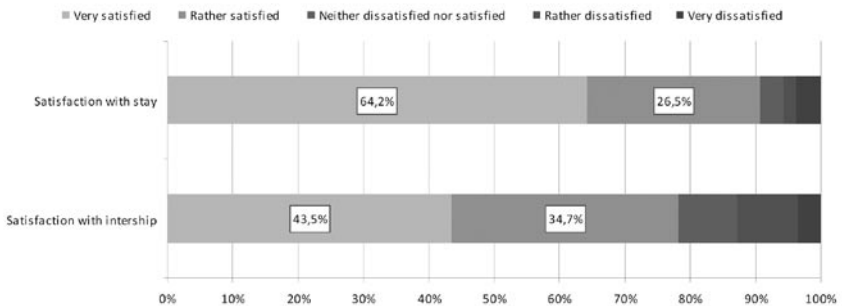
Exchanging Cultures

The results for the interns about their stay abroad were quite similar to the other two groups, but there were some differences.

For overall **satisfaction with the internship**, 78% of the people gave a positive answer (“very satisfied” and “rather satisfied”) and for the **overall satisfaction with stay**, 90% of the people gave a positive answer (“very satisfied” and “rather satisfied”). Only 13% of the people gave a negative answer (“rather dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”) for the overall satisfaction with studies, and 6% of the people gave a negative answer (“rather dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”) for the overall satisfaction with stay.

As the case of the exchange students, also interns were more satisfied with the overall stay abroad than with their internship abroad⁴.

Figure 30 People’ overall satisfaction with stay and with internship (n=733)



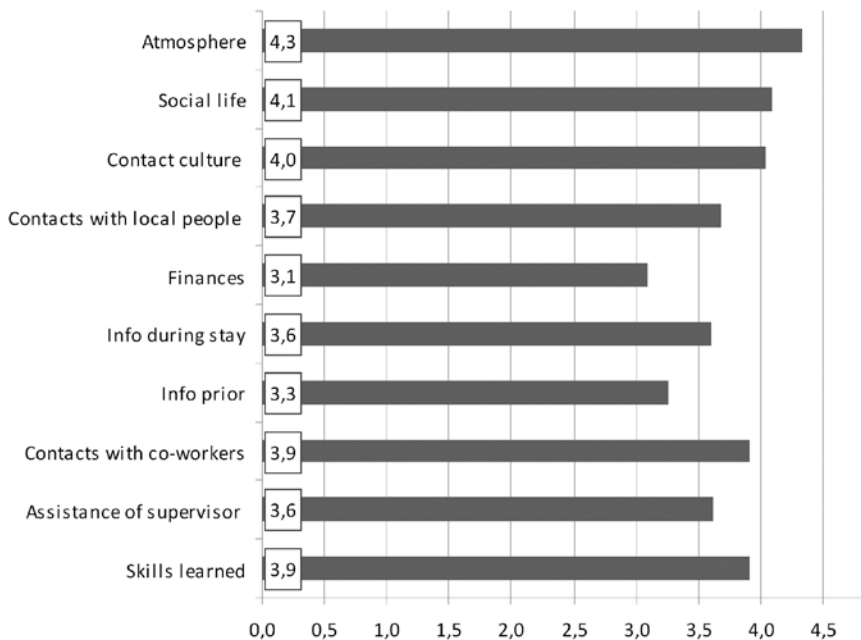
The interns additionally indicated their level of satisfaction with ten different aspects of staying abroad.

They had the highest mean score **of satisfaction with atmosphere of the city and country where they did the internship** (4,31) and the lowest mean score with their **financial situation** (3,11).

⁴ The Paired-Samples T-Test shows that the differences are statistically significant.

The three elements that achieved the highest level of satisfaction were: 1) the atmosphere of the city and country where the internship was located; 2) social life; 3) contact with the host country's culture. At the same time, they are least satisfied with: 1) finances; 2) sufficiency of information prior the internship; 3) Sufficiency of information while doing internship. These results are similar to the results of exchange and regular students.

Figure 31 Interns' satisfaction with different aspects of stay (n=730)



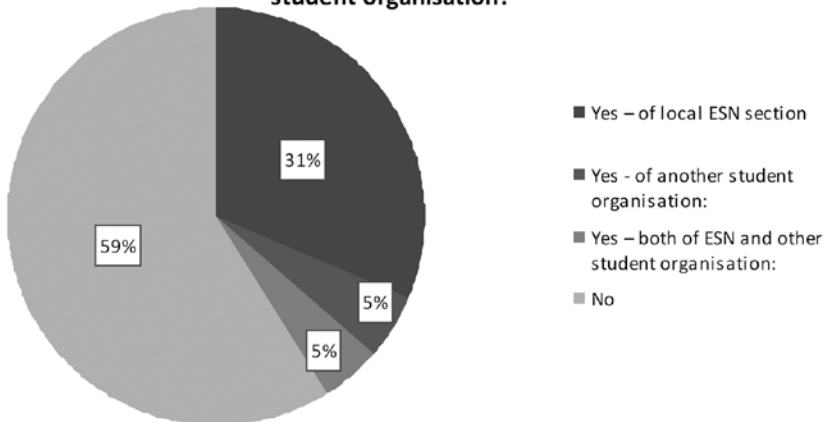
SATISFACTION WITH ESN AND OTHER STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

41% of the respondents participated or used services of ESN or another student organization. 31% of those respondents participated in the local ESN section and 5% of them participated in activities of another student organization. 5% of respondents participated in activities both of ESN and another student organization.

Most of the respondents that participated or used the services of another student organization did it within AEGEE activities, Student Unions' activities or through Buddy Networks.

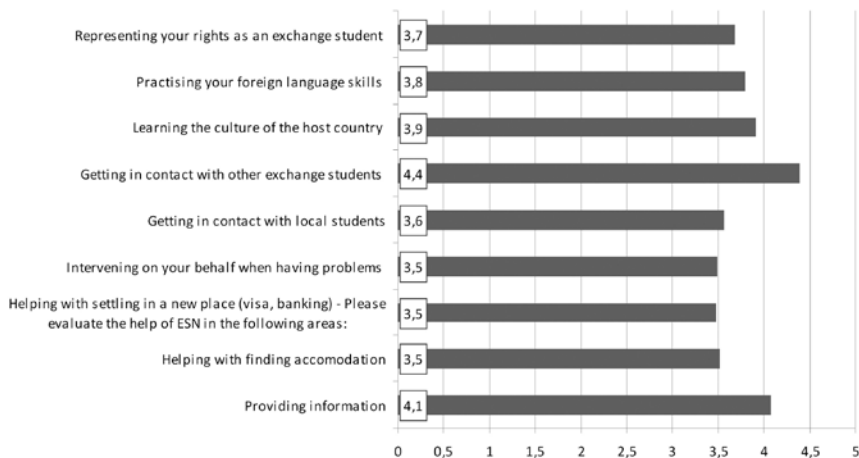
Figure 32 Percentage of respondents participating in ESN or another student organization activities n=7979

Did you participate in activities or used services of ESN or another student organisation?



Students were asked to evaluate how much ESN helped them in different areas and to evaluate seven elements of services that ESN provided to them. All the questions were measured on a five point scale from 1 to 5 (from very dissatisfied to very satisfied) and they had an extra option that they could choose in case they didn't use the service or if a certain service was not applicable to them.

Figure 33: Figure 33 ESN help in different areas (mean)

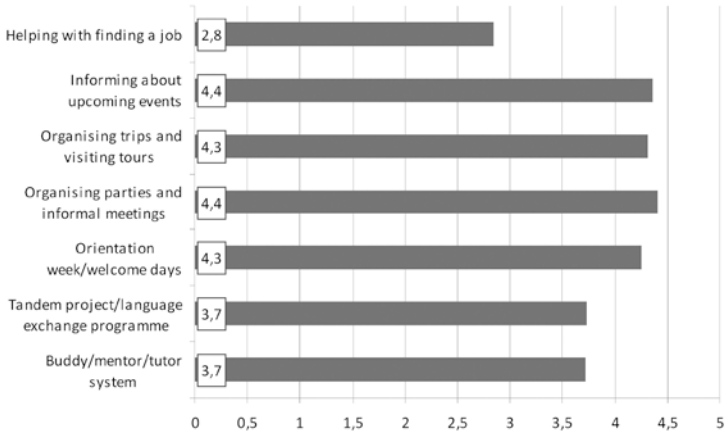


The respondents were least satisfied with the help they got in **settling in the new place** (mean=3,5) and with ESN **intervention on their behalf when having problems** (mean=3,5) and most satisfied with ESN **getting them in contact with other exchange students** (mean=4,39). ESN is not the only student organization students can find at their host university and 10% of the respondents participated or used the activities of another student organization. Those respondents were asked to evaluate also the help and services of that student organization. The results for other student organization were very similar to the ESN. The only significant difference was in case of helping them to get into contact with local students – students were more satisfied with help of the other student organization (mean=3,96) rather than ESN (mean=3,56).

There were less responses for the questions about the help received for settling in new place and finding the accommodation (~n=1720). This could mean that ESN and the other student organizations didn't provide that kind of service, but also that the students did not use it. Services most used by students were: the provision of the information and getting in contact with local or exchange students (~n=2500)

Exchanging Cultures

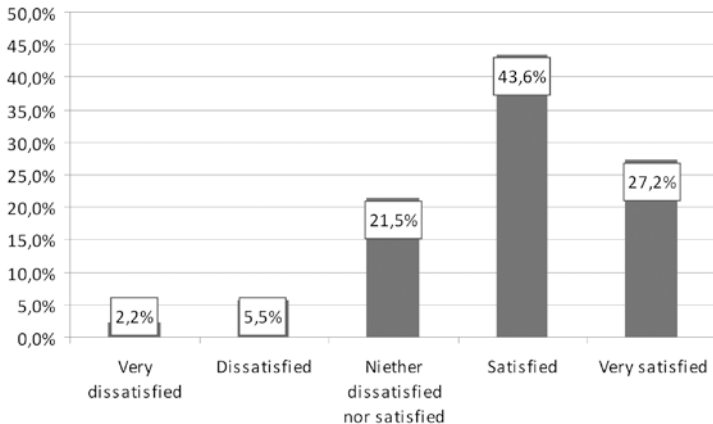
Figure 34 Mean respondents' satisfaction with services that ESN provides them n=964-2712



When we look at the evaluation of services, most of the respondents were very satisfied with ESN **informing them about upcoming events** (mean=4,42) and by the organization of parties and informal events (mean=4,44). They were less satisfied with the help they got in finding a job.

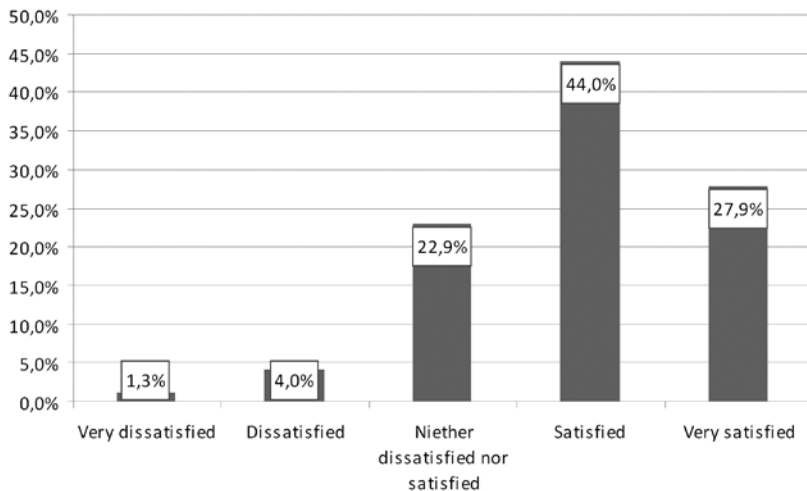
More students used services such as informal meetings and getting informing about future events, fewer students used tandem/language programme, and very few asked in ESN for help in finding a job. Participation in services of another student organization follows the same trend.

Figure 35 Overall satisfaction with ESN (n=2722)



When we asked them about their overall level of satisfaction with the help and activities provided by ESN 70% respondents were very or rather satisfied and only 7,8% were dissatisfied (rather or very dissatisfied).

Figure 36 Overall level of satisfaction with other student organization n=398



The overall satisfaction with other student organizations was 72% of respondents were very or rather satisfied and 5,3% were dissatisfied (rather or very dissatisfied).

ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

EXCHANGING CULTURES ESNSURVEY 2008

This survey can be filled out by students who:

- Were exchange students for at least 3 months in a foreign country
- Did an internship stage in a foreign country for at least 3 months and are within one year after their graduation.
- Study/studied at least 3 months in a foreign country at a foreign university as a regular student

Please mark if you:

- Went abroad as an exchange student
- Did an international internship
- Study/studied in a foreign country at a foreign university as a regular student

PART 1A. YOUR STAY AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

1. Through which programme did you study abroad?

(please refer to your most recent exchange)

- a) Erasmus Programme
- b) Bilateral agreement between universities
- c) Governmental programme
- d) Private foundation
- e) Arranged by myself
- f) Other (please name): _____

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: _____

PART 1B. YOUR STAY AS AN INTERNSHIP STUDENT

1. Through which programme did you do your internship abroad?
(*please refer to your most recent internship*)

- Erasmus Placement
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Arranged by myself
- Other: (please name) _____

2. Country where you did your internship? _____

3. City where you did your internship? _____

4. Where did you do your internship?

- a) State-owned company
- b) Private company
- c) Governmental institution
- d) University or school (private or state)
- e) European institution
- f) Non-profit organisation
- g) Other: (please name) _____

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

6. How long was your internship? Months: _____

Exchanging Cultures

PART 1C. YOUR STAY AS A REGULAR STUDENT

1. Foreign country where you study/studied in as a regular student?

2. City where you study/studied in as a regular student?

3. The university you study/studied at as a regular student?

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

5. How long is already/was the period of your stay there? Months _____

Part 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

7. Please indicate how strong you agree or disagree with the following statements describing your situation before going abroad for your studies/internship:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) I had enough information about the host country's culture	1	2	3	4	5
b) I knew what kind of food is typical in the host country	1	2	3	4	5
c) I knew about the main differences with my own culture regarding contacts with other people	1	2	3	4	5
d) I knew the stereotypes of the host country	1	2	3	4	5


8. Before I went to my host country to study or do internship:

	Yes	No
a) I had already spent more than 3 months in the country I was going to live in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) I had already visited the country I was going to live in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) I had visited the hosting university or hosting company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) I had friends from the city I was going to study/work in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) I had family in the city I was going to study/work in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) I talked to people who had already studied/worked in the host city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) I made contacts with local students/young people by Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) I had arranged my accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PART 3. CULTURE SHOCK

- At the beginning of my stay abroad:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) I had positive expectations about my stay abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
b) I felt I had everything under control.	1	2	3	4	5
c) I often felt tired even though I slept enough.	1	2	3	4	5



Exchanging Cultures

d) I sometimes criticised the host culture.	1	2	3	4	5
e) I was always confident in myself.	1	2	3	4	5
f) I could not solve simple problems.	1	2	3	4	5
g) I often cried without any reason.	1	2	3	4	5
h) I started to realize how great my home culture is.	1	2	3	4	5
i) I missed home a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
j) I was not worried at all about my new environment.	1	2	3	4	5
k) I was looking for contacts with local students/young people.	1	2	3	4	5
l) I was looking for contacts with other exchange students/foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
m) I was looking for contacts with people of my own nationality.	1	2	3	4	5

• After some time abroad I ...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
a) I had fun learning about the host culture	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) I did not appreciate the host culture	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) I stayed with people from my home country	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) I discovered most habits of the host country	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. During my stay abroad:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) There was a period that I felt isolated.	1	2	3	4	5
b) I often preferred to be alone.	1	2	3	4	5
c) I had someone to turn to with my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5

Exchanging Cultures

12. Please indicate how much time you spent with the following groups during your stay abroad

(☞ Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as “Internship Student”)

	Most of my time	Much time	Not much time	I did not spend time with them
Local students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local people other than students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreigners other than students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People of my nationality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Please indicate how much time you spent with the following groups during your stay abroad:

(☞ Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as “Exchange Student or Regular Student”)

	Most of my time	Much time	Not much time	I did not spend time with them
Co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local people other than co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreigners other than co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People of my nationality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. How many friends did you have among local students or other young people from a host country?

- a) 0
- b) 1-5
- c) 6-20
- d) 21-50
- e) more than 50

15. How many friends did you have among foreign students or other foreigners?

- a) 0
- b) 1-5
- c) 6-20
- d) 21-50
- e) more than 50

16. How many friends did you have among students coming from your home country?

- a) 0
- b) 1-5
- c) 6-20
- d) 21-50
- e) more than 50

17. Did you have a close relationship with someone who had the nationality of the host country?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. Did you have a close relationship with another foreigner (someone not being of the same nationality as you are nor of nationality of the host country)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. During your stay abroad did you shared your flat/house with:
(Mark more answers if relevant)

Exchanging Cultures

- People of the host country
- People of my nationality
- People of different nationality than mine, but not local
- I lived alone

20. Did you have classes at university with:

(☞Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as “Internship Student”)

- a) Local students
- b) Foreign students
- c) Both

21. Did you work with: *Mark more answers if relevant.*

(☞Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as “Exchange Student or Regular Student”)

- People of the host country
- People of my nationality
- People of different nationality than mine, but not local

22. Did you work together on a project or task with:

- People of the host country
- People of my nationality
- People of different nationality than mine, but not local
- I did not work with anyone on a common project

23. During your stay did you:

(☞Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as “Internship Student”)

	Yes	No
Have a part-time job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel around the host country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel to another foreign country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Go back home at least once	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Call home country at least once a week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. During your stay did you:

(☞Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as “Exchange Student or Regular Student”)

	Yes	No
Do volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel around the host country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel to another foreign countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Go back home at least once	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Call home country at least once a week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Which language did you communicate in during your exchange?

- a) Mostly in host country’s language
- b) Mostly in English
- c) In different languages depending on situation

26. Evaluate on the scale from 1–not at all to 5–very well, how well you did speak the language of your host country at:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	Very well 5
The beginning of your stay abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
The end of your stay abroad or now.	1	2	3	4	5

27. Evaluate on the scale from 1–not at all to 5–very well, how well you did speak English at:

	Not at all 1	2	3	4	Very well 5
The beginning of your stay abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
The end of your stay abroad or now.	1	2	3	4	5

Exchanging Cultures

28. How would you indicate the differences between the culture of your host country and your own culture?

Very similar	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Very different
--------------	----	----	----	----	----	----------------

29. Did you interrupt your stay abroad because you did not like the host country or its culture?

- a) No
- b) Yes

PART 4A. SATISFACTION AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

30. What is your overall level of satisfaction with:

	Very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
a) your studies as an exchange student?	1	2	3	4	5
b) your stay abroad as an exchange student?	1	2	3	4	5

31. 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

PART 4B. SATISFACTION AS AN INTERNSHIP STUDENT

32. What is your overall level of satisfaction with:

	Very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
a) your internship?	1	2	3	4	5
b) your stay abroad?	1	2	3	4	5

Exchanging Cultures

33. Please evaluate the following aspects of your stay abroad.

	Very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
a) Skills learned during internship	1	2	3	4	5
b) Assistance of internship supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
c) Contacts with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
d) Sufficiency of information prior to internship	1	2	3	4	5
e) Sufficiency of information while doing internship	1	2	3	4	5
f) Financial situation	1	2	3	4	5
g) Contacts with local people	1	2	3	4	5
h) Contact with the host country's culture	1	2	3	4	5
i) Social life	1	2	3	4	5
j) The atmosphere of the city and country where you did internship	1	2	3	4	5

PART 4C. SATISFACTION AS A REGULAR STUDENT

34. What is your overall level of satisfaction with:

	Very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied
a) your studies as a regular student?	1	2	3	4	5
b) your stay abroad as a regular student?	1	2	3	4	5

35. 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

Exchanging Cultures

h) Financial situation	1	2	3	4	5
i) Contacts with local students	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

COMING BACK OF YOUR EXCHANGE

36. Do you rather agree or rather disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) I felt my personality had changed during my stay abroad	1	2	3	4	5
b) At the end of my stay abroad I felt I am more similar to the people of the host country	1	2	3	4	5
c) Before ending my period abroad I felt like the host country is my second home	1	2	3	4	5
d) My friends did not understand me after I came back home	1	2	3	4	5
e) when I turned back home I had problems getting used to my old culture	1	2	3	4	5

37. I would consider:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) Having a serious relationship with a person from another country	1	2	3	4	5
b) Having a serious relationship with a person from the country I spent my time abroad	1	2	3	4	5
c) Moving to live in the host country	1	2	3	4	5
d) Moving to live somewhere in Europe	1	2	3	4	5
e) Moving to live somewhere in the world	1	2	3	4	5

38. My stay abroad helped me improving the following skills:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) Working in a team	1	2	3	4	5
b) Problem-solving in unexpected situations	1	2	3	4	5
c) Planning my time and my projects	1	2	3	4	5
d) Taking responsibility of my tasks and duties	1	2	3	4	5
e) Adapting to new situations	1	2	3	4	5
f) Using computers and Internet	1	2	3	4	5
g) Working with people of different cultural backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5

Exchanging Cultures

39. My stay abroad helped me improving my knowledge about:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) Different teaching methods in universities	1	2	3	4	5
b) Youth organisations who are helping and supporting students	1	2	3	4	5
c) Communicating with people from different countries	1	2	3	4	5
d) What to do in my future life	1	2	3	4	5

40. My stay abroad made me more:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) Tolerant	1	2	3	4	5
b) Open to dialogue	1	2	3	4	5
c) Self-confident	1	2	3	4	5
d) Flexible	1	2	3	4	5

PART 5. ABOUT ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK (ESN)

41. Did you participate in activities or used services of ESN or another student organisation?

- a) Yes – of local ESN section (☞ go to question 42 and 45)
- b) Yes – of another student organisation: (name) _____
(☞ go to question 43 and 44)
- c) Yes – both of ESN and other student organisation: (name) _____
- d) No (☞ skip part 5 and go to part 6)

42. 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

Exchanging Cultures

43. Please evaluate the help of a student organisation you mentioned earlier 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, if applicable.

	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

Exchanging Cultures

45. 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

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

Very dissatisfied	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Very satisfied
-------------------	----	----	----	----	----	----------------

47. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the help and activities provided by the other student organisation you mentioned?

Very dissatisfied	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Very satisfied
-------------------	----	----	----	----	----	----------------

Part 6. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

48. Age: _____

49. Gender:

- a) female
- b) male

50. Country where your home university is located: _____

(☞Skip this question and go to question 52 if you fill in the survey as "Regular Student")

51. City where your home university is located: _____

(☞Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as "Internship Student")

52. Country of origin: _____

53. City of origin: _____

54. Home university: _____

(☞Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as "Regular Student")

55. Level/type of studies:

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

Exchanging Cultures

56. Major/area of studies: _____ 57.

Year of graduation: _____

(↳ Skip this question and go to the next if you fill in the survey as "Internship Student")

58. Do you have any disabilities?

- a) Yes
- b) No

59. 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

60. Who in your family has a higher education degree?

(such as a university degree)

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

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

- Above my country average
- Average
- Below my country average

62. Please indicate how strong you agree or disagree with the following statements about your character in general:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a) I am an open person to new situations	1	2	3	4	5
b) I give up easy when learning new things	1	2	3	4	5
c) I like challenges	1	2	3	4	5

d) I am a social person	1	2	3	4	5
e) I have no problems with being helped by others	1	2	3	4	5
f) I am a curious person	1	2	3	4	5
g) I am a person that almost never initiates contacts	1	2	3	4	5
h) I like new situations	1	2	3	4	5
i) I am an independent person	1	2	3	4	5


ANNEX 2: ABOUT ESN

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the biggest inter-disciplinary European student organisation in the field of mobility. ESN is a non-political, non-profit and non-religious organisation with over **12.000 volunteer members from local student groups (so called sections) in 299 Higher Education Institutions in 32 countries**. These are supporting educational, social and cultural integration of exchange students, providing practical information for incoming and outgoing students about the exchange programmes and reintegration and providing intercultural experience to students who cannot access a period abroad (internationalization at home). The vision of ESN is the enrichment of society through international students – thus, ESN works for fostering the mobility of students under the principle of SHS – students helping students.

ESN provides its services annually to about **150.000 international students** in Europe and beyond.

ESN's activities comprise of **hundreds of projects** developed at every different level. The main international projects of Erasmus Student Network are:

- 1. ESNSurvey** is a European-wide research on different topics concerning academic and non-academic mobility. It is annually conducted among international students as well as non-mobile students, with average response rate of 8.000 participants. Started in 2005, the ESNSurvey is the biggest regular research prepared and run entirely by students for other students. So far, the ESNSurvey investigated into the following topics – Experience




Exchanging Cultures

of Studying Abroad (2005), Exchange Students' Rights (2006), Generation Mobility (2007) and Exchanging Cultures (2008).

2. **PRIME** (Problems of Recognition in Making Erasmus) is a qualitative research at about 100 European universities on the procedures applied to outgoing Erasmus / Exchange students. According to the results from the ESNSurvey 2006 and 2007, recognition of courses studied abroad represents still a barrier for the mobility of students. The aim is to collect best practices among participating universities and through their dissemination contribute to the improvement of the situation.
3. **ExchangeAbility** – the goal of this project is to allow disabled students to be fully involved in the activities of the local sections of ESN. Pilot sections will be encouraged to engage disabled students at their universities in the work for the exchange students. Through participation and involvement in the activities, disabled students will be given an opportunity to experience the international and intercultural atmosphere associated with the exchange programmes. The long term goal of the project is to encourage an increasing number of disabled students to go for an exchange.
4. The **European Campus** is a project in collaboration with UNICA, Youth Agora and several other partners. It aims at opening the ESN Galaxy and Satellite to a wider public and merging formal and non-formal information into one Galaxy. Access, provision and the quality of information is regarded as one of the biggest obstacles to (student) mobility as various researches highlight.
5. **Happy Birthday! ESN** – Together Twentyyear – celebrations of the 20th anniversary of ESN. Erasmus Student Network will in 2009 celebrate its 20th year of existence. The primary goal is to emphasise what ESN stands for (mobility and education as a means towards openness, tolerance, understanding), what ESN as a whole, and as individuals, is able to do and what our plans for the future are. ESN will go on throughout the year, up to 16 October 2009, which is the actual date when ESN was founded 20 years ago. There are **four projects** under the main theme of Birthday celebrations. All Happy Birthday! ESN projects have received a **moral support** from the Commissioner Fige of the European Commission, from the President of the Committee of Regions, from the president of the European Parliament, from the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA) and from the President of the European Youth Forum.
- o **Birthday Book** symbolises a big Birthday Card in which every single ESN section and member can express their best wishes for the Happy Birthday

of ESN. The Book shall eventually travel among all the ESN sections like a thread.

- o **Annual General Meeting 2009 in Utrecht** as the main decision making body of ESN was also an official event of the Birthday celebrations. Utrecht was the very first section of ESN, it was thus the best place to start off the next 20 years, with a look and discussions about the ESN future and its active role in the field of international students and mobile young people.
 - o **Postcard competition** “Send a postcard – send a chance” is a postcard campaign from June till August 2009 that aims at increasing awareness of social exclusion due to different cultural backgrounds. It also focuses on how mobility increases intercultural understanding; thus prevents or reduces xenophobia and racism.
 - o **Give20** is a large-scale fundraising campaign, launched by ESN for a project of UNICEF in Bhutan to improve life conditions of children with disadvantaged background and provide them access to education. All sections of ESN together will raise money throughout the whole year 2009. Through this project, ESN members want to share their fortunate fate so far when they are allowed to study and travel freely.
5. **ESN Identity** is a centralized management system for ESN sections and members which creates a powerful social network. ESN Identity is a high quality information platform made by the use of Web 2.0 technologies. It aims to facilitate contacts between people, overcoming the problem of distance and travelling.
 6. **ESN Galaxy** is a web platform based on the new Web 2.0 technologies. It brings together all the ESN sections, allowing them to communicate and share information in real time. This special system allows international students and ESN members to look for accommodation or to get information on their host country. ESN Galaxy also supports local sections by provision of web-based services.
 7. **ESN Newsletter** is an ESN online communication tool, sent twice per month (at the beginning and in the middle of each month) to over 4.500 subscribers informing them about the network, ESN events as well as about other interesting initiatives happening in Europe and beyond.
 8. **ESN Magazine** is published three times a year. It is an informative high-quality magazine about issues concerning the ESN, Europe and the EU in particular, exchange and mobility. The articles are written by the ESN volunteers and students from all around Europe.



Exchanging Cultures

- 9. ESN Events** – the International Board calls for the majority of the ESN international events, taking place every year. The Board assists to the organisers, especially with advice and support. These events include 5 Regional Platforms (Central European Platform, Northern European Platform, South Eastern European Platform, South Western European Platform and Western European Platform), National Boards Meeting, Cultural Medley and Annual General Meeting of ESN.
- 10. ESN Card** is an ESN membership card, distributed by ESN sections to their members and exchange students. The card offers a number of discounts at local and national level, together with some other advantages. Annually, ESN issues about 40.000 cards.

Erasmus Student Network is a candidate member of the European Youth Forum since April 2007 and was awarded **participatory status with the Council of Europe** at the end of December 2008. ESN is a **courtesy member of the European Association for International Education**.

Contact:

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

ESN AISBL

Rue Hydraulique / Waterkrachtstraat, 15

B-1210 Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode / Sint-Jost-ten-Node

Brussels BELGIUM

Tel.: +32 (0) 22 567 427

Mob.: +32 (0) 475 612 677

www.esn.org

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

ANNEX 3: WINNERS ESNSURVEY 2008



Antti Valkeapää

From Lappeenranta, Finland he was exchange student in Stuttgart, Germany in 2007.

The thought of culture shock did not cross my mind as I began my exchange year in **Universität Stuttgart**.

However, during orientation, I came across a vast array of fellow exchange students all hailing from different countries. Regardless of cultural backgrounds, friendships were made, opinions shared, and hearts were united during the year.

Most memorable were the international potluck parties – not only unfamiliar dishes were offered, but also the customs of each country and phrases of languages learned. Even though **the first steps in the new cultural environment felt like riding a bike up a straight wall** – it was worth it!

Many thanks for an unforgettable year to you fellow exchange students that I had pleasure to get to know. I miss you all dearly!



JENNIFER HICKEY

From Leixlip, Ireland started in 2007 her studies in Aachen, Germany.

I really enjoyed my ERASMUS year abroad in **Aachen, Germany**.

It's pretty easy to type cast a culture for a country and in honesty I expected my experience of Germany to be very different than it was. It was brilliant getting to know so many people from all over the world and learning things about countries and cultures that you really would never learn about in college.

Exchanging Cultures

It's was amazing just how different even the simple things like socializing were.

Overall ERASMUS was a great experience! I made a lot of friends and it's a year I'll never forget!



DIPU JESWANI

From Tenerife island, Spain he was exchange student Göteborg, Sweden in 2008.

My experience as an exchange student has meant more than I thought at the beginning.

Initially I had a basic and **international image of the country** I was going to live for a long period of time. But then everything changed once I moved there, leaving me realize that the country was offering more and that there was, for me, a new culture and traditions that I wanted to know more than ever.

I met people from **all around the world** (in addition to the local people, many other exchange students) with whom I shared unforgettable moments and that allowed me to understand more how the world takes care of us.

Without a doubt, a unique experience that I believe everyone should live at least once in our lives.



FEDERICA GIULANI

From Rome, Italy and she was exchange student in Bergen, Norway in 2008.

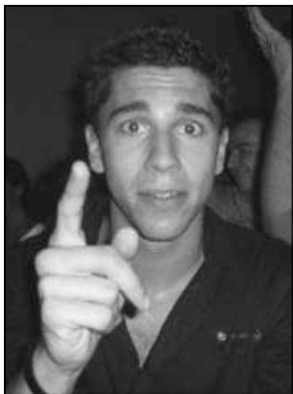
I have always been interested in **foreign countries and cultures.**

Being an Erasmus student on the last year I had the chance to be a part of a big exchange experience.

The more I learnt about the other cultures, the more I knew about me.

When you put all the differences behind and try to understand and live like the others, you end up totally changed, in a positive way. Each person you meet gives you a piece of your personal puzzle, helping you to find out who you really are.

I believe this is the real power of Erasmus.



DAMIEN AELLEN

From Laussane, Switzerland he was exchange student in Madrid, Spain in 2006/2007.

Spain... I can't help it, everytime I think about my time there, I feel strangely good and bad at the same time, balancing between nostalgia and happy memories.

The beginnings had been very rough. No clue about the language, no flat where to sleep, just an overcrowded youth hostel in the town center...

But, it hadn't been long before I start to feel the Erasmus side of life.

Beside the fact of being abroad, what I really liked and valued there was just that I felt completely like **a kid of the world. No border, no limits, just a flow of culture and new experiences**, mainly brought by the other exchange students.

My exchange time has taught me a lot, about the world around me but also about myself.

I'll never forget my time there and hope always being able to have that little smile and that tear drop everytime I think about it.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 What was your most recent experience? (n=8283)	11
Figure 2 Programmes through which exchange students went abroad (n=5939)	12
Figure 3 Programmes through which interns went abroad (n=735)	12
Table 1 Countries of the exchange students' home universities (n=5932).....	13
Table 2 Countries of the universities where the interns graduated (n=725).....	14
Table 3 Country of origin of the regular students (n=1589)	14
Figure 4 Level of studies of the respondents(n=8186)	14
Figure 5 Area of studies of the respondents.....	15
Figure 6 Parents' educational attainment	16
Figure 7 Family's income	16
Figure 8 Area where family lives (%)	17
Figure 9 Character of respondents (mean)	17
Table 4 Country of the exchange students' host university	18
Table 5 Country of the university from which interns had graduated.....	18
Table 6 Country of origin of the international students	19
Figure 10 Disabled students – Area of studies	20
Figure 11 Disabled students – Level of studies	21
Figure 12 Experiences with the hosting country or city before going for different groups of respondents. N=8262.....	24
Figure 13 Students' feelings and attitudes at the beginning of the stay abroad. N=8192 to 8245.	25
Figure 14 Percentage of exchange and international students that spent most of their time or much time with selected groups of people (n=7470 to 7502).....	27
Figure 15 Percentage of interns that spent most of their time or much time with selected groups of people (n=726 to 734)	27

.....>

Figure 16 Size of the friends networks for different groups of respondents n=8262 (%)	28
Figure 17 People with whom respondents have had a close relationship n=8226	29
Figure 18 Percentages of students who did not have a person to turn with personal problems to, by different groups of respondents n=8234.....	30
Figure 19 People with whom respondents shared their flat/house (%)	31
Figure 20 The fact of working on a project or task together with locals, co-nationals and foreigners for different groups of respondents n=8262 (%)	32
Figure 21 Communication for different groups of respondents n=8253	33
Figure 22 Knowledge of the host language and English at the beginning and at the end of the stay for different groups of respondents n=8253.....	34
Figure 23 Adapting to the new culture (n=8182 to 8224)	36
Figure 24 Percentage of students considering to live abroad (n=8205 to 8211)	36
Figure 25 Percentage of students and their improvement in certain skills (n=8202 to 8209)	37
Figure 26 Percentage of students and their improvement in following knowledge (n=8191 to 8204)	38
Figure 27 Personality change after stay abroad (n=8209 to 8217).....	38
Figure 28 Students' overall satisfaction with stay and study (exchange students n=5922, regular students n=1585)	39
Figure 29 Mean students' satisfaction with different aspects of stay (exchange students: n=5908, regular students: n=1585)	40
Figure 30 People' overall satisfaction with stay and with internship (n=733)	41
Figure 31 Interns' satisfaction with different aspects of stay (n=730).....	42
Figure 32 Percentage of respondents participating in ESN or another student organization activities n=7979.....	43
Figure 33: Figure 33 ESN help in different areas (mean)	44
Figure 34 Mean respondents' satisfaction with services that ESN provides them n=964-2712	45
Figure 35 Overall satisfaction with ESN (n=2722)	45
Figure 36 Overall level of satisfaction with other student organization n=398.....	46

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ESNSurvey 2008: Exchanging Cultures was open for three months from June till August 2008 and during this period, about 8.200 students and young people participated to share their opinions and experience of studying or working abroad. Such a high number of responses was only possible thanks to the help of all the local sections within the Erasmus Student Network and thanks to the support of many other associations and institutions, active in the field of international education. Our thanks goes especially to all the ESNSurvey partners of 2008 – Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), AEGEE, British Council, Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Coimbra Group, Compostela Group, CRUI, European Association International Education (EAIE) and Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA).

Furthermore, ESN wishes to thank also to the Erasmus Unit of the European Commission, and namely to Ms. Barbara Nolan, the head of the Erasmus Unit, for their kind and highly appreciated support towards of the ESNSurvey. Our gratitude goes as well to all the National LLP Agencies and universities that helped us spread the word about the ESNSurvey and reach their students and members.

For the first time, the ESNSurvey online questionnaire was implemented by Universum, a Swedish research institute. We would like to thank them, and especially our contact person Michiel Pool, for the smooth cooperation and contribution to the success of the ESNSurvey.

Last but not least, the ESNSurvey is a product of countless days of work of the ESNSurvey team, composed by ESN members from different countries and cultures. It is thanks to their dedication, motivation and enthusiasm that ESNSurvey continues to be one of the most successful projects of ESN.

NOTES