Obstacles to mobility: problems and solutions

Responses from the WG Mobility

Country Code	Respondents	Problems	Solutions
CY	**Marios Kassinopoulos, Cyprus, Cyprus University of Technology**	1. The problem of accommodation for incoming students 2. The problem of language for incoming and sometimes for outgoing students	1. In my first Institution we didn't have at all Students Hall and so the local students had to find accommodation in the private sector. The problem was that for Erasmus students who wanted accommodation for a limited period of time, 5 or maximum 9 months it was extremely difficult to find rooms. There were cases where this problem prevented us from receiving more Erasmus students. In the new university there is a small Student Hall and for the moment a limited number of rooms are available. These rooms are given only to local students. We make efforts to reserve some rooms for Erasmus students and we are optimist to succeed in the near future. 2. The second problem was the problem of language. We had exchanges with two universities from France (Tours and Bourges) with which we had a problem of language. Our students did not speak French and French students did not speak Greek. So we decided that both Erasmus students, incoming and outgoing could do their final year project in the foreign institution with supervision in English language. This has been proved to be a very good solution. The final year project in both institutions took place in the second semester and had duration of about three months. We had received until now 10 French students and sent 6 Cypriot students to France. Now we are on the way to organize student placement in the local industry.
CY	**Mike Trimikliniotis, Cyprus**	Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility 1. What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles? 2. Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?	1 a) The University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Tecnology operate the Foreign Language Centres facilitating mobility for incoming and outgoing students. b) At UCY there is tutorial support in English for incoming students. Furthermore, the International Relations Committee of the Senate is responsible for the promotion and the facilitation of mobility. c) Administrative staff from all universities will engage in the new mobility programme of Erasmus (HE institutions staff training in a HEI abroad) during the year 2008-2009. d) The national Erasmus Coordinators are also involved in mobility schemes. e) All uiversities participate in the Erasmus Mobility Program and most of them operate Mobility offices encouraging students, faculty and staff to participate in the Erasmus mobility programmes. Those Mobility offices also have established several new bilateral agreements and try to get involved in mobility in the widest possible range of subject areas and host countries. f) In general, the universities have established various procedures to create more awareness on staff and student mobility which include direct mail campaigns, promotional leaflets and posters, information sessions in various classes, promotion via websites, continuous promotion through the open-door policy of each HE institution Erasmus office and the enhancement of close links with appropriate faculty members. 2) Visas, work permits and residence permits are not required from students coming from European Union Countries.

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CY	**Mike Trimikliniotis, Cyprus**	3. Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff? 4. Are study periods taken abroad recognised? 5. Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff? 6.Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility? .	3. At the UCY and the Private Univeristies (UNIC and EUC) complementary funding is available from individual and institutional budgets to offset the additional costs of mobility. Financial support for outgoing students, teachers and staff is also provided through the Erasmus Grants. At the UCY there is a special article for the promotion of international relations and realisation of bilateral agreements of cooperation with other institutions.The state provides funding within the framework of cultural agreements of cooperation between the Republic of Cyprus and other countries. 4. At private institutions students are always provided with a Transcipt of Records that corresponds to the period of studies completed under the Erasmus. The Learning Agreement is also signed and stamped by the Host Institutional Coordinator as a confirmation of the ECTS credits awarded during the Erasmus Period. 5. At UCY accommodation is provided for exchange students and information to incoming staff regarding accommodation facilities is also provided. At private institutions accomodation is offered to Mobile students. 6.The public institutions have proceeded to presentations to students and staff, to consultations with Departments and the Erasmus Coordinators, to the pass or fail policy regarding the student´s exams and to the procedures of recognition of studies. The private institutions have proceeded to direct mail campaigns, promotional leaflets and posters, information sessions in various classes, promotion via website, continuous promotion through the open-door policy of the Erasmus Office and the enhancement of close links with appropriate faculty members.
DE	**Peter Greisler, Germany**	1. Frameworks: States in the EHEA have developed structural guidelines for their universities, in some cases very detailed, that on the one hand indeed are acceptable regarding the basic structures agreed in the Bologna Process, but on the other hand are building new barriers to mobility because of their binding character. These structural guidelines relate for example to the number of ECTS points required to gain a BA or MA degree; they relate to the designation of certain degrees or even to the size of modules. In a cooperation of two universities, for example in a joint-degree programme, those differences must be overcome with great difficulty.	1. A solution to this problem is not possible by standarising such regulations throughout Europe, as this would create a rigid system and the required effort of coordination, even on a on a government level, would exceed a tolerable extent. It would also be contrary to the spirit of the Bologna Process, which builds upon voluntary participation and diversity. Instead, the regulation of these structural questions - as far as it appears necessary at all - should be left to the universities, so that they themselves e.g. can dissent from these regulations in the interest of cooperation with a foreign university. We recommend to Ministers that they, if possible, refrain from introducing such structural guidelines. In cases where Ministers do not want to waive structural regulations, as they are considered essential to ensure national uniformity, universities should be enabled to dissent from the regulations, at least in cases of international cooperation within the structural frameworks of the Bologna Process.
DE	**Peter Greisler, Germany**	2. Quality assurance: If two universities want to organise a joint study programme, the question of accreditation of the programme is raised. Quiet often, these programmes are developed and accredited on both sides and then are merged. Unnecessarily efforts are high and the cooperation does not already begin at the design of a course, which in this matter would make sense.	2. We therefore recommend to Ministers that, regarding double and joint degree programmes, a professional accreditation body in one of the countries of cooperation or one of the agencies listed in the EQAR should be allowed to accreditate a joint programme. There are first steps to such practice (see Annual Report EQAR).

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ES	Rafael Bonete, Spain	IN RICH COUNTRIES STUDENTS SEEM TO REACT VERY LITTLE TO AN INCREASE IN FUNDING ALLOCATED TO THEM. Increase the funding allocated to students in order to increase mobility is important but probably is not enough.	**WE MIGHT NEED TO CHANGE OUR FOCUS FROM ONLY INCREASING STUDENT GRANTS, TO ALSO IMPROVE FUNDING FOR TEACHERS AND HEI. Some "new ways" of trying to increase student mobility : 1) Universities should get incentives to encourage them to send more students abroad. Incentives should be important enough to change the structure of benefits and costs for them. 2) Academics as Erasmus Coordinators should have recognised all the efforts related to increase the international mobility. If we want more involvement of Academics in student mobility we need to change the current situation. 3) We have to avoid that many of our students think that Erasmus mobility is a "low profile" mobility. We must introduce quality assurances in our mobility programmes (it cost money). 4) We should improve and help our International Offices. They have to feel that they are also key players and they have to avoid to see more incoming students as a burden. 5) We must do our best to make our teachers more mobile (it costs money). If they seethe benefits of being mobile they will talk about it in the classroom. Maybe we have to help again to create more networking between academics in charge of mobility (Internet is not enough).
FR	Hélène Lagier, France	Incoming foreign students need specific assistance and tailored advice for a smoother integration into the host institution, without being bothered by a lot of administrative procedures here and there	Most French higher education institutions set up specific measures to ensure the best possible welcome to incoming foreign students through a unique contact-point (called "guichet unique"), at the beginning of each academic year : the range of various representatives from different administrations involved with incoming foreign students are gathered on the same spot, and therefore, immediate answers can be given to any practical issue to be solved by an incoming foreign student when first arriving in France: - universities with teachers from different faculties, officers from student support services, - student insurances, - regional student support centres for student housing, catering and social support, - representatives from "préfectures" (local administrative offices for home affairs in France, in each French administrative area called "département") which are involved for the award of residence permits.

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Country Code	Respondents	Problems	Solutions
FR	Hélène Lagier, France	Incoming foreign students need specific assistance and tailored advice for a smoother integration into the host institution, without being bothered by a lot of administrative procedures here and there	Examples of Good practice: 1) Montpellier : Montpellier universities and the specific University centre called "Pôle européen" set up a specific welcome or contact-point ("guichet unique") in order to provide assistance to foreign students who first come to Montpellier : foreign students are welcome by multilingual students who can help them for any administrative or practical step they may need. A 52-page handbook for international students is printed out, with useful information about: budget, health, social events, culture, sports, transportation, how to communicate with one's home country, jobs, good tips … 2) Nantes University :This university set up a specific operation called "Foreign students: let's meet at the unique contact-point! "("Etudiants étrangers : rendez-vous au guichet unique !"). In 2009, for instance, this "guichet unique" was set up from August 31st to October 15th, on Mondays-Fridays, from 9 am to 5 pm. There, foreign students can meet student-mates and staff from the University international office. Any information needed for a first study period in France and a successful integration are available : residence permits, housing, transportation, health, help for the necessary administrative papers, anything going on through associations and about culture in Nantes.A specific email address dedicated to incoming foreign students was created : guichet.unique@univ-nantes.fr 3) Rennes : The Centre for international mobility in Rennes was set up by the recently merged research and higher education centre called "Pôle de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur - Université européenne de Bretagne". Beyond unique welcome points which remain open during a week at the beginning of each academic year, this centre provides any information which is necessary for a smooth and successful cultural and social integration throughout the academic year. It promotes events enhancing the regional or Rennes city cultural heritage, and for instance, each month a special event outdoors (visits, walks, rides or trips) is proposed to foreign students, early-stage researchers and researchers. It sets up a tailored cultural and scientific programme with student associations and various partners from society or from business. It proposes various entertainments, at very special rates, thanks to a partnership involving cultural partners locally.
HU	Katalin Kurucz , Hungary	Weak motivation of students for participation in transnational mobility	Students should be given the possibility to experience why participating in mobility is advantageous for them, e.g. through inviting foreign teachers of students, providing them with opportunities to meet foreign people – on the longer run through internationalizing campuses. This should be achieved through real-life experiences. Small-scale steps are better than large-scale initiatives as the former can get closer to students (although they are more expensive and require more effort). Schools and universities should pay attention to develop students' competences necessary for living and studying abroad. Not only schools, but also local governments should also make an effort, and provide e.g. volunteering opportunities for young people from abroad, and involve local students in these initiatives. Good practice example, existing studies and analyses need to be put in the limelight in order to save effort from local organisers and stakeholders. Even short and simple "How to…" guides could be developed for secondary schools, teachers, local governments, etc.

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IE	**Gerry O'Sullivan, Ireland**	Hope the following is of some help in relation to mobility challenges and solutions	**1.** Promotion of the concept of mobility among second level students Set up a database of Erasmus graduates who are willing to visit second-level schools to promote, encourage and advise students of the benefits of a mobility study or placement period. We hope to initiate a pilot exercise in Ireland this year. When the database is constructed – schools will be able to select suitable graduates from their region to visit their schools. **2.** Awareness Raising Encourage higher education institutions to show on Graduation Day publications the names of those students who have undertaken a mobility period. In other words give recognition to such students in the publicity material and in the address of the University President/Rector etc. We have been encouraging our HEIs to do this but without success so far. I feel that if we could create the concept of the "Erasmus Scholar" on lines similar to the "Fulbright Scholar" then it would raise the status of the action. Such an innovation will cost nothing and requires no legislative change – it would simply be a listing on the graduation brochure. **3.** Extension of Placement Period In an effort to increase the numbers on placements – could the period of eligibility be extended to one year after graduation. Credits would have to awarded. **4.** Greater engagement with the voluntary sector We have tended to focus almost exclusively on the private and public sectors when sourcing placement opportunities. The voluntary sector has a huge amount to offer. I feel this is an area that could be explored – it would provide useful placement experiences; assist the voluntary sector and enhance the concepts of citizenship and a greater sense of civic responsibility. 2011 is the European year of Volunteering. **5.** Network with Local Authorities Local authorities provide a huge range of services – could some initiative be put in place in partnership with the Committee of the Regions that would stimulate local authorise/councils to partner with other authorities to open up placement opportunities.

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Country Code	Respondents	Problems	Solutions
IT	Giovanna Filippini, Italien	Proposals of problems related to mobility to be discussed and possible solutions 1. Collect relevant and comparable data at the national level	1. In national databases the definitions used for the various typologies of students in mobility are different and in some case are not clearly defined, thus preventing a homogeneous comparison with the data collected by other countries of the EHEA. Proposed actions are to make use of shared and common definitions established at international level both for degree seeking students and for credit mobility students. In the case of Italy, the real issue which each university/institution must focus on is how to deal with the provision of these data to the national students database (Anagrafe Nazionale degli studenti) and the level of consistency with data collected for European Commission funded programmes such as LLP Erasmus. Another important issue with a strong impact on data collection is related to Students participating in joint programmes (double or joint degree programmes). A strong criticality does exist in the enrolment systems, which vary significantly. In some cases, there is a joint enrolment system for all partner universities managed by the coordinating institution and in this case it's difficult from a logical point of view to count students in mobility; in other cases, provided that students often make use of an Erasmus economic grant, they are enrolled as Erasmus students; in some cases, universities prefer to enrol them as regular students, while in others cases they are enrolled with a double enrolment. These students should be surveyed separately because we need to know how many they are, but at the same time we have to avoid double counting. An example of good practice can be the EU funded project JOIMAN (www.joiman.eu). The project wants to develop, disseminate and exploit good practices in the management of joint programmes at international level. Partnership is composed by 15 Universities and 3 Erasmus Mundus National Contact Points. The first results of the project are quite encouraging as they show how different organisational models works, which are the most relevant constraints (legislative, fiscal, financial etc.) for the success of a joint programmes, which are the rules to be pointed out and taken into consideration when designing a joint programme.

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Country Code	Respondents	Problems	Solutions
IT	**Giovanna Filippini, Italien**	2. Define quality standards for student mobility	2. A second important issue in the field of student mobility is the definition of quality standards to be focused on specific dimensions such as: • setting quality criteria for outgoing exchange mobility and the academic recognition, including those provided for the external evaluation and, possibly, for the delivery of additional funds. • Encouraging the diversification of mobility: e.g. within EHEA, outside EHEA, mobility for study, internship or research purposes, etc. • Supporting mobility for disadvantaged categories. Possible actions to ensure quality can be the following: a) degree mobility: • Simplification of the procedures for the enrolment of international students and for the recognition of their previous degrees/diplomas, adaptation of the current timing of enrolment procedures to the students' needs. Specific agreements among relevant Ministries and Public bodies in charge of visa, residence permits and enrolment and admission can be needed. • The management of scholarships for international students is subject to a series of regulations which are not compatible with the recruitment of international students. • Some scholarships supplied with the EU financing aid are still subject to taxation, which is inconsistent with EU regulations. An example of good practice in the field of degree seeking mobility is represented by the involvement of students' associations, which can help in defining and providing for services to international students.

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Country Code	Respondents	Problems	Solutions
IT	Giovanna Filippini, Italien	2. Define quality standards for student mobility	b) Credit mobility: • Consistent use of ECTS mobility tools (Learning Agreement, Transcript or Records, recognition procedures) and use of ratios and indicators to assess mobility outcomes; • Use of institutional regulations and procedures ensuring transparent and fair recognition of credits; rules must be duly communicated to students and to the academic bodies in charge of recognition. Examples of good practices can be found in some internal regulations which embed recognition principles and procedures or in rules established for the "translation" of grades from one academic grading system to the other. • Ensure visibility of the learning activities/credits acquired abroad and make use of a good system of data recording in students' records. • Include into the curricula a "mobility window" of at least one semester/term (30 credits) with specific learning outcomes to be obtained during a period of study abroad, including both specific skills (e.g., additional/supplementary skills and knowledge for the relevant degree programme) and general skills (e.g., linguistic and intercultural skills). • Allocation of funds for structural projects in support of mobility for the disadvantaged categories. • Encourage private companies and public institutions (also through tax reliefs) to support mobility for traineeship/internship opportunities abroad, both for outgoing and for incoming students/graduates. • Waive local/regional students' fees for students having being granted a scholarship for traineeship/internship abroad • Ensure financial support to students in mobility, also from national, local or institutional sources • Enhance the competences in foreign languages at secondary high schools (not only for English), and inform students about the opportunities of mobility offered by the higher education institutions.

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Country Code	Respondents	Problems	Solutions
IT	**Giovanna Filippini, Italien**	3. Increasing and improving the teaching mobility	3. Increasing and improving the teaching staff mobility The involvement of the teaching staff helps in creating a mobility culture among teachers. Actions to achieve this goal can be: • Involve teachers having scientific contacts at international level in designing and realizing integrated degree programmes with the release of double or joint degrees. • Recognize the work done by teachers for student mobility, both in terms of a reducing in their ordinary academic workload and in view of their academic career at the university, by taking also into account their commitment in institutional and organizational activities. • Encourage part-time mobility between National and foreign universities: for example, by providing to our contract teachers/lecturers for the possibility of having other contracts at foreign universities, derogating from the principle of the exclusiveness of service; introduce and regulate the so-called "part-time (50%) chairs", that is the possibility of recruiting - with a temporary or special contract - teachers/lecturers willing to preserve their pre-existing chair/function at foreign universities. • Provide incentives for the participation into teaching activities by part of researchers/teachers who are in Italy for research projects. • Encourage the international exchange of teachers who are on a sabbatical leave. • Take into consideration the teachers/lecturers who are on a sabbatical leave in the evaluation of the requisites for the activation of the degree programmes.

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LI	Eva-Maria Schädler, Liechtenstein	An old study (2004) conducted by the Katholieke Hoogeschool Leuven (KHLeuven) "Etude comparative de la mobilité des Professeurs d'établissment scolaire dans les nouveaux états membres de l'Union Européenne' states: "Apparement, les obstacles à la moblité enseignante ne sont pas ici insurmontables. Les partants potentiels sont en régle générale, à cause de la petite taille du pays, bien connus et bien informés. Aucun rejet de candidat n'est acutellement effectué pour des raison financières par les services de gestion des programmes éducatifs européens du Liechtenstein. Les difficultés résiduelles les plus fréquemment évoquées entravant quelque peu le développement de la mobilité sont apparemment les suivantes: - le remplacement des partants - l'absence de reconnaissance officielle de la mobilité - les obstacles linguistiques (page 126-127)	Within the range of the new Eurydice Bologna Report (Focus on Higher Education 2010) which is currently being prepared with regard to the Bologna Ministerial Conference in March we identified the following measures undertaken to promote mobility Measures to promote outbound mobility - Access to universities in Switzerland and Austria has been secured through agreements which also include the mutual recognition of the general and vocational upper secondary education certificate (Maturitäts) and of higher education diplomas. (This agreements include, as is the case with Switzerland, financial agreements) - Information / Guidance and counselling services - Modularisation of Study programs, Use of ECTS - full portability of grants and loans - Universities promote completion of stay abroad (exchange study semesters, trainings on the job) as part of study courses and even make them mandatory in some cases -participation in mobility programs Measures to promote inbound moblity - active participation at different mobility programmes (ERASMUS, ERASMUS Mundus, ERASMUS IP, Norwegian Financial mechanism) - increase of exchange agreements with partner universities on student mobility - the issuing of special student visas - allowance to work part-time with a student visa - Individual guidance and counselling service offered by the international Office of the Hochschule Liechtenstein - recognition procedures for educational and professional qualifications - offering of student accommodation at reasonable prices - modularisation of study programs - Study programmes for exchange students in English - German classes - Cultural introduction week for exchange students - Joint summer academy for incoming students offered by a consortium for different university in the Lake Constance area
ME	Biljana Misovic, Montenegro	Problems: -mobility benefits should be clearly set -low motivation of students and young researchers, low level of interest, psychological barriers -low support by international relation office at the university and at specific faculties -bureaucracy and time taking strict application procedure -we are in need to establish a team which would provide administrative support to all potential users of different programmes (application procedure, project proposals creating ,networking, communication with contact points, partners...)	Proposed solutions: -develop administrative capacities dealing with mobility in the institutions -standardize information flows -create better connections among the existing resources -make information available in all forms (web-site, fliers, info letters, posters, info-days, seminars, fairs, newspapers,

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MK	**Marija Krakutovska, Republic of Macedonia**	The main problem concerning mobility in our country is the lack of financial means for its fostering. The country is facing with negligible number of realized mobilities.	After becoming Bologna signatory country, the authorities in the Republic of Macedonia adopted the so called "National Program for Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015". Regarding the issue on mobility, the National Program highlights the following: Creation of an efficient system of scholarships that will facilitate enhanced educational mobility of students and teachers; The National Program foresees the following measures for fostering the mobility in the country: -strengthening the teaching staff with international experience; -development of study programmes that will be implemented in one of the widely spoken foreign languages; -development of study programmes that will facilitate transfer of credits for domestic and foreign students; -development of information centres that will provide clear and easily accessible information to students in regard to opportunities for international mobility; -strengthening student scholarships; -establishment of mechanisms for easing the transferability of scholarships and credits; -overcoming the obstacles to mobility by facilitating visas and work permits. ...development of information centres that will provide clear and easily accessible information to students in regard to opportunities for international mobility and strengthening student scholarships.
SE	**Karin Åmossa, Sweden**	On this issue, I choose to concentrate on problems and solutions regarding staff mobility. In 2007, Education International made a report on mobility, "Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility". The report includes an analysis of the 2004/5 Bologna Process National Reports. In the national reports, the most frequently mentioned problem was financial support in general. The second most frequently mentioned problem was the lack of recognition of the value of periods spent abroad. In an example from Ireland both the academic staff who participated in the Erasmus teacher mobility scheme and administrators working in international offices took the view that mobility for the purpose of teaching had significantly less prestige in career terms than research.	In terms of policy solutions, the very wide agreement on the need for more funding for academic exchange, together with increasing the availability of leave of absence with contractual continuity, strongly suggests that the Bologna areea ministries of education think of mobilitiy principally in terms of traditional academic exchange. There is little recognition of the arguably more serious policy problems that arise form indefinite forms of mobility.

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UK	Peter Baldwinson, England	How to incentivise students to undertake periods of study or work placement abroad as part of their studies. Mobility for its own sake can be an insufficient motivator for students.	Stress the personal benefits that will accrue to students who undertake a period of study/placement abroad. A recent report issued in the UK "Attainment in Higher Education - Erasmus and placement students" (HEFCE Issues paper November 2009/44) found that: Students who undertook a study/placement had a better profile of degree results. 75% of Erasmus students received a 1st or upper second class degree; for other periods of study abroad the figure was 81%. Placement students were more likely to be employed 6 months after graduating and to have higher salaries than the average. Erasmus students who were in employment (as opposed to further study) were substantially more likely to be employed abroad and have above-average salaries. So the student who is mobile is more likely to get a better degree result and to move to above average earnings. In the UK were are exploring how we can use these findings to promote, for example, the Erasmus programme.