

Disincentives for Mobility?

A summary from recent EUA, EI and ESU reports

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Introduction

During the Mobility Working Group on 12 May 2010 EUA, EI and ESU were asked to prepare a paper “which describes the effects HEIs have to face if they send out students and suggests ways to overcome existing problems (e.g. monetary and other incentives).” As a contribution to this, the following document presents firstly evidence from current EUA studies related to mobility. It then continues with reflections from Education International on Staff mobility and concludes with a contribution from the European Students’ Union.

1. EUAs contribution

1.1 Introduction

Student mobility has been one of the stated goals of the Bologna Declaration and the Bologna Process. More recently, increased emphasis has been laid on enhancing the mobility of academic staff. Mobility is viewed as crucial to meeting the European goals of the EHEA and the ERA as one of the mechanisms that can promote a European identity, enhance the education and personal development goals of individuals, support the creation of a single market, and stimulate new approaches in research through enhanced critical mass. Initially, intra-European mobility was the focus of attention. Recently, as thinking on the global dimension of the Bologna Process has developed, there has been more discussion of also promoting mobility into and out of Europe. These discussions should be seen in the context of the overall growth in international student mobility in recent years (Sursock, 2010). In the preparation of the 2009 Bologna ministerial meeting there was a strong focus on the need to take concrete steps to improve mobility over the next decade. The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué describes the importance of mobility and sets a benchmark figure of 20% for 2020. Similarly, a recent ERAB report sets a mobility target of “20% of doctoral candidates working outside of their home countries” for the same period, representing a tripling of current figures. (Sursock, 2010)

1.2 Forms of mobility

There are many different forms of mobility and each of them enjoys different levels of attention and support from policy makers, HEIs and mobility funding schemes (European, national and university based). Consequently, incentives and disincentives are also very heterogeneous.

Forms of mobility:

- Student mobility:
 - Vertical-/ long term-/ degree mobility
 - Horizontal-/ short term/ credit mobility
 - Organised-/ structural-/ programme mobility
 - Non-organised mobility (free-movers)
- Staff mobility
- Intra-European mobility
- Mobility into and out of Europe

1.3 General disincentives

This chapter summarises disincentives that are not related to a specific form of mobility and that can be considered as system related. These general barriers for mobility constitute a wide field, including financial disincentives, disincentives linked to the lack of data on mobility, disincentives emerging from problems related to the new Bologna study structures and the use of the Bologna tools related to mobility as well as problems of recognition. Furthermore, the imbalance of incoming and outgoing mobility might be a disincentive for mobility as well as admission practices. Finally there are disincentives arising from the interdependence of mobility policy with other policy areas. Many of the disincentives related to mobility are often of financial nature, more or less direct and on different levels and affecting different mobile groups or institutions directly.

1.3.1 Financial disincentives for students and institutions

Davies (2009) points out that the obligation to work to support the cost of study at home keeps many students close to their jobs and therefore away from becoming mobile. Also the low level of ERASMUS grants does not allow students to entirely live on them.

A large number of European countries reported a growing student demand either to enter higher education or to stay on for additional qualifications. This, in combination with mounting pressure on public funding, has led to debate on the issue of tuition fees and free admission to higher education in some countries. In England, the level of tuition fees is being reviewed. In Austria and Germany, the recent debate and student protests (autumn 2009) were also about funding and the possibility to regulate student access in areas where student demand is higher than the available capacities. (Sursock, 2010) The impact of fees on student mobility behaviour and the effects that fee reliance has on institutions is a field that deserves further research.

1.3.1.1 Comments from Education International

For countries, like for example Sweden, Denmark and Norway, where the funding for first (undergraduate) and second cycle (Masters') courses and study programmes is based on the number of full-time equivalent students and/or the annual performance equivalent, sending students abroad means losing funding for HEIs. It is important to develop systems that compensate HEIs for sending students and staff abroad.

In Sweden, the government has decided to make special investments into teacher and student mobility which means that HEIs, as a part of the internationalisation of higher education and research, can apply for additional funding in order to send teachers and students abroad. In Norway, HEIs receive additional funding of 800 € per incoming or

outgoing student. To create incentives for HEIs to send teachers abroad this is especially important since they can motivate students to be more mobile.

To get a more comprehensive picture of the financial disincentives for HEIs who send students or staff abroad, the BFUG working group on mobility would have to conduct a survey among European HEIs.

1.3.2 Lack of reliable data on mobility

Despite the efforts to promote mobility, there are little sound data available on mobility flows and, thus, on the extent to which mobility has progressed over the years. Because of the difficulties with data collection in this area, which were already identified in Trends V, the mobility section in Trends 2010 is restricted to responses received on a limited set of questions and the site-visit reports. Trends 2010 argues that there “is a need to develop more precise definitions and measurements of mobility in order to correct the flaws of some current measurements, which, for example, sometimes count the same student several times.” (Sursock, 2010)

The lack of reliable data on mobility is insofar a problem, as it makes it difficult to develop institutional strategies, financial schemes and clear guidelines. A new EUA project entitled Mapping University Mobility (MAUNIMO) will look into ways how universities can develop better data sets on their own student and staff mobility patterns and how this can steer institutional strategies.

1.3.3 Problems with Bologna structures and tools related to mobility

The introduction of new degree structures, the ‘Bologna tools’ and action lines are closely linked with the shift towards a student-centred approach to higher education. A student-centred approach embraces flexibility and choice in progression routes and in approaches to learning and assessment, as well as the use of tools such as ECTS (for credit accumulation and transfer as well as recognition of prior learning) and support services for students. (Sursock, 2010)

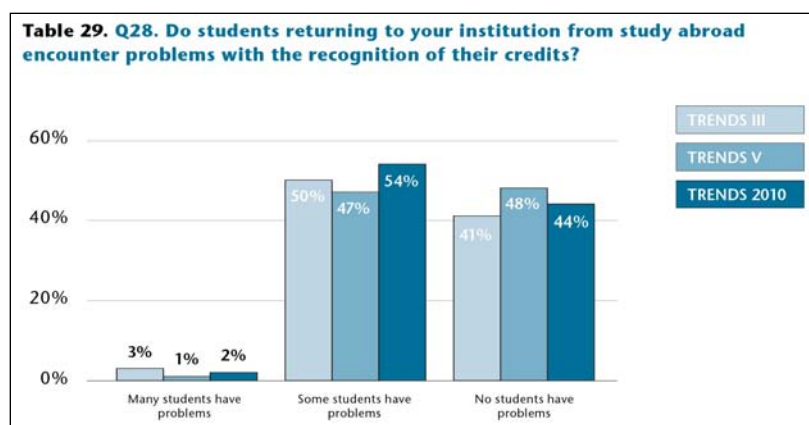
Degree structure: “Mobility, particularly as a period of study abroad during the Bachelor remains a challenge, unless it is central to the institutional internationalisation strategy” (Sursock, 2010) and therefore mainstreamed in the design of BA studies.

ECTS: Despite these advances, however, the most common concerns raised about the use of ECTS in the Trends site visits (and previous Trends reports) are that it is applied very differently across countries and is implemented superficially in many cases or inconsistently across faculties within an institution and between HEIs in the same country. This concern echoes the findings of other Bologna-related reports (Sursock, 2010) and has impacts on mobility.

1.3.4 Lack of Recognition

The mobility problems issuing from lack of recognition often are system-intrinsic. In this regard, the responsibility lies on the side of the universities, which is also confirmed by EUA’s exploratory study on university autonomy in Europe. Recognition issues are at the core of academic autonomy, and as the “design of internal academic and administrative structure is mostly under university control” (Estermann, 2009), institutions will have to articulate more clearly on why recognition still is such an obstacle to mobility. If mobility shall be enhanced and not be limited to programme mobility, recognition plays a central role in doing so. Furthermore as Davies points out, “a substantial volume of student mobility in Europe is likely one day to be ‘inter-cycle’”.

Figure 1 Student problems with recognition of credits



Trends 2010 noted, that data collected on how institutions organise the recognition of study abroad periods are coherent with the unchanged institutions' expectations regarding short-term mobility. Problems with the recognition of credits obtained after a short-term mobility seem to have fluctuated insignificantly over time despite this having been one of the original objectives for the Bologna Process. In Trends III, 41% of institutions said that none of their students had problems; the figure in Trends V went up to 48%; in Trends 2010, the figure has dropped down to 44% (cf. Table 29 taken from Trends 2010 above). A close examination of the responses to the recognition of study abroad periods reveals that:

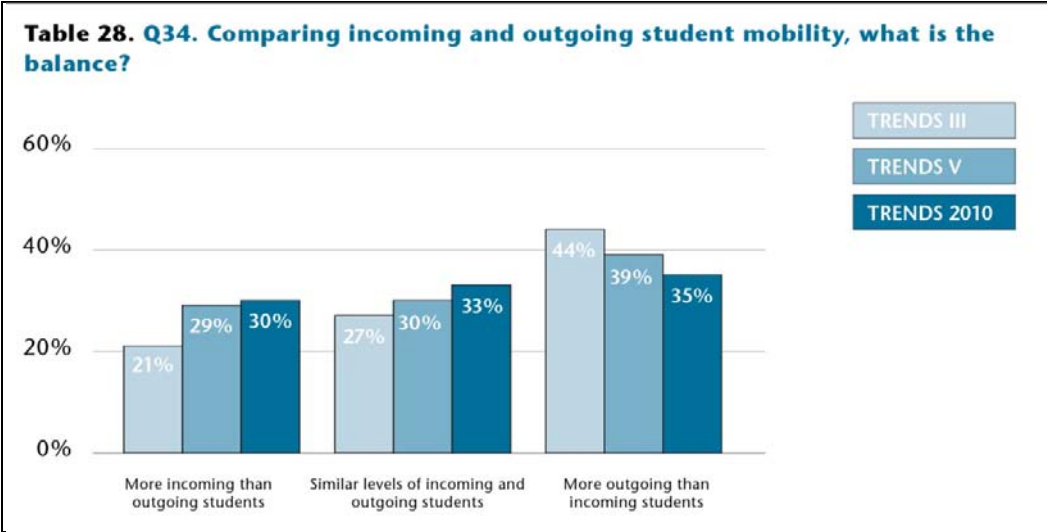
- In universities, study abroad periods are most often recognised at the faculty level, while recognition of degrees takes place in the central office. Although other types of higher education institutions also seem to depend on a central office, they turn also to the faculties and the departments to handle this caseload.
- The centralised way of handling recognition issues seems to be preferred by the smallest institutions especially, while the mid-size and large institutions are more likely to favour the faculty (and departmental) level.
- Institutions with a local focus are clearly in favour of the departmental level, while institutions with a European focus are most likely to prefer a central office.
- The older the institution, the more likely it is that the recognition may take place at faculty level; the younger the institutions, the more likely it is to take place at departmental level.
- Unsurprisingly, the larger the institution, the more likely it is that its students have some problems with the recognition of their credits obtained abroad. While 63% of small institutions stated that none of their students has problems with the recognition of credits earned abroad, the corresponding figure for the largest universities was only 26%. Whether the institution has balanced or imbalanced mobility between outgoing and incoming students makes no difference to the level of recognition problems.
- Most interestingly, however, and of importance to institutional management, the more centralised the recognition of the period of study abroad is, the more likely students will not encounter problems with the recognition of transfer credits probably because centralisation provides a consistent and coherent way of dealing with credit transfer. As discussed in previous sections the main recognition and 'transparency' tools that should facilitate mobility (Lisbon Convention, ENIC/NARIC, ECTS and Diploma Supplement) are increasingly being used by institutions. There remain, however, persistent obstacles to staff and student mobility (both short-term and full-degree), which emerged from the Trends site visits in particular from discussions with academic staff and students.
- The perceived growing competition within the sector is mentioned as leading each institution to try to be unique or different thus creating further obstacles to recognition. This is most evident at the Master level.

Consequently Trends 2010 recommended: "Institutions should create a central recognition unit, to support effective and coherent recognition of study abroad periods and foreign degrees, including also other types of recognition such as formal and informal learning, and locate this unit within the student service functions."

1.3.5 Imbalance of outgoing and incoming students

Trends 2010 asked HEIs to compare the balance between incoming and outgoing students. Their responses, shown in Table 28 are probably based on structured mobility data (e.g. ERASMUS students) rather than data about 'free movers'. The limited data available seem to indicate that the three categories of HEIs are converging towards three equal thirds.

Figure 2: Comparing incoming and outgoing student mobility



The following three maps, which also track short-term structured mobility (the most reliable data collected by HEIs), show that when the data was analysed by country, there was little change to the 'importers' and the 'exporters', although a few more countries were joining the 'importer' group but without altering the historical imbalance between eastern and western Europe. (Surssock, 2010)

Figure 3 Comparing student flows by largest groups of respondents Trends III and V

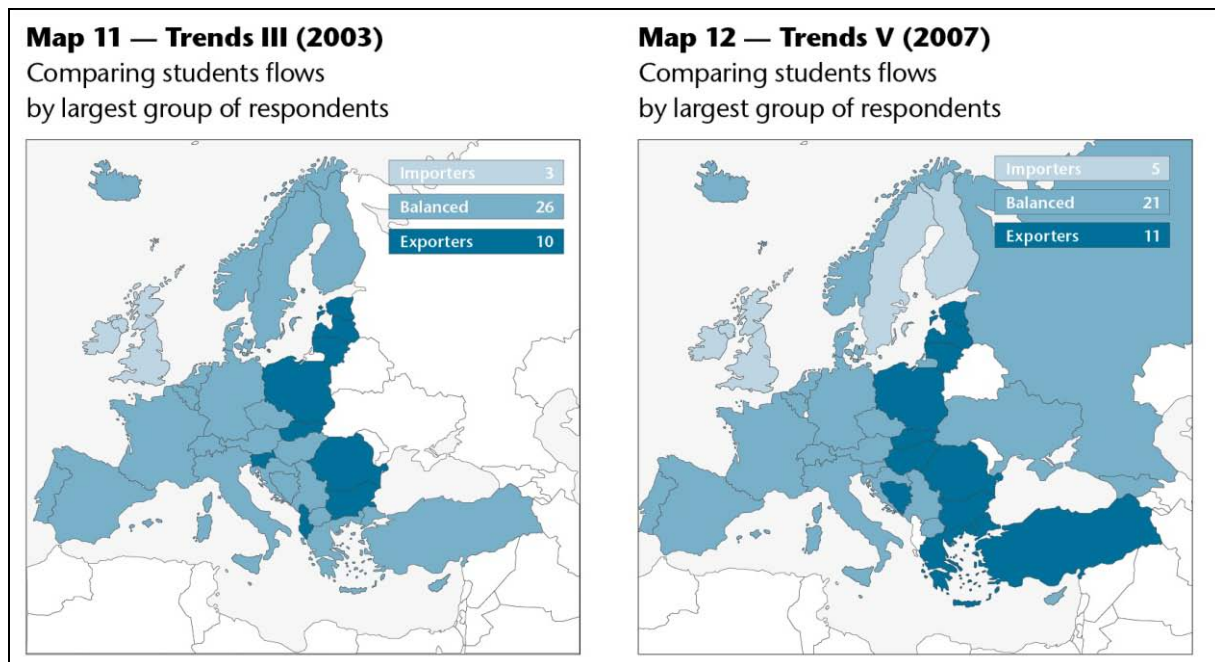
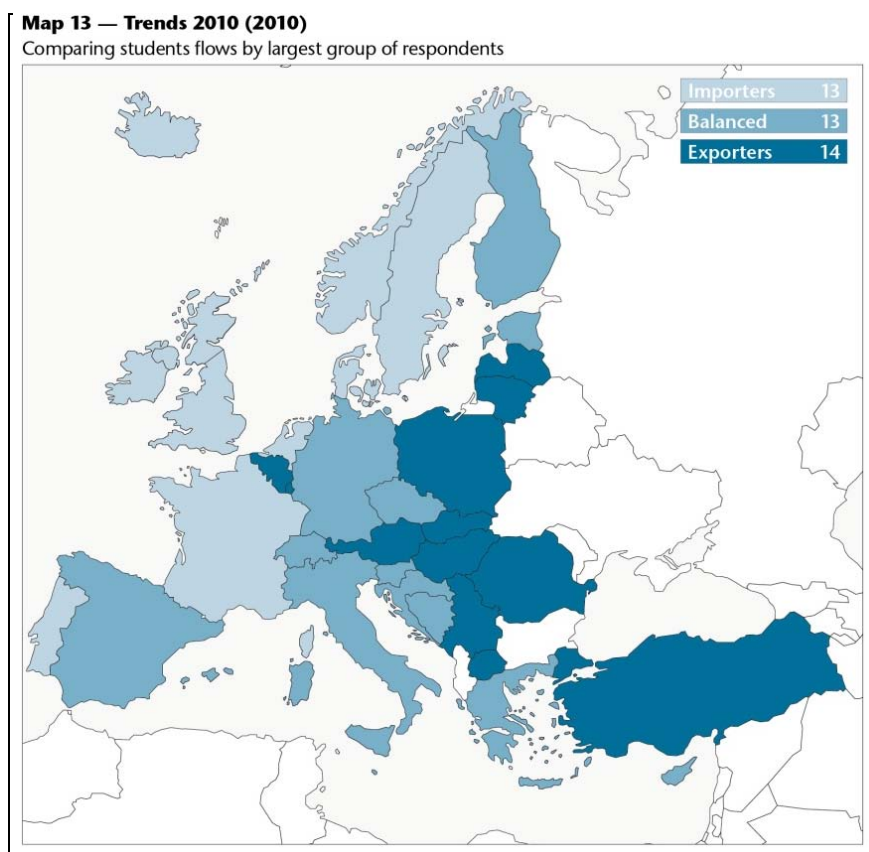


Figure 4 Comparing student flows by largest groups of respondents Trends 2010



In addition, recent EU data show that there is a growing influx of international students to Europe, particularly from Africa and Asia. The main importers in 2007 were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden and the UK. The largest change has taken place in the UK where the number of non-EU students rose from 11% in 2000 to 31% in 2007.

Tentative conclusions can be drawn from these data:

- **First**, institutional expectations regarding short-term mobility seem to have remained stable, and this provides a context for understanding mobility trends.
- **Second**, there are increased expectations for full-degree or vertical mobility.
- **Third**, mobility flows show the same imbalance between east and west, with little change since Trends III.
- **Fourth**, there seems to be an increased influx of international students into Europe as shown by Eurostat data, albeit these are difficult to measure because they include resident immigrants with foreign passports.

Thus the overall increase of international student flows to Europe might reflect in part the greater access of resident immigrants to higher education. (Surssock, 2010)

1.3.6 Interdependence of mobility policy with other policy areas

1.3.6.1 Absence of internationalisation in institutional strategies

The Trends 2010 report points out, that “beyond the differences in organising the recognition of studies abroad in institutions and promoting staff mobility, a less quantifiable but probably more important dimension to mobility is the centrality of internationalisation in an institutional strategy”, and that “mobility needs to be reconsidered a key element of institutional internationalisation policies and all the issues around it addressed in this light. The growing emphasis on internationalisation should be reflected in specific strategies and actions to promote student and staff mobility in the future and to make significant progress in removing the many different obstacles to mobility”. (Surssock, 2010)

Mobility, particularly as a period of study abroad during the Bachelor remains a challenge, unless it is central to the institutional internationalisation strategy. Institutions should develop a strategy that defines the scope of their internationalisation orientation, and develop educational and research activities accordingly. This includes the identification of targets for short-term and full-degree mobility, the geographical target areas, target numbers of mobile students at each degree level, the types of cooperation that fit their overall needs, and the specific HE networks of which they are part. These strategic goals must be aligned with appropriate language teaching provision, manageable numbers of quality-assured joint degrees, the number of programmes with integrated mobility periods, support for outgoing students/young researchers and international students/young researchers (especially administrative support and housing), and guidelines on integrating international students/researchers/staff in classrooms and on campus, thus ensuring internationalisation at home. Institutions should map existing mobility activities in order to understand better mobility patterns and promote, if desired, further growth in these initiatives. (Surssock, 2010)

1.3.6.2 Dependence on European initiatives

Several European Commission schemes support mobility, including the Erasmus Programme for intra-EU mobility, the Tempus Programme for funding within certain European but non-EU countries as well as partner countries neighbouring the EU (e.g. North Africa) and Erasmus Mundus for mobility outside Europe. These developments mean that some institutions no longer distinguish between ‘European’ and ‘International’ mobility, but refer to and thus identify all mobility as international activity, and as part of an overall international strategy. (Surssock, 2010)

1.3.6.3 Lacking coordination of academic calendars

Academic calendars need to be coordinated at European level in order to facilitate short-term mobility. (Surssock, 2010)

1.3.6.4 Admission practices that disadvantage mobile students

Key issues related to the selection of students (student admission) are an important part of regulation affecting mobility; it is closely related to the financial disincentives theme and the fee issue as well as to recognition of prior learning. Several cases are named by EUA's exploratory autonomy study (Estermann, 2009):

- Regulations on the overall numbers of students (general numerus clausus)
There are three basic models in terms of who decides on the student intake into universities. The decision on the overall number of students is either taken **by the university itself** (in a minority of countries), **by the relevant public authorities** or **shared by public authorities and universities**. An intermediate, "cooperative" model includes the intervention of both the university and the public authorities. This can take place in the framework of negotiations with the relevant Ministry or the process of the accreditation of a programme (maximum or minimum numbers of students may be set during the accreditation process). This can also be organised through a split system, where the public authorities decide on the number of state-funded study places and the university can decide on the number of fee-paying students, thus influencing the overall number of students.
- Regulations on students per discipline (disciplinary numerus clausus)
In a third of the European countries analysed, the universities can freely decide on the number of student places per discipline. The allocation however may, in some fields, be subject to negotiations with the relevant authorities, or set within the accreditation procedure.
- Student admission mechanisms (basic qualification granting eligibility to apply to HE):
Admission to university can be clustered into three different models. All systems require that candidates hold a type of secondary education qualification or succeed in a general matriculation exam (this is most often stipulated in the national legislation), which grants them basic eligibility to apply to university.
- Regulations on compliance with special quotas (affirmative action or protectionist action):
Public authorities, in a minority of countries, can according to EUA's autonomy exploratory study, set entry quotas for foreign students – explicitly named are Cyprus and Switzerland.

All of the outlined admission practices - be they a competence of the institution, of the public authorities or competences shared by public authorities and universities - could affect long- and short-term mobility and could represent a disincentive for mobility, especially when student mobility is not being taken into account when designing the admission frameworks and therefore does not allow the flexibility needed for incoming and outgoing mobility.

1.3.6.5 The different pace of curricular change

Asymmetric curricular change in partner institutions further hampers recognition and trust. (Davies, 2009)

1.3.6.6 The high administrative burden for institutions to cater for incoming and outgoing students

Davies names several disincentives that are connected to organisational prerequisites that mainly the institutions have to take in order to cater for incoming or outgoing students:

- the labour intensity of producing information packs in English and of checking the transcripts of incoming students
- foreign language problems – lack of preparatory courses

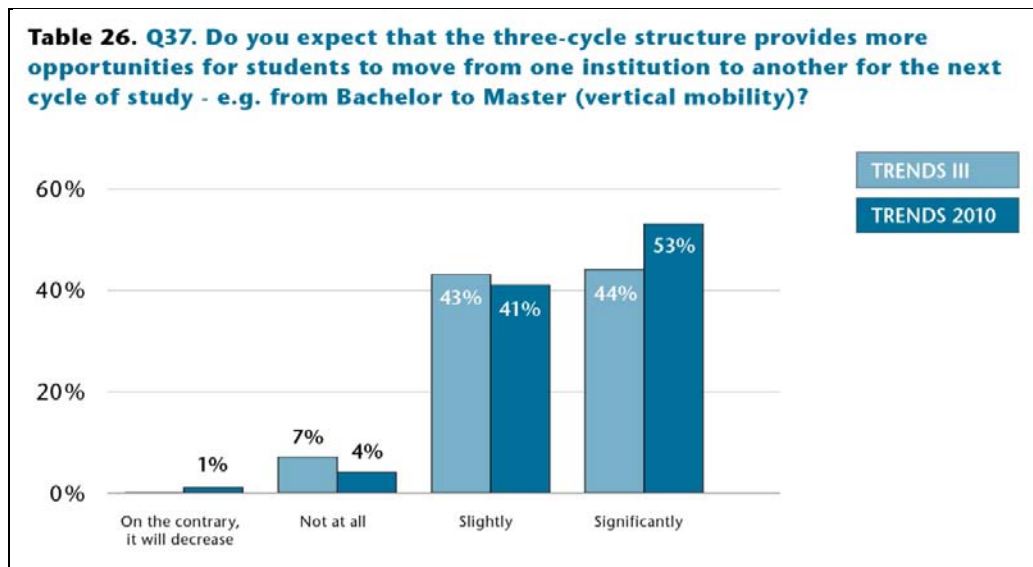
- mismatch of academic calendars
- the slowness of national procedures

1.4 Disincentives for different forms of mobility

1.4.1 Vertical or long term-/ degree mobility

Full-degree mobility data in Trends 2010 was elicited through a question related to expectations. Figure 5 below shows that 53% of institutions (as opposed to 44% in Trends III), mostly from smaller countries, expect that the three-cycle structure provides significant more opportunities for full-degree (vertical) mobility. (Surssock, 2010)

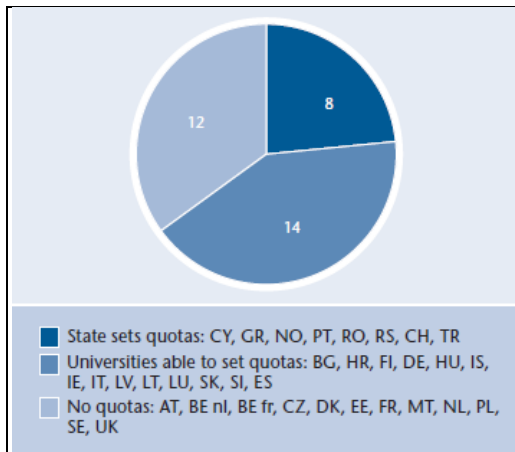
Figure 5 Institutions' expectations on vertical mobility



1.4.1.1 Student quotas

Universities themselves are allowed to set quotas in many countries throughout Europe, from Ireland to Bulgaria, and from Finland to Spain. These quotas would necessarily be diverse as they fall under the responsibility of the individual universities but may target students through criteria of nationality or origin (in Iceland, most HEIs limit their intake of international students), disabilities or outstanding capacities; in certain contexts, quotas may aim at facilitating access to higher education of children of war victims (Croatia). These measures are taken according to the internal decision-making process of the university. Most often, when there is free admission to universities, the institutions may not set quotas, but neither does the state. Italy and Spain are exceptions to this trend as their universities, though operating under a system of free admission, are allowed to introduce such measures. This may apply to part-time students or to high level athletes. (Thomas Estermann, 2009).

Figure 6: Countries with student quotas



1.4.2 Inter-cycle mobility

Davies notes, that one alternative to on-course mobility, is the inter-cycle window created by the student – the gap semester or gap year which can be intercalated between Bachelor and Master. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is growing in importance, particularly when the gap is filled with work placement or paid employment as well as study. It has implications for employability. No data is available at European level – and is unlikely to be, as long as ISCED methodology remains unchanged. (Davies, 2009) This form of mobility entirely depends on the individual student, and can in fact not be counted fully as being traditional mobility. On the other hand, this form of individual inter-cycle mobility helps to prevent several disincentives outlined before, as it is self-funded, related to work placements or paid employment and therefore remunerated and it does not cause study time loss and recognition problems.

1.4.3 Horizontal or short term- / credit mobility

1.4.3.1 Lack of recognition

Davies reports that German respondents to the Master Study questionnaire pointed out, that they noticed a decline of mobility in both BA and MA of the new degree structures compared with the third year of the old long degree. Furthermore, foreign study periods being crowded out by research modules, by work placements and by delivery of the core curriculum. In order to protect them, some institutions were contemplating the possibility of opening a 'mobility window' in the Master, to the value of 30 ECTS points. (Davies, 2009)

1.4.3.2 Special problems regarding Master mobility

For mobility during MA-studies, there are some specific characteristics that can be regarded as disincentives for mobility.

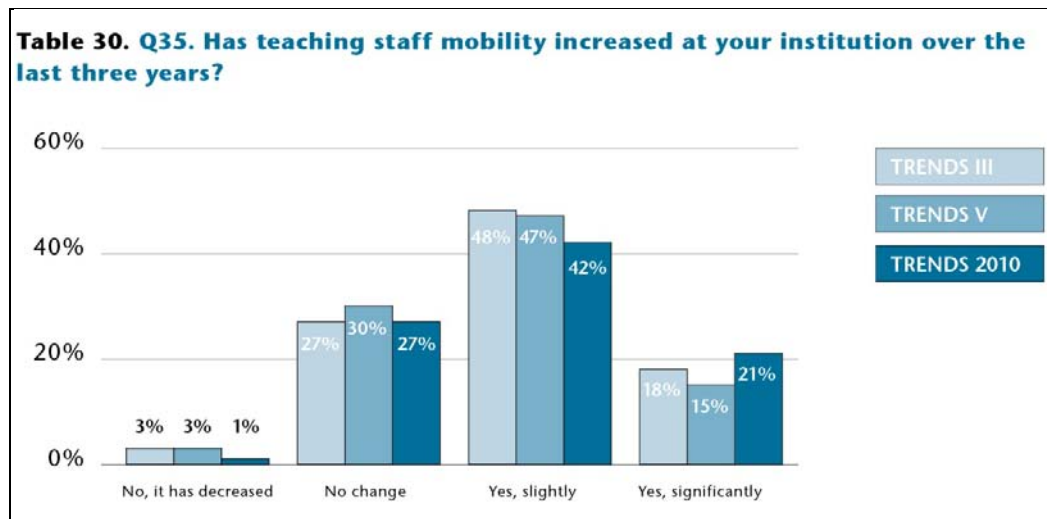
Davies names the width of the Bologna Master band that can itself be the source of dispute. The fact that it may be of one or two full-time years – a difference of 100% - unsurprisingly raises the question of comparability. (Davies, 2009) The shorter time span for the MA compared with the BA in general, be it one year or two years long, exacerbates mobility in a MA programmes even more than it is the case for BA-programmes. Furthermore, Davies points out that specific selection criteria for the access of the master can constitute an additional hurdle for mobility, because the more restrictive the admission criteria are (also the higher tuition fees are), the less there are incentives for both students in these programs and institutions offering them, to open up for mobility.

1.4.4 Staff mobility

Trends 2010 shows, that staff mobility shows a steady, albeit small increase: 21% of respondents say it has increased significantly as compared to 15% in Trends V and 18%

in Trends III. These are institutions in Latvia and Lithuania (50%), followed by Serbia and Turkey (40%), Romania (39%), Poland (35%), and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Italy (33%). (This list includes only countries where 30% or more institutions responded that staff mobility has increased “significantly”.) The number of those answering that it has increased “slightly” has dropped steadily from Trends III and V. Overall, 23% of universities and 15% of other types of HEIs have indicated that staff mobility has grown significantly. Some of the site visit reports relay that academic staff complains of heavy teaching loads and difficulties in finding a substitute for their own mobility period. (Sursock, 2010)

Figure 7 Table on increase of staff mobility in institutions



1.5 References

The studies quoted in this paper are the following:

DAVIES, Howard, Survey of Master Degrees in Europe. European University Association, 2009.

ESTERMANN, Thomas, NOKKALA, Terhi, University Autonomy in Europe I, Exploratory Study. European University Association, 2009.

SURSOCK, Andrée, SMIDT, Hanne, Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education. European University Association, 2010.

2. Contribution from Education International: Obstacles to Academic Staff Mobility

All four of the Bologna Process statements of principle talk about the need to deal with obstacles to mobility, whether by 'overcoming', 'removing' or 'lifting' them. In effect, dealing with obstacles is the sole BP policy on staff mobility. However, as with mobility itself, what exactly counts as an obstacle and how it might be lifted, overcome or removed is not at all clear.

2.1 Categorizing Obstacles

Obstacles to mobility can be categorized according to the point in the process of migration that they intervene. Potential staff may be blocked or dissuaded from progressing at the point of (temporarily) leaving their existing employer or home country, at the point of entry to a different nation, at the point of qualification to enter the academic profession in that nation, at the point of forming a contract with an HEI or at the point of developing and progressing in a career, including further mobility or returning to their home system. Obstacles can also be considered from the perspective of the individual member of staff or the employing institution. Table 1 below gives some examples of certain obstacles to mobility from the individual and institutional perspectives. Some of the obstacles proposed apply only in the case of traditional academic exchange, others in the case of indefinite mobility and a small number in either case.

2.2 Obstacles, Regulation and Deregulation

The achievements to date at the supranational level – whether in the BP itself or the EU – in terms of removing the bigger obstacles to mobility have certainly been impressive and seem to be largely uncontroversial. For example, the mutual recognition of qualifications, the diploma supplement, and the EU's new 'scientific visa' all address obstacles to mobility that were increasingly difficult to justify. To deny a work permit to, or to refuse to appoint, an individual who has emerged via an open competition as the best candidate for a particular academic post for purely administrative reasons related to his or her nationality or the origin or comprehensibility of his or her qualifications is surely unjust.

Once we descend to the national or institution level, however, we are obliged to ask to what degree regulations restrict the terms on which an individual may be employed and whether this can be considered an obstacle to mobility. For many HE managers – particularly those who look to the private sector for models of human resource management practice – obstacles to mobility include much more than formal regulation that prevents an appointment going ahead at all. Such managers might also see as an obstacle any external regulation that restricts the institution's room for manoeuvre with respect to the qualifications required for a post, contractual issues like salaries, or the granting of tenured status – to name just a few of the potentially problematic areas. The requirement that candidates for certain positions have certain types of formal qualification unique to the HE system in question has historically been one of the most obvious and significant obstacles to mobility. This goes some way to explaining why it has been the target of significant attempts at reform like the dropping of the requirement for the 'Habilitation' in Germany. However, even apparently innocuous institutional factors like national-level collective bargaining on salaries can be presented as problematic. Restrictions on the use of short-term contracts, for example, are arguably a disincentive to the creation of certain types of post that, again, might be attractive to candidates from nations with less developed HE systems. Candidates may also be dissuaded from seeking work within HE systems in which career opportunities are limited by, for instance, restrictions on the number of senior or tenured staff. Similarly, nationally applicable minimum salaries can supposedly prevent the employment of

teaching or research assistants, even though the potential occupants of these jobs are willing to accept a low salary (because it compares favourably with the remuneration they could expect in their home countries). Another argument often made is that national salary scales can prevent institutions from attracting top-level staff from other systems in which pay at the top of the scale is higher or unrestricted. Among HEI administrations and in the European Commission this appears to have become the unquestioned conventional wisdom. The European University Association's 2005 'Trends' survey, for example, reported without comment that "With regard to staff recruitment and promotion, ... the impossibility for many institutions to introduce differentiated conditions and incentives in terms of staff salaries and other resources make the institutions less competitive on the international market" (Reichert and Tauch 2005).

Table 1: Potential Obstacles to Temporary and Indefinite Staff Mobility

| | Individual/staff Perspective | Institutional Perspective |
|---|---|--|
| Leaving existing employer or home country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding an appropriate exchange partner • Finding funding for exchange • Gaining leave of absence • Ensuring that existing duties are covered • Ensuring that family responsibilities can be fulfilled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and administrative problems arising from temporary absence of staff • Enabling equal access to mobility for all staff, regardless of personal situation |
| Entry to and settling in a different nation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining visa or work permit (Non-EU citizens) • Problems related to family integration (housing, schooling, language etc) • Requirements for social security/social insurance registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal or administrative restrictions on freedom to recruit foreign nationals • Need to provide support and assistance with problems of integration |
| Entry to the academic profession | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding information about entry to the profession • Getting recognition for existing qualifications and professional experience • Meeting any additional qualification requirements including language requirements • Navigating application and selection processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding foreign academic qualifications • Ensuring that candidates meet national or other external qualifying criteria |
| Formation of the employment contract | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding information and advice about salaries and terms and conditions • Negotiating appropriate placement in terms of grading, tenure etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to provide internationally competitive salaries and terms and conditions • Need to conform with legal or administrative restrictions on the nature of the employment contract • Need to conform with national and local collective agreements |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Career progression and development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting tenure or civil servant status requirements • Potential difficulty of returning to 'home' HE system • Difficulties of pension (non-) portability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the availability of an attractive and reasonably predictable 'career ladder' |
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2.3 Can we assume that removing obstacles is always a good thing?

While these kinds of policy arguments are now ubiquitous, it remains the case that in the more general debate on labour market reform, the straightforward equation between this kind of institution-level deregulation and positive outcomes for individuals, organisations and employment systems has been subject to trenchant criticism. There are two lines of critique, both of which centre around the extent to which market models are adequate representations of the dynamics of social interaction in the economic context. First of all, market models quite deliberately exclude the possibility that moral, political and ethical standards might have a significant effect on economic action. However, as Kaufman puts it, "real people... judge economic transactions by not only price but also fairness, and transactions that are deemed unfair lead to predictable negative consequences such as quitting, holding back work effort, striking..." (Kaufman 2004). Returning to our earlier example of national salary scales, it may well be the case that these are seen by employees as an expression of equity and solidarity – of the uniform value of academic work, regardless of subject or institutional context – as well as a guarantee against arbitrary treatment. Hence, although the 'flexibilisation' of pay via the abandonment of national-level pay may increase institutional freedom to recruit, and hence increase managers' control over the internal configuration of an institution, it may also have a negative effect on institutional performance via staff resentment and resistance arising because of its perceived unfairness.

The second line of critique remains more squarely within the discipline of economics. Basic economic models assume that there are no barriers to competition and in particular no barriers to entry to the market. However, it is very clearly the case that certain institutions and HE systems within the Bologna area are, for historical and political reasons, at an enormous advantage when it comes to competing for students, staff and research funding, and others are at such a disadvantage that in effect they are excluded from meaningful participation in these markets. These distortions in the market for HE seem likely to mean that without some kind of rational reregulation, removing obstacles to mobility will have some distinctly negative effects for many institutions and systems, the 'brain drain' from East to West being only the most frequently cited.

2.4 Socio-culturally Justifiable Obstacles

These thoughts on the potentially negative effects of deregulation even from within the 'market-managerialist' perspective can be complemented by certain arguments constructed from the socio-cultural perspective on HE. The 'marketisation' of HE carries the risk that HEIs will no longer be able to carry out their 'cultural and social mission'. In what is only the most recent statement of its type, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) concluded that "The traditional vocation and full potential of universities for the 21st century include, besides independent inquiry and free advancement of acquired knowledge (but also through these activities) steady contributions to developing social order and a sense of basic values in societies,

cultivation of national identity as well as an open-minded understanding of international and universal merits, promotion of democratic citizenship and sensitivity to human and natural environment both locally and globally, setting of academic objectives, training for practical flexibility as well as teaching in critical thinking" (PACE 2006).

It is crucial to ensure that the convergence of HE structures in Europe does not also lead to a homogenisation of the existing national cultures of knowledge and pedagogy, particularly if the characteristics of a homogenised culture are to be determined by the market rather than in conscious and deliberate processes of identity-formation. One of the most obvious threats in this respect is the increasing pressure on HEIs and academic staff to provide teaching in one of the two or three 'international' languages, notably English. On the other side of this particular coin, it could also easily be argued that systems and institutions should drop formal requirements for competence in national languages since such requirements clearly represent obstacles to mobility. For example, in France, participants in the competition that qualifies individuals to hold 'tenured' posts in the field of management studies are significantly marked down if the work they submit for evaluation omits any reference to the major works in French in their field. They are also required to provide a full translation of their published works – including their doctoral thesis – into French. Just to give another example, qualifying in the field of history and civilisation requires a 15-page resumé of the thesis in French, and at least one French publication. Now, these requirements undoubtedly represent serious obstacles to the accession of foreign candidates to academic positions in French universities. Nevertheless, from the perspective of French language and culture it is arguably very important to ensure that candidates for academic posts have a basic familiarity with the francophone canon in their field, all the more so in those areas like business and management that are dominated by 'anglo-saxon' thinking. It is also wholly unreasonable to expect that assessors should in all cases be familiar with a candidate's language. While the precise nature of the linguistic and cultural requirements in question ought to be open to discussion – language requirements might be made post hoc rather than ad hoc, for example, or financial assistance could be offered to candidates for translation costs – it is surely difficult to argue that national HE systems should not have the right to make demands of this kind on candidates even though certain otherwise qualified individuals would thereby be excluded.

2.5 Summary

This third section of the report has considered the question of obstacles to staff mobility. We suggested that such obstacles can be categorized according to the point in the process of mobility at which they have their obstructive effect; and according to whether the perspective of the individual or the HE institution is adopted. We then argued that great care needs to be taken in the definition of obstacles. What can appear from one perspective as a bureaucratic obstruction to staff recruitment can from a different standpoint appear as an entirely reasonable piece of employment regulation designed to prevent exploitation and to maintain salaries and working conditions at an acceptable level. We cited some theoretical arguments that suggest that this difference in perception has parallels in the academic literature on labour markets. There is a strong current in the academic debate that rejects the neoliberal assumption that deregulation is necessarily a good thing. Hence, removing obstacles to mobility must not be conflated with the simple deregulation of the academic labour market. Finally, we argued that certain obstacles to mobility are justifiable from the socio-cultural perspective. We proposed that HE systems and institutions have a right to protect national and regional cultures of knowledge and learning, and to take steps to avoid cultural homogenisation.

2.6 References:

Cradden, C. *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility*", Education International, 2007

Kaufman, B. (2004). The global evolution of industrial relations: Events, ideas and the IIRA. Geneva, International Labour Office.

PACE (2006). PACE Recommendation 1762 (2006). Brussels, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Reichert, S. and C. Tauch (2005). Trends IV: European universities implementing Bologna. Brussels, European University Association.

3. Contribution from the European Students' Union

3.1 Introduction

The various forms of mobility also have different disincentives. If the 20%/2020 goal is to be reached attention must be paid to the fact that some forms of mobility are easier for institutions. Mobility is supposed to be all encompassing and a possibility in all study programmes and on all levels.

Furthermore the level of knowledge, interest in and access to learning mobility varies across Europe whereas the goal is to reach balanced mobility and make it a realistic opportunity for all.

3.2 Financial disincentives for students

ESU stresses that students must have the opportunity to study abroad independent of income, meaning that financial support for mobility should be family independent. At the same time BWSE (2009) stresses, that more than 80% of the respondents from the National students' unions indicated that many or some national students spending a period abroad do not find their grant or loan sufficient to meet their living expenses. CHEPS (2010) confirms, that financial constraints remain the most important obstacle to mobility (57% of non-ERASMUS students find study abroad too expensive, 29% reject ERASMUS grants because it does not cover costs). As a result this leads to the great social selectiveness of mobility and weakens incentives for students with fewer opportunities. This is next to consideration, that study period abroad (particularly short-term), in most of the cases does not lead to improving employment chances (CHEPS, 2010) and the mobility recognition problems often arise after coming back.

Additional financial support for mobile students is therefore urgently needed in situations in which students want to study in states or regions with visibly higher costs of living than in their place of origin. New forms of support measures for mobility in circumstances of substantial economic differences between home and host country must be developed and tested, taking into account the experiences of innovative approaches.

Furthermore, ESU believes that mobility has been and still remains one of the most visible and central elements of internationalisation of higher education. Mobility should not be restricted to mean the mobility of an individual student. The concept of mobility should encompass incoming and outgoing exchange students, degree students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff: components that are needed for the internationalisation of higher education. Gaining most advantages from mobility should be on the agenda of both the mobile person and the institution; mobility should be seen as a positive academic resource for the institution, not only an individual benefit.

3.3 Lack of recognition

Lack of recognition remains one of the main deterrents to going abroad for those aiming at academically meaningful mobility. This is also the conclusion of the Erasmus Student Network PRIME 2009 study, which concluded that only sixty-six percent of the ERASMUS students receive full recognition of their studies abroad. Respecting learning agreements, proper implementation of ECTS and diploma supplements and respecting the Lisbon Recognition convention are just a few of the actions needed to remove this significant obstacle for mobility, recommends Bologna at the Finish Line (BAFL 2009).

3.4 Balance of mobility

The responsibility on work on incentivizing balanced outward and inward mobility across all EHEA countries is to be shared between the national governments and institutions, also to avoid the trend on focusing mostly on non-EHEA incoming students.

BAFL strongly encourages avoiding seeing learning mobility as a potential market and thus an extra funding source for higher education institutions, but rather than a way of fostering academic quality enhancement, personal development and societal cohesion. The aim of balancing mobility and using it as a building block for the EHEA is seriously being jeopardized by this increasing tendency, and brain-drain is definitely an issue which can lately concern many Bologna member states."

3.5 Strategies for mobility

BAFL (2009) points out, that when designing European, national and institutional strategies, learning mobility is encouraged to be seen as a tool for European integration. Attention must be paid to avoiding the limitations of mobility opportunities as a result of the institutional mission diversification and the development of new transparency tools, through possible obstacles to recognition and institutional partnerships. Also important to keep in mind, the strategies should keep away the incentive to develop "fundraising strategies" on how to promote and attract more students, who are eager to pay. Institutions should also commit to certain concrete actions to create a safe learning environment and full integration, next to expanding the information and guidance facilities, assisting in overcoming immigration and residence matters and last but not least, providing quality and accessible social. Moreover, measures must be taken to ensure the participation of foreign students in student and HEI self-governance and decision-making.

3.6 References

Bologna at the Finish Line 2010 (ESU, 2010)

Bologna with Students' Eyes 2009. (ESU, 2009)

CHEPS study on "Improving Participation in the ERASMUS Programme", (2010, CHEPS)