

The Professional Value of ERASMUS Mobility

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External (interim) Evaluation of the Impact of ERASMUS Mobility (action 2 of the SOCRATES Community action programme; 2000 - 2006) on Students' Access to Employment and Career Development, on Teachers' Career Development and on Two Areas of Study to be Specified.

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Overview of Abbreviations

Home and Host Country Codes

1	AT	Austria	17	LI	Liechtenstein
2	BE	Belgium	18	LT	Lithuania
3	BG	Bulgaria	19	LU	Luxembourg
4	CY	Cyprus	20	MA	Malta
5	CZ	Czech Republic	21	NL	Netherlands
6	DK	Denmark	22	NO	Norway
7	EE	Estonia	23	PL	Poland
8	FI	Finland	24	PT	Portugal
9	FR	France	25	RO	Romania
10	DE	Germany	26	SK	Slovakia
11	GR	Greece	27	SI	Slovenia
12	HU	Hungary	28	ES	Spain
13	IC	Iceland	29	SE	Sweden
14	IR	Ireland	30	CH	Switzerland
15	IT	Italy	31	UK	United Kingdom
16	LV	Latvia	32	OT	Other country

Field of Study Codes

1	Agri	OTH	Agricultural Sciences
2	Arch	ENG	Architecture, urban and regional planning
3	Art	HUM	Art and design
4	Bus	BUS	Business studies, management sciences, economics
5	Edu	HUM	Education, teacher training
6	Eng	ENG	Engineering, technology
7	Geo	NAT	Geography, geology
8	Hum	HUM	Humanities
9	Lan	HUM	Languages, philological sciences
10	Law	SOC	Law
11	Math	ENG	Mathematics, informatics
12	Med	MED	Medical Sciences
13	Nat	ENG	Natural Sciences
14	Soc	SOC	Social Sciences
15	Com	SOC	Communications and information sciences
16	Oth	OTH	Other

Executive Summary

Aims and Design of the Study

The VALERA project (VALERA = Value of ERASMUS Mobility) aims to establish the impact of mobility within the ERASMUS sub-programme of SOCRATES on the mobile students' and teachers' careers. For this purpose, representative surveys were undertaken of formerly mobile ERASMUS students and formerly mobile ERASMUS teachers. In addition, university leaders were asked to assess the role of student and teacher mobility at their institution, and employers were requested to report about the experience with formerly mobile students. Moreover, a broad range of actors and experts stated their perceptions of the impact of ERASMUS mobility in an expert survey and in discussions during general and field specific seminars.

Each survey addressed several dimensions of professional value. With respect to student mobility, professional "success" was measured primarily in terms of:

- General and international competences,
- Transition to work,
- First and subsequent employment and work, and
- International aspects of employment and work.

Similarly, the professional impact of teacher mobility was assessed in five domains:

- General academic and teaching competences,
- International and inter-cultural competences,
- ERASMUS-related activities at the home higher education institution,
- Vertical and horizontal professional mobility, and
- International professional mobility.

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the extent of professional value of student and teacher mobility in various respects, to identify circumstances conducive to increase desirable results, and to assess the overall results with respect of the relevance, effectiveness, impact and durability of the SOCRATES scheme in the area of higher education.

Modes of Inquiry

The evaluation study was divided into two major phases. The first phase started with the analysis of previous studies and an expert survey. The expert questionnaires were sent to representatives of the ERASMUS programme itself and representatives of higher education policy, student organisations, teachers, administrators and employers' organisations. Information was provided by 67 experts, i.e. 43 percent of the 156 persons initially addressed. Both, the findings of prior studies and of the experts' responses, are summarized in a first report of the study, the "Framework Report". It

provides information in its own right on the impact of mobility and helped to design the key surveys of the evaluation study.

Subsequently, four key surveys were undertaken:

- Survey of former ERASMUS students: former ERASMUS students of the academic year of 2000/01, selected according to count and sampled according to higher education institutions, were contacted with the help of their home institutions of higher education. They were asked to respond to a highly standardized paper questionnaire. Actually, 4,589 persons responded, i.e. 45 percent of those contacted.
- Survey of former ERASMUS teachers: All mobile teachers from a sample of higher education institutions of the academic year 2000/01 were addressed via ERASMUS coordinators at the individual institutions of higher education and were asked to fill out an online questionnaire. 755 persons responded, about 24 percent of 3,123 teachers contacted.
- Survey of university leaders: A paper questionnaire was sent via the ERASMUS coordinators to all university leaders of those institutions which had signalled readiness to cooperate with the evaluation study in prior correspondence. Actually, 626 university leaders responded, i.e. 44 percent of the 1,437 contacted.
- Survey of employers: A paper questionnaire was sent to about 1,500 persons supervising former ERASMUS students on their workplace (they could be reached because former ERASMUS students had provided their names and addresses) and to a sample of 4,500 employers from all SOCRATES-eligible countries. Altogether, 312 responses were received, i.e. 6 percent of those contacted.

A draft analysis of the first two surveys was presented to a seminar of experts. The seminar provided an opportunity to explain the findings more thoroughly. Moreover, it helped to specify the objectives of the second phase of the evaluation study and to select the fields of study addressed in the second phase.

The second phase of the evaluation study aimed to gather in-depth information on the professional value of mobility in select fields of study. According to the experts' advice, four fields of study (rather than two initially envisaged) were selected: Chemistry as an academically oriented field and Mechanical Engineering as a professionally oriented field in science and technology and similarly Sociology and Business studies in the area of humanities and social sciences. Representatives of these fields and related professional areas (students, teachers, employers and representatives of their organisations, thereby notably persons involved in curriculum development) were invited to one-day intensive seminars (instead of interviews initially envisaged). The in-depth communication during the seminars helped to reveal the "tacit knowledge" of the participants and to discuss both major findings of the surveys as well as possible directions of improvement of ERASMUS student mobility.

Altogether, stronger and more time-consuming efforts were needed to win the cooperation of the institutions of higher education and of the various groups of respondents than in similar previous studies. The European Commission accepted for

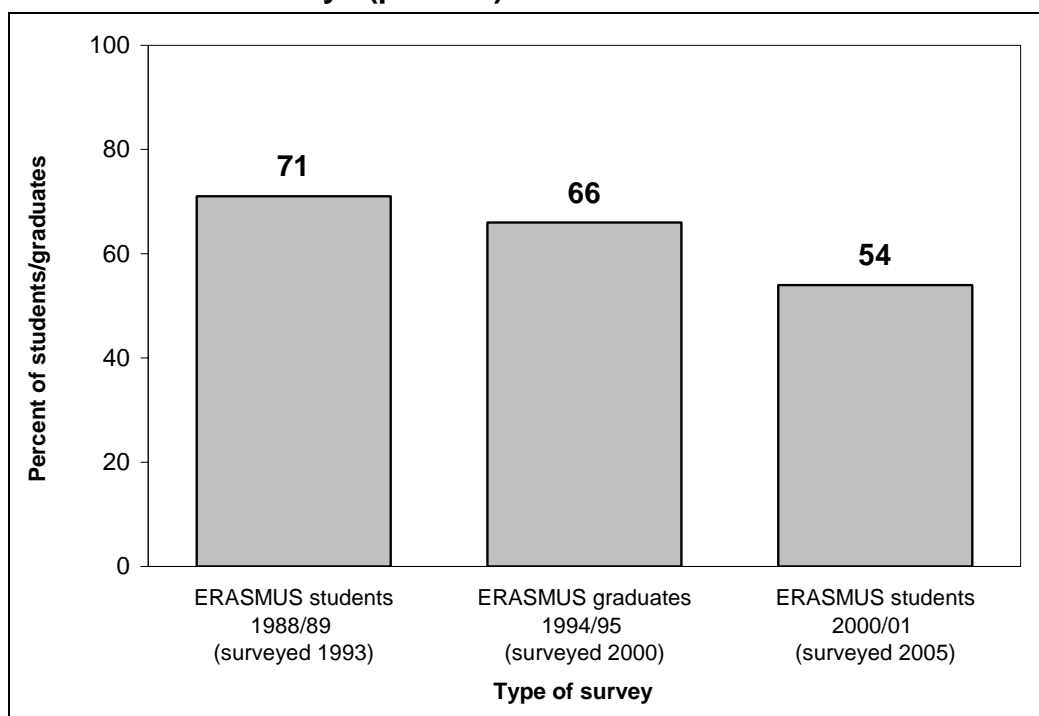
that reason an extension of the project to about twice the period initially envisaged. Moreover, the research team – well experienced in studies on international mobility and responsible for ERASMUS evaluations between the start of the programme and the late 1990s - contributed to the survival of the study with substantial additional resources not paid by the Commission. This saved the project as such, but the response rates remained lower than expected and lower than in previous surveys. There are reasons to assume that response was not only affected by an evaluation fatigue within ERASMUS. The more evaluation in higher education is accepted as highly important, the more – ironically – the quality of systematic evaluations seem to suffer, because all persons involved become overburdened as a consequence of frequent calls to provide information or to support evaluation studies administratively. Though one would have liked higher response rates, the evaluation study certainly could provide interesting information on the professional impact of ERASMUS supported mobility and on the views of the formerly mobile persons and various actors and experts regarding possible improvements in the future.

Transition from Study to Employment

Temporary student mobility stimulates former ERASMUS students to be interested in advanced education. Two out of five of the 2000/01 students – about as many as in previous ERASMUS generations, but about twice as many as European students in general – transferred to advanced study, most of them immediately after graduation and a few somewhat later.

The former ERASMUS students addressed started slightly later than previous generations to seek for employment, but the average search period - less than 4 months - was shorter than that of previous generations of ERASMUS students surveyed. 54 percent of former ERASMUS students recently surveyed believe that the period abroad was helpful in obtaining the first job. But this advantage declined; the respective figures were 71 percent among the 1988/89 ERASMUS students and 66 percent of those graduating in 1994/95 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Perceived Positive Impact of ERASMUS Study Period on Obtaining the First Job - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)



Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment?
 Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

During their first years of employment – at the time of the survey, the respondents were employed less than three years on average – more than half of the former ERASMUS students have changed their employer. According to a previous survey, this early change is more common than among formerly non-mobile persons.

Both, former students and employers surveyed suggest that strong emphasis is placed both on academic achievement and personality in recruitment. In comparison to previous surveys, notably computer skills and foreign language proficiency have become more important recently. Also international experience gained momentum among the recruitment criteria, actually reported as important by about half of the former students and one third of the employers.

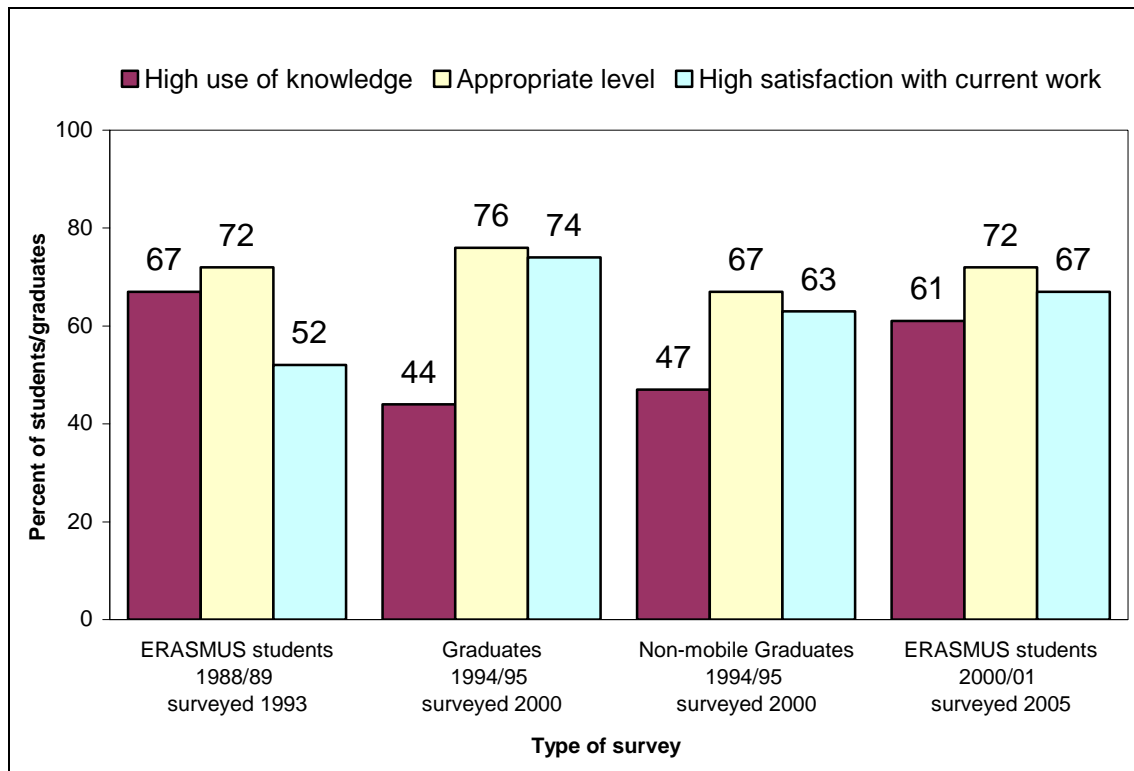
Graduate Career and Work

Six percent of former 2000/01 ERASMUS students report five years after studying in another European country that they were unemployed. This rate was higher than among those formerly mobile twelve years earlier, when 4 percent were unemployed about five years after the study period abroad. Similarly, the proportion those employed temporarily increased from 27 percent within these 12 years to 35 percent. In contrast, the proportion of those employed part-time remained stable at 10 percent.

72 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later believe that the level of position and income is appropriate to their level of educational attainment.

In previous surveys, similar responses were given, whereby formerly mobile students observed an appropriate employment more frequently than graduates who had not been mobile during the course of study (see Figure 2).

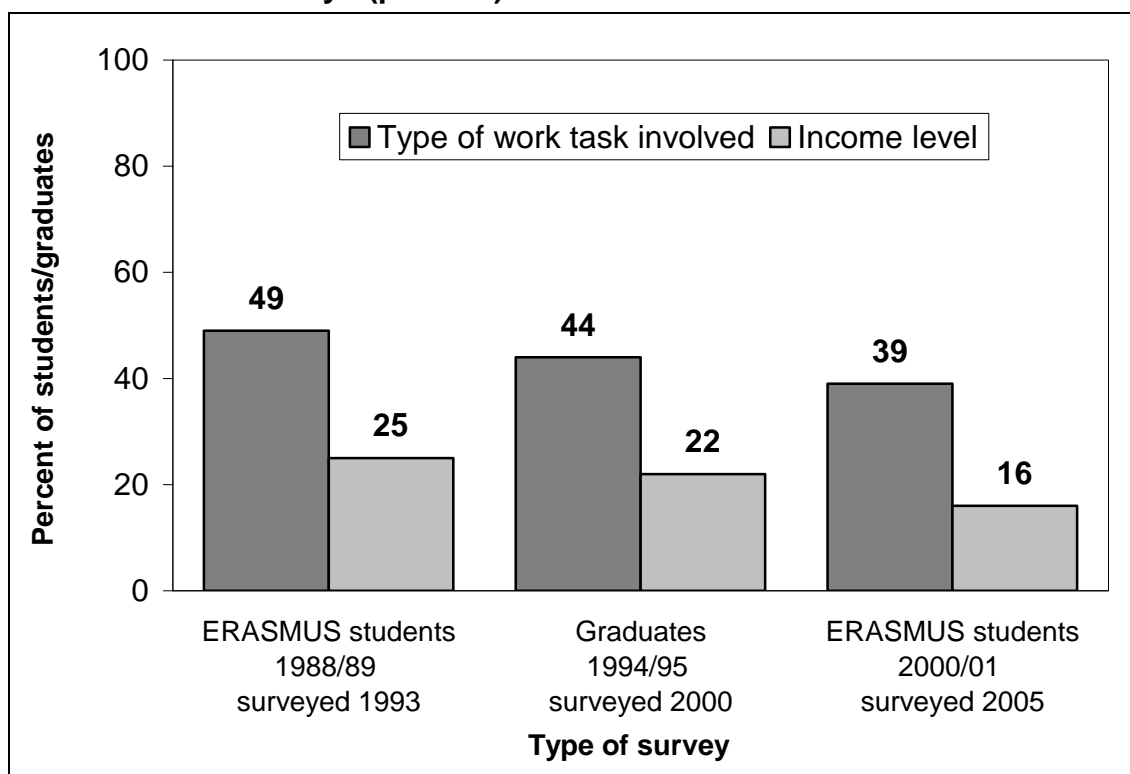
Figure 2 Links Between Study and Subsequent Employment and Work Perceived by Employed Former ERASMUS Students - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)



The figure aggregates the responses to three questions; Question G2: If you take into consideration your current work tasks altogether: To what extent do you use the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study? Question G3: How would you characterise the relationship between your field of study and your area of work? Question G5: Altogether, to what extent are you satisfied with your current work? Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Only 16 percent of the recently surveyed former ERASMUS students consider their income to be higher than that of their peers not having spent any study period abroad. This is clearly lower than in previous generations (see Figure 3): There is even a higher proportion of those who consider their income lower than that of their mobile peers. Employers surveyed in 2006 express a more positive view. According to more than 40 percent of them, internationally experienced graduates are likely to take over professional assignments with high professional responsibility. 21 percent believe that internationally experienced graduates can expect a higher income after some years than those without international experience. Among the experts surveyed at the beginning of the evaluation study, even about one third each believe that the former ERASMUS students can expect a higher status, higher earnings as well as a better chance of reaching a position appropriate to their level of education.

Figure 3 Perceived Positive Impact of ERASMUS Study Period on Type of Work and Income - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)



Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment?
 Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

The university leaders rate the former ERASMUS students' career opportunities most favourably, and most of them expect that their career advantage will increase in the future. Four fifth believe that a study abroad often increases the chance of getting a reasonable job. More than half expect that ERASMUS students more often than non-mobile students get a position appropriate to their level of educational attainment, and one quarter that ERASMUS has a more positive impact on the employability of graduates than any other type of study abroad.

Competences and Work of Former ERASMUS Students

Retrospectively, the former ERASMUS students rate their competences at the time of graduation as high in many respects: academic knowledge, foreign languages and various dimensions work attitudes and work styles. The ratings are higher in many respects than among former ERASMUS student generations. We do not know whether there was a general improvement of the impact of study in general or that of international experience. One should bear in mind, though, that the most recent surveys include a substantial number of Central and Eastern European countries where former ERASMUS students perceive clearly a higher professional value of ERASMUS.

By and large, the employers rate the competences of internationally experienced graduates as favourably as the former ERASMUS students their own competences.

Altogether, employers believe that internationally experienced young graduates have clearly higher competences than those without international experience. International experience notably seems to reinforce adaptability, initiative, the ability to plan and assertiveness.

The experts surveyed initially even have a substantially more positive view of the ERASMUS students. 73 percent consider the academic knowledge of ERASMUS students upon return from the study period abroad to be better than that of non-mobile students, and 82 percent view them as better prepared for future employment and work. They also note higher socio-communicative competences as well as better ways of problem-solving and leadership.

61 percent of the recently surveyed former ERASMUS students who are employed five years later state that they can use the knowledge acquired during the course of study on the job to a high extent (see Figure 2). This is slightly lower than among their predecessors 12 years earlier. 39 percent of those recently surveyed note positive influence on the type of work tasks involved. This again is a decline as compared to 49 percent and 44 percent in the previous two surveys.

About three quarters of former ERASMUS students express a high degree of satisfaction with their employment and work situation (see Figure 2). They state most often that they have largely independent work tasks, can use their competences, have challenging work tasks and have opportunities for continuing learning. The majority of experts surveyed believe that former ERASMUS students have better opportunities than non-mobile students to take over independent work tasks, and almost half of them assume that they have more frequently challenging work tasks.

International Assignments of Former ERASMUS Students

All studies undertaken in the past on the professional value of temporary study in another country have shown consistently that formerly mobile students differ most clearly from formerly non-mobile ones in taking over international assignments. This recent study confirms this conventional wisdom.

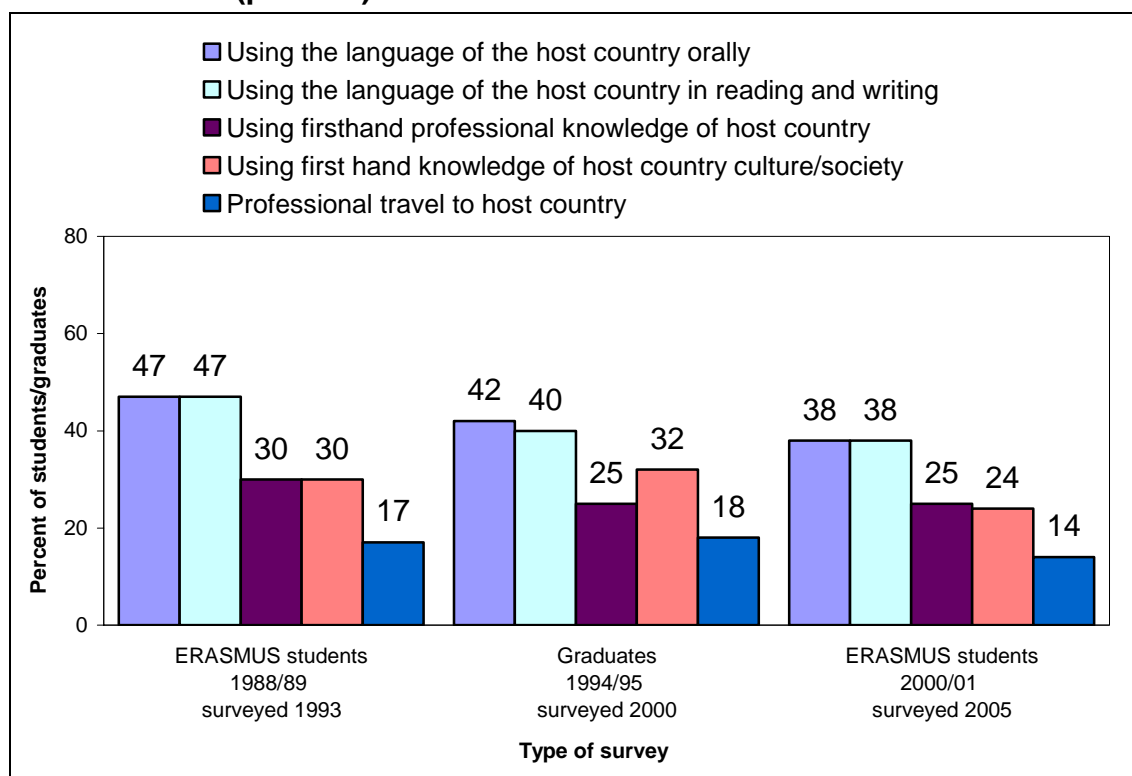
18 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later have been regularly employed abroad – at least for some time - after graduation; this figure is more or less equal to that of prior surveys. Available statistics suggest that this figure is several times as high as among non-mobile graduates. Of those surveyed, half have considered working abroad and almost one quarter have sought employment abroad; these figures are clearly lower than those of previous cohorts of ERASMUS students surveyed.

About half of the recent respondents employed note that their employing organisation has an international scope, and even a higher proportion report substantial international activities. Almost one third see their own work as being embedded into an international context, and even more consider their international competences as important for their current work: About two-thirds view communicating in foreign languages and working with people from different backgrounds as professionally important, more than half of the formerly mobile students assess their knowledge and understanding of international differences in cultures and societies, and almost half their knowledge of other countries

as important for their job tasks. These proportions mostly are somewhat higher than in previous years.

Actually asked how much they use their international competences, a substantially smaller proportion respond affirmatively. Only somewhat more than one third often communicate in foreign languages, about one quarter frequently use firsthand knowledge of other countries and cultures, and only one of seven frequently travels to other countries. Figure 4 shows that former ERASMUS students recently surveyed report less often visible international work tasks than the predecessor generations. Yet, data allow us to estimate that former ERASMUS students are clearly more frequently active in international work tasks than formerly non-mobile students.

Figure 4 ERASMUS-Related Work Task of Employed Former ERASMUS Students – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)



Question F6: To what extent do the responsibilities of your work involve the following? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

The latter finding corresponds to the employers’ responses: Many of them note internationally experienced students taking over international tasks more frequently than students without international experience. They specify this regarding international tasks in general, use of foreign languages, international cooperation, using information and travel abroad. Also most of the experts surveyed are convinced that former ERASMUS students take over such assignments substantially more often than formerly non-mobile students.

Additional Findings about the Professional Value of Student Mobility

Competences, transition to employment, career and professional assignment of former ERASMUS students cannot be attributed predominantly to the temporary study experience in another European country. One has to bear in mind that a substantial proportion of them were internationally mobile prior to their course, and also many of them were mobile during the course of study beyond the ERASMUS-supported period. Moreover, they are a select group of students in various respects. ERASMUS has a mobilizing and reinforcing value, and often it has some value added as regards graduate career and notably international mobility and international work assignments, but certainly ERASMUS has not such a strong impact on the careers of graduates as their more favourable careers and the stronger international components of their careers per se might suggest.

The ERASMUS programme intends to serve students from all eligible countries to more or less the same extent. But, certainly, some graduates benefit more strongly than others. Most strikingly, former ERASMUS students from Central and Eastern European countries report advantageous employment and work in general and international assignments more frequently than their peers from Western Europe. They are a more select group, but they also benefit more strongly from the study period abroad.

There are differences according to field of study as regards the professional value of studying for some period in another European country, but altogether they are less striking than one might expect. Among the four fields addressed in the in-depth second phase of this evaluation study, the lowest impact on academic and field-specific knowledge was reported in Chemistry, while the impact perceived was relatively strong in Business Studies and Sociology.

Across all four fields, ERASMUS mobility was not viewed as a frequent access route to high-flying careers but rather as a "door-opener" into the labour market. In the professionally oriented fields - Business Studies and Mechanical Engineering - the globalisation process and the international business activities seem to make international competences necessary even for positions in national companies. In the other fields - Sociology and Chemistry – international competences were also viewed as important for internationalising job roles of some graduates; more importantly, though, international study experience was viewed as contributing to many "soft skills" in demand also in jobs without any visible international components.

The Professional Value for Mobile Teachers

At first glance, the conditions for professional value of teaching abroad seem to be completely different from that of study abroad. Persons already in the middle of their career (47 years old on average) and mostly already internationally experienced spend a short period of about two weeks on average in another country with the support of ERASMUS. One could expect a substantially more modest impact than on the part of mobile students.

Surprisingly, though, the formerly mobile teachers in the framework of ERASMUS note a substantial value of temporary teaching abroad. It is seen as enhancing subsequent academic work of the formerly mobile teachers. 58 percent of the respondents note a

positive impact on their own professional development in general. Actually, 65 percent report a general improvement of their research contacts, 60 percent broadened their academic knowledge while teaching abroad, 53 percent got involved in innovative academic discussions originating from the country or the institution of their temporary stay, 45 percent improved their teaching in general, and 40 percent developed and implemented new teaching methods. According to many experts surveyed, teaching abroad contributes positively to the teachers' general academic knowledge and formerly mobile teachers are academically superior on average to those not mobile for teaching purposes.

The experts surveyed at the beginning of this study have perceived a slightly stronger spread of subsequent innovation in teaching than improvement of research and general academic activities. The mobile teachers, in contrast, more often report a substantial impact on their subsequent research activities or their academic knowledge in general than on teaching.

In addition, temporary teaching abroad is viewed by the mobile teachers as reinforcing international dimensions of their career. Subsequently, they have spent on average altogether almost one month abroad annually – mostly to attend conferences, but often as well to undertake research activities or to teach. Half of them believe that the teaching period has enhanced their international scientific cooperation activities, while one third each see invitations from abroad and cooperation in research project increasing as a consequence of their ERASMUS teaching period abroad. The experts surveyed present an even more favourable view. More than three quarters each believe that mobile teachers are superior to non-mobile ones after the teaching period abroad in their knowledge of higher education of the host country, intercultural understanding and competences as well as foreign language proficiency.

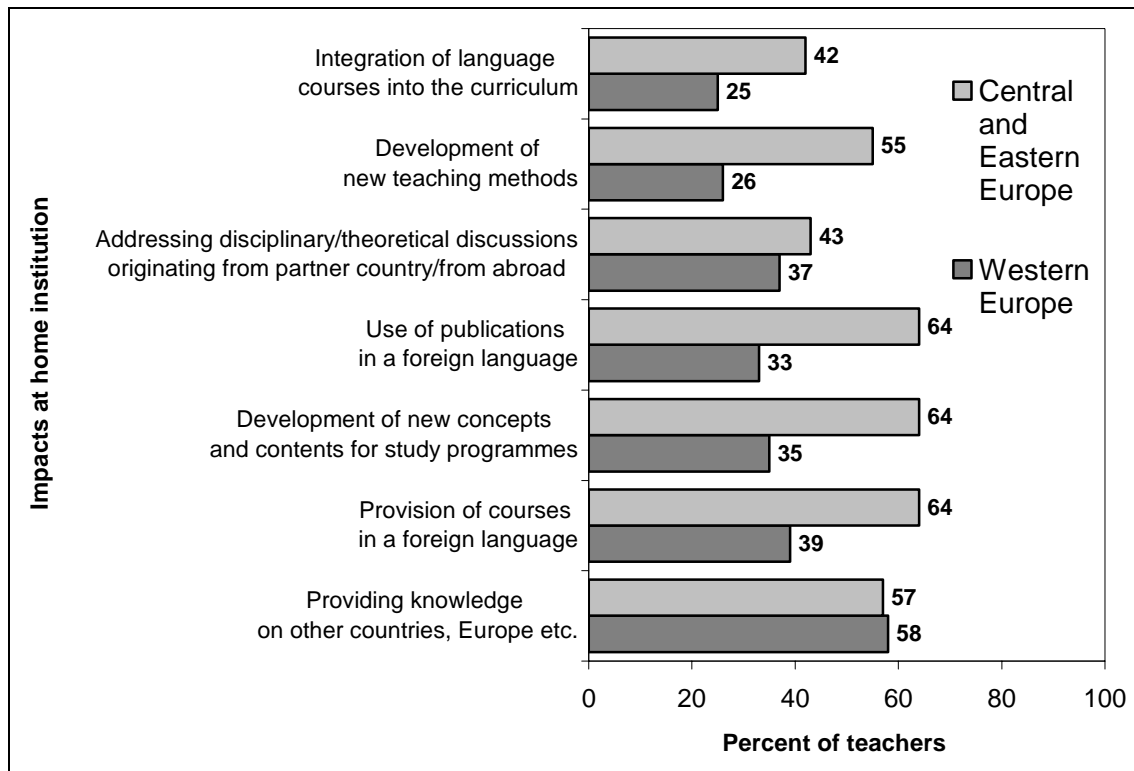
Moreover, formerly mobile teachers are convinced that ERASMUS teaching mobility has a positive impact on their institution of higher education. More than half of them argue that teaching mobility has been helpful for improving advice provided to mobile students and for providing knowledge on other countries. Almost half consider teaching mobility beneficial to improve the coordination of study programmes between the participating institutions, the range of foreign language teaching, the developments of new study concepts and the growing relevance of comparative approaches (see Figure 5).

The university leaders surveyed note a very positive effect as well of teaching staff mobility on their institution: More than three quarters consider teaching staff mobility as contributing to the international reputation of the higher education institution. More than half observe a positive effect on international research activities and half of them each on various dimensions of teaching and learning.

Further, it is worth noting that 9 percent of the formerly mobile teachers are professionally active five years later in another country than that where they had taught prior to the ERASMUS supported period – in many cases in the country of their temporary teaching period abroad. This is certainly a higher degree of mid-career international mobility than one could have anticipated. Even more than two-thirds of the experts addressed believe that teaching abroad increases the opportunity for

international academic mobility. Certainly, however, one cannot expect that a similar proportion of academics actually will be mobile.

Figure 5 Select Strong Impact of ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility on the Home Institution in the View of Former Mobile Teachers by and European Region (percent)



Question E6: In general, how would you rate the impact of ERASMUS teaching staff mobility on your home institution regarding the following aspects? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'
Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey 2005.

Finally, the immediate career value of teaching abroad for status and income looks more modest at first glance: 3 percent observe a raise of income, 6 percent an extension of a temporary contract, and 12 percent the move towards a high-ranking administrative position as a consequence of teaching abroad. One has to bear in mind, though, that the overall number of teachers climbing a higher position subsequent to the teaching period abroad has been low. On the other hand, more than one third state that teaching abroad enhanced their career perspectives. Obviously, teaching abroad often is instrumental for small career steps and nourishes the hope of long-term career enhancement. The university leaders as well name moderate career enhancements, while almost half of the experts initially surveyed expect the mobile teachers to be promoted to a higher rank at the same institution.

Altogether, as already noted, the professional value of teaching abroad seems to be substantially higher for academics from Central and Eastern European countries than for academics from Western European countries. This difference is far more striking for teachers than for students. For example, 10 percent of teachers from the former, but only one percent from the latter countries note a raise of income level, 30 percent of the former as compared to 7 percent of the latter perceive a contribution of teaching abroad

to getting a higher rank, and 81 percent as compared to 53 percent report a positive impact on the overall professional development.

The Overall Value and Recommendations

Overall, the surveys conducted in the framework of the VALERA study elicited five major findings.

- The triangulation of views shows that experts, university leaders and employers note a higher professional value of temporary ERASMUS-supported study in another European country than the former ERASMUS students themselves. We cannot establish clearly whether the former overestimate or the latter underestimate the impact of student mobility.
- The evaluation study confirmed the finding of previous surveys that former ERASMUS students view the study period abroad as leading to international mobility, international competences and visibly international work tasks while hardly promising career enhancement as compared to formerly non-mobile students. However, other actors and observers surveyed more often believe that ERASMUS contributes as well to general career enhancement.
- A comparison of the responses of the survey of 2000/01 ERASMUS students five years later to those of previous cohorts of ERASMUS students suggests that an advantageous employment and work situation and a visibly more international role of former ERASMUS students as compared to formerly non-mobile students declines over time in many respects. The more international components of employment and work become common and the more students acquire international competences, the less pronounced is the professional value of ERASMUS.
- The professional value of ERASMUS for former students – as well as for former teachers - from Central and Eastern countries obviously is substantially higher than for those from Western European countries. In contrast to this difference by groups of countries, the differences by fields appear to be modest.
- Though mobile teachers tend to be already internationally experienced, are mature persons often well established in their career and spend only a short teaching period abroad, the formerly mobile teachers report a strikingly strong professional value of the ERASMUS-supported teaching mobility period. The majority of them observe enhancement in international research cooperation and in their general academic competences, while a slightly lower proportion report a substantial value for subsequent teaching activities. Some of the mobile teachers note visible career advantages and some opt subsequently for an academic career in another country, not infrequently that of their ERASMUS-supported teaching period.

Overall, the findings of the VALERA evaluation study underscore the *relevance* of the ERASMUS support scheme. As previous studies have also shown, a temporary period of study in another European country helps to enhance international competences, contributes to international mobility of graduates and places former ERASMUS students in visibly international professional positions. This study shows in addition that

the employers consider the internationally experienced graduates superior to other graduates as far as many other competences are concerned, and many of them believe that formerly mobile students will be more successful in their long-term career. Finally, the relevance of ERASMUS is strongly underscored in the study by the high professional value reported by mobile teachers, and university leaders believe that this contributes significantly both to the internationalisation as well as to the reputation of the institution in general. These findings suggest that ERASMUS serves a demand on the part of the employment system and that institutions of higher education are aware of societal expectations.

The evaluation study confirms the finding of previous studies that ERASMUS is *effective* in terms of serving high numbers of persons with the help of small funds for the individual persons supported. Obviously, however, many experts and actors believe that the quality could be improved, if more funds were provided notably for teachers to teach longer periods in the host country and for curricular activities linked to student mobility.

As far as the *impact* of ERASMUS is concerned, prior studies already had shown that the “vertical” professional value of temporary study in another European country is limited, but the “horizontal” professional value is impressive. Former ERASMUS students hardly can count on higher status and income than their non-mobile peers, but access to employment is facilitated, and they are more often internationally mobile and take over visibly international work assignment. Only for former ERASMUS students from Central and Eastern European countries a general career enhancement is the rule. But the recent surveys as well suggest that experts and employers appreciate not only those competences enhanced abroad which serve international job roles, but also note above-average strengths of former ERASMUS students in various areas of academic knowledge, general intellectual competences, work-related values and socio-communicative skills. There is no evidence that ERASMUS has stronger impacts in those direction than temporary study abroad by other means, but ERASMUS succeeds in mobilize broad numbers of students which benefits from the experience abroad in the ways named above.

With respect to teaching staff mobility, this evaluation study revealed an impressively high impact. Many of the teachers mobile for a short period of time noted an enhancement of international cooperation and research and various educational activities. University leaders and other experts stated that mobile teachers often become more active, more intellectually thriving and also in some cases more visibly successful in their careers.

As regards *durability*, most of the actors and experts addressed in the study seem to believe that ERASMUS can play an important role in the future, if the basic characteristics of the support programme will persist. ERASMUS has so many benefits that almost all of those concerned plea for continuation.

Therefore one set of recommendations named call for improvements with the given logics of the established practices: more intensive preparation, more academic, administrative and financial support for the students while abroad, better means of assessment and recognition, closer links between higher education and the employment system, more money and less bureaucracy on the part of the European Commission and

- last but not least – stronger efforts to make the benefits visible. As regards teacher mobility, suggestions are made to increase efforts to make longer period of teaching abroad viable and take temporary teaching in another country more strongly into account in decisions affecting career enhancement, such as appointment and promotion decisions.

But there are findings as well which call into question the durability. The professional value of temporary study in another country clearly has declined over the years. According to the most recent survey, the impact of ERASMUS is smaller than according to surveys of previous generations for graduates in obtaining a first job, getting a higher income and taking over job tasks for which visible international competences are needed. This is most likely caused by a growing internationalisation in general that lead to a gradual decline of the uniqueness of the ERASMUS experience.

The authors of this evaluation study conclude that the ERASMUS programme will have better chances in the future if it becomes again more ambitious as far as the quality of the experience abroad is concerned. There were good reasons in the past why ERASMUS gradually shifted from student mobility closely linked to curriculum development towards an administratively smooth programme for large numbers of students. But now the value of the experience abroad as such is declining in the wake of the general internationalisation of the environment. Moreover, the experts addressed for select fields of study indicate ample opportunities of strengthening the value of temporary study abroad through a more targeted timing in the course of study and more targeted curricular thrusts. Thus, the time seems to be ripe for another major approach of ERASMUS student mobility, where more ambitious curricular aims will be intertwined with the financial support for mobile students.

Executive Summary (Français)

Objectif et structure de l'étude

Le projet VALERA est intitulé « Valeur professionnelle de la mobilité ERASMUS – Évaluation externe de l'impact de la mobilité ERASMUS sur l'accès à l'emploi et le déroulement de la carrière des étudiants ainsi que sur le déroulement de la carrière des personnels enseignants ». Il analyse l'impact de la mobilité intervenue dans le cadre du sous-programme ERASMUS de SOCRATES sur la carrière des étudiants et des enseignants mobiles. Il repose sur des enquêtes représentatives auprès d'anciens étudiants et enseignants mobiles ERASMUS. Des enquêtes auprès de dirigeants d'université sur le rôle de la mobilité des étudiants et des enseignants au sein de leurs institutions, et auprès d'employeurs sur leurs expériences avec d'anciens étudiants mobiles complètent le tout. En outre, de nombreux acteurs et experts ont été interrogés sur leurs perceptions de l'impact de la mobilité ERASMUS dans le cadre d'une enquête d'experts et de discussions au cours d'ateliers généraux et d'experts.

Chaque enquête concerne plusieurs dimensions de la valeur professionnelle. Le « succès » professionnel de la mobilité étudiante a été analysé sous les aspects suivants :

- Compétences générales et internationales,
- Transition vers le monde du travail,
- Premier emploi et emplois ultérieurs,
- Aspects internationaux de l'emploi et du travail.

De façon similaire, l'impact professionnel de la mobilité des personnels enseignants fut mesuré dans cinq domaines :

- Compétences générales et internationales,
- Transition vers le monde du travail,
- Activités liées à ERASMUS dans l'institution d'enseignement supérieur d'origine,
- Mobilité professionnelle verticale et horizontale,
- Mobilité professionnelle internationale.

L'évaluation avait un triple objectif : la mesure de l'impact en terme de valeur professionnelle de la mobilité des étudiants et des enseignants, l'identification des éléments menant aux résultats souhaités et l'analyse des résultats globaux en terme d'importance, d'efficacité et de durabilité du sous-programme ERASMUS dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur.

Méthodes d'enquête

L'étude d'évaluation comprend deux phases majeures. La première phase a été conçue en deux étapes. Une première étape d'analyse des résultats d'études précédentes et

d'enquête auprès d'experts. Un questionnaire « expert » a été adressé aux responsables du programme ERASMUS, aux responsables des institutions d'enseignement supérieur, aux organisations étudiantes, aux personnels enseignants et administratifs, ainsi qu'aux organisations patronales. Parmi les 156 experts contactés, 67 ont rempli le questionnaire, ce qui correspond à un taux de réponse de 43 %. Le premier rapport de notre étude, le « rapport cadre », reprend les résultats de cette étape et a servi à définir les questions clés de la seconde étape.

Une seconde étape en quatre enquêtes clés :

1. Une enquête auprès d'anciens étudiants ERASMUS (année universitaire 2000/2001). Ces derniers, sélectionnés par pays et par type d'institutions d'enseignement supérieur, ont été contactés par leurs institutions d'enseignement supérieur d'origine. 4.589 anciens étudiants ERASMUS ont répondu au questionnaire papier, très standardisé, soit un taux de réponse de 45 %,
2. Une enquête auprès d'anciens personnels enseignants ERASMUS. Tous les enseignants mobiles de l'année académique 2000/2001, d'un échantillon d'institutions d'enseignement supérieur, ont été contactés par leurs coordinateurs ERASMUS et ont été priés de remplir le questionnaire en-ligne. 755 professeurs (de 3.123) ont répondu, soit un taux de réponse de 24 %,
3. Une enquête auprès de responsables d'institutions d'enseignement supérieur. Les coordinateurs ERASMUS ont transmis un questionnaire papier aux responsables qui avaient signalé, lors d'un contact préliminaire, leur volonté de participer à l'étude. 626 dirigeants ont répondu, soit 44 % des 1.437 personnes contactées.
4. Une enquête auprès d'employeurs. Un questionnaire papier a été adressé à 1.500 personnes, employant d'anciens étudiants ERASMUS sur leurs lieux de travail (les adresses ont été compilées à partir des informations fournies par les anciens étudiants ERASMUS), ainsi qu'à un échantillon de 4.500 entreprises des pays éligibles pour le programme ERASMUS. Au total, 312 réponses nous sont parvenues, soit 6 % des personnes contactées.

La première phase de l'étude s'est achevée par la présentation de résultats d'analyse préliminaires lors d'un atelier d'experts. Cet atelier a servi à formuler des hypothèses sur les résultats obtenus, à préciser les objectifs ainsi qu'à sélectionner les filières pour la seconde phase de l'étude d'évaluation.

La seconde phase de l'étude a été consacrée à la valeur professionnelle de la mobilité dans certaines filières. En accord avec les experts consultés, quatre filières ont été choisies, au lieu de deux prévues à l'origine, à savoir : deux filières à orientation académique (la chimie et la sociologie) et deux filières à orientation professionnelle (l'ingénierie mécanique et les études de commerce), couvrant ainsi d'une part le domaine des sciences et technologies, et d'autre part celui des sciences humaines et sociales. Des représentants de ces filières et des domaines professionnels correspondants (étudiants, personnels enseignants, employeurs, représentants d'organisations professionnelles, en particulier personnes impliquées dans la conception des programmes) furent invités à des ateliers intensifs d'une journée (ces derniers remplaçant les interviews prévus à l'origine). Ces échanges approfondis ont servi à

mettre à jour le « savoir tacite » des participants, à approfondir les principaux résultats ainsi qu'à développer des suggestions pour l'amélioration de la mobilité étudiante ERASMUS.

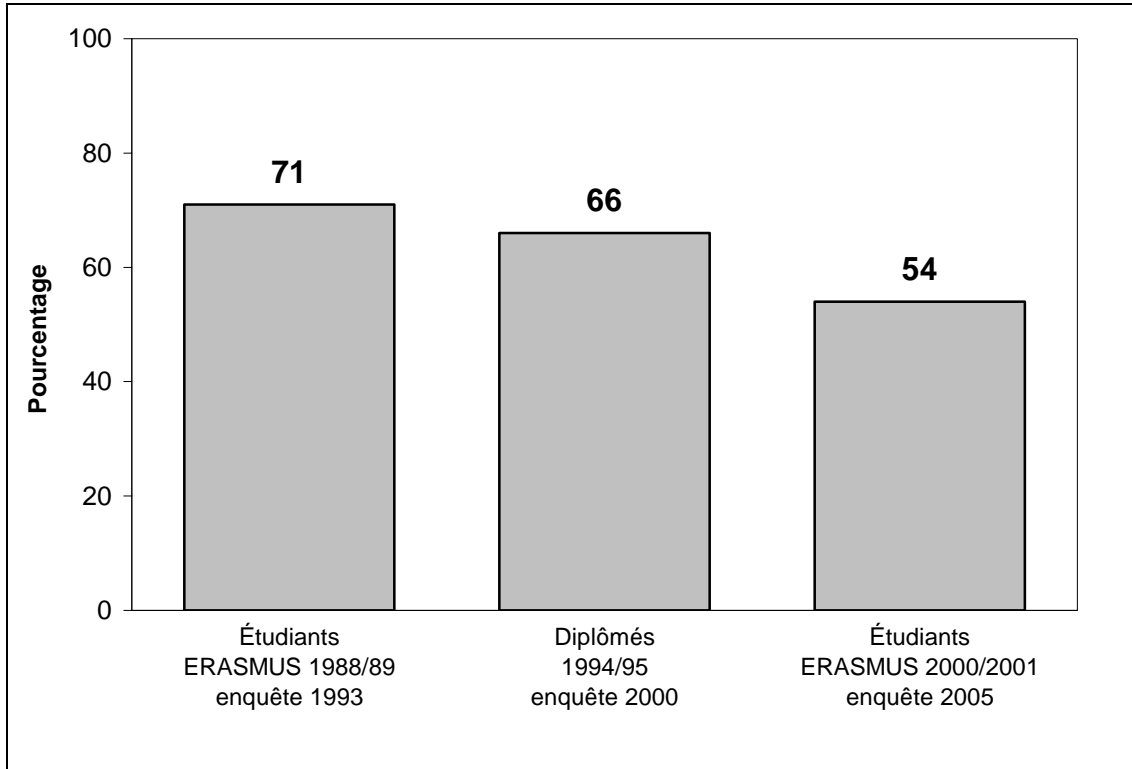
Dans l'ensemble, faire coopérer les établissements d'enseignement supérieur et les différents groupes de personnes interrogés nous a demandé plus de temps et d'efforts que lors d'études similaires précédentes. C'est la raison pour laquelle la Commission Européenne a accepté une prolongation du projet, doublant presque la période envisagée à l'origine. Il a été également nécessaire que l'équipe de recherche – très expérimentée dans le domaine des études sur la mobilité internationale et responsable des évaluations ERASMUS entre le début du programme jusque dans les années 1990– s'engage en termes de ressources au-delà des subventions de la Commission. Cela a sauvé l'existence du projet. Cependant les taux de réponse sont restés plus faibles que prévus et en deçà des résultats d'enquêtes précédentes. Nous avons de bonnes raisons de penser que les problèmes survenus au cours de cette étude ne sont pas uniquement dûs à un ras-le-bol face aux évaluations ERASMUS. Il semble que plus on reconnaît l'importance des évaluations dans l'enseignement supérieur, plus la qualité des évaluations systématiques semble – ironiquement – souffrir. En effet les activités d'évaluation se multiplient, à un point tel que toutes les personnes impliquées sont surchargées de sollicitations visant à leur demander des informations ou un soutien administratif pour telles ou telles études d'évaluation. Nous aurions aimé atteindre des taux de réponse plus élevés, l'étude d'évaluation fournit, cependant, de précieuses informations sur l'impact professionnel de la mobilité ERASMUS et présente des suggestions pour l'amélioration de la mobilité étudiante ERASMUS à partir des réflexions de personnes ayant été mobiles, de divers experts et d'acteurs consultés.

Transition des études vers l'emploi

La mobilité étudiante temporaire incite les anciens étudiants ERASMUS à poursuivre leurs études supérieures. Cela concerne deux anciens étudiants ERASMUS sur cinq (2000/2001), presque autant que dans les générations ERASMUS précédentes mais deux fois plus que les étudiants européens en général. La plupart des étudiants ont poursuivi leurs études immédiatement après leur diplôme et quelques-uns peu de temps après.

Les anciens étudiants ERASMUS ont commencé un peu plus tard à chercher un emploi que les générations précédentes mais la durée moyenne de leur recherche (moins de 4 mois) est inférieure à celle des générations précédentes d'étudiants ERASMUS interrogées. 54 % des anciens étudiants ERASMUS sont d'avis que leur séjour à l'étranger les a aidés à obtenir leur premier emploi. Cependant, cet avantage semble perdre de l'importance : ce taux atteignait 71 % pour les étudiants ERASMUS de 1988/89 et 66 % parmi les diplômés en 1994/1995 (cf. figure 1).

Figure 1 Influence positive d'un séjour d'études ERASMUS sur l'obtention de premier emploi – Le point de vue d'anciens étudiants en comparaison des résultats d'enquêtes précédentes (en pourcentage)



Question H1: A votre avis, quel a été l'impact de votre séjour d'études à l'étranger sur votre emploi?

Source: Maiworm et Teichler 1996; Jahr et Teichler 2002; Université de Kassel, VALERA Enquête sur les Anciens Étudiants ERASMUS 2005.

Au cours de leurs premières années d'activités professionnelles – les sondés étaient employés depuis moins de trois ans en moyenne au moment de l'enquête – plus de la moitié des anciens étudiants ERASMUS avaient changé d'employeur. Selon une enquête précédente, le changement précoce d'employeur est plus répandu parmi les anciens étudiants ERASMUS que parmi les personnes n'ayant pas été mobiles auparavant.

Les anciens étudiants ainsi que les employeurs interrogés ont souligné que l'importance des résultats académiques et de la personnalité lors du recrutement. La comparaison avec les études précédentes révèle, également, l'importance actuellement grandissante des connaissances informatiques et de la maîtrise de langues étrangères. Environ un ancien étudiant sur deux et un employeur sur trois mentionnent l'expérience internationale comme un critère important lors du recrutement.

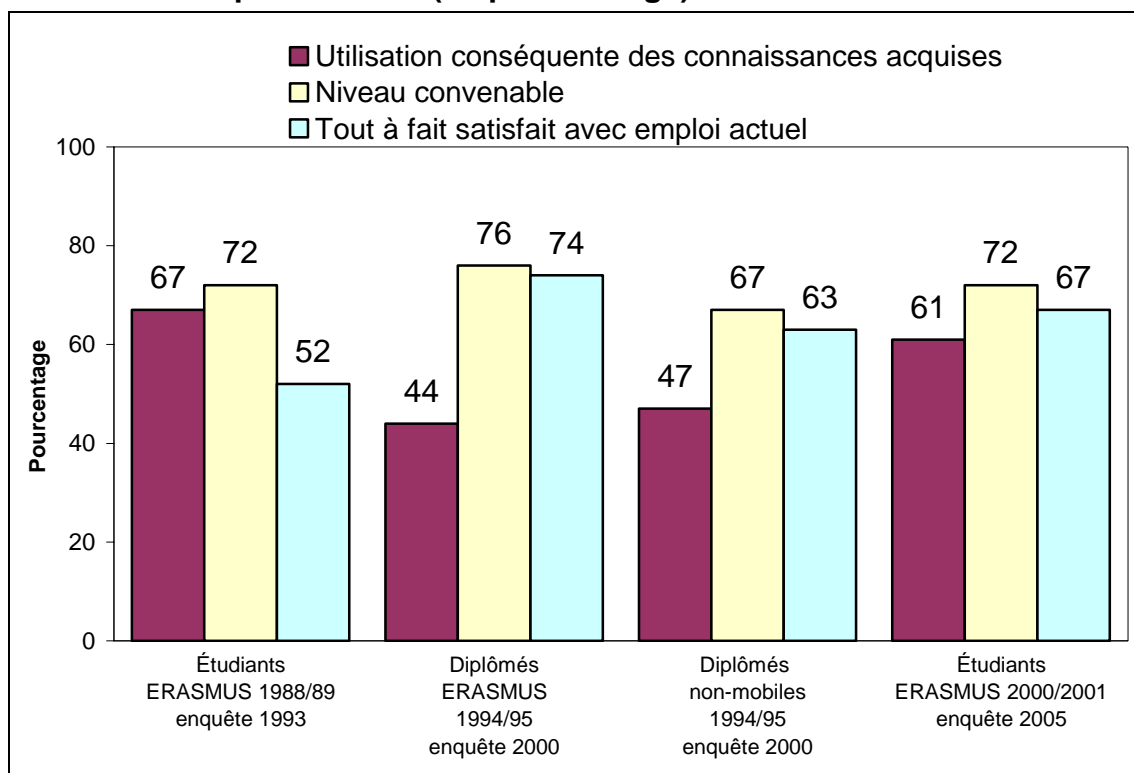
Carrière et statut des diplômés

Cinq ans après leurs études dans un autre pays européen, 6 % des anciens étudiants ERASMUS 2000/01 ont déclaré être au chômage : Un taux supérieur à celui des étudiants mobiles il y a 12 ans (4 % de cette population était au chômage cinq ans après leur période d'études à l'étranger). De même, le pourcentage de personnes ayant un

emploi temporaire est passé de 27 % à 35 % au cours de ces 12 ans. Par contre la proportion des anciens étudiants ERASMUS employés à mi-temps est restée stable de l'ordre de 10 %.

72 % des étudiants ERASMUS 2000/01 employés cinq ans après leur période de mobilité pensent que le niveau de leur position et de leur revenu est adapté à leur niveau d'études. Ceci correspond aux résultats obtenus lors d'enquêtes précédentes, cependant, les anciens étudiants mobiles font plus souvent ce constat que les diplômés n'ayant pas été mobiles pendant leurs études (cf. figure 2).

Figure 2 Relations entre les études et l'emploi voire le travail ultérieur – Le point de vue d'anciens étudiants ERASMUS ayant un emploi en comparaison des résultats d'enquêtes précédentes (en pourcentage)

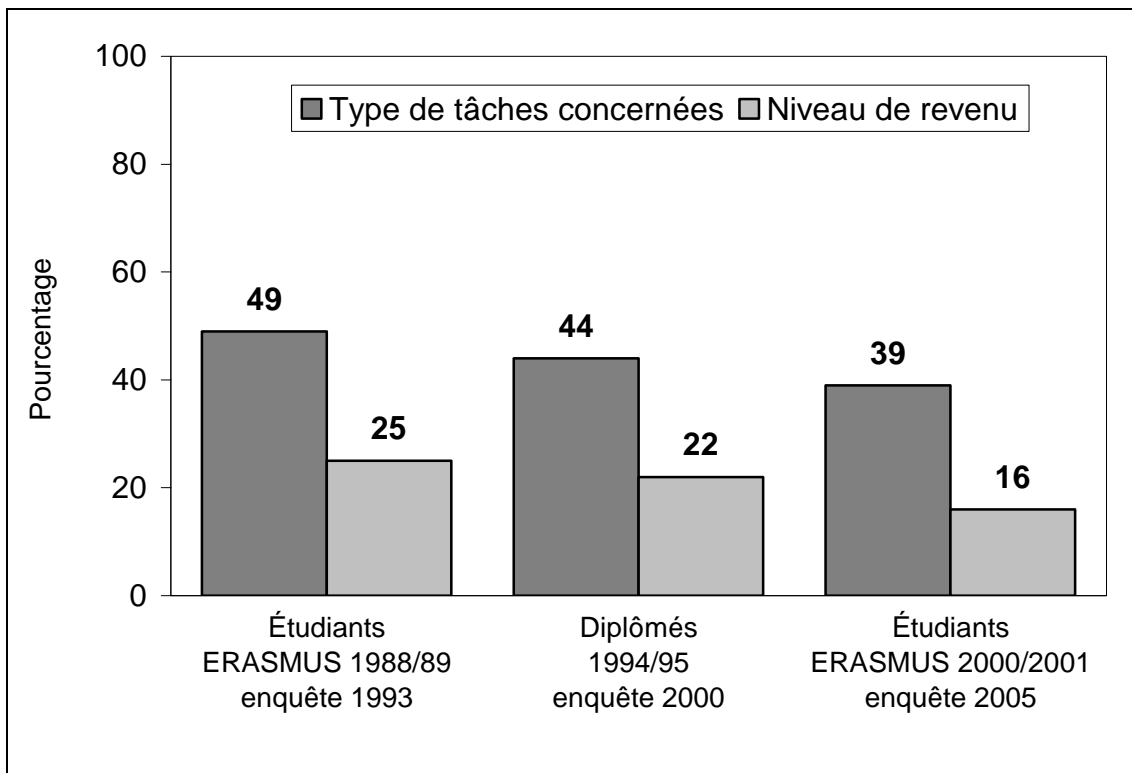


Le figure rassemble les questions en trois question; Question G2: Si vous prenez en compte votre actuel emploi, veuillez estimer dans quelle mesure vous utilisez les connaissances et les compétences acquises au cours de vos études? Question G3: Selon vous, dans quelle mesure votre filière d'études est-elle liée à votre fonction? Question G5: Dans l'ensemble, quel est le niveau de satisfaction que vous apporte votre emploi actuel?
Source: Maiworm et Teichler 1996; Jahr et Teichler 2002; Université de Kassel, VALERA Enquête sur les Anciens Étudiants ERASMUS 2005.

Seulement 16 % des anciens étudiants ERASMUS, récemment interrogés, considèrent que leurs revenus sont supérieurs à ceux de leurs pairs n'ayant pas étudié à l'étranger. Cette proportion est nettement inférieure à celle des générations précédentes (cf. figure 3). Les employeurs interrogés font part d'une vision plus positive : pour 40 % d'entre eux, les diplômés ayant eu une expérience internationale sont susceptibles d'assumer des tâches professionnelles à haute responsabilité. 21 % considèrent qu'après quelques années, les diplômés avec une expérience internationale peuvent s'attendre à recevoir un revenu plus élevé que les diplômés sans expérience internationale. Environ un tiers des

experts interrogés au début de cette étude sont d’avis que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS peuvent s’attendre à obtenir un statut et des revenus plus élevés ainsi qu’à atteindre une position adaptée à leur niveau d’études.

Figure 3 Influence positive d’un séjour d’études ERASMUS sur l’emploi et le travail – Le point de vue d’anciens étudiants en comparaison des résultats d’enquêtes précédentes (en pourcentage)



Question H1: A votre avis, quel a été l’impact de votre séjour d’études à l’étranger sur votre emploi?
 Source: Maiworm et Teichler 1996; Jahr et Teichler 2002; Université de Kassel, VALERA Enquête sur les Anciens Étudiants ERASMUS 2005.

Les dirigeants d’université sont convaincus que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS bénéficient de meilleures opportunités de carrière, et que cet avantage ira en s’accroissant à l’avenir. Quatre dirigeants sur cinq affirment que les études à l’étranger accroissent souvent les chances d’obtenir un bon travail. Plus de la moitié déclare que les étudiants ERASMUS ont plus de chances que les étudiants non mobiles d’obtenir une position adaptée à leur niveau d’études. En outre, un quart est d’avis qu’ERASMUS a un impact plus positif sur les chances d’emploi des diplômés que n’importe quel autre type d’études à l’étranger.

Compétences et activités professionnelles des anciens étudiants ERASMUS

Rétrospectivement, les anciens étudiants ERASMUS se considèrent comme hautement compétents au moment de leur remise de diplôme au regard de leurs connaissances académiques, des langues étrangères et des divers comportements et styles de travail. Ces taux sont plus élevés que lors des études précédentes. Nous ignorons s’il s’agit

d'une amélioration générale de l'impact des études ou de l'impact de l'expérience internationale. Néanmoins, un facteur est évident : les enquêtes les plus récentes comprennent un nombre important de pays d'Europe Centrale et d'Europe de l'Est où les anciens étudiants ERASMUS attribuent une valeur professionnelle très importante à ERASMUS.

Tout compte fait, les employeurs considèrent les compétences des diplômés ayant une expérience internationale aussi favorablement que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS eux-mêmes. Ils sont d'avis que ces derniers disposent de compétences plus développées que les diplômés sans expérience internationale. L'expérience internationale semble renforcer la capacité d'adaptation, l'esprit d'initiative, la capacité de planifier et l'assurance.

Les experts interrogés au début de cette étude ont une opinion bien plus positive des étudiants ERASMUS. 73 % d'entre eux considèrent que les connaissances académiques des étudiants ERASMUS à leur retour de séjour d'études à l'étranger sont meilleures que celles des étudiants non mobiles et 82 % considèrent qu'ils sont mieux préparés pour leur futur emploi et travail. Ils soulignent l'effet de la mobilité sur les compétences socio - communicatives, la capacité à résoudre des problèmes et leur leadership.

61 % des étudiants ERASMUS 2000/2001 en poste cinq ans plus tard déclarent qu'ils peuvent largement utiliser, pendant leur travail, les connaissances acquises durant leurs études. Ces résultats sont légèrement inférieurs à ceux des générations précédentes, 12 ans auparavant. 39 % des étudiants ERASMUS interrogés récemment ont déclaré que la période ERASMUS a influencé positivement le type de tâches professionnelles. Ce pourcentage est en baisse en comparaison des taux de 49 % et de 44 % enregistrés lors des deux études précédentes (cf. figure 3).

Près de trois quarts des anciens étudiants ERASMUS se déclarent hautement satisfaits de leur emploi et de leur travail. Interrogés sur les caractéristiques de leur situation professionnelle, ils déclarent le plus souvent qu'ils jouissent d'une grande indépendance, qu'ils peuvent utiliser leurs compétences, que leurs tâches sont stimulantes et qu'ils ont des possibilités de formation continue. La majorité des experts interrogés pensent que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS ont de meilleures chances d'avoir des tâches professionnelles indépendantes que les étudiants non mobiles. Près de la moitié pense qu'ils assument des tâches plus stimulantes.

Activités internationales des anciens étudiants ERASMUS

Toutes les études menées dans le passé sur la valeur professionnelle des études temporaires dans un autre pays montrent avec régularité que les étudiants anciennement mobiles se distinguent le plus nettement des étudiants non mobiles en ce qu'ils assument des activités internationales. Cette étude récente confirme ce qui peut déjà être considéré comme un acquis.

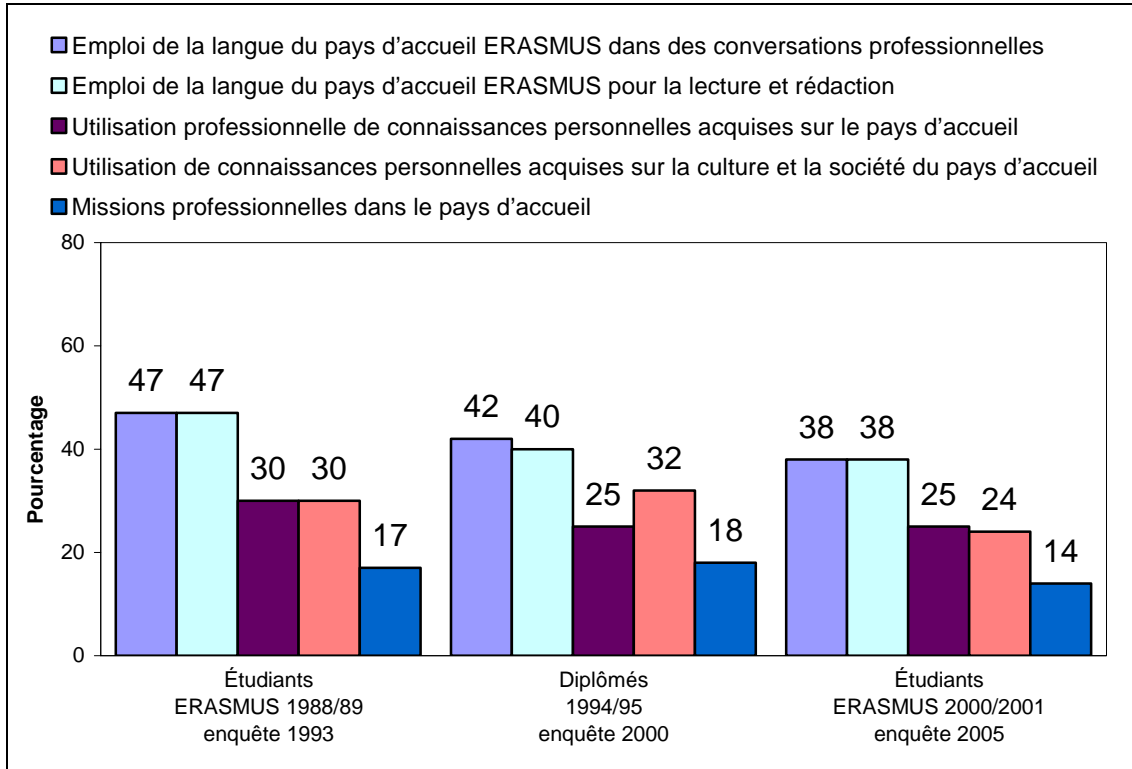
18 % des étudiants ERASMUS de 2000/2001 en poste cinq ans plus tard ont régulièrement travaillé à l'étranger – au moins pour un certain temps – après la fin de leurs études. Ce pourcentage est plus ou moins identique dans les études précédentes. Les statistiques disponibles montrent que ce taux est de largement supérieur à celui des diplômés non mobiles. Parmi les étudiants interrogés, la moitié a pensé à travailler à

l'étranger et presque un quart a cherché un emploi à l'étranger. Ces chiffres sont nettement inférieurs à ceux des précédentes enquêtes d'étudiants ERASMUS.

Près de la moitié des étudiants interrogés récemment ayant un emploi constate que leur organisme employeur a une envergure internationale et même un plus grand nombre constate des activités internationales importantes. Près d'un tiers des diplômés eux-mêmes considèrent que leur propre travail est intégré dans un contexte international. Un plus grand nombre pense, même, que leurs compétences internationales sont importantes pour effectuer leur travail actuel : Près de deux tiers considèrent que la communication dans des langues étrangères et la collaboration avec des personnes aux profils différents sont importantes pour leur travail. Pour plus de la moitié, leurs connaissances et leur compréhension de différentes cultures et sociétés jouent un rôle important; près de la moitié considère que leurs connaissances d'autres pays sont importantes. Ces taux sont pour la plupart légèrement supérieurs à ceux des années précédentes.

À la question visant la proportion de leurs compétences internationales utilisées, un petit nombre déclare qu'ils utilisent fréquemment ces capacités. Seulement un peu plus d'un tiers communique souvent dans une langue étrangère, près d'un quart utilise fréquemment l'expérience personnelle d'autres pays et cultures et seulement un sur sept voyage fréquemment dans d'autres pays. Le figure 4 illustre le fait que les étudiants ERASMUS interrogés récemment mentionnent moins souvent que les générations précédentes effectuer des tâches à l'international. Ces données nous permettent cependant de constater que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS sont plus engagés dans des activités internationales que les étudiants non-mobiles.

Figure 4 Activités professionnelles liées à ERASMUS - Le point de vue d'anciens étudiants ERASMUS ayant un emploi en comparaison des résultats d'enquêtes précédentes (en pourcentage)



Question F6: D'après les propositions suivantes, veuillez évaluer les responsabilités qu'implique votre emploi:
Graduation des réponses de 1 = a un niveau très élevé à 5 = pas du tout.

Source: Maiworm et Teichler 1996; Jahr et Teichler 2002; Université de Kassel, VALERA Enquête sur les Anciens Étudiants ERASMUS 2005.

Ces données peuvent être complétées par les réponses des employeurs : Beaucoup d'entre eux notent que les étudiants ayant une expérience internationale assument plus souvent des tâches internationales que les étudiants sans expérience internationale. Ces réponses se fondent sur les tâches internationales en général, l'usage des langues étrangères, la coopération internationale, la mise à profit d'informations et des voyages à l'étranger. La plupart des experts sont également convaincus que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS assument plus souvent de telles tâches que les anciens étudiants non mobiles.

Résultats complémentaires sur la valeur professionnelle des études à l'étranger

Il faut garder à l'esprit que les compétences, la transition vers l'emploi, la carrière et les tâches professionnelles des anciens étudiants ERASMUS ne peuvent pas être principalement attribuées aux séjours d'études temporaires dans un autre pays européen. Il faut également garder à l'esprit que nombre d'entre eux furent mobiles à l'international avant leurs études, et nombre d'entre eux furent mobiles à l'international au cours de leurs études hors de la période ERASMUS. Ils forment sous différents aspects un groupe spécifique. ERASMUS a un effet mobilisant et renforçant, il

représente un certain atout en terme de carrière des diplômés, de mobilité et d'activités professionnelles internationales. Cependant ERASMUS n'a assurément pas un impact si important sur la carrière des diplômés que l'analyse des déroulements et les éléments internationaux de carrière les plus positifs peuvent le suggérer.

Le dessein du programme ERASMUS est de servir les étudiants de tous les pays éligibles dans une mesure plus ou moins égale. Mais il convient de noter des variations entre les différents pays. Le résultat le plus frappant dans ce contexte est le fait que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS des pays d'Europe Centrale et d'Europe de l'Est déclarent avoir en général plus souvent des emplois et positions avantageux et des tâches internationales, que leurs pairs d'Europe de l'Ouest. Les participants sont plus fortement sélectionnés et ils profitent également plus fortement de leurs séjours d'études à l'étranger.

Selon les filières, on note des différences quant à la valeur professionnelle des études temporaires effectuées dans un autre pays européen. Elles sont cependant moins marquées que ce à quoi on pourrait s'attendre. Sur les quatre filières concernées dans la seconde phase de notre étude d'évaluation, l'impact le plus faible pour une filière à orientation académique avec des connaissances spécifiques a été établi pour la chimie alors que l'impact est perçu comme important pour la sociologie et les études de commerce.

Dans les quatre filières analysées, la mobilité ERASMUS n'est pas considérée comme le billet d'entrée normal pour une carrière de haute volée mais plutôt une clé qui ouvre les portes du marché du travail. Dans les filières à orientation professionnelle – sciences économiques et ingénierie mécanique – la mondialisation et les structures internationales des entreprises semblent rendre les compétences internationales indispensables, même pour des postes dans des entreprises nationales. Dans les deux autres filières - la sociologie et la chimie – les compétences internationales sont également considérées comme importantes pour internationaliser les activités professionnelles de certains diplômés ; un élément nous semble encore plus important : l'expérience acquise à l'international lors des études à l'étranger est considérée comme contribuant fortement aux développements des «soft skills», hautement appréciés par les employeurs, sans nécessairement avoir des composants internationaux visibles.

La valeur professionnelle pour les personnels enseignants mobiles

Au premier abord, les conditions de valorisation professionnelle d'un séjour d'enseignement à l'étranger semblent différer totalement de celles d'un séjour d'études. Des personnes, ayant déjà atteint le milieu de leurs carrières (âgées de 47 ans en moyenne) et pour la plupart possédant déjà une expérience à l'international, passent une courte période d'environ deux semaines dans un autre pays avec le soutien d'ERASMUS. On pourrait s'attendre à un impact plus réduit de cette mobilité que celui de la mobilité étudiante.

Il est, cependant, étonnant que les personnels enseignants ayant été mobiles dans le cadre d'ERASMUS accordent une valeur importante à leur expérience d'enseignement à l'étranger. Elle contribue pour eux à l'enrichissement du travail académique ultérieur des personnels enseignants mobiles, au développement de leurs connaissances académiques générales et ils considèrent également que les personnels enseignants ayant été mobiles sont meilleurs, en ce qui concerne les objectifs pédagogiques, que

ceux qui ne l'ont pas été. 58 % des personnes interrogées notent un impact positif sur leur propre évolution professionnelle en général. Plus précisément, 65 % déclarent une amélioration générale de leurs contacts pour la recherche, 60 % ont élargi leurs connaissances académiques en enseignant à l'étranger, 53 % ont été impliqués dans des discussions académiques innovantes initiées par leur pays ou université de leur séjour temporaire, 45 % ont amélioré leur enseignement suite à leur expérience à l'étranger, et 40 % ont développé et appliqué de nouvelles méthodes d'enseignement. De même, les experts sondés au début de cette étude pensent qu'enseigner à l'étranger contribue à leurs connaissances académiques générales. La plupart d'entre eux déclarent que les anciens professeurs ERASMUS sont meilleurs, en ce qui concerne les compétences, que ceux qui ne sont pas mobiles dans le but d'enseigner.

Les experts interrogés au début de l'étude ont perçu un impact légèrement plus fort en terme d'innovations consécutives à la mobilité dans le domaine de l'enseignement par rapport à celui sur la recherche ou les activités académiques en général. Les enseignants mobiles, au contraire, témoignent plus souvent d'un impact important sur les activités de recherche consécutives ou leurs savoirs académiques plutôt que sur leurs activités d'enseignement.

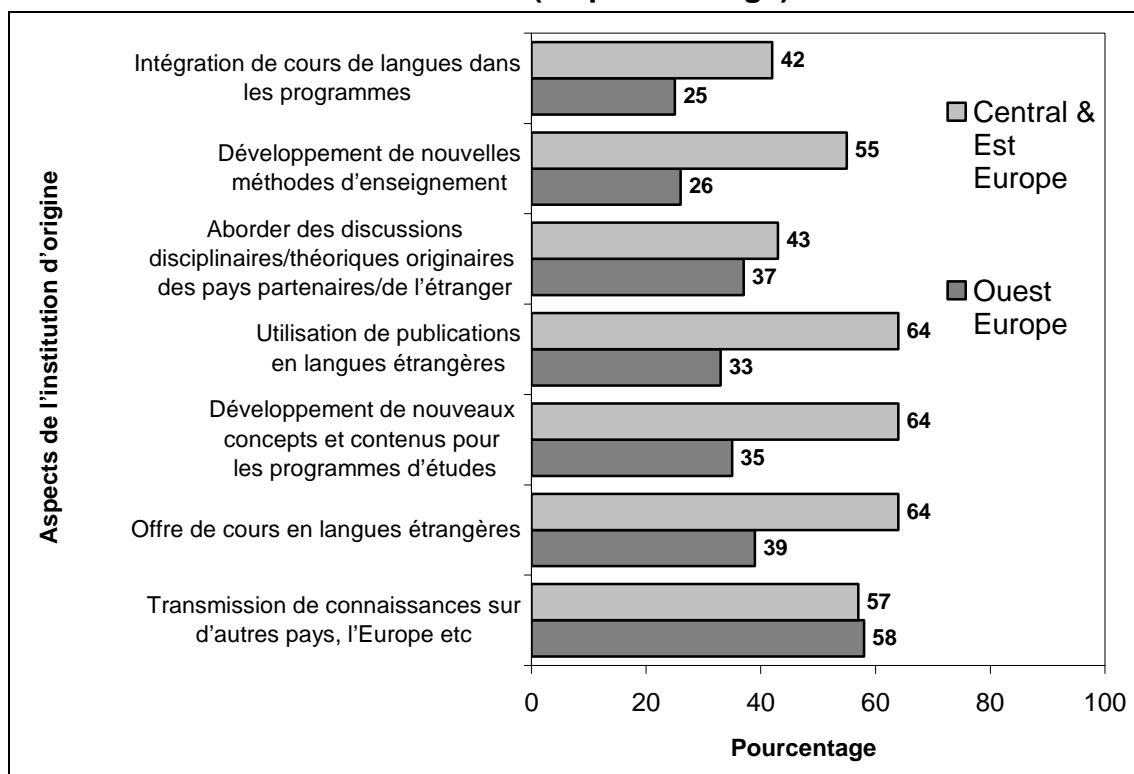
De plus, les enseignants mobiles considèrent qu'enseigner à l'étranger renforce la dimension internationale de leurs carrières. Après leur expérience de mobilité, ils ont passé en moyenne presque un mois à l'étranger – pour la plupart pour participer à des conférences, mais également souvent pour faire de la recherche ou enseigner. La moitié d'entre eux considère que leur période d'enseignement à l'étranger a permis de développer les activités de coopération scientifiques internationales, alors qu'un tiers apprécie les invitations reçues de l'étranger et les coopérations dans des projets de recherche comme une conséquence de leurs séjours d'enseignement à l'étranger. Les experts interrogés partagent une opinion encore plus favorable. Plus de trois quarts d'entre eux pensent que les enseignants mobiles sont meilleurs que les enseignants non mobiles à la suite de leur séjour d'enseignement à l'étranger, tant pour leur connaissance du système d'enseignement supérieur du pays d'accueil et pour leur compréhension et leurs compétences interculturelles que pour leur maîtrise des langues étrangères.

Les enseignants ayant été mobiles sont convaincus que la mobilité d'enseignement d'ERASMUS a des impacts positifs sur leurs établissements d'enseignement supérieur. Plus de la moitié déclarent que la mobilité d'enseignement a été utile pour améliorer les conseils donnés aux étudiants mobiles et pour transmettre leurs connaissances des autres pays. Près de la moitié des enseignants interrogés considère que la mobilité d'enseignement aide à améliorer la coordination des programmes d'études entre les établissements d'enseignement supérieur participants, à élargir l'éventail de langues étrangères enseignées, à renforcer le développement de nouveaux concepts d'études et l'importance croissante des approches comparatives (cf. figure 4).

Les responsables d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur interrogés ont également noté un effet très positif de la mobilité des enseignants sur leurs établissements : Plus des trois quarts pensent que la mobilité du personnel enseignant a contribué à la réputation internationale de leurs établissements. Plus de la moitié observent un effet positif sur les activités internationales de recherche et seulement la moitié mentionne des effets positifs sur différentes dimensions de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage.

Il est intéressant de noter que cinq ans après, 9 % des anciens enseignants mobiles sont actifs dans un pays autre que leur pays d'enseignement avant le séjour ERASMUS – bien souvent, il s'agit du pays de leur séjour d'enseignement temporaire à l'étranger. Ce degré de mobilité internationale en milieu de carrière est assurément plus élevé qu'on ne l'aurait pensé. Parmi les experts interrogés, plus des deux tiers pensent qu'enseigner à l'étranger augmente les opportunités de mobilité académique internationale. Cependant, il est certain qu'on ne peut s'attendre à une mobilité du personnel académique dans les mêmes proportions.

Figure 4 Sélection d'impacts de la mobilité enseignante ERASMUS sur l'établissement supérieur d'origine - Le point de vue d'enseignants mobiles d'Europe de l'Ouest, d'Europe Centrale et de l'Est (en pourcentage)



Question E6: En général, comment évalueriez-vous l'impact de la mobilité ERASMUS du personnel enseignant sur votre institution d'origine concernant les aspects suivants? Graduation des réponses de 1 = très important à 5 = pas du tout.

Source: Université de Kassel, VALERA Enquête sur les Anciens Professeurs Mobiles ERASMUS 2005.

Enfin, au premier abord, l'impact immédiat de l'activité d'enseignement à l'étranger sur l'évolution de leur carrière semble assez réduit : 3 % des enseignants mobiles ont observé une augmentation de leur traitement, 6 % une prolongation de leur contrat temporaire, et 12 % une promotion à une position administrative de haut niveau. Mais il faut garder à l'esprit que le nombre de professeurs atteignant une position supérieure après leur séjour d'enseignement à l'étranger n'est pas très élevé. D'autre part, plus d'un tiers des enseignants mobiles interrogés considèrent qu'enseigner à l'étranger a amélioré leurs perspectives de carrière. Apparemment, enseigner à l'étranger est souvent utile pour réaliser de petits avancements de carrière et nourrit l'espoir d'amélioration à long terme de la carrière. Les responsables d'université mentionnent

également un impact limité sur le déroulement des carrières, alors que presque la moitié des experts interrogés à l'origine s'attendent à ce que l'enseignant mobile soit promu à une position plus élevée au sein de son institution.

Comme précédemment évoqué, la valeur professionnelle d'une activité d'enseignement à l'étranger semble être bien plus élevée pour le personnel académique des pays d'Europe Centrale et d'Europe de l'Est que pour celui des pays d'Europe de l'Ouest. Cette différence est encore plus éclatante pour les personnels enseignants que pour les étudiants. Ainsi, 10 % des enseignants des pays d'Europe Centrale et d'Europe de l'Est contre seulement 1 % de ceux venant d'Europe de l'Ouest notent une augmentation de leurs revenus, 30 % des premiers et 7 % des seconds rapportent que l'enseignement à l'étranger les a aidés à obtenir une position plus élevée, 81 % des enseignants de la première catégorie contre 53 % de ceux de la seconde mentionnent un impact positif sur leur évolution professionnelle en général.

Conclusions et recommandations

Les enquêtes réalisées dans le cadre de l'étude VALERA ont permis de mettre en évidence cinq faits majeurs :

- Le croisement des points de vue a permis d'établir que les experts, les responsables d'université et les employeurs octroient à une période temporaire ERASMUS dans un autre pays européen une valeur professionnelle plus importante que les anciens étudiants ERASMUS eux-mêmes. Nous ne pouvons pas dire avec certitude s'il s'agit d'une surestimation ou d'une sous-estimation de l'impact de la mobilité étudiante de la part des uns ou des autres.
- L'étude d'évaluation confirme les résultats d'enquêtes précédentes : les anciens étudiants ERASMUS considèrent que la période d'études à l'étranger mène à une mobilité, des compétences et des tâches professionnelles internationales alors qu'elle mène rarement à un avancement de carrière en comparaison des parcours d'étudiants non mobiles. Cependant les autres acteurs et experts interrogés sont plus souvent d'avis qu'ERASMUS contribue également au déroulement général des carrières.
- La comparaison entre les réponses de l'enquête sur les étudiants ERASMUS 2000/2001 cinq ans après et les cohortes précédentes d'étudiants ERASMUS montre que l'effet positif d'ERASMUS sur l'emploi et la situation professionnels ainsi que sur des activités apparemment plus internationales des anciens étudiants ERASMUS va progressivement en diminuant par rapport aux étudiants non mobiles. Plus l'internationalisation de l'emploi et du travail se normalise, plus les étudiants acquièrent des compétences internationales, plus la valeur professionnelle ajoutée d'ERASMUS s'efface.
- La valeur professionnelle d'ERASMUS pour les anciens étudiants – ainsi que pour les anciens enseignants – originaires d'Europe Centrale et d'Europe de l'Est est nettement plus élevée que pour les personnes originaires d'Europe de l'Ouest. Par rapport à cette différence entre les groupes de pays, la différence entre les filières semble très faible.

- Bien que les personnels enseignants aient tendance à disposer d'expériences internationales, qu'ils soient des personnes adultes souvent bien établies en terme de carrières et qu'ils passent seulement une courte période d'enseignement à l'étranger, ces personnes confèrent à cette période de mobilité ERASMUS une valeur professionnelle étonnamment importante. Une majorité d'entre elles observe le développement des coopérations internationales de recherche et de leurs compétences académiques générales, alors qu'une part légèrement moins importante mentionne une valeur importante pour les activités d'enseignement. Certains d'entre elles notent des avantages visibles en terme de carrière et optent, après leur période de mobilité, pour une carrière académique dans un autre pays, assez souvent dans celui de leur période d'enseignement ERASMUS.

Dans l'ensemble, cette étude d'évaluation VALERA souligne l'importance du schéma de soutien ERASMUS. Comme l'ont montré les études précédentes, une période temporaire de séjour dans un autre pays européen contribue aux développements des compétences internationales, à la mobilité des diplômés et place les anciens étudiants ERASMUS dans des positions professionnelles visiblement européennes. Cette étude montre de plus que les employeurs considèrent que les compétences des diplômés ayant vécu une expérience internationale sont supérieures à celles des autres diplômés, beaucoup sont d'avis qu'à long terme les étudiants mobiles auront plus de succès dans le déroulement de leurs carrières. L'importance d'ERASMUS est également fortement soulignée dans cette étude par le témoignage des personnels enseignants mobiles sur la forte valeur professionnelle. Pour leur part, les responsables d'institutions d'enseignement supérieur sont d'avis que cela contribue de façon significative à la fois à l'internationalisation et à la réputation de leurs institutions en général. Ces résultats suggèrent qu'ERASMUS répond à une attente sociétale sur le marché de l'emploi et de la part des institutions d'enseignement supérieur.

L'étude d'évaluation confirme les résultats d'études précédentes sur l'efficacité d'ERASMUS : le programme sert un grand nombre de personnes avec un financement minimal par personne. Il est cependant évident que beaucoup d'experts et d'acteurs croient que la qualité pourrait en être améliorée si plus de financement était mis à disposition en particulier des personnels enseignants pour qu'ils enseignent sur des périodes plus longues dans leurs pays d'accueil et pour l'organisation de programmes en lien avec la mobilité.

Comme les études antérieures le montrent, l'impact d'ERASMUS en termes de valeur professionnelle « verticale » d'une période d'études dans un autre pays Européen est limité, par contre la valeur professionnelle « horizontale » est très importante. Les anciens étudiants ERASMUS ne peuvent certes pas compter avec un statut professionnel ou des revenus plus élevés que leurs pairs non mobiles mais l'accès à l'emploi est plus facile, ils sont plus souvent mobiles à l'international et ils prennent en charge des tâches visiblement internationales. Une amélioration générale de la carrière est une règle qui s'applique uniquement aux anciens étudiants mobiles originaires d'Europe Centrale et d'Europe de l'Est. Les enquêtes récentes suggèrent également que les experts et les employeurs apprécient non seulement les compétences acquises à l'étranger, utiles pour des tâches internationales, mais également les atouts au-dessus de la moyenne des anciens étudiants dans de nombreux domaines tels que le savoir académique, les compétences intellectuelles générales, les valeurs liées au travail, les

savoir-faire socio communicatifs. Il n'y a pas de preuve selon laquelle un séjour ERASMUS aurait plus d'impacts dans ces domaines qu'un séjour d'étude temporaire à l'étranger autrement financé, mais ERASMUS réussit à mobiliser un grand nombre d'étudiants qui bénéficient de cette expérience à l'étranger dans les termes mentionnés ci-dessus.

Notre étude révèle un fort impact ERASMUS de la mobilité des personnels enseignants. De nombreux enseignants ayant été mobiles témoignent d'une amélioration de leurs coopérations et activités de recherche internationales ainsi que de diverses activités d'enseignement. Les responsables d'université et les autres experts soulignent que les enseignants mobiles sont, après leurs expériences à l'étranger, souvent plus actifs, intellectuellement plus innovants et ont, dans certains cas, visiblement plus de succès dans leurs carrières.

S'agissant de *durabilité*, la plupart des acteurs et experts impliqués dans cette étude semblent croire qu'ERASMUS pourra jouer un rôle important à l'avenir si les caractéristiques de base du programme sont conservées. ERASMUS présente de nombreux avantages qui sont presque autant d'arguments pour sa continuation.

Dans ce contexte, certaines recommandations portent sur de possibles améliorations à réaliser dans le cadre des logiques déjà mises en place : des préparations plus intensives, un plus grand soutien académique, administratif et financier pour les étudiants lors de leurs séjours à l'étranger, de meilleures méthodes d'évaluation et de reconnaissance, des liens plus étroits entre l'enseignement supérieur et le marché du travail, plus de financement et moins de bureaucratie de la part de la Commission européenne et – une dernière recommandation et non la moindre – des efforts plus soutenus pour mettre en évidence les bénéfices de la mobilité. En ce qui concerne la mobilité des enseignants, les suggestions concernent les efforts à fournir pour rendre une mobilité plus longue viable, pour la prise en compte des activités temporaires d'enseignement à l'étranger en termes d'avancement de carrière (offre de poste et décision de promotion).

Certains résultats mettent cependant en doute la durabilité d'ERASMUS. La valeur professionnelle d'une période temporaire d'études à l'étranger a nettement diminué au cours des années. En comparaison avec études réalisées auparavant auprès des diplômés, l'étude la plus récente montre que l'impact d'ERASMUS est moindre, ce constat concerne l'obtention d'un premier emploi, l'opportunité d'obtenir un niveau de revenu plus élevé et la prise en charge de tâches pour lesquelles des compétences internationales sont nécessaires.

Les auteurs de cette étude d'évaluation concluent que le programme ERASMUS aura de meilleures chances à l'avenir si il redevient plus ambitieux en ce qui concerne l'expérience à l'étranger. Il y a eu, par le passé, de bonnes raisons pour que ERASMUS passe graduellement de la mobilité étudiante étroitement liée au développement des programmes d'enseignement à un programme administrativement plus souple pour un grand nombre d'étudiants. Dorénavant la valeur d'une expérience à l'étranger, en tant que telle, diminue suite à l'internationalisation de notre environnement et l'exclusivité de l'expérience ERASMUS s'efface. Selon les experts, engagés dans la sélection des filières pour notre étude, il serait possible de renforcer la valeur des séjours temporaires à l'étranger en ciblant plus précisément la période de mobilité par rapport au calendrier et aux spécialisations des programmes d'enseignement. Il semble que le temps est venu pour une autre approche de la mobilité étudiante ERASMUS au sein de laquelle les

objectifs académiques et le soutien financier aux étudiants mobiles seront étroitement liés.

Executive Summary (Deutsch)

Ziele und Anlage der Studie

Das Ziel des VALERA-Projekts (VALERA = Value of ERASMUS Mobility) ist es, die Auswirkungen der Mobilität von Studierenden und Dozenten im Rahmen des SOKRATES/ERASMUS-Programms auf deren berufliche Karrieren zu untersuchen. Um das zu verwirklichen, wurden repräsentative Befragungen ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender und ehemaliger ERASMUS-Dozenten durchgeführt. Hinzu kamen Befragungen bei Hochschulleitungen und Arbeitgebern. Darüber hinaus äußerten verschiedene Experten und Akteure – in einer Befragung sowie in einigen Seminaren – ihre Einschätzungen zum beruflichen Ertrag von Mobilität.

Jede Teilstudie sprach Dimensionen von möglichen beruflichen Erträgen an. Im Hinblick auf studentische Mobilität sollten vor allem Wirkungen in folgenden Bereichen geprüft werden:

- generelle und internationale Kompetenzen,
- der Übergang in die Erwerbstätigkeit,
- Beschäftigung und Berufstätigkeit in den ersten Jahren nach dem Studienabschluss und
- internationale Aspekte von Beschäftigung und Berufstätigkeit.

Des Weiteren sollten fünf Themen zu den Wirkungen der Mobilität von Dozenten behandelt werden:

- allgemeine wissenschaftliche und Lehrkompetenzen,
- internationale und interkulturelle Kompetenzen,
- Aktivitäten an der Herkunftshochschule im Rahmen des ERASMUS-Programms,
- vertikale und horizontale berufliche Mobilität und schließlich
- internationale berufliche Mobilität.

Die Evaluationsstudie sollte klären, wie hoch das Ausmaß der beruflichen Erträge von studentischer Mobilität bzw. der der Dozenten ist, welche Bedingungen die Wirkungen erhöhen und was die Resultate insgesamt für Relevanz, Effektivität, Wirksamkeit und Dauerhaftigkeit des Teilprogramms ERASMUS im Rahmen des SOKRATES-Programms aussagen.

Gewählte Untersuchungsverfahren

Die Evaluation war in zwei Hauptphasen unterteilt. In der ersten Phase wurden zunächst frühere Studien analysiert und eine Expertenbefragung durchgeführt. Um Auskunft gebeten wurden Verantwortliche des ERASMUS-Programms und Repräsentanten von Studierendenorganisationen, Fachdisziplinen sowie Arbeitsmarkt, Politik und Hoch-

schulen. Der weitgehend offene Fragebogen wurde von 67 Personen beantwortet – 43 Prozent der insgesamt 156 ursprünglich einbezogenen Personen. Die Ergebnisse früherer Studien und dieser Befragung gingen in den ersten Bericht ein, den „Framework Report“, der zugleich den inhaltlichen Rahmen für die nachfolgenden Schritte des Projekts setzte.

Im Kern der ersten Projektphase standen vier Befragungen:

- Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender: ERASMUS-Studierende des Studienjahrs 2000/2001 wurden in einer in den einzelnen Ländern nach Hochschulen geschichteten Zufallsstichprobe befragt. Über die ERASMUS-Koordinatoren an den einzelnen Hochschulen wurde ihnen ein weitgehend standardisierter Fragebogen postalisch zugesandt. 4.589 Fragebogen wurden ausgefüllt, was einer Rücklaufquote von 45 Prozent entspricht.
- Befragung ehemals mobiler Dozenten: Alle Dozenten ausgewählter Hochschulen, die im Studienjahr Jahr 2000/01 am ERASMUS-Programm teilgenommen hatten, wurden über ihre ERASMUS-Koordinatoren mit der Bitte angesprochen, einen Online-Fragebogen auszufüllen. Von den insgesamt 3.123 kontaktierten Personen beantworteten 755 Lehrende den Fragebogen; das entspricht einer Rücklaufquote von 24 Prozent.
- Befragung der Hochschulleiter: Die ERASMUS-Koordinatoren aller Hochschulen, die sich zu einer Unterstützung dieser Evaluationsstudie bereit gefunden hatten, wurden gebeten, einen schriftlichen Fragebogen an ihre Hochschulleitungen weiterzuleiten. Die 626 Antworten bei insgesamt 1.437 verteilten Fragebogen entsprechen einer Rücklaufquote von 44 Prozent.
- Befragung der Arbeitgeber: Erstens wurde ein gedruckter Fragebogen an etwa 1.500 Vorgesetzte ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender, die hierfür eine Adresse bereitgestellt hatten, gesandt. Zweitens wurde an 4.500 ausgewählte Unternehmen ein Fragebogen mit der Bitte gesandt, diesen an die für die Einstellung von Hochschulabsolventen Verantwortlichen weiterzuleiten. Insgesamt gingen 312 Antworten ein, d.h. nur von sechs Prozent der Kontaktierten (10% im ersteren und 2% im letzteren Fall).

Die Ergebnisse der ersten beiden Befragungen waren Gegenstand der Diskussion im Expertenseminar am Ende der ersten Projektphase. Dadurch wurden nicht nur Anregungen zur Interpretation der Ergebnisse gewonnen, sondern es wurden auch die Ziele der zweiten Phase präzisiert und näher zu untersuchende Fachrichtungen ausgewählt.

In der zweiten Projektphase sollten detaillierte Informationen über den beruflichen Wert von temporärem Studium in einem anderen europäischen Land für Studierende in ausgewählten Fächern gewonnen werden. Entsprechend dem Ratschlag des Experten wurden vier Fächer (nicht zwei, wie ursprünglich geplant) ausgewählt: Aus dem Bereich der Natur- und Ingenieurwissenschaften Chemie als ein wissenschaftlich akzentuiertes und Maschinenbau als ein berufsorientiertes Fach sowie analog Soziologie und Wirtschaftswissenschaften aus dem Bereich der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften.

Eingeladen wurden Dozenten, ehemalige ERASMUS-Studierende, Vertreter von Arbeitgebern und Berufsverbänden sowie andere Experten, die in Fragen der Studiengangentwicklung erfahren sind. Durchgeführt wurden Seminare (statt der

ursprünglich geplanten Interviews), um unterschiedliche Erfahrungen und Perspektiven sowie verborgenes Wissen („tacit knowledge“) der Beteiligten „ans Tageslicht“ zu holen und miteinander konfrontieren zu können.

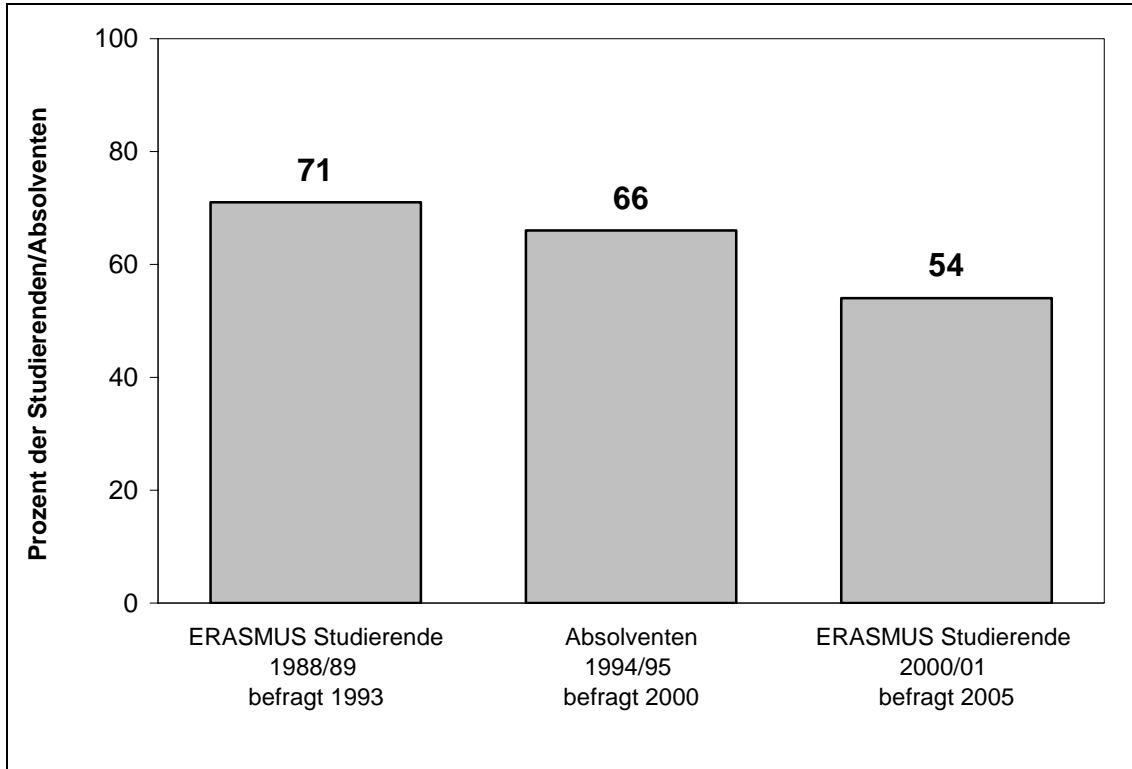
Insgesamt waren mehr Zeit und Aufwand als bei ähnlichen vorangehenden Studien erforderlich, um die Hochschulen und die anderen Adressaten zur Mitarbeit zu bewegen. Deshalb akzeptierte die Europäische Kommission eine Verlängerung der Projektdauer um nahezu das Doppelte der ursprünglich vorgesehenen Zeit. Darüber hinaus trug das Forschungsteam, das im Bereich der Studien über internationale Mobilität und Hochschulen sehr erfahren ist, mit Ressourcen, die nicht von der Europäischen Kommission zur Verfügung gestellt worden waren, zur aufwändigen Realisierung des Projekts bei. Trotz dieser Verlängerung und zusätzlicher Ressourcen war die Rücklaufquote geringer als erwartet und niedriger als in vorhergehenden Studien. Die bei der Durchführung des Projekts aufgetretenen Probleme sind wohl nicht einem abnehmenden Interesse der Angesprochenen am ERASMUS-Programm zuzuschreiben, sondern einer allgemeinen zunehmenden Befragungs- und Evaluationsmüdigkeit. In dem Maße, in dem Evaluationen als Mittel der Qualitätssicherung akzeptiert werden, scheint ironischerweise gleichzeitig die Qualität systematischer Evaluationen zu leiden, weil die Betroffenen mit der Bitte um Information überschwemmt werden. Dennoch konnte die Evaluationsstudie wichtige Ergebnisse über die beruflichen Wirkungen von ERASMUS-geförderter Mobilität ermitteln und dokumentieren, welche Vorstellungen Betroffene und Experten für zukünftige Verbesserungen haben.

Übergang vom Studium in die Erwerbstätigkeit

Zeitweilige Mobilität im Rahmen des Studiums erhöht offensichtlich das Interesse an weiterführender Bildung. Zwei von fünf der ERASMUS-Studierenden von 2000/01 – ungefähr so viele wie in vorhergehenden Jahrgängen, aber ungefähr zweimal so viele wie sonst die europäischen Studierenden – begannen ein weiterführendes Studium während der ersten fünf Jahren nach ihrem Auslandsstudium – die meisten direkt nach Studienabschluss, andere einige Zeit danach.

Die befragten ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden begannen etwas später mit der Jobsuche als frühere Jahrgänge, hingegen war die Gesamtdauer der Suche mit vier Monaten etwas kürzer als früher. 54 Prozent der im Jahr 2005 Befragten glauben, dass der ERASMUS-Aufenthalt hilfreich für die erste Anstellung nach dem Studium war. Allerdings scheint dieser positive Einfluss geringer zu werden: Der entsprechende Wert war 71 Prozent bei den befragten ERASMUS-Studierenden des Jahres 1988/89 und 66 Prozent bei denjenigen, die 1994/95 ihr Studium abgeschlossen hatten (siehe Abbildung 1).

Abbildung 1 Positiver Einfluss des ERASMUS-Studienaufenthaltes auf die erste Anstellung nach Einschätzung ehemaliger Studierender – ein Vergleich mit früheren Studien (in Prozent)



Frage H1: Welchen Einfluss hatte das Auslandsstudium auf Ihre Arbeit?

Quellen: Maiworm und Teichler 1996; Jahr und Teichler 2002; Universität Kassel, VALERA-Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender 2005.

In den frühen Jahren der Erwerbstätigkeit – zum Befragungszeitpunkt waren die Befragten im Durchschnitt weniger als drei Jahre beschäftigt – hat über die Hälfte der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden ihren Arbeitgeber mindestens einmal gewechselt. Nach Ergebnissen vorhergehender Studien ist dies unter ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden häufiger verbreitet als unter nicht-mobilen Studierenden.

Die jüngsten Befragungen der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden und der Arbeitgeber bestätigen, dass auf die wissenschaftlichen Leistungen und die Persönlichkeit der Absolventen bei der Bewerberauswahl höchsten Wert gelegt wird. Im Vergleich scheinen weitere Kriterien, so Computerkenntnisse und Fremdsprachenbeherrschung, an Bedeutung gewonnen zu haben. Auslandserfahrung spielt laut der Hälfte der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden und einem Drittel der Arbeitgeber eine wichtige Rolle.

Beschäftigung und Berufstätigkeit

Sechs Prozent der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden des Jahres 2000/01 berichten fünf Jahre nach ihrem Auslandsaufenthalt, dass sie arbeitslos sind. Dieser Prozentsatz ist höher als derjenige von ERASMUS-Studierenden zwölf Jahre früher, als nur vier Prozent fünf Jahre nach der Auslandsstudienphase arbeitslos waren. Auch die befristete

Beschäftigung stieg innerhalb von 12 Jahren von 27 Prozent auf 35 Prozent an. Der Anteil der Teilzeitbeschäftigten blieb dagegen mit etwa zehn Prozent konstant.

72 Prozent der ERASMUS-Studierenden des Jahres 2000/01, die fünf Jahre später erwerbstätig sind, glauben, dass ihre Position und ihr Einkommen ihrem Ausbildungsniveau entsprechen. Frühere Studien kamen zu ähnlichen Ergebnissen, wobei ehemals Mobile ihre Stellung häufiger als adäquat einschätzen als Absolventen, die während des Studiums nicht mobil waren (siehe Abbildung 2).

Abbildung 2 Zusammenhang zwischen Studium und Beruf nach Einschätzung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender - ein Vergleich mit früheren Studien (in Prozent)

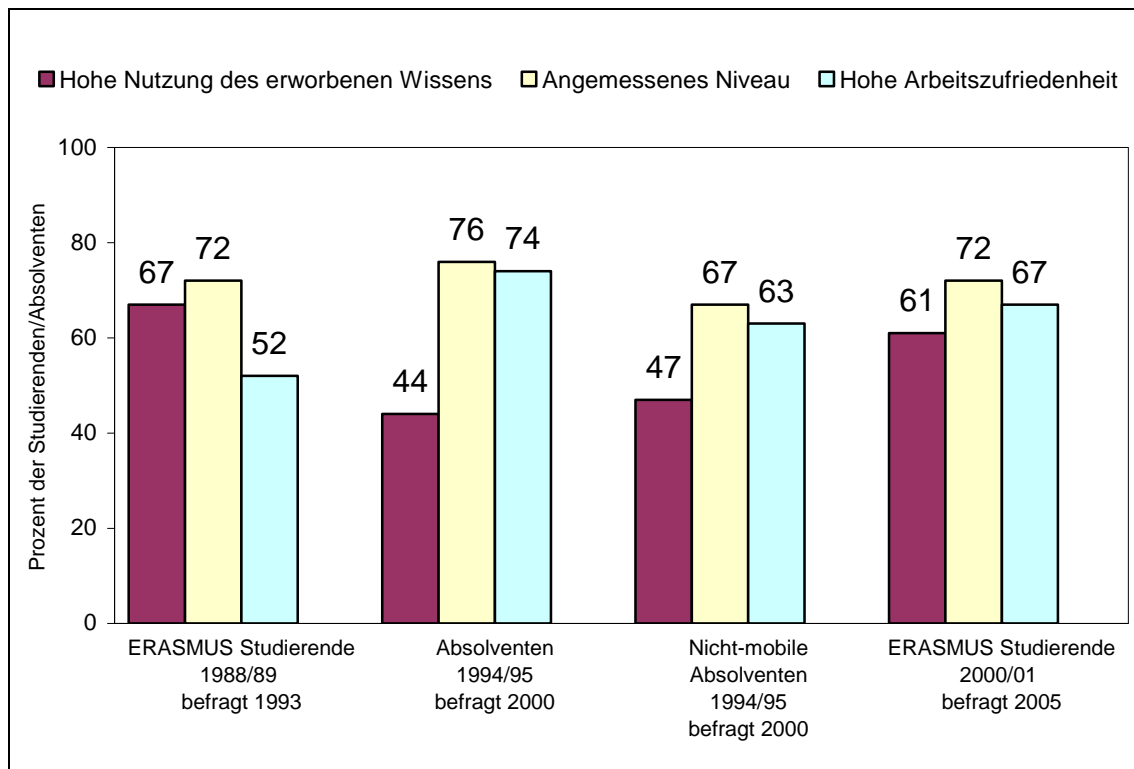
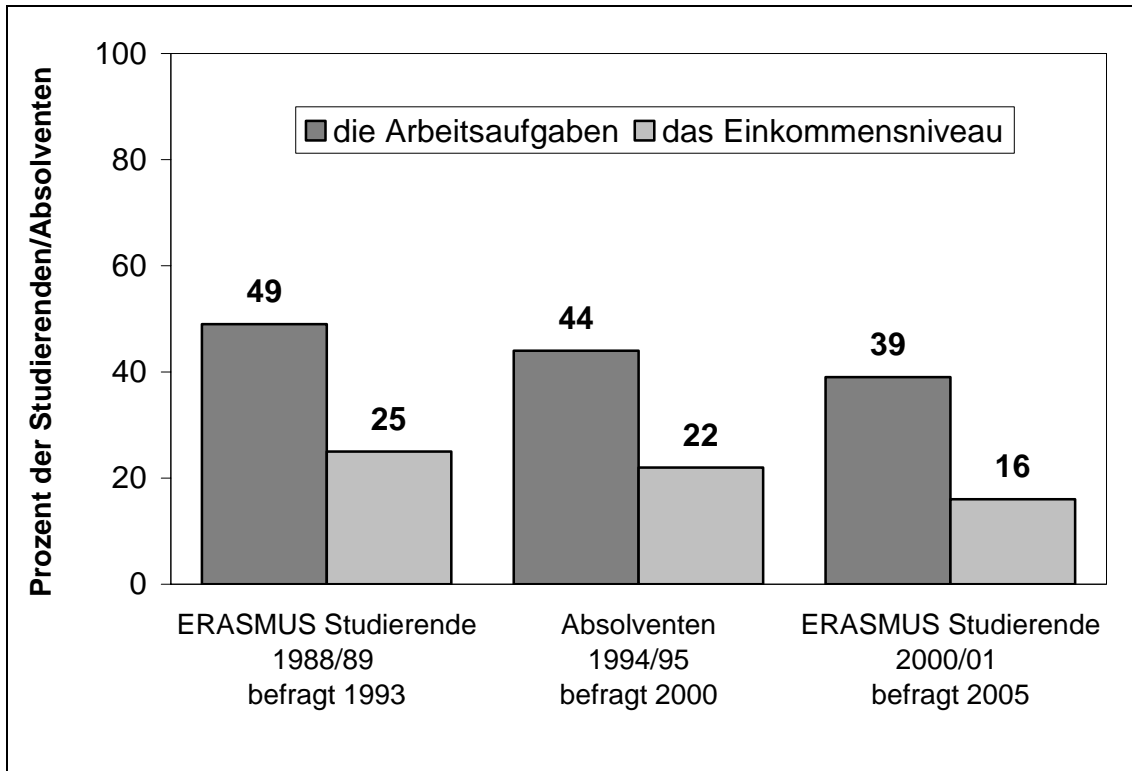


Abbildung 2 aggregiert drei Frage; Frage G2: Wenn Sie Ihre derzeitigen Arbeitsaufgaben betrachten: Inwieweit nutzen Sie die während des Studiums angeeigneten Fertigkeiten und das erworbene Wissen? Frage G3: Wie würden Sie den Zusammenhang zwischen Ihrem (Haupt-) Studienfach und Ihren derzeitigen beruflichen Aufgaben beschreiben? Frage G5: Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit Ihrer derzeitigen Arbeit insgesamt?
Quellen: Maiworm und Teichler 1996; Jahr und Teichler 2002; Universität Kassel, VALERA-Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender 2005.

Nur 16 Prozent der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden schätzen, dass ihr Einkommen höher ist als das ihrer nicht-mobilen Kollegen. Dieser Prozentsatz ist niedriger als bei früheren Generationen (siehe Abbildung 3). Etwas höher ist die Zahl der ehemaligen Studierenden, die glauben, weniger zu verdienen als ihre nicht-mobilen Kollegen. Die befragten Arbeitgeber dagegen schätzen die Situation positiver ein. Nach Ansicht von mehr als 40 Prozent haben international erfahrene Absolventen größere Aussichten, berufliche Aufgaben mit hoher Verantwortung zu übernehmen und 21 Prozent glauben, dass international Erfahrene nach einigen Jahren Arbeit mit einem höheren Einkommen als ihre nicht-mobilen Kollegen rechnen können. Unter den Experten, die am Anfang der Evaluationsstudie befragt wurden, glauben sogar ein Drittel, dass ehemalige

ERASMUS Studierende einen höheren Status und ein höheres Einkommen erwarten können sowie bessere Chancen auf eine ihrer Ausbildung adäquate Position haben.

Abbildung 3 Positiver Einfluss des ERASMUS-Studienaufenthaltes auf Erwerbstätigkeit und Arbeit nach Einschätzung ehemaliger Studierender – ein Vergleich mit früheren Studien (in Prozent)



Frage H1: Welchen Einfluss hatte das Auslandsstudium auf Ihre Arbeit?

Quellen: Maiworm und Teichler 1996; Jahr und Teichler 2002; Universität Kassel, VALERA-Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender 2005.

Die befragten Hochschulleiter schätzen den beruflichen Wert einer ERASMUS-Auslandsstudienphase am höchsten ein. Vier von fünf glauben, dass ein Auslandsstudium die Chance auf einen guten Job erhöht. Mehr als die Hälfte schätzt die Aussichten ehemaliger mobiler Studierender, eine ihrer Ausbildung entsprechende Stellung zu erreichen als diejenigen der nicht-mobilen Studierenden, höher ein, und ein Viertel nimmt an, dass ERASMUS eine positivere Auswirkung auf die Berufschancen von Absolventen hat als andere Formen der Studierendenmobilität.

Kompetenzen und Tätigkeiten ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender

Rückwirkend schätzen die ERASMUS-Studierenden ihre Kompetenzen zur Zeit ihres Studienabschlusses in vielen Aspekten hoch ein: den wissenschaftlichen Kenntnisstand, die Fremdsprachenkenntnisse sowie verschiedene Arbeitshaltungen und -stile. Die Einschätzungen sind positiver als bei früheren Befragungen. Wir wissen nicht, ob dies eine allgemeine Erhöhung des Studienerfolgs oder höhere Erträge des Auslandsstudiums signalisiert: In jedem Falle bezieht die jüngste Befragung eine Reihe von mittel- und osteuropäischen Ländern ein, in denen die Befragten den beruflichen Ertrag eines

ERASMUS-Auslandsaufenthaltes positiver bewerten als jene aus westeuropäischen Ländern.

Alles in allem bewerteten die Arbeitgeber die Kompetenzen ehemaliger mobiler Studierender ähnlich positiv. Sie halten die international erfahrenen Absolventen in vieler Hinsicht für besser qualifiziert als ihre nicht-mobilen Kollegen. Nach ihrer Ansicht trägt ein Auslandsstudium zu Anpassungsfähigkeit, Initiative sowie Planungs- und Organisationsfähigkeit bei.

Die Experten, die zu Beginn dieser Studie befragt wurden, haben ein noch positiveres Bild. 73 Prozent schätzen die wissenschaftlichen Kompetenzen von ERASMUS-Studierenden direkt nach ihrer Rückkehr aus dem Ausland höher ein als die von nicht-mobilen Studierenden. 82 Prozent meinen, dass diese besser für ihre zukünftige Beschäftigung und Berufstätigkeit vorbereitetet seien, und fast alle schätzen deren sozio-kommunikativen Kompetenzen, Problemlösungsfähigkeiten und Führungsqualitäten hoch ein.

61 Prozent der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden, die zur Zeit der jüngsten Befragung beschäftigt waren, geben an, dass sie ihre im Studium angeeigneten Fertigkeiten und das erworbene Wissen bei ihren derzeitigen Arbeitsaufgaben weitgehend nutzen können (siehe Abbildung 2). Dieser Prozentsatz ist etwas niedriger als 12 Jahre zuvor.

39 Prozent geben an, dass der ERASMUS-Aufenthalt einen positiven Einfluss auf ihre Arbeitsaufgaben hatte. Auch hier zeigt sich ein Rückgang gegenüber 49 Prozent bzw. 44 Prozent bei den beiden vorangehenden Studien (siehe Abbildung 3).

Etwa drei Viertel der befragten ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden sind mit ihrer Arbeits- und Beschäftigungssituation sehr zufrieden. Sie sehen die Möglichkeit, ihre Arbeit selbständig zu gestalten und ihre Kompetenzen einzubringen. Sie berichten von herausfordernden Arbeitsaufgaben und Gelegenheiten zur Weiterbildung. Die Mehrheit der befragten Experten ist davon überzeugt, dass ehemalige ERASMUS-Studierende bessere Möglichkeiten als nicht-mobile Studierende haben, selbständige Arbeitsaufgaben erfolgreich zu übernehmen, und fast die Hälfte glaubt zudem, dass ehemalige ERASMUS-Studierende eher herausfordernde Aufgaben erhalten.

Internationale Tätigkeiten ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender

Alle bisher durchgeführten Studien über den beruflichen Wert eines Auslandsstudiums haben gezeigt, dass ehemals mobile Studierende später weitaus häufiger internationale Arbeitsaufgaben übernehmen als ehemals Nicht-Mobile. Die Ergebnisse der vorliegenden Studie bestätigen diesen stabilen Befund.

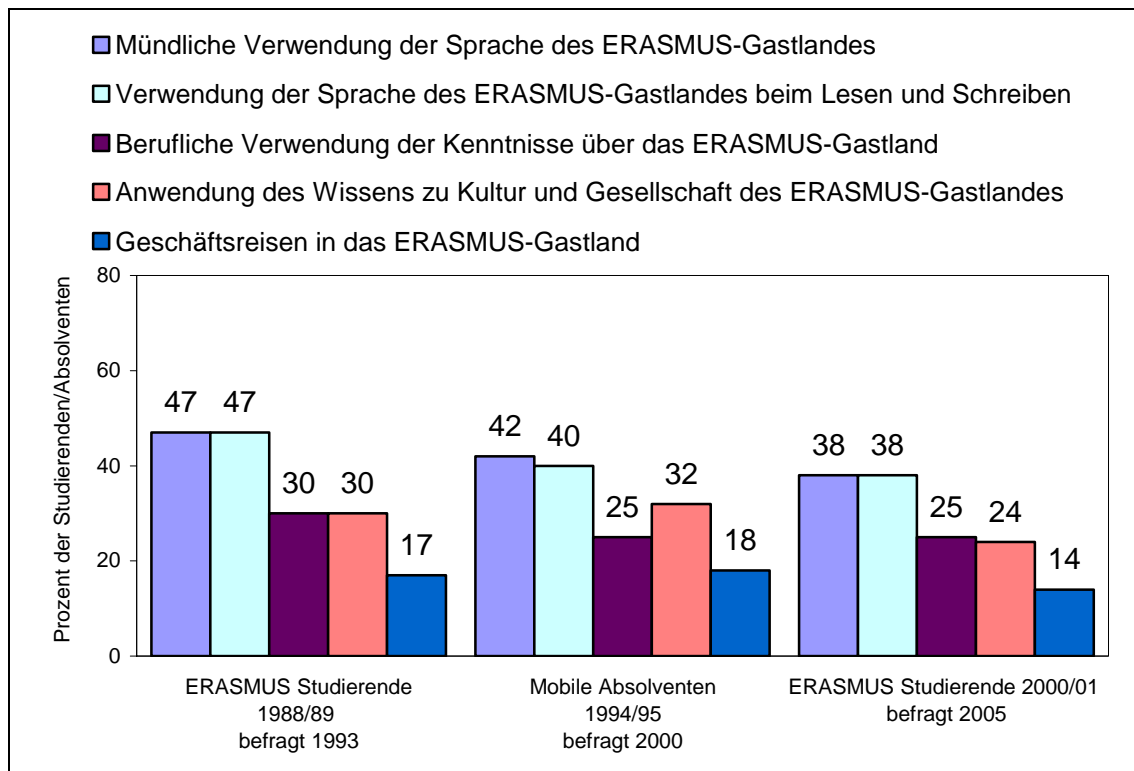
18 Prozent der ERASMUS-Studierenden von 2000/01, die fünf Jahre später beschäftigt waren, sind nach ihrem Abschluss zumindest für einige Zeit im Ausland beschäftigt gewesen – mehr oder weniger so viele wie bei früheren Studien. Vorhandene Statistiken lassen den Schluss zu, dass das mehrfach so hoch ist wie beim Durchschnitt der Hochschulabsolventen in Europa. Von den jüngst Befragten hatte etwa die Hälfte über eine Beschäftigung im Ausland nachgedacht, und etwa ein Viertel hat aktiv eine Stelle im Ausland gesucht. Diese Werte sind allerdings deutlich geringer als bei früheren Befragungen.

Über die Hälfte der kürzlich befragten Berufstätigen, die zuvor ERASMUS-Studierende gewesen waren, geben an, dass ihre beschäftigende Organisation eine internationale

Ausrichtung hat, und noch mehr haben intensive internationale berufliche Aufgaben. Fast ein Drittel sieht ihre Arbeit in einen internationalen Kontext eingebettet, und ein noch höherer Anteil bewertet ihre internationalen Kompetenzen als wichtig für die alltägliche Arbeit. Etwa zwei Drittel unterstreicht den beruflichen Stellenwert der Kommunikation in einer Fremdsprache und die Arbeit mit Menschen aus verschiedenen Kulturkreisen. Für mehr als die Hälfte ist das Wissen und das Verstehen internationaler Unterschiede in Kultur und Gesellschaft wichtig und für fast die Hälfte ihr Wissen über andere Länder. Diese Werte liegen etwas über denen in früheren Erhebungen.

Auf die direkte Frage, in welchem Maße die Absolventen ihre internationalen Kompetenzen in der täglichen Arbeit tatsächlich nutzen, antwortet allerdings ein weitaus kleinerer Anteil. Nur etwa ein Drittel kommuniziert regelmäßig in einer Fremdsprache, etwa ein Viertel nutzt Wissen über andere Länder und Kulturen, und nur einer von sieben Befragten reist regelmäßig in andere Länder. Abbildung 4 zeigt, dass dies seltener der Fall ist als bei ihren Vorgängern. Aber weiterhin ist anzunehmen, dass ehemalige ERASMUS-Studierende weitaus häufiger internationale Aufgaben haben als diejenigen, die nicht temporär in einem anderen Land studiert haben.

Abbildung 4 ERASMUS-bezogene Arbeitsaufgaben von ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden – ein Vergleich mit früheren Studien (in Prozent)



Frage F6: In welchem Maße beinhaltet Ihre Arbeit die folgenden Tätigkeiten? Antworten 1 und 2 auf einer Fünferskala von 1 = „In hohem Maße“ bis 5 = „Überhaupt nicht“

Quellen: Maiworm und Teichler 1996; Jahr und Teichler 2002; Universität Kassel, VALERA-Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender 2005.

Das letztere entspricht auch dem Ergebnis der Arbeitgeberbefragung. Demnach übernehmen international erfahrene Absolventen internationale Arbeitsaufgaben weit-

aus häufiger als Absolventen ohne internationale Erfahrungen. Diese Aussage bezieht sich auf internationale Tätigkeiten im Allgemeinen wie auf spezifische Arbeitsaufgaben, so z. B. die Nutzung von Fremdsprachen, internationale Kooperation und Auslandsreisen. Auch die befragten Experten glauben, dass ehemals mobile Studierende derartige Aufgaben deutlich häufiger übernehmen als nicht-mobile Studierende.

Weitere Befunde zum beruflichen Ertrag studentischer Mobilität

Die Kompetenzen, der Übergang zum Beruf, die Karriere und die beruflichen Tätigkeiten der ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden werden nicht ausschließlich durch den ERASMUS-Auslandsaufenthalt beeinflusst. Viele von ihnen waren bereits vor dem Studium international mobil bzw. waren während des Studiums ergänzend mobil. Sie sind darüber hinaus in verschiedener Hinsicht eine ausgewählte Gruppe. ERASMUS hat zwar sicherlich eine mobilisierende und verstärkende Wirkung und ist für die berufliche Laufbahn generell folgenreich, insbesondere für die internationale Mobilität und für spätere internationale Berufsaufgaben, aber dieser Einfluss von ERASMUS ist nicht so stark, wie der Blick allein auf erfolgreichere Berufsverläufe und stärkere internationale Aktivitäten vermuten ließe.

Das ERASMUS-Programm ist darauf ausgerichtet, allen Studierenden von allen Partnerländern in mehr oder weniger gleichem Maße etwas zu bieten – aber sicherlich bietet das Auslandsstudium für manche mehr als für andere. Auffällig ist, dass ehemalige ERASMUS-Studierende aus mittel- und osteuropäischen Ländern häufiger vorteilhafte Beschäftigungs- und Arbeitsbedingungen sowie internationale Arbeitsaufgaben vermelden als solche aus anderen Ländern. Sie sind eine stärker selektierte Gruppe, aber sie profitieren auch stärker von ihrem Auslandsstudium.

Es gibt Unterschiede nach der Fachrichtungsgruppe, aber diese sind nicht so stark, wie man vermuten könnte. Bei den Fächern, die in der zweiten Phase des Projekts intensiv behandelt worden sind, wurden von den ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden im Fach Chemie die geringsten Erträge für die wissenschaftliche und fachliche Qualifizierung festgestellt. Im Gegensatz dazu wurde von den ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden in den Fächern Wirtschaftswissenschaften und Soziologie der Lerneffekt hinsichtlich des fachlichen Wissens über den Markt bzw. die Gesellschaft des Gastlandes am stärksten betont.

In allen vier Fächern wird ERASMUS nicht als Eintrittskarte zu einer überwältigenden Karriere gesehen, sondern eher als ein „Türöffner“ zum Arbeitsmarkt. In den mehr berufsorientierten Fächern – Wirtschafts- und Ingenieurwissenschaften – scheinen der Globalisierungsprozess und die internationalen Wirtschaftsaktivitäten internationale Kompetenzen für beinahe jede Position auch im nationalen Kontext zu erfordern. In den anderen Fächern – Soziologie und Chemie – werden internationale Kompetenzen in manchen Fällen als bedeutsam für internationale Aufgaben angesehen, noch häufiger aber als Beitrag zur Verbesserung so genannter „Soft skills“, die auch in Aufgabenbereichen geschätzt werden, die nicht als international zu verstehen sind.

Der berufliche Ertrag für mobile Dozenten

Auf den ersten Blick erscheinen die Bedingungen für einen beruflichen Ertrag von ERASMUS bei mobilen Dozenten völlig anders als bei Studierenden. Personen, die in

der Mitte ihrer Karriere stehen (Durchschnittsalter 47 Jahre) und in der Regel schon Auslandserfahrung besitzen, verbringen mit Unterstützung des ERASMUS-Programms nur eine kurze Phase von im Durchschnitt zwei Wochen im Ausland. Es wäre daher nicht überraschend, wenn der berufliche Ertrag für Dozenten deutlich geringer eingeschätzt würde als für Studierende.

Überraschenderweise konstatieren die befragten ehemaligen mobilen Dozenten jedoch einen beträchtlichen beruflichen Ertrag ihres Auslandsaufenthaltes. Sie bewerten ihn als einen wertvollen Beitrag zur Verbesserung ihrer wissenschaftlichen Tätigkeit. 58 Prozent heben einen positiven Einfluss auf ihre berufliche Entwicklung im Allgemeinen hervor, 65 Prozent sehen einen Beitrag zur Verbesserung ihrer Forschungskontakte und 60 Prozent erweiterten dadurch ihre wissenschaftlichen Kompetenzen. 53 Prozent wurden in wissenschaftliche Diskussionen einbezogen, deren Ursprung im Land der gastgebenden Hochschule liegt, 45 Prozent verbesserten dadurch ihre Lehrfähigkeiten, und 40 Prozent entwickelten und verwendeten nach ihrer Rückkehr neue Lehrmethoden. Nach Auskunft verschiedener Experten trägt das Lehren im Ausland zur Erhöhung der allgemeinen wissenschaftlichen Kompetenz bei; die mobilen Dozenten seien im Durchschnitt ihren nicht-mobilen Kolleginnen und Kollegen wissenschaftlich überlegen.

Die zu Beginn der Studie befragten Experten sehen vor allem Erträge für nachfolgende Innovationen in der Lehre. Dagegen betont ein großer Anteil der Dozenten den Wert des Lehraufenthaltes im Ausland für die Forschung und für allgemeine wissenschaftliche Kompetenzen, dagegen weniger für die Lehre.

Des Weiteren bewerten die ehemals mobilen Dozenten ihren Lehraufenthalt als nützlich für internationale Aspekte in ihrer weiteren beruflichen Tätigkeit. Seit der ERASMUS-geförderten Phase verbrachten sie im Durchschnitt einen Monat pro Jahr im Ausland – meistens zur Teilnahme an Konferenzen, oft aber auch zu Forschungszwecken oder um zu lehren. Etwa die Hälfte der Dozenten sieht einen Zusammenhang zwischen ERASMUS und ihren erweiterten internationalen Forschungsk Kooperationen, während etwa ein Drittel sowohl mehr Einladungen aus dem Ausland als auch die Zunahme der Forschungsk Kooperationen als positive Folge ihres ERASMUS-Aufenthaltes nennt. Die befragten Experten hatten sogar eine noch positivere Sichtweise. Mehr als drei Viertel ist davon überzeugt, dass ehemals mobile Dozenten im Wissen über das Hochschulsystem des Gastlandes, ihrem interkulturellen Verständnis und in ihren Fremdsprachenkenntnissen ihren nicht-mobilen Kollegen überlegen sind.

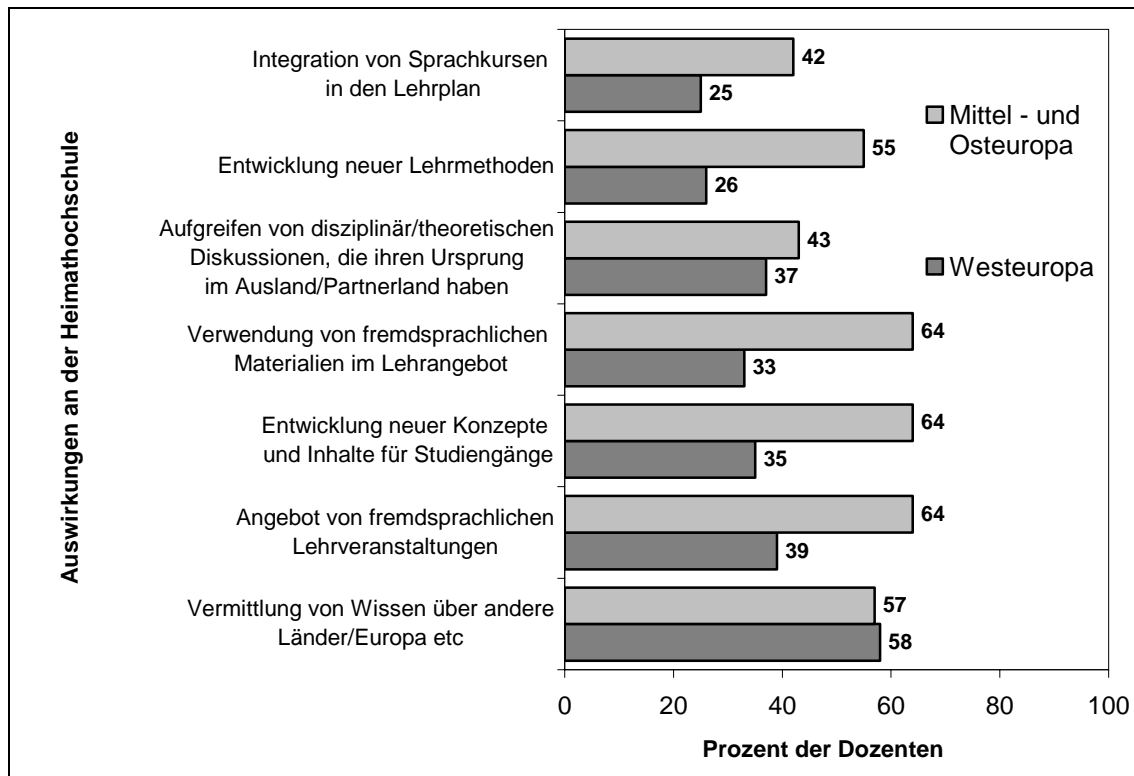
Außerdem ist die Mehrheit der mobilen Dozenten davon überzeugt, dass die Mobilität von Lehrenden im Rahmen des ERASMUS-Programms auch einen positiven Einfluss auf die Hochschule hat. Mehr als die Hälfte berichtet, dass Dozentenmobilität hilfreich war, um die Beratung der mobilen Studierenden zu verbessern und Wissen über andere Länder bereitzustellen. Fast die Hälfte der Befragten betrachtet Dozentenmobilität als hilfreich, um die Koordination der Studienprogramme zwischen den Partnerhochschulen zu verbessern, das Angebot von Fremdsprachenkursen zu erweitern, neue Studienkonzepte zu entwickeln und der zunehmenden Bedeutung von komparativen Ansätzen zu entsprechen (siehe Abbildung 5).

Auch die befragten Hochschulleiter beobachten einen positiven Effekt der Dozentenmobilität auf ihre Hochschule. Mehr als drei Viertel sehen darin einen positiven Beitrag zur internationalen Reputation ihrer Hochschule. Mehr als die Hälfte schätzen die

Effekte für internationale Forschungsaktivitäten und etwa die Hälfte für verschiedene Dimensionen von Lehren und Lernen positiv ein.

Schließlich sollte hier angemerkt werden, dass neun Prozent der befragten ehemaligen mobilen Dozenten zum Zeitpunkt der Befragung beruflich in einem anderen Land tätig war als dem Land, in dem sie vor ihrem ERASMUS-Aufenthalt beschäftigt waren. In vielen Fällen war das Land ihrer aktuellen Beschäftigung ihr ehemaliges Gastland. Dies ist sicherlich ein höherer Grad an Mobilität als im Allgemeinen in der Mitte der Karriere erwartet werden konnte. Des Weiteren glauben mehr als zwei Drittel der befragten Experten, dass ein Lehraufenthalt im Ausland die Möglichkeiten für weitere internationale wissenschaftliche Mobilität erhöht. Sicherlich kann man aber nicht davon ausgehen, dass ein entsprechend hoher Prozentsatz des Lehrpersonals wirklich zukünftig auch mobil sein wird.

Abbildung 5 Ausgewählte Auswirkungen der ERASMUS Dozentenmobilität auf die Heimathochschule – nach Einschätzung der ehemals mobil Dozenten aus Mittel- und Osteuropa sowie Westeuropa (in Prozent)



Frage E6: Wie bewerten Sie im Allgemeinen die Effekte von Dozentenmobilität im Rahmen von ERASMUS an Ihrer Heimathochschule bezüglich der folgenden Aspekte? Antworten 1 und 2 auf einer Fünferskala von 1 = „In hohem Maße“ bis 5 = „Überhaupt nicht“

Quelle: VALERA-Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Dozenten 2005.

Der Ertrag eines Lehraufenthaltes im Ausland bezüglich Status und Einkommen sieht auf den ersten Blick bescheiden aus: Drei Prozent konstatieren als Folge eine Gehaltssteigerung, sechs Prozent die Verlängerung des Beschäftigungsvertrags und 12 Prozent den Wechsel in eine leitende Position. Zu bedenken ist allerdings, dass der Anteil derjenigen, die seit ihrem Lehraufenthalt in eine höhere Position aufgestiegen ist, sehr

gering ist. Ein Drittel der befragten Dozenten gibt dennoch an, ihr Lehraufenthalt im Ausland habe ihre Karriereperspektiven verbessert. Offenkundig führt die Dozentenmobilität oft zu kleineren Verbesserungen und nährt die Aussichten auf spätere Karriere-Erträge. Die befragten Hochschulleiter sehen ebenfalls eher moderate Effekte für die Karriere, während fast die Hälfte der eingangs befragten Experten glaubt, dass mobile Dozenten gute Aussichten auf einen Aufstieg an der eigenen Hochschule haben.

Insgesamt scheint, wie bereits zuvor erwähnt, der berufliche Ertrag eines Lehraufenthaltes im Ausland für Dozenten aus Mittel- und Osteuropa wesentlich höher zu sein als für ihre Kollegen aus westeuropäischen Ländern. Dieser Unterschied ist bei den Lehrenden weitaus höher als bei den Studierenden. So beobachten zehn Prozent der Dozenten aus Mittel- und Osteuropa, aber nur ein Prozent aus Westeuropa, eine Erhöhung des Gehalts. 30 Prozent der ersteren im Vergleich zu sieben Prozent der letzteren Gruppe betonen, dass sie als Konsequenz des Lehraufenthalts im Ausland eine höhere Position erhalten haben. Schließlich verzeichnen 81 Prozent der ersteren im Vergleich zu 53 Prozent der letzteren einen positiven Ertrag für die allgemeine berufliche Entwicklung.

Der Ertrag insgesamt und Empfehlungen

Insgesamt erbrachten die Erhebungen, die im Rahmen des VALERA-Evaluationsprojekts durchgeführt worden sind, fünf besonders bemerkenswerte Befunde:

- Die Triangulation der Einschätzungen zeigt, dass die einbezogenen Experten, Hochschulleiter und Arbeitgeber den beruflichen Effekt der durch ERASMUS geförderten Studienphase in einem anderen europäischen Land höher einschätzen als die ehemals mobilen Studierenden selbst. Wir können nicht eindeutig feststellen, ob erstere eher zu einer Überschätzung oder letztere eher zu Unterschätzung der Erträge neigen.
- Diese jüngste Evaluationsstudie bestätigt die Ergebnisse früherer Erhebungen: Auch frühere ERASMUS-Studierende glauben, dass die Auslandsstudienphase häufig internationale Mobilität, internationale Kompetenzen und sichtbar internationale berufliche Aufgaben zur Folge hat, aber kaum höhere Positionen oder höheres Einkommen im Vergleich zu nicht-mobilen Studierenden nach sich zieht. Die meisten anderen Befragten sind allerdings der Ansicht, dass ERASMUS auch zu Karrierevorteilen führt.
- Ein Vergleich der Antworten, die die ERASMUS-Studierenden des Jahres 2000/01 fünf Jahre später gaben, mit den Antworten, die frühere Generationen von ERASMUS-Studierenden bei vorangehenden Befragungen gegeben hatten, lassen den Schluss zu, dass der Vorteil, den ERASMUS-Studierende im Hinblick auf internationale Beschäftigung und Berufstätigkeit haben, im Laufe der Zeit in vieler Hinsicht sinkt. Je mehr internationale Berufstätigkeiten zunehmen und je mehr alle Studierenden internationale Kompetenzen gewinnen, desto weniger kann ein herausgehobener Wert von ERASMUS erwartet werden.
- Der berufliche Wert einer ERASMUS-geförderten Auslandsphase ist für mobile Studierende wie für mobile Dozenten aus mittel- und osteuropäischen Ländern offenkundig deutlich höher als für Westeuropäer. Gegenüber diesen Unterschieden nach Ländern sind die Differenzen nach Disziplinen gering.

- Obwohl die mobilen Dozenten in der Regel bereits vorher international erfahren waren, zur Zeit des Auslandsaufenthalts bereits im Beruf gut etabliert sind und mit Hilfe von ERASMUS meistens nur eine sehr kurze Phase im Ausland lehren, berichten sie von einem bemerkenswert hohen beruflichen Ertrag dieser Lehrtätigkeit im Ausland. Die Mehrheit von ihnen ist dadurch stärker in internationaler Forschungskooperation eingebunden und ist der Ansicht, dass sich ihre wissenschaftlichen Kompetenzen dadurch insgesamt gesteigert hätten; etwas geringer ist der Anteil derjenigen, die wertvolle Erträge für ihre spätere Lehrtätigkeit sehen. Einige ehemals mobile Dozenten sehen positive Auswirkungen auf ihre beruflichen Karrieren, und einige entscheiden sich, ihre Berufstätigkeit in einem anderen Land fortzusetzen, dabei in den meisten Fällen in dem Land, in dem sie mit Hilfe von ERASMUS gelehrt haben.

Insgesamt unterstreichen die Ergebnisse der VALERA-Evaluationsstudie die *Relevanz* des ERASMUS-Förderungsprogramms. Wie auch frühere Studien gezeigt haben, hilft ein temporäres Studium in einem anderen Land, internationale Kompetenzen zu erhöhen, fördert die berufliche Mobilität der Absolventen und führt die ehemaligen ERASMUS-Studierenden an internationale Berufsaufgaben heran. Die Studie zeigt darüber hinaus, dass Arbeitgeber international erfahrene Absolventen gegenüber anderen Absolventen in vielen Kompetenzbereichen als überlegen einschätzen und auch annehmen, dass sie im Laufe ihrer Karriere erfolgreicher sind. Die Relevanz von ERASMUS wird schließlich in dieser Studie dadurch unterstrichen, dass die mobilen Dozenten einen hohen beruflichen Wert der ERASMUS-geförderten Phase des Lehrens konstatieren. Die befragten Universitätsleiter sind davon überzeugt, dass dies deutlich zur Internationalisierung wie zur Reputation der Hochschule beiträgt. Die vorliegenden Befunde lassen den Schluss zu, dass ERASMUS einem Bedarf des Beschäftigungssystems entspricht und dass die Hochschulen sich der an sie gerichteten gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen bewusst sind.

Diese Evaluationsstudie bestätigt das Ergebnis früherer Untersuchungen, dass ERASMUS darin *effektiv* ist, dass es große Zahlen von Personen mit im Einzelfall relativ bescheidenen Mitteln unterstützt. Allerdings sind auch viele in die Analyse einbezogene Akteure und Experten davon überzeugt, dass eine Qualitätsverbesserung erreichbar wäre, wenn die Lehrenden jeweils eine höhere finanzielle Unterstützung erhielten, um längere Phasen im Ausland zu lehren, und wenn mehr Unterstützung für curriculare Aktivitäten in enger Verknüpfung zu studentischer Mobilität vorgesehen würden.

Was die *Wirkung* von ERASMUS angeht, ist bereits aus früheren Studien erkennbar, dass der „vertikale“ berufliche Wert des temporären Studiums in einem anderen europäischen Land begrenzt, aber der „horizontale“ Wert eindrucksvoll ist. Ehemalige ERASMUS-Studierende können kaum damit rechnen, dass sie höhere Positionen und ein höheres Einkommen als andere Absolventen erreichen werden, aber der Übergang in die Berufstätigkeit ist erleichtert, sie sind in größerer Zahl international beruflich mobil, und sie übernehmen in hohem Maße sichtbar internationale berufliche Aufgaben. Nur die früheren ERASMUS-Studierenden aus den mittel- und osteuropäischen Ländern können überwiegend auch mit größeren Karriereerfolgen rechnen. Die jüngst durchgeführten Erhebungen zeigen darüber hinaus, dass die Experten und Arbeitgeber, die angesprochen wurden, nicht die Förderung der Kompetenzen durch ERASMUS schätzen, die für internationale Berufsrollen wichtig sind, sondern das überdurchschnittliche generelle Kompetenzniveau von früheren ERASMUS-Studierenden in

vielen Bereichen des wissenschaftlich-fachlichen Wissens, der generellen intellektuellen Kompetenzen, der berufsbezogenen Werte und Einstellungen und der sozio-kommunikativen Befähigungen. Es gibt keinen Beleg dafür, dass ERASMUS eine stärkere Wirkung hat als andere Formen des Auslandsstudiums, aber das ERASMUS Programm ist sehr erfolgreich in der Mobilisierung einer großen Anzahl von Studierenden, die in den oben beschriebenen Maße von dieser Erfahrung profitieren.

Im Hinblick auf die temporäre Mobilität von Dozenten konnte diese Studie beachtliche Erträge benennen. Die meisten mobilen Lehrenden beobachten weitreichende Wirkungen im Hinblick auf ihre späteren Forschungs- und Lehrtätigkeiten. Die befragten Hochschulleiter und andere Experten sind sogar der Ansicht, dass die mobilen Lehrenden danach aktiver und intellektuell anspruchsvoller werden und in manchen Fällen danach auch bemerkenswerte Karriereerfolge haben.

Was die *Dauerhaftigkeit* des ERASMUS-Programms angeht, sind die meisten befragten Akteure und Experten davon überzeugt, dass ERASMUS auch in Zukunft eine große Rolle spielen wird, wenn die Grundzüge des Programms unverändert bleiben. ERASMUS hat so viele Vorzüge, dass beinahe ausnahmslos alle Betroffenen sich für ein Weiterbestehen einsetzen.

Jedoch fordern sie Verbesserungen im Rahmen der erprobten Praktiken, z.B. eine bessere Vorbereitung der Studierenden, eine stärkere studienbezogene, administrative und finanzielle Unterstützung während des Auslandsaufenthaltes, verbesserte Anerkennung der Studienleistungen nach der Rückkehr, bessere Zusammenarbeit zwischen Hochschule und Beschäftigungssystem, mehr Geld und weniger Bürokratie von Seiten der Europäischen Kommission und zu guter Letzt stärkere Bemühungen, die Stärken des ERASMUS-Programms außerhalb der Hochschulen bekannt zu machen. Zur Mobilität der Dozenten wird vorgeschlagen, Bemühungen zu unternehmen, damit längere Phasen des Lehrens in anderen Ländern realisiert werden können; auch wird empfohlen, die temporäre Lehre im Ausland stärker bei Personalentscheidungen zu berücksichtigen, so bei Berufungs- und Beförderungentscheidungen.

Diese Studie hat jedoch auch Befunde erbracht, die die Dauerhaftigkeit der „Erfolgs-story ERASMUS“ in Frage stellen. Der berufliche Ertrag des temporären Studiums in einem anderen Land ist im Laufe der Jahre deutlich zurückgegangen. Die jüngste Befragung ehemaliger ERASMUS-Studierender zeigt im Vergleich zu ähnlichen früheren Studien, dass das temporäre Studium weniger zu einem leichteren Übergang in das Beschäftigungssystem, zum Erreichen eines höheren Einkommens und zum Zugang zu internationalen Berufsaufgaben beiträgt als in der Vergangenheit. Das ist wahrscheinlich durch eine wachsende generelle Internationalisierung verursacht, die die Einzigartigkeit der ERASMUS-Erfahrung erodieren lässt.

Die Autoren dieser Studie kommen zu dem Schluss, dass das ERASMUS-Programm in Zukunft größere Chancen hat, wenn es im Hinblick auf die Qualität der Auslandsstudienphase wieder anspruchsvoller wird. Es gab gute Gründe in der Vergangenheit, warum das ERASMUS-Programm sich allmählich von einer engen Verzahnung von studentischer Mobilität und Studiengangsentwicklung zu einem administrativ gut funktionierenden Programm für große Zahlen von Studierenden entwickelt hat. Aber jetzt sinkt der Wert der Auslandsstudienphase an sich. Darüber hinaus sehen die Akteure und Experten, die an dieser Studie im Hinblick auf Fragen der einzelnen Studienfächer beteiligt waren, große Spielräume, den Wert des temporären

Auslandsstudiums durch eine bessere zeitliche Einbettung in den Studienverlauf und gezielter curriculare Akzente zu erhöhen. So scheint die Zeit reif zu sein für einen Richtungswandel in der Akzentuierung des ERASMUS-Programms, wobei anspruchsvollere Ideen zur Studiengangsgestaltung mit der Förderung der mobilen Studierenden verbunden werden sollten.

1 Introduction

This is the final report presenting the results of the project : "*The professional value of ERASMUS mobility - External Evaluation of the Impact of ERASMUS Mobility on Students' Access to Employment and Career Development, on Teachers' Career Development and on Two Areas of Study to be Specified*". In short, the core objective of this project was to evaluate the professional value of the ERASMUS programme for mobile students and teachers participating in the programme.

The report presents the results of each project step, summarising the Framework Report, the Report on the First Phase and on the Second Phase. The first two introductory chapters give an overview about the aims and design of the study and the used modes of inquiry. The following third chapter summarises the core results of the expert survey and is a condensed version of the Framework Report. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the student survey. The core findings of the conducted employer survey are the objective of the fifth chapter, followed by a chapter about the results of the teacher survey. The seventh chapter finally presents the results of the survey which was directed to the university leaders. These five surveys formed the first phase of the project.

The major findings of the second project phase can be found in chapter eight. Here the field-specific results on student mobility in Mechanical Engineering, Business Studies, Sociology and Chemistry can be found. Finally, a summarising ninth chapter presents the core results of all conducted surveys in a topic-oriented order followed and a summary of the results according to the initially stated evaluation questions.

1.1 Aims and Design of the Study

This study "*The Professional Value of ERASMUS Mobility*" (VALERA) presents the results of an evaluation study undertaken from December 2004 to June 2006 on the professional impact of mobility of

- students and
- teachers

who have spent some period in another European country in the framework of the ERASMUS sub-programme of SOCRATES. For this purpose, first, prior evaluation studies were screened thoroughly and a broad range of actors and experts were asked to present their views. Second, by taking available information and the results of the initial survey into account, representative surveys were undertaken of formerly mobile ERASMUS students and formerly mobile ERASMUS teachers who had spent a period in another European country in the academic year 2000/01. Third, information provided was supplemented by surveys of university leaders are asked about student and teacher mobility at their institution and of employers to report about their experience with formerly mobile students. Fourth, seminars were held addressing four selected fields of study, i.e. Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, Sociology and Business, in order to elicit experts' and actors' views about the major strengths and weaknesses of temporary student mobility and possible ways in increase its professional value.

The study takes for granted that students' temporary mobility during the course of study is not only important for learning up to a degree within the walls of higher education institution, but also affects their subsequent life-course and notably their subsequent employment and work. Since two previous similar studies have been undertaken, the study helps to establish changes in the professional value of ERASMUS. In contrast, prior studies on teaching staff mobility had focussed on the impact of temporary teaching in another European country on study provisions and conditions at their home department and well as on student mobility; this study puts emphasis for the first time on the impact of this international experiences on the formerly mobile teachers' employment and work.

Actually, the professional value of student mobility was analysed notably with regard to general and international competences, transition to work, first and subsequent employment as well as international aspects of employment and work. Similarly, the impact of teaching staff mobility on teachers' career development was analysed with regard to general academic and teaching competences, international and inter-cultural competences, subsequent activities at the home higher education institution in the framework of ERASMUS, the teachers' subsequent academic activities and career as well as international mobility.

The Report was commissioned by the European Commission – Directorate General Education and Culture as “External Interim Evaluation of the Impact of ERASMUS Mobility (Action 2 of the SOCRATES Community Action Programme, 2000 – 2006) on Students' Access to Employment and Career Development, on Teachers' Career Development and on Two Areas of Study to be Specified (Contract No. 2004-3297)”. It was undertaken by members of the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel), University of Kassel.

1.2 Modes of Inquiry

The evaluation study was divided in two major phases. The first phase encompassed altogether five surveys: An expert survey as a very first step, a survey of former ERASMUS students, a survey of former ERASMUS teachers, a survey of university leaders and an employers' survey. The second phase was based on qualitative seminars focusing on four specific fields of study for an in-depth field-specific analysis of the results of the first phase. An expert seminar formed the linking point between both phases.

The analysis of the *expert survey*, the first survey of the project outline, is called “Framework Report”, because it set the agenda for all subsequent activities of the project. It aimed to provide findings in its own right. The expert survey was undertaken prior to the survey of former ERASMUS students and teachers in order to help prepare the latter surveys; e.g. identifying issues which had not been taken care of in previous student and teacher studies. The questionnaires were sent to representatives of the ERASMUS programme itself, policy representatives, representatives of student organisations, fields of study/disciplines, labour market representatives and higher education institutions. Of the 156 addressed experts, 67 answered the questionnaire which corresponds to a response rate of 43 percent.

The second step of the first project phase included on the one hand surveys of the mobile persons themselves: ERASMUS students and teachers a few years after their ERASMUS experience as well as university leaders and employers.

The survey of *former ERASMUS students* was aimed at providing information on the actual professional impact of an ERASMUS-supported temporary study period in another country and to identify the most conducive conditions for a high professional value. To gather information from the formerly mobile students, this survey was directed at students who went abroad in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/01 with an elaborate questionnaire on their view of their competences gained during their ERASMUS period abroad and on the impact of the temporary study abroad on their transition to work. By addressing ERASMUS students from 2000/01, it could be assumed that the majority of the former mobile students had already graduated and arrived on the labour market. Altogether, the response rate was 45 percent. 4,589 former ERASMUS students had filled the questionnaire.

As not only student mobility but also teaching staff mobility was one of the objectives of this study, a second survey was directed at all *teachers* who were mobile with the ERASMUS programme in the academic year 2000/01. The underlying assumption was that teaching staff mobility contributes to students' learning and to serve the development of the knowledge base both at the home and the host university and that it also improves the competences of the mobile teachers themselves. Accordingly, the teacher questionnaire covered questions about the socio-graphic background, the teaching activity abroad, supporting structures at the home institution as well as the perceived impact on competences and subsequent career. All outgoing teachers of the academic year 2000/01 were addressed via their respective ERASMUS coordinator at the institution and asked to fill out the online questionnaire. 755 teachers answered the questionnaire which corresponds to a response rate of 24 percent.

The *university leader survey* delivered information about student and teaching staff mobility in the framework of the ERASMUS programme. Due to the top position of university leaders and their responsibility for policies related to internationalisation and ERASMUS, they should be well informed about the potential professional impact of teaching in the framework of ERASMUS, and they are certainly well informed about the universities' activities to support the transition to employment and about feedback from the employment system about the professional value of study in another European country. Paper questionnaires covering these topics were sent to all leaders of higher education institutions involved in the ERASMUS programme via the institutional ERASMUS coordinator. The response rate was 44 percent, 626 leaders had answered and resent the questionnaire.

Additionally, an *employers' survey* was undertaken. The survey of employers provides a basis to compare the employers' view with the view of the former ERASMUS students and the university leaders and to identify possible mismatches between the employers' needs and graduates' competences. Accordingly, the questionnaire included questions about the organisation itself, the scope of operations, the positions of formerly mobile graduates, the applied recruitment criteria and competences expected. Furthermore, the employers were asked to compare formerly mobile and non-mobile graduates in their organisation. This questionnaire survey was answered by 312 persons who are

responsible within the employing organisations for the recruitment of university graduates.

These surveys of the first phase delivered the main input for the *expert seminar* which took place at the end of the first project phase. The expert seminar brought together experts from different European countries and several professional backgrounds: representatives of National Socrates Agencies and ERASMUS coordinators, Ministries of Education, employers' and students' organisations as well as academic and professional organisations on both national and European level. The aim was to discuss the findings of the first phase and to specify the objectives of the second phase. The main conclusion of the expert seminar was to conduct seminars instead of interviews in different fields of study during the second phase of the project. The seminars as methodological approach were chosen to ensure a deep insight into various perspectives and experiences and to reveal tacit knowledge of the participants in the respective domain. Accordingly, during the second phase of the project, *expert seminars* in each of the *four selected fields of study* were conducted: Chemistry as an academically oriented field in the area of science and engineering, Mechanical Engineering as a professionally oriented field in this area, Sociology as an academically oriented field in the area of humanities and social sciences and Business Studies as a professionally oriented field in the latter area. As seminar participants were invited teachers (favourably involved in curriculum development), former and current ERASMUS students, employers, representatives of academic and professional associations and experts involved in relevant projects (e.g. TUNING, Thematic Networks).

Table 1 Overview about the Surveys Conducted in the VALERA Study

Kind of survey	Field Phase	Number of filled questionnaires	Response rate
<i>Expert Survey</i> Experts and Akteurs in the ERASMUS Programme	March 2005 - May 2005	67	43%
<i>Student Survey</i> Student Participants in the ERASMUS programme (2000/01)	September 2005 - February 2006	4,589	45%
<i>Employer Survey</i> Employers and Recruiting Managers of Higher Education Graduates	February 2006 - April/May 2006	312	6%
<i>Teacher Survey</i> Teaching Staff Participants in the ERASMUS programme (2000/01)	October 2005 - February 2006	755	24%
<i>University Leader Survey</i> University Leaders at Higher Education Institutions participating in ERASMUS	September 2005 - February 2006	626	44%
<i>"Field of Study" specific seminars</i> Experts, Employers, Teachers, Students in the respective field of study	Four seminars conducted between end of March and beginning of May	Qualitative data	Qualitative data

Altogether, stronger and more time-consuming efforts were needed to win the cooperation of institutions of higher education and of the various groups of respondents than in similar previous studies and than both the European Commission promoting this study and the research team conducting this study had expected. The European Commission accepted for that reason an extension of the project to about twice the period initially envisaged. Moreover, the research team – more experienced than any other in studies on international mobility in higher education - contributed to the survival of the study with substantial additional resources not paid by the Commission. This saved the project as such, but the response rates remained lower than expected and lower than in previous surveys conducted by the responsible institution.

We have good reasons to conclude that the problems which had emerged in the process of this study are not due to ERASMUS fatigue, but are due to an evaluation and survey fatigue in general. The more evaluation is accepted as highly important, the more – ironically – the quality of systematic evaluations seem to suffer, because the evaluation activities explode quantitatively to such an extent that all persons involved become overburdened as a consequence of frequent calls to provide information for evaluation studies or to lend support to them in other ways.

The subsequent report certainly provides valuable insights, but the results could have been received with a higher level of confidence if the cooperation on the part of the higher education institutions and of the various types of experts and actors had been as impressive as it had been in prior studies conducted by the research team between the inauguration of the ERASMUS programme and the late 1990s.

Nevertheless, this report relies on the valuable assistance of administrative staff related to the ERASMUS programme within hundreds of higher education institutions in Europe. We are deeply grateful for their readiness to help in the process of the surveys. In particular we appreciate the participation of more than 6,000 persons from whom we got a feedback as experts about the ERASMUS programme, as former ERASMUS students, as mobile teachers, as university leaders or employers.

Besides the authors of this report, many other members of INCHER-Kassel contributed to the study: student assistants like Adis Dewi, Martin Guist, Agnes Jäger, Stefan Kohl, Markus Nees, Thorsten Schramm, Agnes Schreiber, Lars Söhlke, and many others helped with the administration of the surveys; Ahmed Tubail administrated the online surveys and did a lot of the statistical analysis; Cristian Ivan developed and administrated the web site of the project and, together with Roman Schmidt, he did a lot of work related with the formatting of questionnaires and production of charts and tables for the reports; Dagmar Mann and Christiane Rittgerott supported the report with text-editing, and Sandy Mui was our right hand for all organisational and secretarial matters.

Finally, the project team is very thankful regarding the fruitful cooperation with members of the EU Commission, DG Education and Culture, during the project, especially Mr. Pedro Martinez-Macias.

2 The ERASMUS Programme

2.1 The History of the Programme

The European Economic Community, after its foundation in the 1950s, initially addressed educational matters only in the areas of vocational training and the transition from education to employment. When higher education became part of the European agenda during the 1970s, one of the first activities was to promote student mobility. The Joint-Study Programmes (JSP) were established in 1976 and remained operative for about a decade. This pilot programme provided financial support for networks of departments that exchanged students for a period of up to one year and also included some funds, though on a moderate scale, for mobile students. The JSP programme was widely viewed as successful in creating a fruitful academic and administrative environment for student exchange between cooperating departments of higher education institutions in different countries. All of them established various modes of organisational and academic support for mobile students, many were active in joint curricular development, and the most ambitious departmental networks even developed double degrees. However, the limited time-span of institutional support and the extra costs incurred by students during study periods abroad constituted barriers to far-reaching success.

Subsequently, in 1987 the ERASMUS programme was inaugurated. Its name not only reminded of the Dutch humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1466-1536), but also served as an acronym for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. ERASMUS was not only aimed to increase the quantity of European higher education activities but also to broaden their scope. It rapidly became the most visible of the various newly emerging European educational programmes. Though the financial basis of the programme did not reach the volume needed for pursuing the ambitious aim initially set by the European Community of supporting a temporary study period in another European country of 10 percent of students in higher education, ERASMUS became the largest student mobility programme hitherto established.

A new chapter in the history of European support for temporary student mobility and transborder cooperation of higher education institutions was expected to begin when the SOCRATES programme – named after the Greek philosopher and educational reformer of the fifth century B.C. – was established in 1995. Implemented in the area of higher education as from the academic year 1997/98, SOCRATES brought together the various education programmes, thus aiming at increased administrative efficiency and substantive cross-fertilisation of education activities in various sectors. When ERASMUS became a sub-programme of SOCRATES, support for student mobility and cooperation in higher education was substantially increased. In addition to student mobility, teaching staff mobility and curricular innovation were now promoted as well to place special emphasis on a broad development of the European dimension in higher education and to make the non-mobile students profit from the programme as well. The responsibility for administering student mobility and cooperation was moved away from the networks of cooperating departments previously supported, named Inter-University Co-operation Programmes (ICPs), to the centre of the higher education institutions. The

European Commission and the individual higher education institutions became partners by concluding so-called Institutional Contracts (IC).

2.2 The Initial ERASMUS Approach

Financial support for temporary student mobility within Europe – more precisely: grants aiming to cover the additional costs for study abroad – has been the most visible component of the ERASMUS programme from the outset. More than half the ERASMUS funds were allocated to student mobility grants. The European Commission also provided initially some funds for the departments involved in student exchange. Additional actions of the programme provided support for staff exchange, notably teaching staff mobility, as well as for curriculum development, short intensive programmes and some other activities. As from 1989/90, funds were also made available to departments cooperating in the establishment of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The characteristics of ERASMUS during that period were described in the major evaluation study addressed the first seven years of the programmes: regional (i.e. intra-European) mobility, temporary student mobility (up to one year), collective mobility (between certain institutions and departments), mobility and cooperation within networks, organized study abroad (institutional support for preparation, accommodation, administrative matters etc.), curricular integration, an inclusive approach towards temporary study abroad (recognition as a key criteria), as well as partial and incentive-funding.

ERASMUS was quickly considered the flagship of the educational programmes administered by the European Union. Despite widespread criticism of bureaucratic hypertrophy and too little funding for individual students and universities, ERASMUS was seen as having helped student mobility in Europe become one of the normal options for students instead of an exception and cooperation in higher education being upgraded from a marginal phenomenon toward an activity that was intertwined with almost all issues of the regular life of a university.

2.3 The SOCRATES Approach

The SOCRATES programme, above all, aimed to create links between various areas of support in education. As a large umbrella programme, it should symbolise the extension of responsibility of the European Union to all education areas since the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht. Also, the administrative load associated with the management of the programmes should be reduced through a merger of individual programme structures. Last but not least, SOCRATES should stimulate cooperation in European matters of education across different educational sectors.

SOCRATES therefore integrated the more than a dozen educational programmes which had been established in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They were revised or supplemented to form two new large European programmes, namely SOCRATES for the different sectors of general education and LEONARDO DA VINCI for vocational

education. SOCRATES absorbed ERASMUS and LINGUA, which became two of a total of five sub-programmes.

As regards ERASMUS, the most visible changes of ERASMUS envisaged under the new umbrella of SOCRATES were of a managerial nature:

- (a) Each individual institution of higher education had to submit one application encompassing all its exchange and cooperation activities, thus replacing the previous pattern of submission of applications by networks of cooperating institutions. This application became the basis for an “Institutional Contract” between the European Commission and the individual institution of higher education.
- (b) Bilateral cooperation agreements between partner institutions substituted the inter-university agreements between networks of departments. The institutions of higher education applying for SOCRATES were expected to keep and provide on request written traces of the cooperation that had been established between them and other European institutions.
- (c) Each institution submitting an application for SOCRATES support was requested to include in its application a European Policy Statement (EPS). This statement was designed to provide a framework for all the actual European activities to be carried out by the applying institution and to define the role SOCRATES support would play in this framework.

This *managerial change* of the SOCRATES programme was generally conceived to imply more salient changes than a mere amendment to bureaucratic procedures. Implicitly, SOCRATES challenged the institutions of higher education wishing to be awarded grants for cooperation and mobility to reflect and put a stronger *emphasis on the coherence of goals* to be pursued and the coherence of European activities to be undertaken, to *strengthen the responsibility of the central level* of the higher education institutions regarding European activities, and to develop and reinforce strategic thinking in terms of setting clear targets and pursuing them successfully.

ERASMUS under the umbrella of SOCRATES was expected to take further steps towards cooperation and the qualitative development of course provisions in European higher education. For example, stronger efforts were envisaged to foster a common substance of knowledge across Europe. “*The European dimension*“ was advocated as a goal to be pursued more vigorously than in the past.

While ERASMUS in the past had clearly focused on the learning opportunities of mobile students, SOCRATES aimed to also address the *non-mobile of students*, i.e. to make the majority of students benefit from the European dimension in higher education. Notably, curricular innovation and increasing teaching staff mobility was expected to contribute to European experiences on the part of the non-mobile students.

For these purpose, activities supported in addition to student mobility were given an increasing share of the resources and were expected to play a greater role. Financial support for teaching staff exchange was substantially increased. Support for Curriculum Development and Intensive Programmes was extended and newly structured. Promotion of the European Credit Transfer System became one of the priorities of the targeted measures to improve the conditions of student mobility. In addition, Thematic Networks

projects were introduced. They were expected to stimulate innovative concepts of educational change through joint deliberation and development activities in networks of experts and key actors focusing on individual fields of study or special cross-cutting issues.

Some measures taken or recommended were intended to contribute to improved academic and administrative support of student mobility. The growing responsibility of the institutions of higher education as a whole should increase the degree of administrative support both for out-going and in-coming mobile students. Also, the bilateral cooperation agreements between partner institutions of higher education were expected to ensure that a certain minimum quality of academic and administrative was universal by being less at the mercy of a few individuals than they were in the past. Further, greater teaching staff mobility and growing activities of curricular innovation also should contribute to a better learning environment both for mobile students and non-mobile students. Finally, the further spread of ECTS was expected to be not merely a mechanism to assess study achievements abroad, but also to lead to better information and growing European cooperation in curricular matters.

2.4 Implementing ERASMUS as a Sub-Programme within SOCRATES

The European Community action programme on education, SOCRATES, was adopted by the European Parliament and Council Decision No 819/95/EC of 14 March 1995 for the period from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1999. This decision set in motion the implementation of the first overall programme in the field of education at the European level.

The general objective of the SOCRATES programme is described in Article 1 of the corresponding Council Decision: “This programme is intended to contribute to the development of quality education and training and the creation of an open European area for cooperation in education”. In the perspective of lifelong learning, its aim is to optimise the skills and competences of the citizens of Europe, to strengthen equal opportunities and to encourage the development of active and responsible citizenship with a European dimension. These general objectives are made operational by nine specific aims described in Article 3 of the Council Decision:

- “a) to develop the European dimension in education at all levels so as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each Member State;
- b) to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement of the knowledge of the languages of the European Union, and in particular those which are least widely used and least taught, leading to greater understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the European Union, and to promote the intercultural dimension of education;
- c) to promote wide-ranging and intensive cooperation between institutions in the Member States at all levels of education, enhancing their intellectual and teaching potential;
- d) to encourage the mobility of teachers, so as to promote a European dimension in studies and to contribute to the qualitative improvement of their skills;

e) to encourage mobility of students, enabling them to complete part of their studies in another Member State, so as to contribute to the consolidation of the European dimension in education;

f) to encourage contacts among pupils in the European Union, and to promote the European dimension in their education;

g) to encourage the academic recognition of diplomas, periods of study and other qualifications, with the aim of facilitating the development of an open area for cooperation in education;

h) to encourage open and distance education in the context of the activities of this programme;

i) to foster exchanges of information and experience so that the diversity and specificity of the educational systems in the Member States become a source of enrichment and of mutual stimulation.”

Various sub-programmes other than ERASMUS were relevant for higher education as well. Among others, COMENIUS and LINGUA addressed teacher training. OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING as well as ADULT EDUCATION were open to participation of higher education institutions. Obviously, however, ERASMUS remained the core (sub-)programme for mobility and cooperation in higher education.

After a number of amendments to its original structure under SOCRATES had been made, from the introduction of Institutional Contracts in 1997/98 on, the ERASMUS programme was structured into two broad fields of support, the so-called “Actions”:

Action 1: Support to universities to enhance the European dimension of studies;

Action 2: Student mobility grants.

Action 1 was subdivided into six “Activities“ on the one hand and Thematic Network projects on the other hand. The six Activities could be granted financial support by the European Commission within the framework of Institutional Contracts, whereas Thematic Network projects had to be organised separate from Institutional Contracts. Institutional Contracts between the European Commission and individual institutions of higher education determine the nature and the amount of support to be provided by the former for the development and implementation of European cooperation activities by the latter. They normally run over three years and have to include a European policy statement of the higher education institution for this period. Funding for Activities is granted on a yearly basis and runs from July on. All Activities must involve transnational cooperation between higher education institutions and must be based on prior agreements between departments, faculties or institutions.

The six Activities for which higher education institutions could receive financial support under Institutional Contracts were the following:

- Activity 1: Support for organising the mobility of students

Higher education institutions were expected to create optimal conditions for students who wanted to spend study periods at partner institutions abroad. Therefore, among others, the linguistic preparation of their students, the provision of information on the host institution, the monitoring of outgoing

students and help for incoming students were eligible for financial support. Since study periods abroad had to be recognised at the home institution, discussions of academic and organisational arrangements with partner institutions could also be supported. The level of support depended on the size of an institution, the number of mobile students involved and the extent to which the priorities of an institution coincided with the interest of the European Commission for a balanced participation of students among countries, regions and subject areas.

- Activity 2: Teaching staff mobility

As regards teaching staff mobility, assignments of short duration (one to eight weeks) and fellowships of medium duration (2 to 6 months) had to be distinguished. Participating academics had to be fully integrated into the department or faculty of their host institution; they were required to make a substantial contribution to the host institution's programme of study in terms of the number of teaching hours involved. Their lecturing should refer to courses which were assessed as part of a degree offered by the receiving institution. Teaching fellowships of medium duration were meant to especially stimulate the debate on pedagogical approaches.

- Activity 3: Intensive programmes

Intensive programmes were short programmes of study lasting between 10 days and 3 months and bringing together students and staff from institutions in at least three countries (research activities or conferences, however, were not eligible for support). Their stress was on efficient teaching of specialist topics, students working in multinational groups and teaching staff exchanging views on teaching content and approaches.

- Activity 4: Preparatory visits

This activity should enable academic or administrative staff to spend up to 3 weeks abroad in order to establish cooperation with departments, faculties or institutions which had not been involved in ERASMUS before.

- Activity 5: European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

ECTS is meant to provide an effective and generally applicable mechanism for recognition of students' academic achievement between partner institutions from different countries. Higher education institutions could be granted support for developing the use of ECTS within those departments in which the system had not yet been applied.

- Activity 6: Joint curriculum development

As regards this Activity, support could be granted for the joint development of curricula at initial or intermediate level, for the development of advanced level university programmes ("Masters" type), for the joint development of European modules or the joint development of integrated language courses. Institutions from at least three countries have to be involved. Cooperation with the professional world at regional, national and European level as well as the use of new media was desired.

Additionally, Thematic Network projects could also be supported under Action 1, but separate from the Institutional Contracts. Thematic Network were to facilitate the definition and the development of a European dimension within a given academic discipline or other issues of common interest (including administrative ones) through cooperation between faculties or departments as well as academic or professional associations. It was expected to relate to curriculum innovation, improvements in teaching methods or to the development of joint programmes and specialised courses. Outcomes should have lasting and widespread impact across a range of institutions within or between specific discipline areas.

Under Action 2 of ERASMUS within SOCRATES, student mobility grants were awarded to help students cover the extra costs incurred during study abroad (travel, language preparation and differences in the cost of living). Direct financial aid could be granted for a study period abroad of 3 to 12 months duration to be recognised at the home institution. The level of grants depended on the arrangements defined by National Agencies in the participating countries. The number of student grants awarded to an institution was decided by considering not only the number of outgoing students which a university entered in its application for an Institutional Contract to the Commission, but also the available overall budget, the balance of student flows between countries and in single subject areas, the availability of funding from other sources etc. Not all ERASMUS students necessarily had to be awarded a Community-funded mobility grant.

2.5 SOCRATES/ERASMUS 2000-2006

The decision no. 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 January 2000 establish the second phase of SOCRATES for the years 2000 until 2006.

The general objectives of Socrates II are described in Article 2 of the Council Decision:

"In order to contribute to the development of quality education and encourage life-long learning, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States, the objectives of the programme shall be:

(a) to strengthen the European dimension in education at all levels and to facilitate wide transnational access to educational resources in Europe while promoting equal opportunities throughout all fields of education;

(b) to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement of the knowledge of the languages of the European Union, in particular those languages which are less widely used and less widely taught, so as to lead to greater understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the European Union and promote the intercultural dimension of education;

(c) to promote cooperation and mobility in the field of education, in particular by:

- encouraging exchanges between educational institutions,
- promoting open and distance learning,
- encouraging improvements in the recognition of diplomas and periods of study,

- developing the exchange of information, and to help remove the obstacles in this regard;

(d) to encourage innovation in the development of educational practices and materials including, where appropriate, the use of new technologies, and to explore matters of common policy interest in the field of education."

The ERASMUS action comprises now three areas:

- Action 2.1 European interuniversity cooperation,
- Action 2.2 Mobility of students and university teachers,
- Action 2.3 Thematic networks.

It was decided to continue with the Action 2 (ERASMUS) until 2006 without big changes besides the administration of the programme: with the academic year 2000/2001 the administration of the funds for mobile teaching staff was transferred from the European Commission to the National Agencies and the *ERASMUS University Charter* (EUC) was introduced 2003/2004, which substitutes the former Institutional Contract. Now higher education institutions apply for the ERASMUS University Charter to the European Commission, and after the awarding of an EUC the institution has the right to participate in activities supported by the ERASMUS programme.

Institutions of higher education that are not holders of an EUC may participate as partners in a multinational project, but they are not allowed to submit themselves a project proposal for a funding by the Community.

The ERASMUS University Charter sets out the underlying fundamental principles behind all the ERASMUS activities of an institution of higher education, and represents the commitment of the institution to these principles and obligations.

3 Findings of the Expert Survey

3.1 Introduction

As a first step of the project, a broad range of actors and experts was asked to state their perceptions of the impact of ERASMUS mobility. The analysis of the expert survey was called "Framework Report" in the project outline, because it sets the agenda for all subsequent activities of the project. This expert survey, first, aims to provide findings in its own right. Experts' views ideally are based on a broad information base and on an in-depth understanding of the issue at stake. Second, the expert survey was undertaken prior to the survey of former ERASMUS students and teachers in order to help prepare the latter survey; issues might be newly addressed in the expert survey which had not been taken care of in previous student and teacher studies. Thus, the expert survey is supposed to serve as methodological tool for developing the questionnaires of the subsequent surveys.

3.2 The ERASMUS Expert Survey

Table 2 gives an overview about the key information about the expert survey undertaken in spring 2005.

Table 2 Overview of the Field Phase of the Survey of ERASMUS Experts

1	Target population	Experts and actors in the field of Mobility, the ERASMUS Programme and Labour Market
2	Start of field phase	March 2005
3	End of field phase	May 2005
4	Sampling strategy	No sampling; Selection of experts based on expertise, recommendations of National Agencies and literature and document research
5	Questionnaire (see ANNEX A.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly standardized, 14 pages, 89 questions - Translated in English, French and German - Online versions
6	Number of filled questionnaires	67
7	Gross response rate (based on 190 experts who received the questionnaire)	35 %
8	Net response rate (based on 156 experts, 34 declined to participate)	43 %

The questionnaire was only sent to selected experts and actors. As a rule, the National Socrates Agencies were asked to recommend experts in their respective home country. The *target group* were representatives from the following types of institutions:

- National Socrates Agency
- Ministries of Education
- Conference of rectors/presidents/vice chancellors
- Umbrella organisations of employment agencies
- Companies

On a supra-national level, the project team identified relevant European bodies with the help of direct information from experts within the European Commission, of a directory of relevant European associations provided by the European University Association (EAU) and with the help of some other experts known to have a broad knowledge of the European higher education “scene”. In addition, an internet search was undertaken notably in order to identify relevant employers’ associations.

Mailing procedure: The experts' survey was conducted online and the experts were addressed initially by email. However, experts were also offered to answer the questionnaire offline, but only few of them opted for this alternative. The questionnaire was presented in English, French and German. This, again, was undertaken to minimize costs based on the assumption that the experts surveyed were highly versatile in at least one of these languages. The experts were made available all three versions; thus, they could choose themselves.

The *questionnaire* covered student and teaching staff mobility. The content was similar to the later developed student and teacher questionnaire. Questions referred to competences of former mobile students/teachers compared to non-mobile students/teachers, the students' transition to work, the subsequent career as well as the possibility to state suggestions for improvement. It comprised open and "closed" questions. Various closed questions were taken from similar prior surveys in order to facilitate the comparison of the results of this study with findings of previous studies.

Response rate: The questionnaire was mailed to 190 experts. Only 29 experts got the questionnaire about ERASMUS student mobility, 162 got a questionnaire consisting of questions regarding ERASMUS student and teacher mobility. Of these 190 experts 34 declined to answer the questionnaire (among them 4 belonged to the group which were only addressed regarding ERASMUS student mobility). 43 percent of the remaining 156 answered the questionnaire (67 of 156). Of the expert groups, the response rates were highest among experts from the National Agencies. Here, 90 percent answered the questionnaire:

Table 3 Response Rates by Type of Experts (Survey of ERASMUS Experts)

	Sample size	Number of responses	Number of refusals to participate	Number of filled questionnaires	Response rate in %*	Corrected response rate in %**
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Employer organisation	25	5	3	2	20	9
Employment umbrella organisations	7	2	1	1	29	17
Ministries	37	17	7	10	46	33
National agency	33	30	3	27	91	90
Rectors' conferences	26	11	7	4	42	21
Others	62	36	13	23	58	47
Total	190	101	34	67	53	43

* The response rate is based on the number of responses (2) in relation to the sample size.

** The corrected response rate is based on the number of filled questionnaires (4) in relation to the sample size reduced by the number of refusals (3).

In the following analysis the single countries have been grouped into four country groups to secure a statistical significant size of respondents. The experts of supra-national organisations were treated separately.

Northern Europe	Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland
Middle	Germany, UK, France, The Netherlands, Lichtenstein, Luxemburg,

Europe	Austria, Belgium, Ireland
Southern Europe	Portugal, Italy, Spain, Greek, Cyprus, Malta
Eastern Europe	Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland. Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia
SUPRA	Supra-national organisations (e.g. European Association of..)

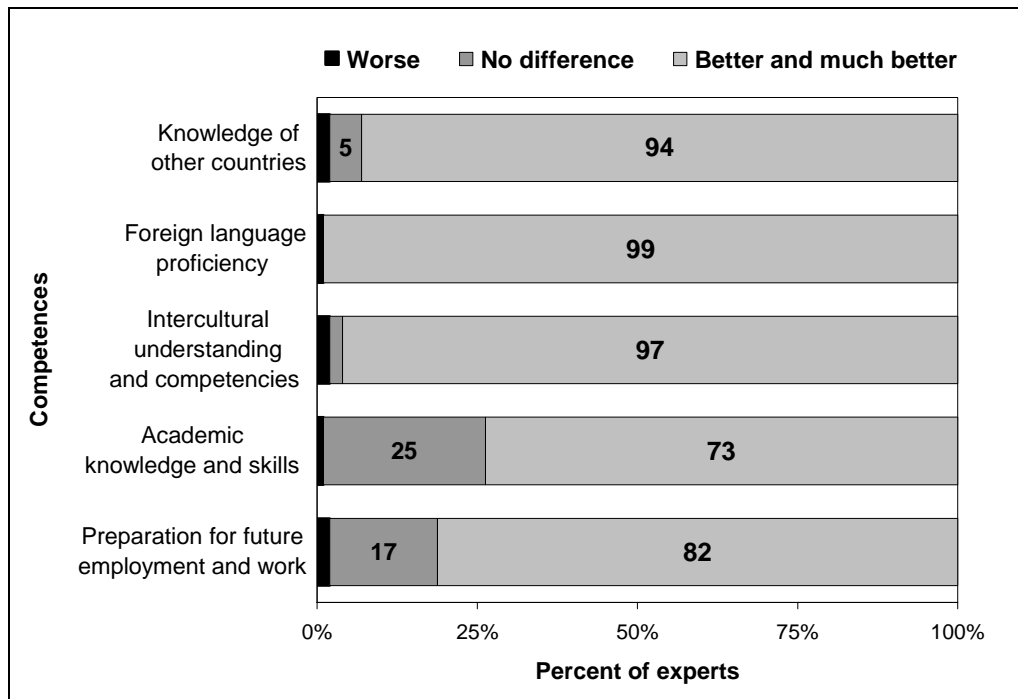
3.3 Competences of Mobile Students Upon Return

Almost all of the 67 surveyed experts rate the mobile students' competences upon return to the home institution of higher education as better or even much better than their non-mobile fellow students'. Of the 67 experts responding, between 73% and 99% each rated them superior in the five areas addressed:

- Foreign language proficiency (99%)
- Intercultural understanding and competences (97%)
- Knowledge of other countries (94%)
- Preparation for future employment and work (82%)
- Academic knowledge and skills (73%)

In contrast, only between one quarter and none rate the mobile students as on even terms with the non-mobile students, and hardly any expert rated the mobile students as worse.

Figure 1 Competences of ERASMUS Mobile Students Upon Return as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question A1: At the time of return, how do you rate mobile students as compared to non-mobile students in the following areas? (n=67); 5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better"
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

Mobile students are considered superior to non-mobile students almost consistently with regard to foreign language proficiency, intercultural understanding and knowledge of other countries, i.e. areas directly linked to international experience. It is worth noting that most experts also consider the general academic and professional competences of mobile students as better than those of their non-mobile fellow students. The expert ratings hardly differ by country of origin. Two exceptions are worth noting, as Table 3 shows. Foreign language proficiency was extremely highly assessed by experts from Eastern European countries. Experts from Northern Europe less frequently assessed mobile students as superior to non-mobile students with regard to general academic knowledge and skills.

In this expert survey, 38% of respondents rate the mobile students' knowledge of other countries as much better and 56% as somewhat better than those of non-mobile students. Only three of the respondents observe no difference in this respect and one person rates the knowledge as somewhat worse on the part of the mobile students.

In the comments provided to these rating, several experts point out that living and studying in another country and socialising with its citizens will enhance the knowledge about culture, society and economy of the host country and at the same time of other countries as well. However, some experts are more critical and point out that enhancement of the knowledge on other countries might vary according to areas of knowledge and might depend on specific circumstances, such as the length of the stay

or the personality of the mobile student and that those students not studying abroad might have similar opportunities of acquiring knowledge of other countries.

Overall, the surveyed experts rate the impact of an ERASMUS supported study period abroad on the knowledge on other countries as very positive and confirm hereby previous studies on ERASMUS. However, critical comments refer to the need of differentiation, as the learning process and its outcomes can not be generalised and as to a certain degree similar knowledge can be gained at the home university.

3.3.1 Foreign Language Proficiency

Almost half of the experts surveyed rate the foreign language proficiency of formerly mobile students upon return as much better (51%) and as somewhat better (48%) than that of their fellow non-mobile students. Only one expert observes no difference in this respect, and not a single expert rates the foreign language proficiency of mobile students as inferior. Experts point out that living in another country and using a foreign language every day contributes significantly to the improvement of foreign language proficiency beyond mere study.

It can be summarized that the experts assess the impact of an ERASMUS study period abroad as quite strong and confirm, hereby, the results of prior studies. As explanatory factors, they mainly mention the need to use the foreign language in the daily and academic life which has a much stronger impact on the language proficiency than just studying a language. Still, the critical aspects should not be neglected. It is important to distinguish between the gain in foreign language proficiency (mainly in a lingua franca) in general and the language of the host country.¹

3.3.2 Intercultural Understanding and Competences

Again, about half of the experts surveyed in this study rate the intercultural understanding and competences of formerly mobile students as much better (50%) or somewhat better (47%) than those of their non-mobile fellow students. Only one respondent notes no difference in this respect. One respondent even rates the cultural understanding of mobile students as substantially worse than that of non-mobile students. The experts see a positive impact of an ERASMUS supported stay abroad on the intercultural understanding and competences. They argue that living in another country, in another cultural system, getting along with people from different cultures raises the tolerance and intercultural understanding, which is not possible by staying in the home country. But equally important are the few comments which point out that there may also occur negative effects as e.g. confirming prejudices and intolerance which is known in the literature as cultural shock.² These negative side-effects show the necessity of a good preparation before and counselling during the stay.

¹ The results of the survey of the 1998/99 cohort shows that around 35% used some other language during their ERASMUS stay besides of the host and the home country language, in: Maiworm, F., Teichler, U., The Students' Experience, in: Teichler, U. (edit.), ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme - Findings of an Evaluation Study, ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education, Lemmens Verlags- & Mediengesellschaft mbH, Bonn 2002, p. 103.

² Müller, S., Die Psyche des Managers als Determinante des Exporterfolges, M&P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, Mannheim, 1991, p.48.

3.3.3 Academic Knowledge and Skills

In contrast to the three areas of international competences addressed, a superiority of mobile students to non-mobile students in general academic and professional competences is not so obvious. Therefore, it is worth noting that 16% of the experts surveyed in this study rate the academic knowledge and skills of formerly mobile students after their return as much better and 57% as somewhat better than those of their non-mobile fellow students. Only one quarter of the respondents rate the academic knowledge and skills of formerly mobile students as equal to those of non-mobile students and only one of them rates them as somewhat worse.

Comments of the experts surveyed on the professional competences are more diverse than comments on other areas of competences. Some experts notably perceive a growth of “soft skills”, such as problem-solving ability, openness and flexibility. Some experts point out explicitly that professional competences reinforced by a temporary study period in another European country are appreciated by employers. Additionally, formerly mobile students are seen as better prepared for job search due to a greater maturity.

Most experts see a positive impact of the ERASMUS study period abroad and, hereby, confirm the results of previous studies. Still, the comments in the open part of the question show that different arguments lie behind this assessment. One group of comments refer to the external effect of a study period abroad on the employer. Other comments take a different perspective and emphasize the impact on the students’ personality which leads to an advantage in the job search. Therewith, the experts agree with the results of earlier student surveys, in which students rated their study abroad experience as worthwhile for career prospects. Still, 17% of the experts do not see a difference. Unfortunately, no open comments give further explanations for these assessments. Suggestions for improvement of the impact on future employment and work refer to the planned merger of the LEONARDO and ERASMUS programme which foster the practical and working experiences abroad.

3.3.4 Areas in which ERASMUS Students lag behind in comparison to non-mobile students

The surveyed experts were explicitly asked whether they consider the formerly mobile students as inferior upon return in some respects to the non-mobile students. Almost all respondents do not rate the mobile students as inferior with respect to any area of competences addressed. Many of them deny the question emphatically.

However, some experts address the fact that some mobile students face problems of recognition and credit transfer and a substantial number of them prolong their overall period of study as a consequence of temporary study abroad even if it is also argued that this is more than compensated by the positive experience during the ERASMUS stay. Recognition problems are one of the main topics in each ERASMUS evaluation. The student and employer questionnaire will further deepen this problem by asking in detail if there was a prolongation because of recognition problems and the duration of that prolongation.

3.3.5 Factors Affecting the Immediate Impact of an ERASMUS Period Abroad

Most experts respond affirmatively to the question addressing factors possibly explaining differential impact of the temporary study period of another country. Some respondents perceive students' individual characteristics as crucial, for example motivation, openness, outgoing personality, etc. Overall, the answers mainly repeat the categories *individual characteristics*, *field of study* and *institution of higher education* given as example in the question. All answers confirm that these categories have to be considered in a differentiated view. Only a few answers state further factors which have an influence on the success of a study period abroad as for example the possibilities of making contacts in the accommodation.

3.4 Impact of ERASMUS Student Mobility on Competences Upon Graduation

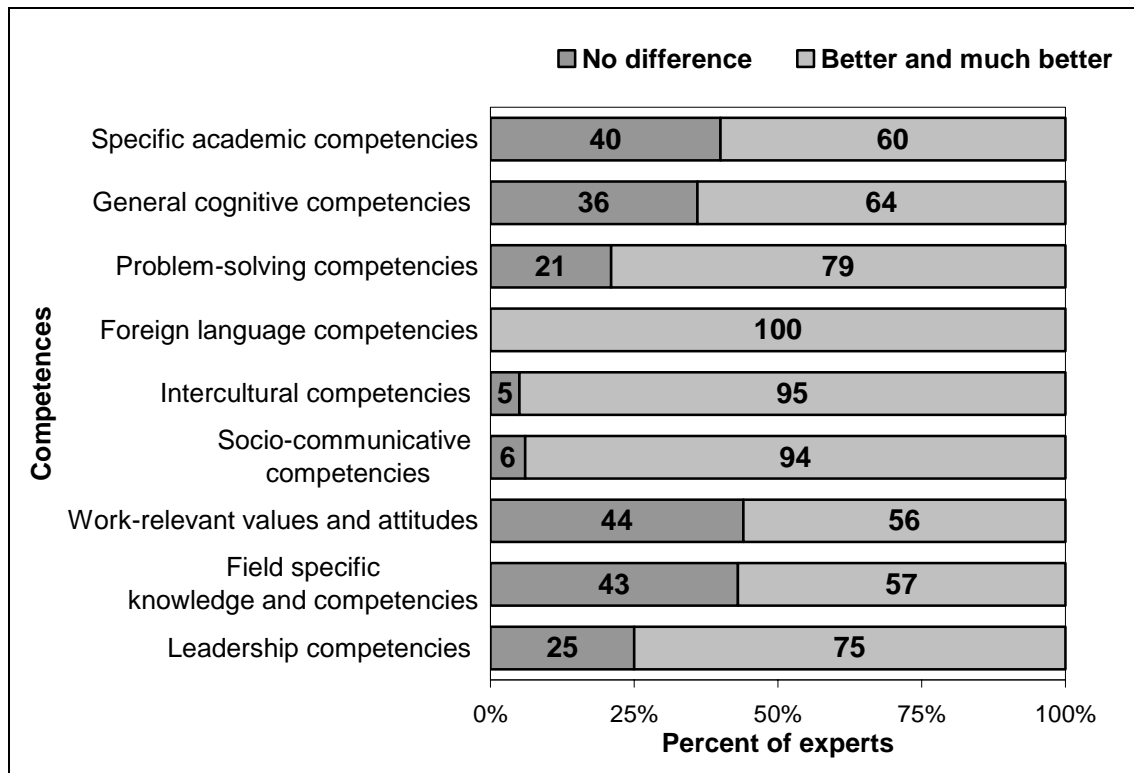
Temporary study in another European country is expected to be valuable for former ERASMUS students' career, because formerly mobile students are considered to be superior to non-mobile students with respect to various professionally relevant competences not only immediately after the study period abroad, but also upon graduation (as well as subsequently in the course of employment and work).

Almost all experts surveyed are convinced that former ERASMUS students as a rule are better than non-mobile students as far as "international competences", such as knowledge of other countries, foreign language proficiency and understanding of cultures and societies are concerned. Moreover, the majority of experts believe that formerly mobile students are at least somewhat superior as well upon return from the study period abroad with respect to other academically and professionally relevant competences.

The experts were asked to rate the formerly mobile students' competences upon graduation – again in comparison to non-mobile students. Responses to this question allow us to analyse whether experts consider the mobile students' superior competences upon return from the study period abroad as short-lived or persistent.

Figure 2 shows that almost all experts rate the formerly mobile students' competences as superior against students which were not mobile during their study at time of graduation. The "international competences" foreign language proficiency and intercultural competences are conceived as much better by a majority of the experts. The most striking finding with respect to the perceived competences upon graduation is the fact that almost all experts as well consider the formerly mobile students superior to non-mobile students with respect to socio-communicative competences.

Figure 2 **Competences of Former ERASMUS Mobile Students Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)**



Question B1: How do you rate the competences of former ERASMUS students at the time of graduation as compared to non-mobile students? (n=63)

5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" through 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

The ratings of the competences upon graduation by the respondents are fairly similar to the ratings with respect to time of return after the study period abroad. First, study abroad seems to have a strong effect in fostering "international competences". More or less all experts believe that most mobile students benefit in those respects and that this is visible in higher respective competences upon graduation. Second, most experts believe as well that students having studied for some period in another European country turn out to be somewhat better than non-mobile students with regard to all other major academically and professionally relevant areas of competences. This difference visible upon return from the study period abroad does not disappear up to the time of graduation. On the contrary, the superiority of formerly mobile students seems to increase with respect to one area, i.e. socio-communicative competences. Though the experts were not explicitly asked to rate the extent to which differences already existed prior to the study period abroad, the comments provided by the respondents suggest that the differences can be viewed primarily as an indication of an impact of the study period abroad.

As with respect to the competences upon return to the home institutions, experts from Northern European countries again rate the formerly mobile students' competences upon graduation somewhat more cautiously than experts from other European regions, as Table 1 shows. Previous evaluation studies suggest that the impact of study abroad is

viewed as less positive, if the academic quality of the host university is rated as lower than that of the home university. As the Northern universities are viewed on average as academically more demanding than the European average both by Northern students and teachers as well as by students and teachers from other regions, this seemingly regional difference might reflect primarily quality differences between home and host university.

Table 4 **Competences of Former ERASMUS Students Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts by Country of Expert (arithmetic mean)**

	Country Group						Total
	North	Middle	South	East	Supra	No answer	
(1) Specific academic competences	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.5	4.0	3.6
(2) General cognitive competences (e.g. analytical thinking, reflective thinking etc.)	3.4	3.5	3.9	3.7	3.8	4.0	3.7
(3) Problem-solving competences	3.4	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.1
(4) Foreign language proficiency	4.7	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.5	5.0	4.6
(5) Intercultural competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture, society and mo	4.2	4.4	4.9	4.5	4.3	5.0	4.5
(6) Socio-communicative competences	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.3
(7) Work-relevant values and attitudes (e.g. motivation, working ethic etc.)	3.3	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.5	4.0	3.8
(8) Field specific knowledge and competences	3.4	3.2	3.7	4.0	3.3	3.0	3.6
(9) Leadership competences (e.g. ability to take initiative; taking responsibilities, etc.)	3.7	3.9	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.0	4.0
Count (n)	(9)	(14)	(16)	(19)	(4)	(1)	(63)

Question B1: How do you rate the competences of former ERASMUS students at the time of graduation as compared to non-mobile students?

Arithmetic mean of a 5 point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

3.5 Impact of ERASMUS Student Mobility: Transition to Work

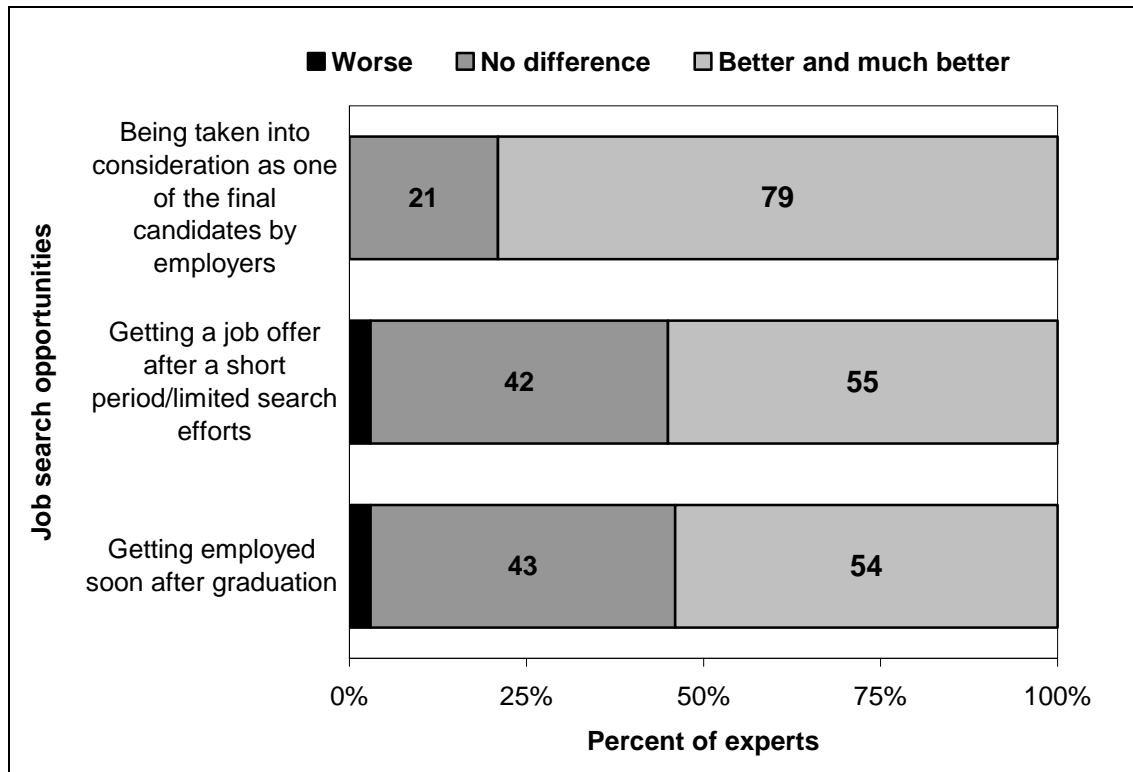
The impact of ERASMUS student mobility on the transition to work covers two different aspects: Job search and characteristics of the first job. Both aspects will be analysed separately.

Job search

Many experts surveyed are convinced that former ERASMUS students are in a better position in the search for a job than graduates who had not been internationally mobile in their course of study. Notably, most of them believe that former ERASMUS students have a better opportunity of being taken into consideration as one of the final candidates on the part of the employers, as Figure 3 shows. A slight majority of experts as well believes that former ERASMUS students, as compared to formerly non-mobile

students, have a better chance to get a job offer after a short period or with limited search efforts and to get employed soon after graduation.

Figure 3 Job Search of Former ERASMUS Students as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question C1: In your opinion, how do you rate the opportunities of former ERASMUS students regarding the following areas of transition to work as compared to their non-mobile fellow students? (n=63); 5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" through 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

The ratings by experts are surprisingly similar to those expressed by former ERASMUS students in prior evaluation studies. Both findings suggest that study abroad makes the CV more interesting and substantially increases the opportunity to be considered in the recruitment process. Study abroad finally seems to increase the opportunity for graduates to a certain extent of eventually securing a job.

Experts from Middle European countries consider the former mobile students' opportunity most favourably to be taken into consideration as one of the final candidates by employers. Yet, as Table 2 shows, they do not differ significantly from experts from other European regions in their assessment of the actual opportunities of getting employed soon and without substantial efforts in the search process.

Table 5 Job Search of Former ERASMUS Students as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts by Country of Expert (percent)

	Country Group					No answer	Total
	North	Middle	South	East	Supra		
<i>(1) Being taken into consideration as one of the final candidates by employers</i>							
No difference	22	7	27	32	0	0	21
Better	78	93	73	68	100	100	79
<i>(2) Getting a job offer after a short period/limited search efforts</i>							
Worse	0	0	0	11	0	0	3
No difference	44	62	44	32	25	0	42
Better	56	38	56	58	75	100	55
<i>(3) Getting employed soon after graduation</i>							
Worse	0	0	0	11	0	0	3
No difference	33	50	53	39	25	0	43
Better	67	50	47	50	75	100	54
Count (n)	(9)	(14)	(16)	(19)	(4)	(1)	(63)

Question C1: In your opinion, how do you rate the opportunities of former ERASMUS students regarding the following areas of transition to work as compared to their non-mobile fellow students?

5 point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better"

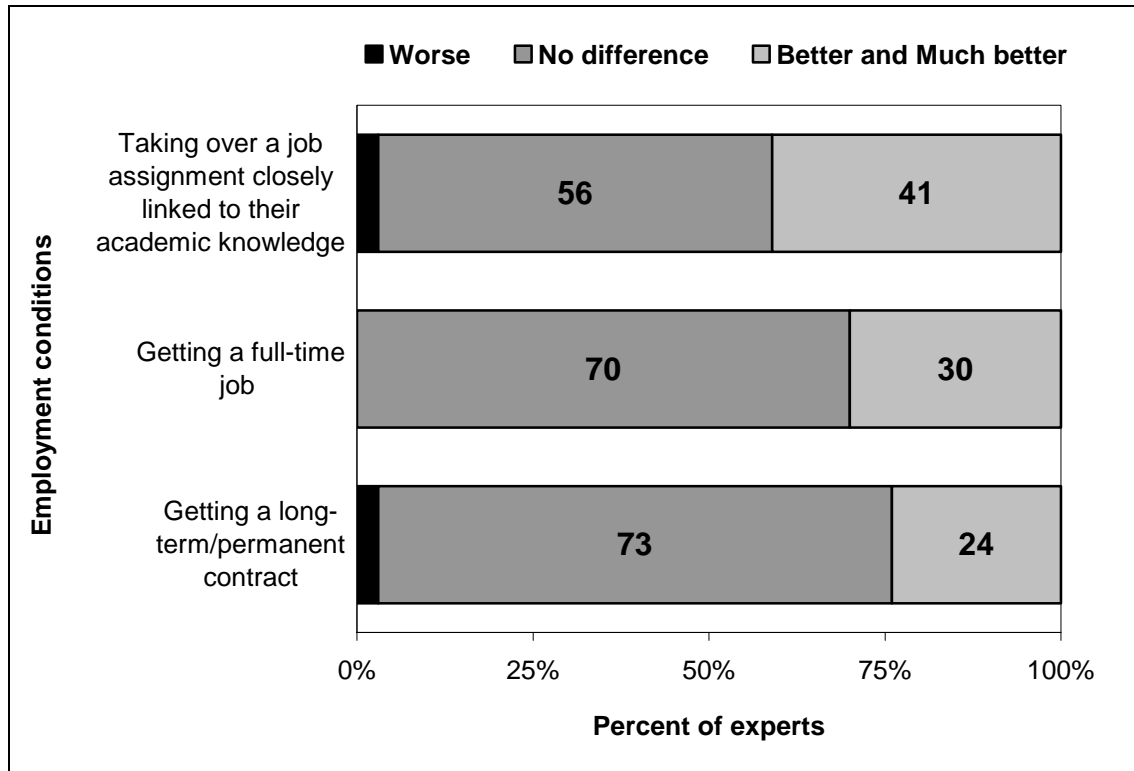
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

Job characteristics

Only a minority of the surveyed experts in this study perceives the first job characteristics of formerly mobile students as more favourable than that of graduates not having studied abroad for some period. Actually, as Figure 4 shows, an advantage of former ERASMUS students in getting a full-time job was noted by 30% of the respondents (among them 8% much better), and in getting a long-term/permanent contract by 24% of the respondents (among them 8% much better as well). Most experts rated the opportunities of initial employment of former ERASMUS students as being more or less the same as those of formerly non-mobile students.

The ratings by the experts surveyed can be viewed, notwithstanding, as relatively positive, as former graduate surveys suggest that formerly mobile students have hardly any advantage over formerly non-mobile students as far as the general employment conditions are concerned.

Figure 4 Initial Employment of Former ERASMUS Students as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question C1: In your opinion, how do you rate the opportunities of former ERASMUS students regarding the following areas of transition to work as compared to their non-mobile fellow students? (n=63); 5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" through 3 = "no difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

A somewhat higher proportion of experts (41%) are convinced that formerly mobile students have a favourable opportunity of taking over work assignments closely linked to their expertise. This, again, confirms the findings of prior evaluation studies according to which ERASMUS temporary student mobility is quite successful in assuring access to work assignments linked to one's knowledge and otherwise desirable assignments.

3.5.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Former ERASMUS Students in Transition to Employment and Work

The assessments of the experts surveyed on advantages and disadvantages of former ERASMUS students in the transition process to the labour market are overall positive. The open comments elaborate the reasons for this assessment. An ERASMUS supported study period is seen as having an impact on the attractiveness of students in the application process, because of indirect effects on their personality and soft skills or because of the general attractiveness of mobility and international experience for employers. Only a few critical comments remind the generality of these assumptions, stating that the attractiveness of an ERASMUS stay depends on the kind of job and organisation.

With regard to possible disadvantages, the respondents do not see major problems for former ERASMUS student in their transition to work process. At the same time, some comments imply that the ERASMUS programme does not have the attractiveness which some students expect from it. Possible reasons may be the non-elite character of ERASMUS (no brand name) as well as the growing demand of international experience as a prerequisite for the application process in some areas. Still, the non-elite character and the lacking knowledge of employers about the programme are the only two arguments for a disadvantage of former ERASMUS student in their search process. In particular, the non-elite character has to be interpreted in comparison to application processes of other mobility programmes as earlier studies have already shown that more than 80% of the ERASMUS students were selected by some kind of criteria.³

3.5.2 Fields of Study with Major Advantages and Disadvantages

In response to a question whether certain fields of study stand out regarding former ERASMUS students' advantages and disadvantages on their way from higher education to employment, Business Management and Social Sciences were most frequently named as fields where a study period abroad is advantageous for the transition to employment and work. This was stated by 38 respondents. Human Sciences and Languages follow on the second place (30 votes) and Communication and Information Sciences (13) on third place, followed by the Mathematics and IT (9) as well as Engineering, Technology and Architecture (9). Other fields of study named were Education (7), Art (5), Natural Sciences (4), Agriculture (4), Law (4) and Geography and Geology (2) as well as Medicine (1) among the groups of fields of study named in the questionnaire. Additionally, "European Studies" (1), Economics (1) and "Health Professions in general" (1) were named as groups of fields of study which were not stated in the questionnaire.

Consistently, most explanations for advantages of former ERASMUS students were given in the area of Business Management. In discussing the professional value of temporary study abroad during the course of study in Business Management, most experts refer to the labour market situation and the job requirement. In contrast, experts pointing out the advantage of mobility during course of study in Languages and Human Sciences primarily refer to the nature of the subject calling for a study period abroad. Many responses refer to the professional relevance of foreign language proficiency.

In response to the question whether the respondents note any disadvantages of former ERASMUS students' on the labour market, substantially fewer references (35 as compared to 128 references about advantages) were made. Disadvantages were named several times as regards law. Any other fields were named at most three times: Medicine (3), Architecture, Technology and Engineering (3), Geography and Geology (3), Agricultural Science (2), Human Sciences and Languages (2), Other Sciences (2),

³ 88% of the ERASMUS students were selected by criteria as linguistic skills, motivation, general knowledge, knowledge of the chosen country etc., in: Rosselle, D., Lentiez, A., The ERASMUS programmeme 1987 - 1995 - A qualitative review looking to the future (Vol. 1 summary), Lille-North Pas de Calais European Academic Network, France 1999, p. 64.

Education (3), History (1), Art and Design (1), Mathematics & IUT (1), Social Science (2), Natural Sciences (1).

Overall, the outstanding position of Business Management and Social Sciences as well as the importance of a study abroad period for Languages is not surprising and was well known before. In regard to disciplines with a possible disadvantage, fewer respondents have answered this part of the questions. If they did, most referred to subject areas with strictly structured national examinations and orientation such as Law, Medicine and Education. Interesting are the two German comments which indirectly argue that students are mobile to improve their professional value and that, hence, the motivation to be mobile decreases when the Labour market situation changes.

3.5.3 Further Factors

The experts were asked for further relevant factors possibly explaining differences of the professional value of temporary student mobility as far as the transition from study to employment and the initial employment situation are concerned.

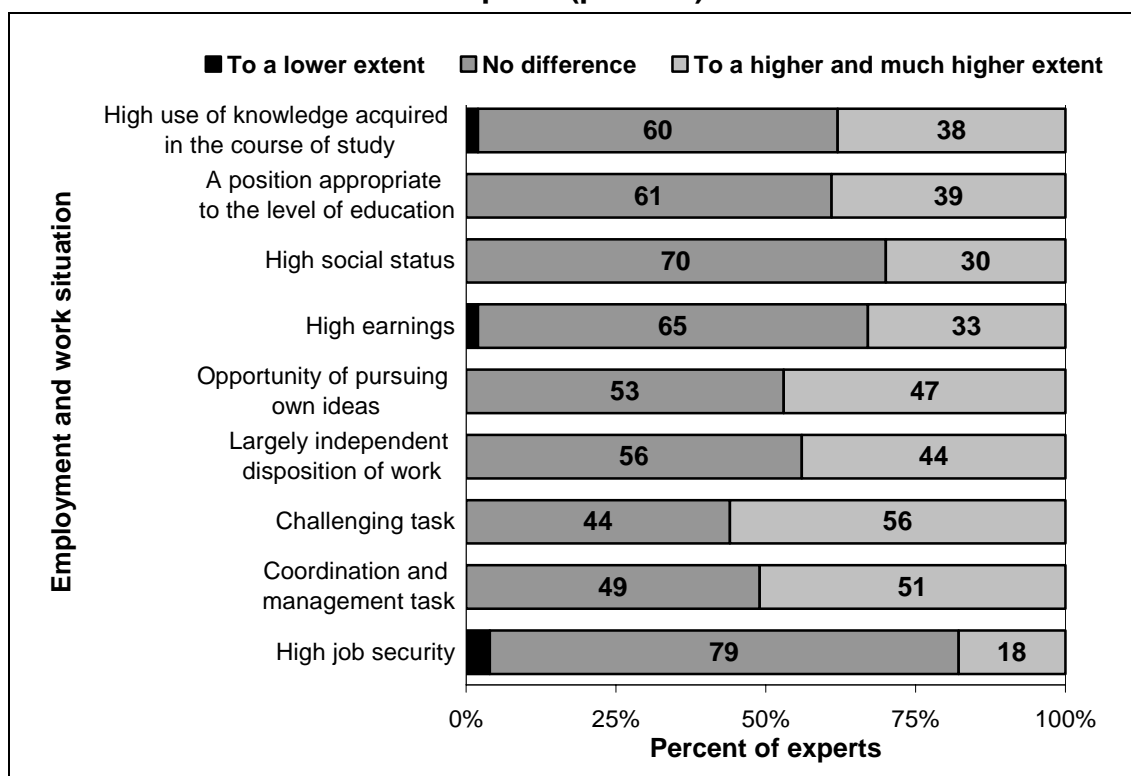
A substantial number of respondents referred to individual characteristics and personality of the students as one of the key factors. Other responses addressed contextual factors in the life of ERASMUS students and the external environment. Some experts explicitly raise the “egg-hen” question about the extent to which characteristics of former ERASMUS students are the result of the ERASMUS experience and the extent to which they are due to the fact that students of those characteristics opt for an ERASMUS-supported study period abroad.

The experts distinguish three main groups of factors having an influence on the transition process of students: Personality and individual characteristics (e.g. motivation) and study performance. Points of discussion are the effect of ERASMUS on the students' personality and the degree of influence on higher education institution reputation. Overall, the answers mainly focus on general influencing factors (besides the ERASMUS stay) which are valid for non-mobile students as well.

3.6 Career Impact of ERASMUS Student Mobility

In this study, the experts also were asked to rate the employment and work situation of former ERASMUS students some years after graduation in comparison to formerly non-mobile students. In contrast to the previous questions, this question refers to the regular employment and work situation, i.e. clearly after the initial stages without specifying the actual career stage to be taken into consideration (“a couple of years after graduation”).

Figure 5 Employment and Work Situation of Former ERASMUS Students as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question C7: To what extent do the following characteristics of employment and work apply to former ERASMUS students as compared to their non-mobile fellow students a couple of years after graduation? (n=58) - 5-point scale from 1 = "To a much lower extent" through 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "To a much higher extent"
 Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

As could be expected both on the basis of prior studies and on the basis of the experts' responses to issues of job search, transition and initial employment, the status and the employment conditions of former ERASMUS students are rated as advantageous only by a minority. The majority of respondents does not perceive any difference in this respect, while only one or two respondents each perceive a below-average status and employment situation of former ERASMUS students.

The responses provided by the experts surveyed, however, suggest that the career impact of ERASMUS study abroad is more impressive and might be also more impressive in some aspects than various prior studies have indicated. With regard to the content of work, i.e. according to dimensions which are usually viewed as a desirable job, a substantial proportion perceives the formerly ERASMUS mobile students to be in a (most somewhat) better situation than formerly non-mobile students.

The perceptions vary by regions, as Table 3 shows. Experts from Eastern and from Southern European countries more frequently conceive the careers of former ERASMUS students as advantageous than experts from Northern and Middle European countries. Compared to this, the experts' views vary only moderately according to their institutional base.

Table 6 **Characteristics of Employment and Work of Former ERASMUS Students as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts by Country of Expert (arithmetic mean)**

	Country Group						Total
	North	Middle	South	East	Supra	No answer	
(1) High use of knowledge acquired in the course of study	3.1	3.1	3.5	3.7	3.3	4.0	3.4
(2) A position appropriate to the level of education	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.5
(3) High social status	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.3
(4) High earnings	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.4
(5) Opportunity of pursuing own ideas	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.3	4.0	3.5
(6) Largely independent disposition of work	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.0	3.5
(7) Challenging tasks	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.5	4.0	3.6
(8) Coordination and management tasks	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.6
(9) High job security	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.1
Count (n)	(9)	(12)	(15)	(17)	(4)	(1)	(58)

Question C7: To what extent do the following characteristics of employment and work apply to former ERASMUS students as compared to their non-mobile fellow students a couple of years after graduation?

Arithmetic mean of a 5-point scale from 1 = "To a much lower extent" over 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "To a much higher extent"

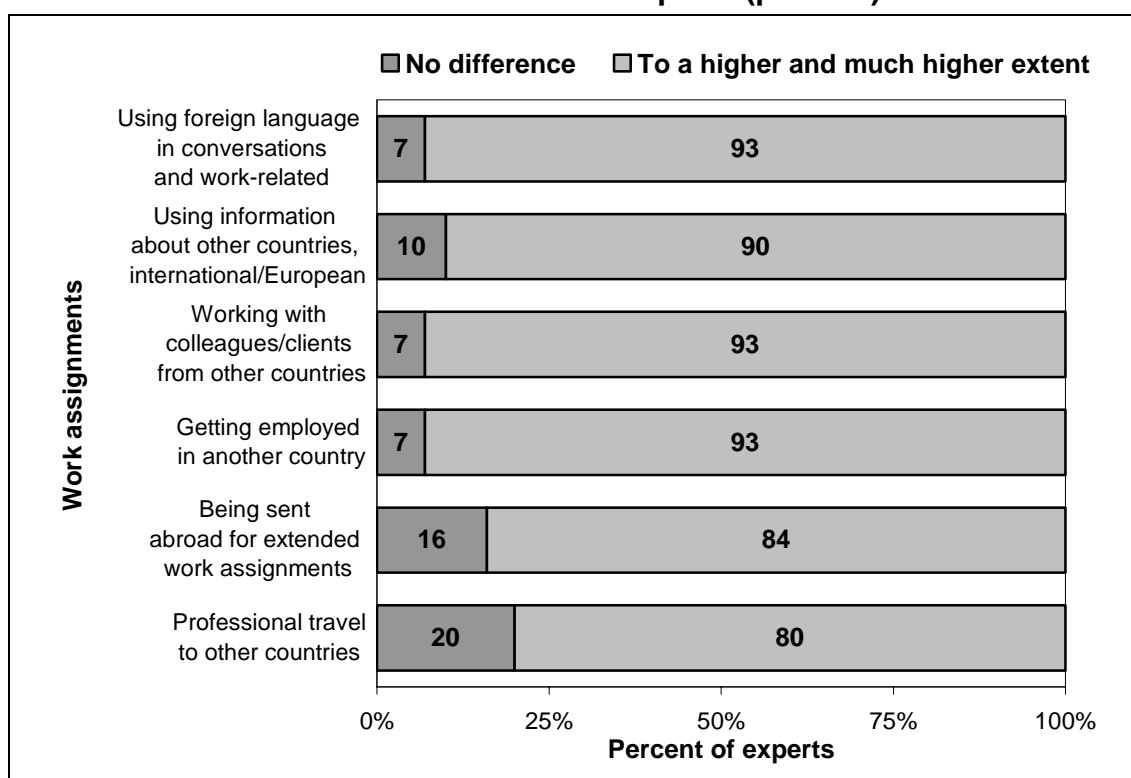
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

Overall, one can observe that the respondents assess the differences between formerly mobile and non-mobile students regarding the core job conditions of status, income and job security as lower than the more task oriented characteristics. Here at least one third of the respondents would assess that these characteristics apply to a higher extent to formerly mobile students. The interpretation of this differentiation could be that respondents are more willing to see positive differences for ERASMUS students in the areas which are more difficult to measure whereas they are more cautious in the "hard-facts" areas of income, job security and status. Interestingly, the job characteristics "opportunity of pursuing own ideas" and "challenging task" are assessed by around 50% of the experts as applying to a higher extent to formerly mobile students.

3.6.1 International and European Careers and Assignments

Almost all surveyed experts are convinced that former ERASMUS students are more likely to be internationally mobile in the course of their career. Moreover, almost all respondents believe that former ERASMUS students are more likely to take over work assignments with visible international components – irrespective whether they are internationally mobile or not. This holds true for all international components of work assignments addressed in the questionnaire:

Figure 6 International and European Work Assignments of Former ERASMUS Students as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question C5: To what extent do former ERASMUS students take over the following European/International aspects in their work assignments as compared to their non-mobile fellow students? 5-point scale from 1 = "To a much lower extent" through 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "To a much higher extent"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

Experts vary somewhat in their assessment of former ERASMUS students' careers according to their region of origin. The differences, however, are too small to be viewed as highly relevant. As regards the function of experts we note that the few labour market experts underscore the former ERASMUS students' advantage in taking over international assignments even more strongly than the other experts surveyed.

When asked to explain their ratings, again a small number of experts added extended comments. Some respondents concentrate on describing the international competences of former ERASMUS students which are valuable in an international organisation.

Other experts point out the frequent international professional mobility of former ERASMUS students and, hence, the higher chance of former ERASMUS students to be sent abroad by their employers. Also, the experts assess that the chances for employment in another country increase. A few experts, however, caution the view that former ERASMUS students are eager primarily to take over international assignments. They argue that ERASMUS students are not looking primarily for the most international job but for that one which is appropriate to their study.

The experts assess the impact of an ERASMUS supported study period abroad as having a very positive impact on the degree of international job characteristics of former ERASMUS students which is in concurrence with earlier studies. Similar to these

studies, the characteristic "getting employed in another country" was assessed, in particular, as applying to a very high extent to formerly mobile students.

3.7 Suggestions for Improvement (Student Mobility)

3.7.1 Suggestions for Improvement regarding the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme as a whole

More than half of the surveyed experts suggested improvements of the overall ERASMUS sub-programme of SOCRATES in order to strengthen the professional value of temporary study in other European countries. Two suggestions were most frequently made:

- Better promotion, information and dissemination of the ERASMUS programme
- More mobility funds and support of a larger number of students.
- For giving a better overview, the suggestions made by the experts are structured under the following headings: Suggestions regarding the:
 - Promotion and Marketing of the ERASMUS programme
 - Cooperation with the Labour market/Employers
 - Administration and communication
 - Recognition of study period abroad

Promotion and marketing: Some respondents believe that the ERASMUS programme needs a better and stronger marketing campaign. One expert called for "*establishing ERASMUS as a quality brand name!*" Various respondents demand better information about ERASMUS to the universities but also and in particular to employment agencies and employers as well as ministries and policy makers to make the people aware of the importance and significance of the ERASMUS programme.

Funding: More funds are advocated for various purposes: to increase the participation of students, to increase the funds per mobile students, to provide the opportunity to study abroad twice, to support socially disadvantaged students and to support various activities, such as language preparation.

Employment system: Some experts point out that information about the benefits of ERASMUS can be spread more successfully, if co-operation with employers was improved. More information campaigns and meetings should be held. This could also comprise cooperation in the programme evaluation and programme development.

Internship/practical experiences: Some respondents suggest extending students' opportunities of spending short practical periods abroad. Some of them refer to the LEONARDO programme and suggest installing closer links between both.

Administration and communication: Several respondents see the need to make the ERASMUS administration less bureaucratic and more flexible and transparent. Some demand improved communication and a stronger customer orientation.

Recognition: Some respondents point out recognition is not yet self-evident and needs further improvement e.g. introducing the Diploma Supplement.

3.7.2 Suggestions for Improvements at Institutional Level regarding Incoming Students

More than two-third of respondents suggested to improve activities within the institutions themselves to take care of the incoming students in a better way. Some referred primarily to the purpose of such activities without further specification, notably:

- Better integration of the incoming students - in the classroom by teamwork and also in the leisure time
- Better services (language courses, dormitories etc.) to the incoming students
- Make teachers aware of the added value of ERASMUS students

Other experts suggested specific measures of improvement, among them:

- More foreign language and cultural courses
- More and cheaper dormitories
- Free internet access
- Better information packages about the host university and the host country
- Improvement of guidance
- Improvement of tutoring systems (e.g. former ERASMUS students as tutors)
- Family programmes with local families
- Earlier information about courses
- More courses and study programmes in foreign languages

Various experts suggest that efforts should be strengthened to improve the integration of mobile students into the academic and social life at the host institution and in the host country – a point strongly emphasized as well in an earlier qualitative study questioning former ERASMUS students⁴. Suggestions refer to mentoring system, Welcome Events, more student accommodations and language courses. Up to now, the quality of student support services is quite different in each country and at each higher education institution.

3.7.3 Suggestions for Improvements at Institutional Level regarding Outgoing Students

About two-thirds of the experts surveyed as well suggest improvements with respect to outgoing students in order to increase the professional value of temporary study abroad.

⁴ Rosselle, Dominique and Lentiez, Anne, The ERASMUS programme 1987 - 1995 - A qualitative review looking to the future (Vol. 1 summary), p. 46f.

Though the proposals are quite diverse, four directions of change seem to be viewed as most desirable:

- Ensure a good preparation before departure
- Support, guidance, and counselling to maximize the ERASMUS experience
- More flexible and less bureaucratic procedures
- Ensuring re-integration of the ERASMUS students after return

Some specific suggestions were made to enhance support for outgoing students:

- Better language and cultural preparation
- Better information packages about the host university and better information by the international office
- Ensure recognition, e.g. by most frequent use of Study Agreements and by making teachers more aware of the importance of academic recognition
- Home higher education institution should keep contact with the outgoing student during their study period abroad

Finally, some experts argue that improved evaluation and quality management processes also from the side of the home institution could contribute to the professional value of temporary study in another European country.

Overall, the experts suggested a broad range of measures to improve ERASMUS students' mobility in various respects. In most cases, no immediate link to the professional value of study abroad was addressed, but the arguments seemed to be based on the assumption that most general improvements of the ERASMUS sub-programme of SOCRATES are likely to strengthen its professional value for mobile students. Only a selected number of experts made suggestions thereby explicitly stating the link between the improvement proposed and the expected enhancement of the professional value of student mobility.

3.8 Good Practices (Student Mobility)

Finally, the experts surveyed were asked to name cases of good practice in the higher education institutions in their country aiming to enhance the professional value of an ERASMUS-supported period abroad. Only a minority of respondents provided information in this section of the questionnaire.

Some respondents named general activity of quality enhancement in student exchange. Others referred to targeted action of reinforcing professional competences or placing graduates.

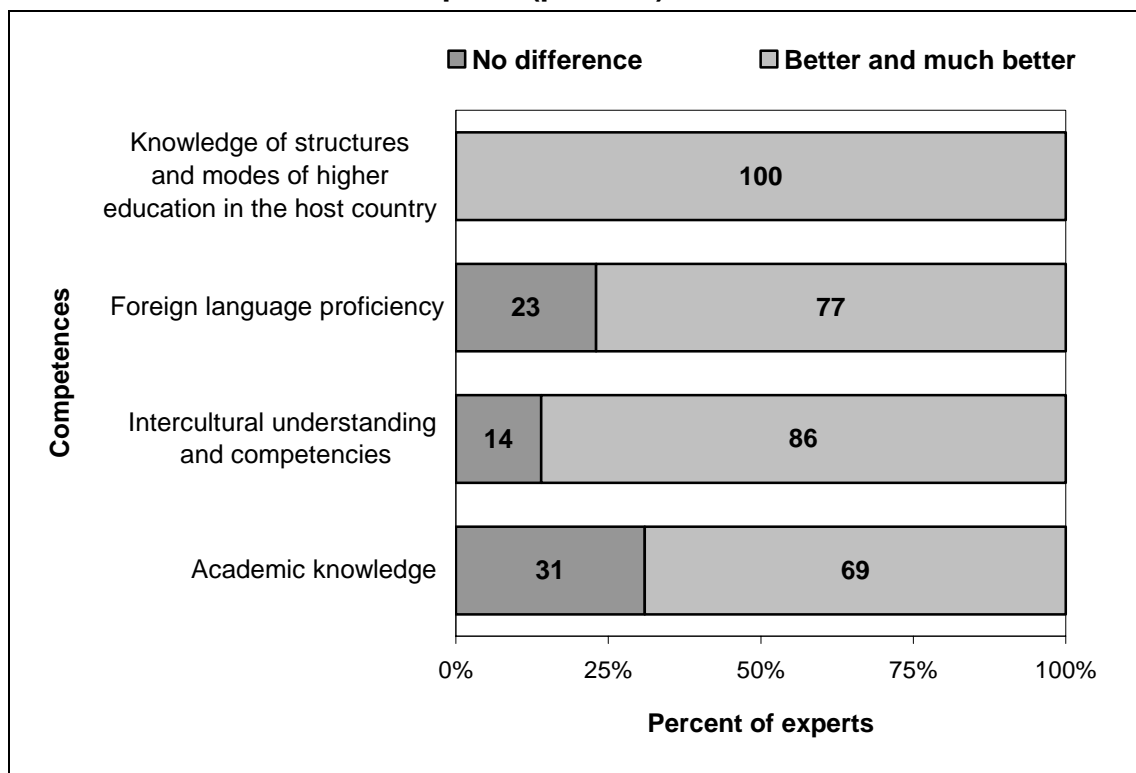
Again, some respondents referred to general improvements of the ERASMUS sub-programme. Hardly any example was provided which addresses directly the professional value of ERASMUS mobility.

3.9 Direct Impact of ERASMUS Mobility on the Mobile Teachers

Most of the experts surveyed consider mobile teachers upon return to their home institution as more competent than their non-mobile colleagues in all the four areas addressed in the survey. Accordingly, as Figure 7 shows,

- knowledge of structures and modes of higher education in the host country is viewed as better by all experts (among them 50% much better),
- intercultural understanding and competences by 86% of the experts (among them 22% much better)
- foreign language proficiency by 77% (among them 27% much better)
- academic knowledge by 69% (among them 33% much better).

Figure 7 Competences of Former ERASMUS Teachers Upon Return as Compared to Non-Mobile Teachers in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question A1 (teacher): At the time of return, how do you rate mobile teachers as compared to non-mobile teachers in the following areas?

5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" through 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

The results are not surprising, as far as the three aspects of “international competences” are concerned. Here, the experts note somewhat higher competences on the part of the teachers, while they often rated the mobile students’ competences much higher than those of the non-mobile students. This certainly reflects the facts that many mobile teachers were already internationally experienced and competent and that short periods

of teaching abroad of mostly one or two weeks are less likely to have profound effects than the study period abroad of half a year or one year.

As compared to prior surveys of mobile teachers, this expert survey shows a surprisingly high confidence on the part of the experts surveyed that mobile teachers are better than non-mobile teachers with regard to their general academic knowledge. 69% consider the mobile teachers to be superior in this respect which is certainly not generally viewed a prime aim or a prime spin-off of teaching abroad, i.e. almost as many as those noting a higher level of foreign language proficiency.

3.9.1 Knowledge of structures and modes of higher education in the host country

The surveyed experts rate the impact of the teaching period abroad as very positive on the knowledge of structures and modes of higher education in the host country: 100% of the valid answers agree that the knowledge is better or much better than those of non-mobile teachers.

Asked to explain their rating various experts point out that mobile teachers tend not only to absorb knowledge of the host country, which they acquire through contacts with the staff of the host institution and their own daily experiences. Rather, many of them seem to use it for comparative observation and reflection after returning to the home institution. This comparison is likely to initiate changes.

The experts assess the impact of an ERASMUS supported teaching period as positive on the teachers' knowledge of structures and modes of higher education in the host country and agree, hereby, with results of previous ERASMUS teacher surveys. Despite the high consent about this fact in the standardised part of the question (100%) the open comments express several critical aspects. These critics argue that the impact depends on the preparation before the teaching stay and the overall length of the stay. Furthermore, it is argued that the knowledge is limited to the situation at the host institution. Even so these critics cannot be totally neglected, the overall agreement about the positive impact of the teaching stay displays that all experts think that at least some kind of knowledge gain happens.

3.9.2 Foreign language proficiency

Teaching abroad can contribute so obviously to the teachers' foreign language proficiency that most experts did not see any need to explain such a notion. Table 4 shows that some of those experts, however, who raised doubt about such a result of teaching abroad (23%), were inclined to explain their critical view in the open comments. These explanations mainly refer to the short period of the stay, a selection or self-selection process as only teachers with a good command of foreign language go abroad for teaching purposes.

Table 7 Foreign Language Proficiency of Former ERASMUS Teachers as Compared to Non-Mobile Teachers in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent and number)

	Percent	Count (n)
<i>Foreign language proficiency</i>		
No difference	23	(11)
Better	50	(24)
Much better	27	(13)
Total	100	(48)

Question A1: At the time of return, how do you rate mobile teachers as compared to non-mobile teachers in the following areas?

5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Out of the 49 valid answers in table 13 only 48 were valid for this sub-question.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

The majority of experts agree that the ERASMUS teaching period has a positive impact on the foreign language proficiency and are, hereby, in agreement with the results of earlier teacher surveys. The general formulation of the question does not specify if this foreign language needs to be the language spoken in the host country, hence, the gain in foreign language proficiency can be in the host country language but will be mostly in one of the lingua franca. Earlier studies have showed that most teaching is conducted in English, French or German. Teachers are not in the same degree as students expected to learn the language of the host country. Furthermore, there is a selection process. The results of earlier studies show that teachers with language competences are more likely to teach abroad⁵.

3.9.3 Intercultural understanding and competences

The majority of experts assess the impact of an ERASMUS supported teaching period abroad as having a positive impact on the intercultural understanding and competences. They argue that such learning occurs due to the direct contact with foreign students and teacher colleagues. The teacher gets more tolerant and broadminded through his work abroad and his/her experiences of the daily life in a foreign country. Critical aspects are as described the shortness of the stay and the difficulty to separate the effects of the stay from the effects of the selection processes during the application process of the ERASMUS programme. The shortness of the stay is a reasonable criticism as earlier surveys show that the average duration of the teaching stay was slightly over 8 days.⁶

⁵ Maiworm, F., Teichler, U., The Academics' Views and Experiences, in: Teichler, U. (edit.), ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme - Findings of an Evaluation Study, ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education, Lemmens Verlags- & Mediengesellschaft mbH, Bonn 2002, p. 148.

⁶ Results for the 1995/96, 1996/97; 1997/98, 1998/99, in: Maiworm, F., Teichler, U., The Academics' Views and Experiences, in: Teichler, U. (edit.), ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme - Findings of an Evaluation Study, ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education, Lemmens Verlags- & Mediengesellschaft mbH, Bonn 2002, p. 146. .

3.9.4 Academic knowledge

As already pointed out, the proportion of experts not expecting any visible gain of general academic knowledge as a result of teaching abroad is somewhat larger than those not expecting a growth of “international competences“. They argue that the enhancement of academic knowledge is rather limited due to the shortness of the stay.

Table 8 Academic Knowledge of Former ERASMUS Teachers as Compared to Non-Mobile Teachers in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent and number)

	Percent	Count (n)
<i>Academic knowledge (theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)</i>		
No difference	30	(15)
Better	37	(18)
Much better	33	(16)
Total	100	(48)

Question A1: At the time of return, how do you rate mobile teachers as compared to non-mobile teachers in the following areas? 5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" over 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "Much better"; Out of the 49 valid answers in table 13 only 48 were valid for this sub-question.

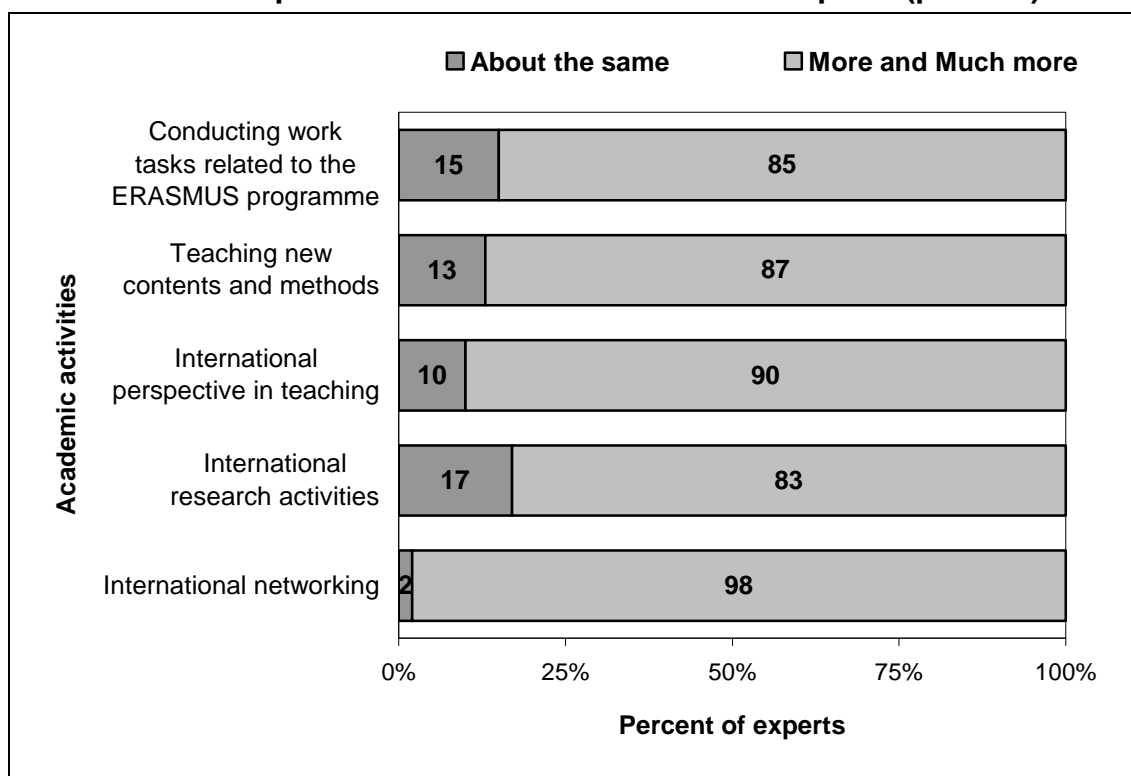
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

Yet, the majority of experts assess the ERASMUS teaching period as having a positive impact on the academic knowledge of teachers. They argue that the teachers get to know new teaching methods abroad; they can discuss teaching methods and contents with colleagues at the host institution and can evaluate their teaching methods by using them in their teaching at the host institution. This assessment confirms the result of the earlier surveys that the teachers assessed their teaching period as being worthwhile for their acquaintance with other teaching methods and the enhancement of the content of their lectures.

3.10 Impact on the Teachers' Subsequent Activities at the Home Institution

Almost all experts are convinced that ERASMUS mobile teachers are more active after the teaching period than prior to it in international activities of teaching and research and improving their activities on the basis of their experiences acquired during the period of teaching abroad. This holds true for all five areas of activities addressed in the questionnaire: International networking, international perspective in teaching, teaching new contents and methods, conducting work tasks related to the ERASMUS programme and international research activities.

Figure 8 Extent of Changes of the Mobile Teachers Academic Activities Upon Return as Compared to the Situation before Departure in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question B1 (teacher): In your opinion, in how far do the following activities of ERASMUS mobile teachers change after their return as compared to the situation before their departure? 5-point scale from 1 = "Much less" through 3 = "About the same" to 5 = "Much more"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

It should be noted that among those perceiving such changes, about two-thirds do not have substantial changes in mind, but rather moderate ones. Altogether, experts from Eastern European countries more frequently note changes of mobile teachers' activities upon return than their colleagues from other European regions. Similarly, experts professionally active in ministries and those representing companies and employers' organisations are more inclined than other experts to assume that mobile teachers intensify their international activities after the teaching period abroad.

3.10.1 Undertaking activities related to the ERASMUS programme

It is generally known that many teachers opt for a teaching period abroad who had been already involved actively in various ERASMUS-related activities. Most experts believe that the teaching period abroad will lead to even more frequent and more intensive activities in this domain. The experience of being mobile and living in a foreign country helps and motivates to be a counsellor or advisor for ERASMUS students and teachers. Former ERASMUS teachers often work as promoters for the ERASMUS programme. Some experts also report that mobile teachers are working as representatives of the home institution at the host institution and prepare and broaden the cooperation.

The majority of respondents assess an ERASMUS teaching period abroad as having an impact on the teachers' activities and involvement in the ERASMUS programme after

returning. More than 80% see a positive change and argue that teachers get more involved, motivated and enthusiastic about the programme after they themselves have experienced it. Critical comments represent the nearly 15% of experts assessing that there is no difference. They argue that the involvement does not change because of participation in the programme but is merely determined by personal characteristics and engagement.

3.10.2 Teaching new contents and methods

Most experts note a positive change on the usage of new contents and methods in teaching after returning. Various experts point out that teaching abroad and the contact and discussion with foreign colleagues stimulates the teachers to develop new substance and methods in order to improve teaching and learning at home. Most comments formulated aim to describe this creative consequence of the teaching experience abroad.

The majority of experts assess that an ERASMUS teaching period abroad has a positive impact on the teachers with regard to teaching new contents and methods after return. Still, the analysis should be more differentiated. Firstly, method and contents are two different concepts. The open comments refer mainly to both, whereas the last comment remarks that introducing new contents is easier than introducing new methods. Secondly, the already stated differentiation between gain of new knowledge of new teaching methods and the actual application of that knowledge at the home institution needs to be considered.

3.10.3 International perspectives in teaching

The majority (90%) of respondents believe that mobile teachers put "more" or "much more" international perspective into their teaching after return. Various experts point out that formerly mobile teachers are likely to contribute to a stronger international dimension of teaching through increased use of foreign textbooks and other foreign publications. Other respondents take a wider perspective and refer in their answer to a broad range of international views, comparisons, theories and good practices.

3.10.4 International research activities

International research activities are working tasks where the experts surveyed perceive a relatively lower change after returning than in other areas. Still, more than 83% think that "much more" or "more" international research activities are conducted after the ERASMUS teaching period than before the departure. These experts who are noting increasing international research activities mention the possibility of improving international networking during an ERASMUS stay, the possibility of learning about new research projects in the host country and the gained international experience which helps when writing a proposal for an international project.

The more sceptical remarks by experts are similar to those regarding other possible consequences of teaching staff mobility: the period of teaching mobility is too short to have a major impact, those teaching abroad were already highly active and international prior to teaching abroad and it depends on the personality of the mobile teachers.

3.10.5 International networking

Positive changes in sense of much more or more international networking of mobile teachers after their return to the home institution is supported by the wide majority of the surveyed experts. Experts who are providing comments on increasing international networking after the teaching period abroad name either major areas of activities, e.g. invitations to international events, joint publications etc., or providing examples for successful networking.

Some respondents underscore that teaching abroad does not only trigger off the networking between individuals but also between institutions. They state as examples the development of inter-university networks, bi-lateral agreements and a more intense contact in general.

All experts assess an ERASMUS teaching period has a strong positive impact on the international networking. The comments underline the 98% approval of the standardised question and emphasize that international networking is a very important point which has an influence on future research contacts and invitations to scientific events. The impact of an ERASMUS supported teaching period on the international networking of teachers is seen by the experts as one of the main advantages of teacher mobility.

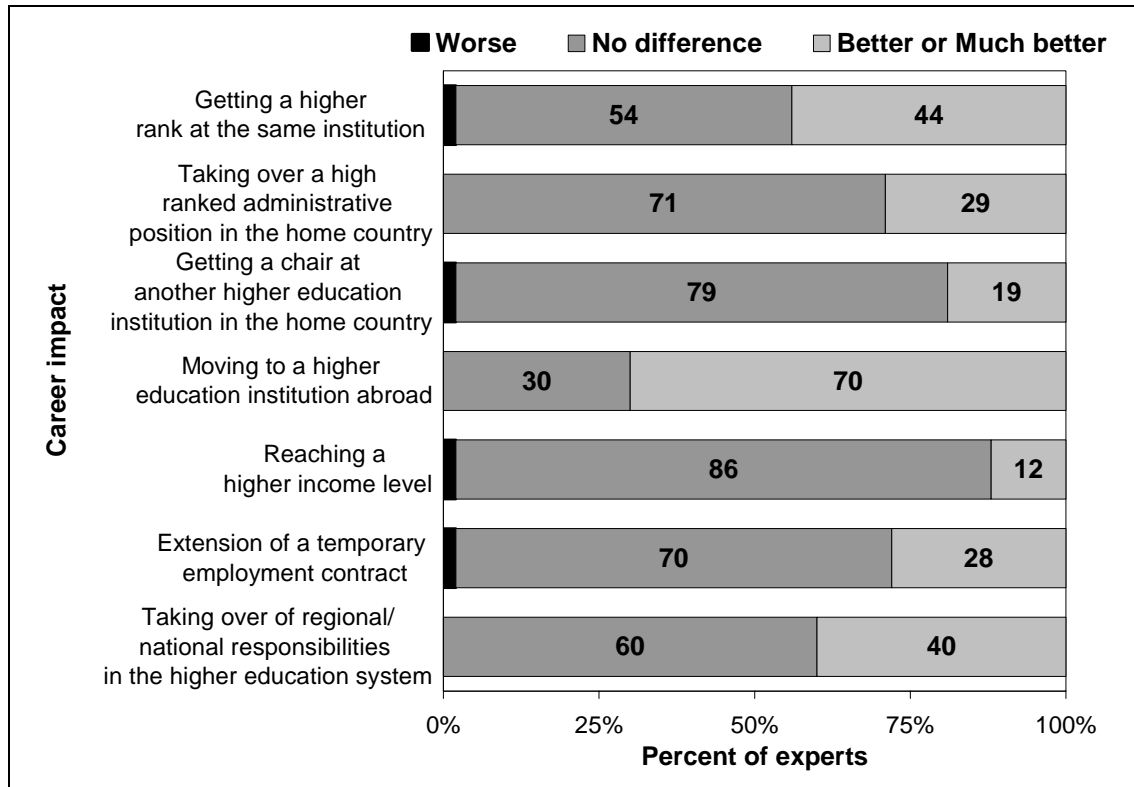
3.11 Impact on Teachers' Career

The experts were asked to state whether they rate the long-term (“in about a 10 years period”) career opportunities of ERASMUS mobile teachers more favourably than non-mobile teachers. Certainly, first, one hardly could expect that a short activity of teaching abroad would turn out as career break-through for a large number of academics. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that hardly any expert surveyed did perceive “much better” career opportunities for ERASMUS mobile teachers.

Second, one could have expected that teaching abroad could facilitate one direction of “horizontal” career change, i.e. moving to a higher education institution abroad without climbing upwards on the career ladder. Actually, a surprisingly high quota (70%) of the respondents assesses such an opportunity of former mobile teachers as (mostly somewhat) better than those of their non-mobile colleagues.

With regard to other, mostly vertically upward career opportunities, the respondents were less optimistic than with regard to enhanced opportunity for international mobility. Yet, again, a surprisingly high proportion of the experts surveyed rate the career opportunities of mobile teachers as better in many respects, as Figure 9 shows.

Figure 9 Long-term Career Impact of Teaching Abroad - Opportunities of Former ERASMUS Teachers as Compared to Non-mobile Teachers in the View of ERASMUS Experts (percent)



Question C1 (teachers): In about a 10 years period, how do you rate the opportunities of former ERASMUS mobile teachers regarding the following career aspects as compared to non-mobile teachers? 5-point scale from 1 = "Much worse" through 3 = "No difference" to 5 = "Much better"

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Experts 2005.

3.11.1 Major advantages and disadvantages

Eventual career advantages for formerly mobile teachers depend substantially, according to the respondents' comments, on the various procedures and customs of recruitment, assessment and promotion of academic staff in the individual countries and institutions of higher education. Various respondents underscore in general that an ERASMUS teaching period abroad is beneficial for the long-term career due to contacts established and international activities triggered off. Whereas, other experts expect individual career advantages because their institution of higher education has had long-term gains as a consequence of the teaching activities abroad.

Some experts point out possible career disadvantages of teaching abroad temporarily even though they expect these to hold true only for a minority of mobile teachers. They are convinced that teaching staff mobility often is not sufficiently appreciated. The open comments about advantages and disadvantages of former ERASMUS teachers in their further career present an oppositional picture to the results of the standardised question. Even so the result of the standardised question gives the impression that overall the career impact is rated as moderate, only a few make comments about disadvantages whereas many make favourable comments about advantages. It seems like ERASMUS

teaching mobility has some kind of neutral position. It can enhance the career opportunities in some aspects but only a minority thinks that there are any negative impacts. Overall, the open comments about advantages further imply that most respondents would welcome a systematic approval of mobility in the career evaluation and promotion processes.

3.11.2 Differences by Fields

About half of the respondents named disciplines in which mobile teachers were more likely to expect career advantages than in other fields. Several respondents pointed out explicitly that mobile teachers of all disciplines have some career advantages. Not a single expert named any discipline in which a teaching period is seen as unfavourable to others as far as career prospects are concerned. The following groups of fields are most frequently named: Business Management and Social Sciences (8), Communication and Information Science (7) as well as Languages and Human Sciences (7). In addition, Engineering and Architecture (5), Mathematics & IT (4), Law (4), Education (4) and Arts (3), Natural Sciences (3) and Medicine (1) were named as well.

Overall, out of the experiences and in the opinions of the respondents there are only fields of studies with advantages regarding the future career of former mobile teachers. In congruence with the results in the student mobility part, the most often stated study fields are Business Management and Social Sciences. These seem to be the classical internationally oriented study fields. Also, the high nomination for advantages for study fields in the area of Communication and Languages could be expected. Interestingly, the third most stated field of study belong to the field of Engineering and Architecture. In contrast to the field of Business Management the argument for this choice is the gain in new technical knowledge which can be transferred by teaching to the students.

3.12 Suggestions for Improvement (Teaching Staff Mobility)

The majority of experts surveyed took the opportunity to formulate changes which, according to them, might contribute to a higher professional value of ERASMUS teaching staff mobility for the mobile teachers.

3.12.1 Suggestions for improvement regarding the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme as a whole

With regard to the overall SOCRATES/ERASMUS programmes, the respondents named desirable improvements – similarly as in the survey on the professional value of student mobility – bureaucracy, language preparation and notably limited funds as major barriers. Several proposals directed to the SOCRATES/ERASMUS as a whole turn out to be primarily in the domain of the participating higher education institutions. They refer to a better promotion of ERASMUS teaching mobility at the universities, a higher appreciation of the institution and improved organisation of teaching substitutes.

3.12.2 Suggestions for improvement regarding the "receiving" institution

Various experts suggest in this framework that the host universities should increase their efforts in order to make teaching periods more beneficial for all persons and

institutions involved. One can infer from these statements in this context that the expert would expect also a higher career impact for the mobile teaching, if their teaching period abroad itself was made more valuable by the host institution. Notably efforts could be made to provide a better service for incoming mobile teachers and to take care for a better academic and social integration at the host institution.

3.12.3 Suggestions for improvement regarding the "sending" higher education institution

The proposals made to integrate teaching mobility abroad into regular work assignments and into the regular career are directed by the experts, as a matter of course, to the home universities. They suggest, among other things, to increase the incentives to go abroad, to promote the value of being mobile and to introduce "being mobile" as an element in evaluation and promotion processes.

A few additional comments refer to better preparation, support and funding scheme for the outgoing staff. These comments are similar to those made referring to improvements regarding incoming staff.

3.13 Good Practice (Teaching Staff Mobility)

Asked to name good practices known to them aiming to increase the professional value of teaching for some period in another European country in the framework of ERASMUS, less than 10% of the surveyed experts responded affirmatively. And among the few examples presented, the prime emphasis is on making results of the teaching period better visible rather than directly on assuring an impact on the subsequent career.

3.14 Concluding Remarks

The expert survey was the first evaluation step in the project "The professional value of ERASMUS mobility - External evaluation of the impact of ERASMUS mobility on students' access to employment and career development, on teachers' career development and on two areas of study to be specified". The objective of this survey was to gain a broad understanding of the topic and to use the results and the expertise of the experts for the further steps of the evaluation.

The experts' survey was directed to representatives of the ERASMUS programme itself (National Agencies), policy representatives (Ministries of Education), representatives of student organisations (e.g. AIESEC), fields of study/disciplines (e.g. Association of history teachers), labour market representatives (Unions, employer organisations) and higher education institutions (conferences of rectors). 190 experts were addressed via email and asked to participate in an online survey about the professional value of ERASMUS teaching and study mobility. 43% answered the questions about ERASMUS student and/or teachers mobility. Overall, the participating experts represent 29 European countries and even more different organisations and institutions.

The online questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions and was available in English, German and French. In the questionnaire, the experts were asked to rate the former ERASMUS students' competences, activities and education and professional paths as compared to students not having been internationally mobile. Such a rating was asked for different stages of the biography: Immediately upon return from study in another country, at the time of graduation and job search, during the first steps and employment and work and finally "a couple of years" after graduation. They were asked to express whether and to what extent they considered former ERASMUS students to be superior and to what extent subsequent education, competences, employment and work could be viewed as an impact of ERASMUS student mobility.

It can be said from the outset, first, that the responses of the experts provided in spring 2005 in this first step of this project primarily confirm the results of prior studies. According to the experts' views, ERASMUS students are immediately upon return from the study period abroad, obviously superior to most non-mobile students with respect to knowledge on other countries and notably on the host country. Their foreign language proficiency has improved substantially, and their intercultural understanding was significantly enhanced. Undoubtedly, they gained academically from study abroad but not to a level that they excel other students by far. A substantial proportion of experts are aware that one has to qualify such ratings with respects to different home and host countries, different fields of study, different individuals and circumstances at the various home and host institutions of higher education. Independent of those differences, several of them underscore strongly what former student, teacher and coordinator surveys have pointed out: the strongest immediate impact of ERASMUS student mobility is its eye-opening, strengthening of comparison and reflection and other new perspectives as a result of creative provocation of prior established views. Also at time of graduation, experts consider former ERASMUS students clearly superior on average to non-mobile students, as far as "international competences" are concerned: knowledge on other countries, foreign language proficiency, intercultural understanding etc. On the other hand, it is not surprising as well that they observe some above-average level of academic knowledge and general competences.

The surveyed experts are convinced that former ERASMUS students are far better on average than non-mobile students in the search process and in the transition to employment. Study abroad is generally seen as an asset in the CV of the job seekers which will make them more interesting for those recruiting graduates. More than three quarters of experts state that former ERASMUS students have a better chance to be considered as candidates in final stages of selection. More than half of them believe that the search process will be smoother and that former ERASMUS students will be more successful in eventually getting employed for the first time after graduation. In addressing the former ERASMUS students' employment and work a couple of years after graduation, the experts view the impact of student similarly in various respects as the findings of previous surveys of the careers of former ERASMUS students had suggested. First, former ERASMUS students clearly more frequently take up visibly international job tasks, such as international travel, communication with persons from other countries, employing foreign languages, using knowledge on other countries, etc. Yet, the experts do not overlook that there are many former ERASMUS students as well who do not end up in visible international job assignments. Second, the experts note some advantages of former ERASMUS students, as far as status, income, job security

etc. are concerned. But the percentages of experts stating such advantages are clearly smaller: 33% with respect to income, 30% regarding the social status and 18% regarding job security. Moreover, most of them note only somewhat of an advantage: a moderate one and not necessarily for most former ERASMUS students. Altogether, the experts surveyed express somewhat more favourable views of the professional value of ERASMUS study abroad than former ERASMUS students surveyed earlier in two respects. The experts considered those former ERASMUS students' competences as relatively high which often had been called in recent discussions as "key skills", "employability" skills, i.e. competences at the cross-roads of cognitive knowledge and personality development, and they noted good opportunities of former ERASMUS students to take over desirable work tasks and assignments close linked to their domains of knowledge. It will be interesting to compare these findings with the responses to the survey of former ERASMUS students scheduled for 2005.

In the second part of the expert survey, the focus lied on teacher mobility. The core question was how strongly teaching abroad and related activities shape the competences and subsequent activities of former mobile teaches and how this is reflected in their subsequent careers. The experts were, hence, asked to rate the competences, activities and careers of formerly mobile teachers. They were encouraged as well to explain the impact of teaching staff mobility and discuss possible means of improvement.

The results show that experts are convinced that temporary teaching in another European country is beneficial for the competences of the teachers themselves. According to areas of knowledge, views and attitudes, a similar pattern is viewed as had been pointed out with respect to mobile students: As a rule, mobile teachers – according to experts' views - increase their knowledge of the host country and possibly other countries. In many cases, teaching staff mobility is valuable for the foreign language proficiency and for the intercultural knowledge and understanding of mobile teachers. Finally even more than two-thirds of the surveyed experts believe that formerly mobile teachers are afterwards somewhat superior to non-mobile teachers as far as academic knowledge is concerned.

Experts point out as well that the ERASMUS teaching period in another European country contributes substantially to an increase of international activities on the part of the formerly mobile teachers. Almost all experts consider them as more active than non-mobile teachers with respect to international networking, doing research in international context as well as increasing international, European and comparative dimensions in teaching and study programmes in general. Last but not least it is generally assumed that formerly mobile teachers are often quite active in various ERASMUS-related areas.

Many of the surveyed experts are convinced as well that mobile teachers have ample long-term career opportunities. They are clearly viewed to have better opportunities of being internationally mobile. But almost half the respondents state as well that mobile teachers have better opportunities for career advancement at their home higher education institution or otherwise within their home countries. For example 44 percent argue that mobile teachers have better chances than their non-mobile peers to get a higher rank within their institution. It should be noted though that the opportunities of reaching a higher income level are rated as quite low. In explanations of their ratings many experts point out that many mobile teachers have acquired competences and undertaken activities subsequently which deserve to be taken into consideration in mid-

term and long-term reward, appointment and promotion policies. A substantial number of them believe that these competences and activities are undervalued in many institutions of higher education.

4 Former Students' Views and Experiences

4.1 Introduction

Studying in another country is viewed as beneficial for the learning process of the students and their growth of competences in various respects, notably:

- acquisition of academic knowledge (theories, methods and basic disciplinary knowledge) in areas of expertise which are not taught in the home country at all or only on a substantially lower level,
- gathering and experiencing field knowledge of the economy, society and culture of the host country of study,
- successful study in fields which are genuinely border-crossing (e.g. International Law),
- learning internationally comparative approaches,
- broadening the mind and improving reflection through contrasting experiences of different countries, different academic cultures, etc.
- acquisition of international/inter-cultural communication techniques, e.g. foreign languages, inter-cultural communication styles, etc.

Moreover, studying abroad is expected to have a valuable impact on the personal development of the students. Naturally, ERASMUS supported temporary study in another European country is expected to have a positive impact on life after graduation, notably on their employment and work, but also on their activities as citizens, for their family life and for other life spheres. Although higher education as a rule is not geared closely to professional preparation, the professional value of ERASMUS was high on the agenda from its inauguration.

The rationale of the graduate survey is to provide information about the active professional impact of ERASMUS-supported temporary study period in another country. Moreover, it aims to identify the most conducive conditions for a high professional value.

4.2 Prior Studies

This study on the professional impact of the ERASMUS-supported study period in another European country on subsequent career can draw from the results of prior studies. For the European Commission already had supported surveys in the past addressing the transition from higher education to employment and the early careers of former ERASMUS students. As the number of eligible countries has increased over

time, it is not surprising to note the prior studies comprised a smaller number of countries.

First, more than 1,300 former ERASMUS students of the academic year 1988/89 provided information in spring 1992, i.e. about three years later, on study upon return from the ERASMUS-supported period abroad and on the transition to employment (Teichler and Maiworm 1994). Two years later, in spring 1994, more than 1,200 former ERASMUS students of the academic year 1988/89 provided information on their early career (Maiworm and Teichler 1996). These surveys were part of a longitudinal study ranging from the academic year 1989/90, i.e. shortly after the ERASMUS supported period abroad, until about five years later.

The major findings of the two studies were summarized as follows: "The study showed that the respondents perceived study abroad as a help for transition to work, but not necessarily as a boost for a high-flying career. Most considered it useful for their working life. Professional contacts with the former host country were more likely if they had spent the study period in a large EU member state. The academic value of study abroad was appreciated to a lesser extent five years later than shortly after the study period abroad, but all other impacts were seen as similar at all stages of the survey. Also, former students believed five years later that their course of study had been prolonged slightly less as a consequence of the study period abroad than they had expected during the academic year after their return. Altogether, former ERASMUS students rated the study period abroad as rather more valuable five years after returning to their home country than during the academic year immediately after returning to their home institution." (see Jahr and Teichler, 2002, p. 117).

Second, a follow-up survey was undertaken in spring 2000 of the largest internationally graduate survey hitherto, the so-called CHEERS survey (sponsored by the European Commission in the framework of the TSER Programme). In the CHEERS survey, more than 35,000 graduates of the academic year 1994/95 from 11 European countries and Japan were surveyed in 1999, i.e. about four years after graduation. The follow-up survey undertaken in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 evaluation addressed graduates from five countries who had reported in 1999 that they had studied abroad during the course of their study. Thus, it was possible to compare the careers of about 400 former ERASMUS students with about 400 former European students who had been mobile during the course of study with others means (self-supporting or the with help of other support schemes) in the early 1990s and with thousands of graduates who had not been internationally mobile during the course of their study (see Jahr and Teichler 2002).

The major findings of this study were summarized as follows (see Teichler 2002, p.220): "In examining the impact of temporary study in another European country on subsequent employment and work we noted that more mobile students than non-mobile students eventually

- took on job assignments with international components
- were more often employed abroad, and
- were more often assigned work abroad, if employed by a home country employer.

- Former mobile students also assessed their professionally relevant competence somewhat higher than the non-mobile students, and
- they also experienced a smoother transition from study to employment.

However, few formerly mobile students believed that they had a more successful career than their fellow students who had not been mobile, and few had a higher income. But the contribution of ERASMUS is impressive when it comes to European and international assignments of graduates. In most respects, the findings of a recent survey of 1994-95 graduates who had studied abroad with ERASMUS support around 1992-94 confirmed those of the longitudinal study of the 1988/89 cohort. In most respects, the change over time was marginal.

But caution is called for. First, as the recent survey shows, former ERASMUS students are not better prepared for employment and work in general or for international assignments than European graduates who studied abroad with other means of funding. Second, the number of former ERASMUS students who do not find significant European or international job assignments is fairly high and seems to grow slightly over time.”

Altogether, all prior surveys suggest that students who were mobile during the course of study are also more likely to work abroad after graduation. They also more frequently take over professional assignments which require knowledge of other countries, foreign language proficiency and other areas of knowledge and competences which cross the national borders. Study abroad also seems to have a favourable signal effect in the period of job search.

However, there were three cautions to the “success story” of ERASMUS, as far as the professional value is concerned. First, it seems to be questionable according to these studies undertaken in the past whether ERASMUS has a clear positive impact on the status and remuneration of the beneficiaries. One might consider this as disappointing, but one might also view this as normal: ERASMUS can be viewed as a public investment to strengthen European and international competences increasingly needed on the labour market rather than as a measure to increase private return for study in another country.

Second, a considerable number of former ERASMUS students are disappointed that they cannot make more use of their European and international competences on the job. One might raise the question whether the employment system calls for fewer competences of this kind, for different competences or whether the former ERASMUS students do not find the appropriate job where their competences are required.

Third, ERASMUS is not superior to other modes of study abroad, as far as the professional value is concerned. One might consider this as disappointing in the face of all the activities undertaken in the framework of ERASMUS to make study in another European country successful. In contrast, one might argue that ERASMUS notably is successful in mobilizing large numbers of students to spend a study period in another country. Therefore, a professional impact of an ERASMUS supported study period abroad similar to the impact of study abroad through other means can be viewed as a success of ERASMUS.

4.3 The Survey of 2000/01 ERASMUS Students

Table 9 provides the key information on the survey undertaken from autumn 2005 until spring 2006 on subsequent study and early career of ERASMUS students of the academic year 2000/01. Actually, almost 4,600 former ERASMUS students provided the information on which the subsequent analysis is based.

The *target population* of the survey are persons who have been supported in the framework of ERASMUS to spend a period of study in another European country in the academic year 2000/2001. This year was chosen, because, on the basis of prior studies, one could expect that the respondents can report about three years of professional experience on average at that time.

Table 9 Overview of the Field Phase of the Survey of Former ERASMUS Students

1	Target population	Students who have been supported in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/2001 (N=108,505)
2	Start of field phase	September 2005/October 2005
3	End of field phase	February 2006
4	Sampling strategy	Two stage sampling: first institutions (511) and then students (20,500) stratified by country
5	Questionnaire (see Annex A.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly standardized, 16 pages, 110 questions, 277 variables - Translated in 23 official languages of the European Union - Online and paper versions
6	Number of co-operating institutions	244
7	Number of filled questionnaires from ERASMUS students (1.3.2006)	4,589
8	Gross response rate (confirmed sent out of 16,819 questionnaires)	27 %
9	Net response rate (assumption that only 60% of the used addresses were valid)	45 %

According to the KENT database 108,505 students from 30 countries have been mobile with ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/2001. Thereby, the number of students from individual countries varied from more than 15,000 in three cases to less than 500 in ten cases.

In order to ensure that a certain absolute number responses are made available, an uneven stratified *sample* according to home country was drawn: 1,500 students each from the five biggest countries, 800 each from a second group of countries with about

2,500 to 4,500 mobile students, 650 each from a third group, and all outgoing students from the fourth group of the smallest countries.

Since there was no central address register of former ERASMUS students available, the *mailing of questionnaires* to the former ERASMUS students had to be done with the help of the institutions from which the students went abroad in 2000/01. Therefore the sampling was realised as a two step cluster sampling: In the first step, a sampling of institutions per country was realised. In the second step, individuals within these institutions were sampled. In order to reduce the overall work load, the numbers of institutions of higher education institutions was kept low, and the institutions sampled were requested to send out questionnaires to almost all of their former ERASMUS students. However, the strategy chosen increases the standard error because of cluster effects, because the variance within a cluster is likely to be smaller than across the clusters.

A random sampling was undertaken in the first step and a manual adjustment in the second step. The representativeness was mainly controlled according to home country and field of study, the latter aggregated in 16 categories.

In sampling the institutions, they were sorted according to their number of outgoing students, and draws were made of the start number and interval numbers. In a second step, an adjustment was taken in order to include appropriate numbers according to field of study.

Altogether, 511 institutions thus sampled were asked through e-mail correspondence to trace addresses to mail eventually the questionnaires. This choice had been initially made on the assumption that 30 percent of the institutions will cooperate. Actually, 244 institutions of higher education, i.e. 48 percent of those approached, mailed the questionnaires. Cooperation was highest among institutions in Romania, Norway, Portugal, Czech Republic and Spain. In contrast, support was rather weak in the United Kingdom as well as in Denmark, Slovenia and Estonia.

The addresses of the institutions were available in the TAO database. However, about ten percent of the email addresses had to be updated. A high response rate was strived for through two reminder mailings, the second by the European Commission, and finally phone calls to the ERASMUS co-ordinators to ask for their support. Some institutions never responded and other declined cooperation, thereby naming work overload, shortage of personnel and unavailability of addresses of former ERASMUS students as major reasons.

The cooperating institutions received from the project a sufficient number of envelopes with the questionnaires and with reminder letters to be mailed two to three weeks later. They sent the envelopes to the last available address, whereby some institutions were active in updating available addresses. The overall period of surveying ranged from late August 2005 over a period of more than six months. Partially extending periods of shipping as well as delays in the mailing procedures as a consequence of shortage of staff time at the participating institutions as well as the necessary reminder procedures caused such a long time span.

The *questionnaire* addresses primarily the career of former ERASMUS students after graduation, i.e. the transition to employment, the early employment history thereafter

and the actual employment and work situation at the time the survey is conducted (see Table 10). A broad range of indicators of professional success was employed:

- (a) graduation and job search,
- (b) initial employment,
- (c) present activity,
- (d) employment situation and status at the time of the survey,
- (e) links between study and work assignment,
- (f) links between orientations and assessment of the professional situation,
- (g) international aspects of employment and work (working in an international context, international tasks, European and international mobility).

Table 10 Themes of the Questionnaire of the Survey with Former ERASMUS Students

Socio-biographic background	Age, gender, citizenship, mobility prior to study, parental educational background		
Course of study	Study prior to ERASMUS period (study period, field of study, home institution)	The ERASMUS period (host country, duration, study/work placement, quality of preparation, support by host institution, language, problematic characteristics of home and host, teaching/learning styles, ECTS)	Subsequent studies (country of further study and of graduation, duration up to graduation, field of graduation, self-assessment of achievement, language proficiency, degree)
Transition	Major activities after graduation, job search, unemployment, time until first employment		
Current employment and work	Employment (position, income, sector of employment, working time, kind of contract, appropriateness, career prospects)	Work (major assignments, utilisation of knowledge and skills, job satisfaction, life-long learning)	European/international dimension (country of employment, international work tasks, role of foreign languages, out-of-job activities)

In addition, the questionnaire comprises a large number of other questions possibly explaining the professional value:

- (a) socio-biographic background (age, gender, citizenship, mobility prior to study, parental educational background),
- (b) study prior to ERASMUS period,

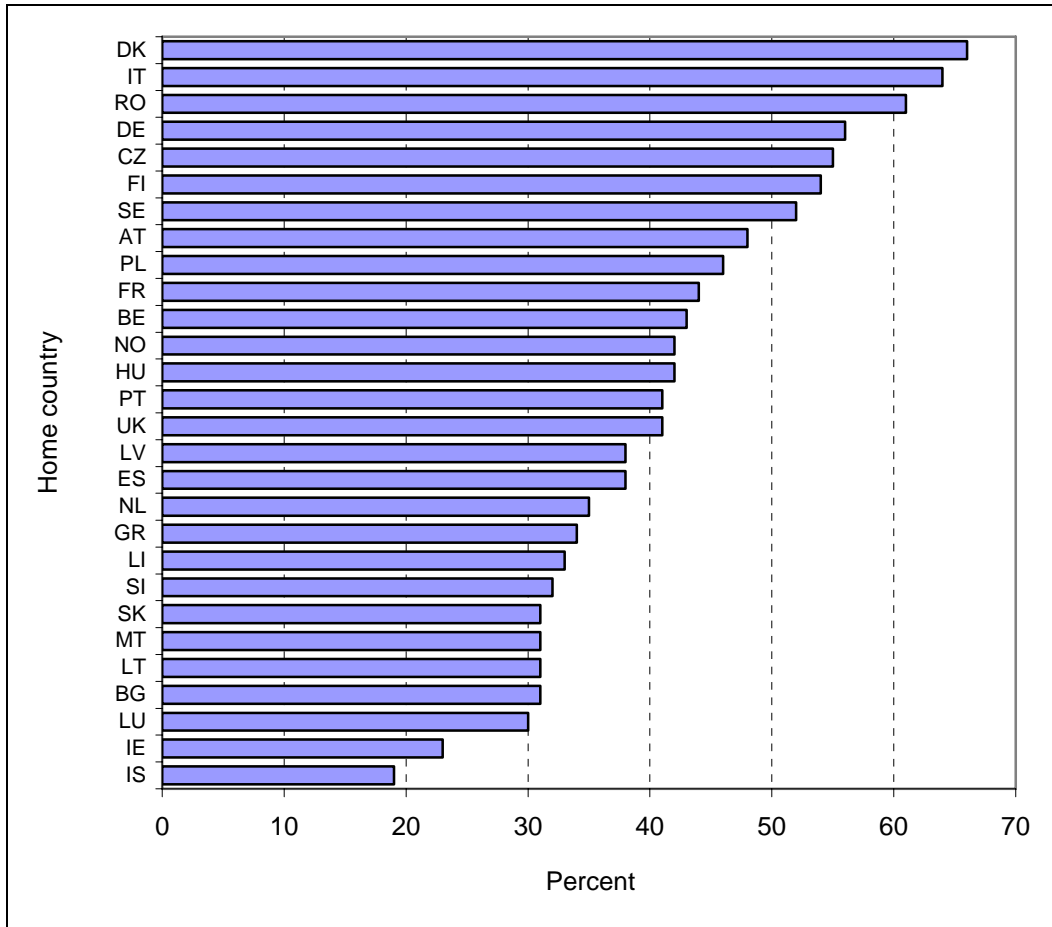
- (c) the ERASMUS period,
- (d) subsequent study,
- (e) competences upon graduation.

Where appropriate, the questionnaire took up questions employed in prior surveys of former ERASMUS students. This makes it possible to establish changes over time. The questionnaire, initially developed in German and English was translated into all the official languages of the 30 ERASMUS-eligible countries. A complex procedure of translation, retranslation and various modes of communication were chosen in order to ensure a high quality of translations. Respondents received a paper version of the questionnaire comprising 13 pages and additional pages for an integrated cover letter and explanations and were informed about the possibility of responding the online-version with the help of a PIN code.

The process of *the field phase* of the survey with former ERASMUS students was very heterogeneous in the different countries.

By March 1, 2006, 4,589 responses were received. The gross response rate is about 27 percent. As available information suggest that only about 60 percent of the students initially sampled were sent the questionnaire and actually were reached, the net response rate is estimated to be 45 percent. Highest net response rates can be estimated for Denmark (66%). In contrast, response rates were low in Iceland and Ireland, and even no responses were received from Estonia (see Figure 10).

Figure 10 Response Rate* of the Survey with Former ERASMUS Students by Home Country (percent)



* The response rate was calculated on the basis of the gross response rate with the assumption that 60 % of the students could be delivered a questionnaire.

Table 11 Survey with Former ERASMUS Students - Population, Sample and Response

Country	Group	Population and sample					Response from graduates		
		Institutions		Students			Absolute response	Gross response rate	Net response rate
		Total	Target sample	Total	Target sample	Number of sent out quest.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DE	1	228	30	15,777	1,500	1424	478	29%	56
ES	1	74	9	16,383	1,500	1482	334	22%	38
FR	1	293	39	17,153	1,500	1699	446	23%	44
IT	1	100	17	13,237	1,500	1308	499	30%	64
UK	1	157	39	8,87	1,500	676	168	12%	41
AT	2	61	23	2,886	800	720	206	28%	48
BE	2	64	15	3,99	800	362	93	16%	43
FI	2	49	18	3,285	800	626	203	26%	54
NL	2	48	14	3,509	800	529	111	12%	35
PL	2	82	24	3,682	800	802	219	18%	46
PT	2	71	35	2,567	800	936	228	19%	41
SE	2	37	18	2,72	800	822	257	22%	52
CZ	3	23	11	2,001	650	724	239	25%	55
DK	3	66	33	1,634	650	478	188	27%	66
GR	3	29	14	1,834	650	725	150	13%	34
HU	3	32	15	1,996	650	589	149	28%	42
IE	3	24	18	1,648	650	670	92	10%	23
RO	3	38	18	1,899	650	435	160	27%	61
BG	4	23	23	376	398	131	24	11%	31
EE	4	14	14	255	255	0	0	0%	0
IS	4	6	6	134	134	132	15	13%	19
LI	4	1	1	12	12	10	2	8%	33
LT	4	20	20	616	624	370	68	25%	31
LU	4	1	1	28	28	28	5	14%	30
LV	4	15	15	182	182	115	26	38%	38
MT	4	1	1	92	92	92	17	20%	31
NO	4	34	26	1,007	1,007	579	145	24%	42
SI	4	3	3	227	227	118	23	7%	32
SK	4	14	14	505	505	237	44	29%	31
Total		1608	511	108,505	20,464	16,819	4,589	22%	45

(1) ISO-Country Code

(2) Group according to our sampling strategy

(3) Total number of institutions having outgoing students in the reference period according to Kent Database

(4) Target sample of institutions in consideration of gross student sample

(5) Total number of outgoing students in the reference period according to Kent Database

(6) Target number of sampled students according to the sampling strategy

(7) Outgoing students within participating institutions = realised student gross sample:

(8) Absolute response of students

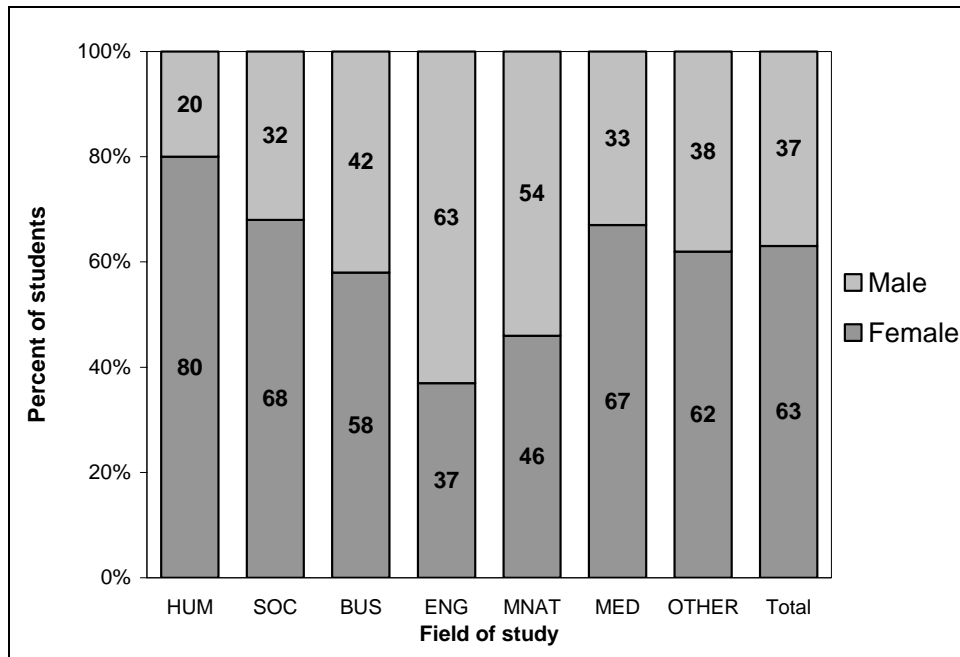
(9) Gross response rate, non participating institutions excluded: (10) / (9)

(10) Net response rate, non participating institutions excluded and assumption that 60% of the sent out questionnaires could be delivered

4.4 The Profile of Former ERASMUS

63 percent of former ERASMUS students responding are female. Only in engineering and science fields, they formed the minority (see Figure 11).

Figure 11 Gender of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent)



Question I1: Gender

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005;

Former ERASMUS students had spent on average 6.8 months abroad with the help of ERASMUS. Medical students had a clearly shorter *duration of the study period abroad* than students from other fields of study

Table 12 Duration of Study Abroad During ERASMUS Period 2000/2001 of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (means)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Arithm. mean	6.6	7.3	6.8	7.2	6.7	5.4	6.3	6.8
Median	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Count	1245	(749)	(789)	(610)	(455)	(261)	(444)	4553

Question A3: How many months did you spend abroad during your ERASMUS supported period in the academic year 2000/2001?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

9 percent of the surveyed former ERASMUS students had not yet been awarded a degree about five years of the ERASMUS-supported study period and thus might be considered as *drop-outs*. The corresponding figure had been 6 percent among 1988/89 ERASMUS students five years later.

40 percent of the graduates had been enrolled (or are still enrolled) in *advanced study*. This is as frequent as among graduates of the 1988/89 ERASMUS cohort (41%). One of the most striking impact of ERASMUS is the relatively high advancement rate to further study – about twice as high as among non-mobile students (21% among the

1994/95 graduates). The duration of subsequent study was on average about two years (see Table 13).

Table 13 Duration of Further Study of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (means)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Arithm. mean	23.8	22.6	23.4	26.1	28.2	29.1	25.9	24.8
Median	18.0	18.0	18.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	21.0	20.0
Count	(449)	(285)	(291)	(216)	(221)	(77)	(149)	1688

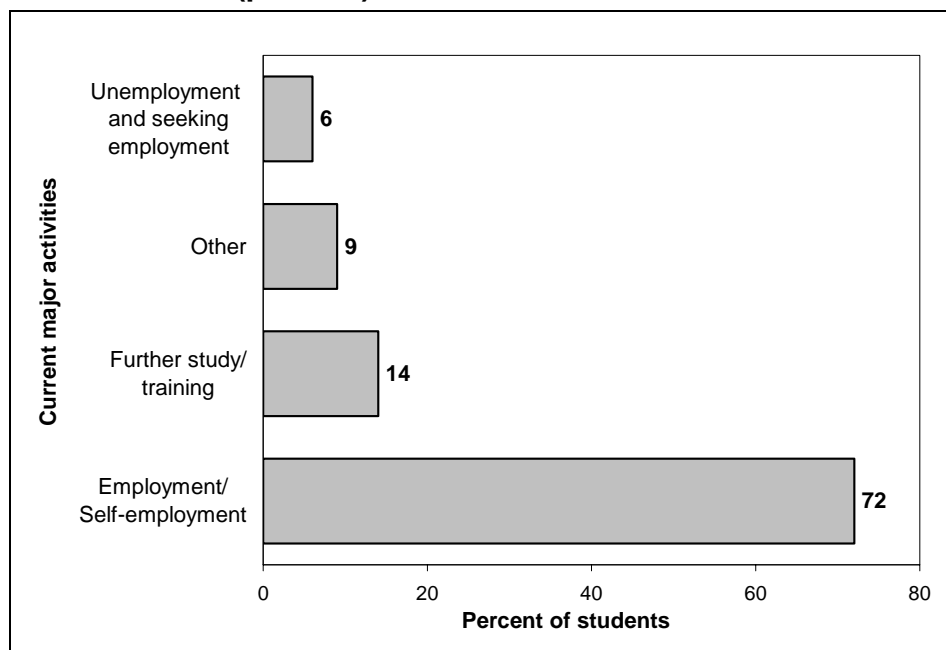
Question B9: How many months did you study for that degree?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

4.5 The Early Career

72 percent were employed or self employed at the time the survey was conducted. 6 percent were unemployed and 23 percent active in studies, training and other areas (see Figure 12).

Figure 12 Current Major Activity of Former ERASMUS Students (percent)



Question E1: What is your current major activity?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 14 Current Major Activity of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Employment	59	59	79	74	61	66	63	66
Self-employment	7	6	4	8	3	9	7	6
Unemployment (not employed and seeking employment)	8	6	5	4	5	2	7	6
Further study	11	12	6	8	19	8	10	11
Professional training	3	6	0	2	2	6	2	3
Family care	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	1
Other	10	9	5	4	9	8	9	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	1197	(720)	(777)	(590)	(437)	(252)	(339)	4312

Question E1: What is your current major activity?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

On average, the respondents have been employed slightly more than two years (see Table 15).

Table 15 Duration of Employment of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (means)

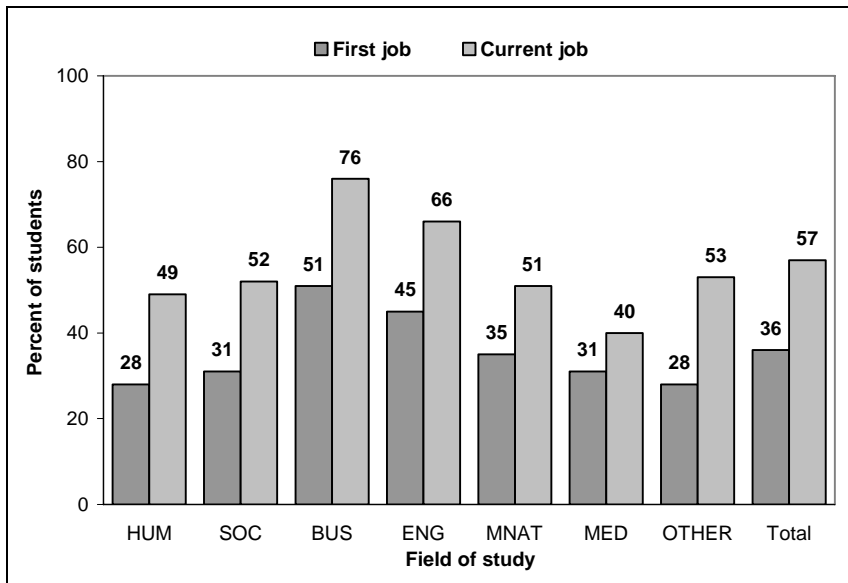
	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Arithm. mean	23,8	25,8	29,2	30,7	27,5	28,7	28,4	27,1
Median	24,0	24,0	30,0	30,5	25,0	27,0	28,0	26,0
Count	1006	(611)	(716)	(538)	(357)	(221)	(289)	3738

Question E3: How long in total have you been employed since graduation?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

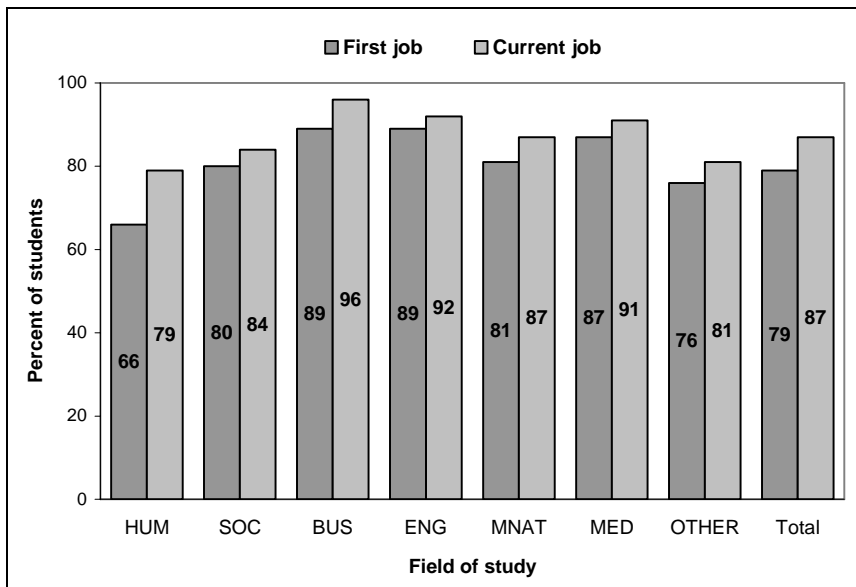
On the first job after graduation, 36 percent of the former ERASMUS students were employed on *fixed-term contract* (see Figure 13). This ratio inclined to 57 percent at the time the survey was conducted. *Full-time employment* is already dominant on the first job after graduation (79 percent), it increased to 87 percent currently (see Figure 14).

Figure 13 Permanent Contract at the First Job and Current Job by Field of Study (Percent)



Question D2: What was the type of your contract? Question E5: What is the type of your current contract? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Figure 14 Full-Time Employment at First Job and Current Job by Field of Study (Percent)



Question D3: Did you work full-time or part-time? Question E6: Do you work full-time or part-time? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

During the first years after graduation, more than half of the 2000/01 ERASMUS graduates have *changed employers* – more than a quarter even more than once (see Table 16). Change of employers is less frequent in professionalized fields of study. Available data suggest that former ERASMUS students seem to somewhat more frequently change employers in their early years of employment than formerly non-mobile students.

Table 16 Number of Employers Since Graduation of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
One employer	37	38	44	49	44	45	34	41
Two employers	27	31	30	28	26	25	32	28
Three employers	16	15	15	14	13	16	19	15
Four employers	8	8	5	4	6	5	7	6
Five and more employers	8	4	3	3	4	5	4	5
Other	5	4	4	3	6	4	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	1135	(681)	(768)	(572)	(419)	(243)	(319)	4137

Question E2: How many employers have you had altogether since graduation? - including yourself if you have been self-employed - including current employer.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

4.6 Job Search and Recruitment

Many of the former ERASMUS students surveyed *started their job search* relatively late: 32 percent of the job seekers started only some time after graduation as compared to 24 percent of European 1994/95 graduates (see Table 17).

Table 17 Start of Job Search of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Prior to graduation	29	30	35	29	29	30	32	30
Around the time of graduation	21	23	24	27	22	22	23	23
After graduation	33	32	31	31	31	28	32	32
I was not looking for employment	17	15	11	12	18	20	12	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	1226	(727)	(788)	(602)	(443)	(255)	(345)	4386

Question C1: When did you start looking for a job? Exclude search for casual and vacation jobs.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

In contrast, the former ERASMUS students surveyed spent a short *time span to seek* for their first regular job: only 3.7 months on average (see Table 19). This period is quite short in comparison to the 5 months average job search period of mobile students and 7 months of non-mobile students among 1994/95 graduates. The job-seeking former ERASMUS students also contacted fewer employers before taking up their first job: 19 on average (see Table 19) as compared to 25 on the part of the 1994/95 graduates.

The average job search period for 2000/01 students was clearly the shortest in Medicine (2.4 months) and the longest in Humanities (4.5 months). It varied from less than 2 months in some Central and Eastern European countries to about 6 months in Spain and Italy.

Table 18 Number of Employers Contacted During Job Search by Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (means)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Arithm. mean	18.9	18.7	23.3	20.2	22.1	7.4	16.1	19.3
Median	5.0	5.0	9.0	5.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	5.0
Count	1013	(619)	(696)	(531)	(369)	(206)	(334)	3768

Question C2: How many employers did you contact (e.g. by letter) before you took up your first job after graduation?
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 19 Duration of Job Search of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (means)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Arithm. mean	4.5	3.7	3.7	3.3	3.9	2.4	3.8	3.8
Median	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
Count	1003	(616)	(695)	(531)	(366)	(205)	(334)	3750

Question C3: How many months did you seek all-together (before or after graduation) for your first job after graduation, which you consider not to be a casual job?
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

According to the former ERASMUS students, their employers considered academic knowledge and personality most frequently as *recruitment and criteria* when they decided to employ them. In addition, aspects closely related to study abroad played a substantial role (see Table 20), i.e.

- foreign language proficiency (60%) and
- experiences abroad (53%), among them the ERASMUS study period abroad (37%).

These figures hardly differ from that of former ERASMUS students 1988/89 (64% and 53%) and from ERASMUS students having graduated in 1994/95 (60% and 56%). Naturally, they are substantially higher than for former non-mobile students having graduated in 1994/95 (17% and 5%).

These two criteria closely related to the ERASMUS study abroad period, i.e. foreign language proficiency and experiences abroad, were most important for graduates from Foreign Languages, followed by Business Studies and Engineering. They were least important for graduates from Medicine. They were highly important for graduates in some Central and Eastern European countries and in France, but least important for graduates in the United Kingdom.

Table 20 Recruitment Criteria of Employers in the View of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Personality	81	85	90	82	75	74	82	83
Field of study	68	71	73	83	79	83	74	74
Foreign language proficiency	65	57	69	58	53	34	57	60
Main subject/specialisation	59	52	56	66	67	64	59	59
Experiences abroad	53	53	63	54	48	32	47	53
Practical/work experience acquired during course of study	49	51	54	56	46	51	51	51
Grades	31	39	36	36	41	37	26	35
Reputation of the institution of higher education	25	32	38	49	32	24	36	34
Recommendations/references from third persons	34	36	30	38	35	38	33	35
Computer skills	38	36	54	60	55	17	49	45
ERASMUS study abroad period	34	36	44	42	35	25	34	37
Count (n)	1034	(610)	(712)	(547)	(375)	(216)	(293)	3787

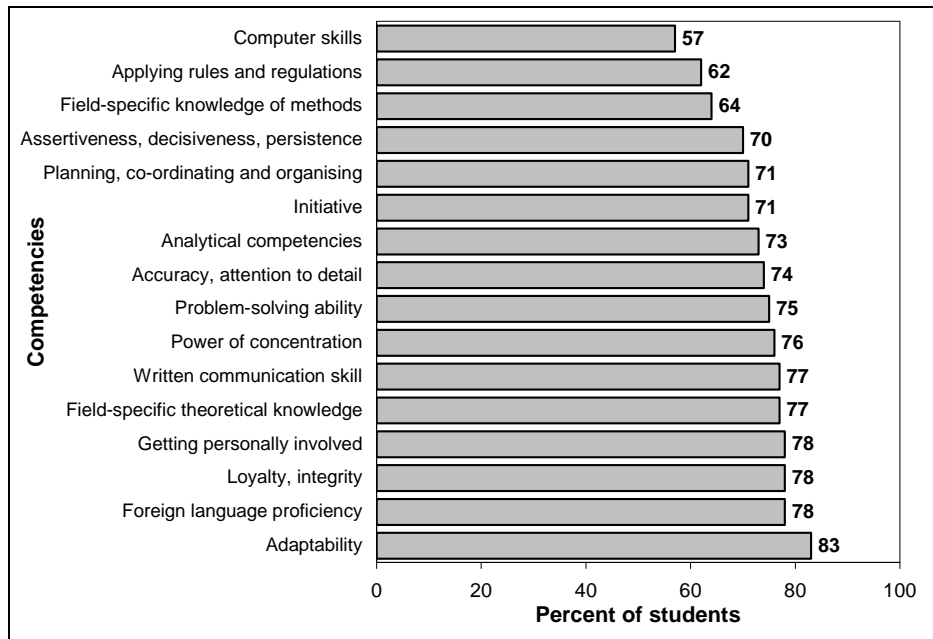
Question D6: How important, according to your perception, were the following aspects for your employer in recruiting you for your initial employment after graduation, if applicable? Scale of answers from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

4.7 Competences, Orientations and Work Assignments

The surveyed former ERASMUS students rated their competences at the time of graduation quite positively. More than three quarters reported high competences with regard to theoretical knowledge, foreign language proficiency as well as regards various work attitudes and styles (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 Former ERASMUS Students' Self-assessed Competences at Time of Graduation (percent "high"; responses 1 and 2)



Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

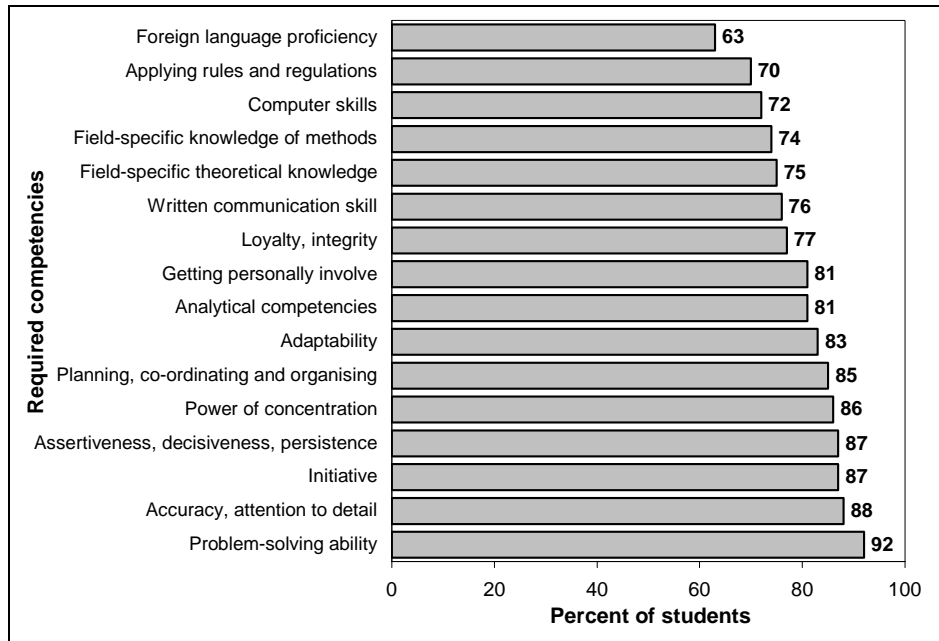
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

The ratings differ only to a small extent by home country (with the exception of positive ratings by students from Bulgaria, Malta and Romania), host country and field of study.

4.8 Competences and Job Requirements

In comparison to the *job requirements* perceived (see Figure 16 and Table 21), competences seem to be clearly lower than job requirements in 7 of the 16 dimensions addressed. On the other hand, more former ERASMUS students believe that they have a higher foreign language proficiency than they need on the job.

Figure 16 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Required Competences at Current Work (percent "high"; responses 1 and 2)



Question F7: Please, state the extent to which the following competences are required in your current work. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 21 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Required Competences at Current Work by Field of Study (percent "high"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Problem-solving ability	86	93	95	96	93	94	89	92
Accuracy, attention to detail	87	86	87	88	88	92	90	88
Initiative	87	87	91	88	82	86	88	87
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	88	89	88	88	80	88	84	87
Power of concentration	86	84	84	85	85	91	87	86
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	87	83	86	86	79	82	85	85
Adaptability	84	82	84	82	77	83	85	83
Analytical competences	71	84	86	87	87	77	77	81
Getting personally involve	83	76	83	78	76	85	84	81
Loyalty, integrity	81	77	76	73	66	82	77	77
Written communication skill	78	86	77	70	68	65	73	76
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	70	75	66	80	79	93	81	75
Field-specific knowledge of methods	69	74	68	81	80	85	77	74
Computer skills	65	67	82	82	83	46	72	72
Applying rules and regulations	72	71	65	72	62	79	69	70
Foreign language proficiency	70	56	69	62	64	44	61	63
Count (n)	(918)	(562)	(683)	(525)	(345)	(226)	(273)	3532

Question F7: Please, state the extent to which the following competences are required in your current work. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Altogether, the 2000/01 ERASMUS students rated their competences at the time of graduation substantially higher than ERASMUS students who had graduated in 1994/95. Among the 1994/95 graduates, former ERASMUS students considered their foreign language proficiency substantially higher than the formerly non-mobile students: Otherwise, the ratings of competences and work tasks differed between them at most moderately. We do not have any convincing explanation: Did teaching and learning improve so much for ERASMUS students, or do we note a growing self-confidence in this respect?

As far as *work orientations* are concerned, the surveyed former ERASMUS students consider an autonomous work situation as well as opportunities of using their competences on the job as most important. Regular work and high income seem to be less important work orientations (see Table 22).

In general, the characteristics of the *actual work situation* are assessed less favourably (see Table 23). A discrepancy between orientation and actual job characteristics is most frequently stated with respect to income.

Table 22 Former ERASMUS Students' Work Orientations by Field of Study (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Possibilities of using acquired knowledge and skills	91	86	83	84	88	97	91	88
Opportunity of pursuing own ideas	87	84	87	88	85	85	91	86
Opportunity of pursuing continuous learning	85	87	84	87	83	94	90	86
Challenging tasks	83	87	91	90	83	86	87	86
Largely independent disposition of work	81	79	83	81	79	76	82	81
Good career prospects	68	77	87	82	75	75	78	77
Chances of combining employment with family tasks	77	77	71	74	77	72	82	76
Enough time for leisure activities	76	75	72	73	77	72	77	75
Job security	79	69	68	71	74	80	78	74
Clear and well-ordered tasks	74	67	68	74	77	78	76	73
Chances of doing something useful for society	76	73	59	65	69	79	75	70
High income	59	65	78	72	59	68	64	66
Social recognition and status	61	61	68	61	52	72	57	62
Co-ordinating and management tasks	47	54	71	59	44	42	55	54
Opportunity of undertaking scientific/scholarly work	42	44	33	55	68	67	57	48
Count (n)	1177	(709)	(757)	(573)	(423)	(244)	(329)	4212

Question G1A: How important are the following characteristics of an occupation for you personally? Scale of answers from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 23 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of the Professional Situation by Field of Study (percent "high"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Possibilities of using acquired knowledge and skills	70	71	62	66	73	80	73	69
Largely independent disposition of work	68	68	71	68	68	46	68	68
Opportunity of pursuing continuous learning	60	67	60	68	71	71	67	65
Challenging tasks	63	65	68	65	69	64	66	65
Job security	55	53	63	62	56	59	59	58
Opportunity of pursuing own ideas	60	53	59	57	65	39	62	58
Clear and well-ordered tasks	59	50	51	48	55	54	57	53
Social recognition and status	45	52	55	53	45	53	48	50
Good career prospects	39	47	58	51	51	45	44	48
Chances of doing something useful for society	53	51	32	38	44	72	55	47
Chances of combining employment with family tasks	53	56	43	44	43	28	49	47
Enough time for leisure activities	50	52	45	42	45	27	45	46
Co-ordinating and management tasks	36	36	51	43	34	26	44	40
Opportunity of undertaking scientific/scholarly work	24	34	19	40	54	50	39	33
High income	23	29	43	34	27	27	34	31
Count (n)	(899)	(555)	(658)	(513)	(343)	(212)	(265)	3445

Question G1B: To what extent do the following characteristics of an occupation apply to your current professional situation? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Again, the orientations stated by the 2000/01 ERASMUS students are clearly more ambitious than those of the 1994/95 graduates. Altogether the work situation is seen more favourable as well, but this difference is smaller on average and regards income and job security. The 2000/01 students consider the actual work situation slightly less often as favourable.

Altogether, the majority of 2000/01 ERASMUS students perceives a close *link between study and subsequent employment and work*, whereby differences are stronger by field of study than by country:

- Altogether, 61 percent stated that they used highly on the job the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study (see Table 24).
- 41 percent viewed their field of study as the only one possible or by far the best field for their area of work. Less than a quarter sees their field of study as largely irrelevant for their work (see Table 25).
- 72 percent viewed their level of employment and work as closely linked to their level of education (see Table 25).
- 67 percent were satisfied with their current work (see Table 28).

The responses were slightly more positive than those by all 1994/95 graduates.

Table 24 Former ERASMUS Students' Usage of their Knowledge and Skills Acquired in the Course of Study by Field of Study (percent; arithmetic mean)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
<i>Knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study</i>								
1 To a very high extent	29	27	14	23	35	44	25	26
2	32	34	42	36	31	30	36	35
3	23	24	29	28	18	20	22	24
4	11	11	13	11	12	4	12	11
5 Not at all	5	3	2	2	4	2	5	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count	1081	(641)	(726)	(545)	(392)	(237)	(304)	3926
Arithmetic mean	2,3	2,3	2,5	2,3	2,2	1,9	2,4	2,3

Question G2: If you take into consideration your current work tasks altogether: To what extent do you use the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all. Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 25 Former ERASMUS Students Assessment of the Relationship Between their Field of Study and Area of Work by Field of Study (percent; multiple responses)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
My field of study is the only possible/by far the best field	39	43	28	42	40	78	41	41
Some other fields could prepare for the area of work as well	35	38	50	45	44	18	40	40
Another field would have been more useful	10	7	10	8	8	2	10	8
The field of study does not matter very much	11	10	12	8	9	2	12	10
Higher education studies are not at all related to my area of work	10	5	6	3	5	1	6	6
Other	4	2	3	2	2	3	3	3
Total	109	105	108	109	109	105	113	108
Count (n)	1050	(628)	(717)	(551)	(383)	(238)	(293)	3860

Question G3: How would you characterise the relationship between your field of study and your area of work? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 26 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of the Appropriateness of their Employment and Work to Level of Education by Field of Study (percent; arithmetic mean)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
<i>Extent of employment and work appropriate to level of education</i>								
1 Completely appropriate	37	46	33	41	51	63	39	42
2	28	27	39	33	28	24	31	31
3	16	14	18	18	11	9	17	16
4	11	6	7	6	6	3	10	8
5 Not at all appropriate	7	6	4	2	5	0	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count	1027	(621)	(707)	(541)	(379)	(234)	(291)	3800
Arithmetic mean	2,2	2,0	2,1	2,0	1,8	1,5	2,1	2,0

Question G4: To what extent is your employment and work appropriate to your level of education? Scale of answers from 1 = completely appropriate to 5 = not at all appropriate.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 27 Former ERASMUS Students' Satisfaction with Current Work by Field of Study (percent; arithmetic mean)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
<i>Satisfied with your current work</i>								
1 Very satisfied	27	23	25	24	22	31	22	25
2	38	40	44	45	47	39	40	42
3	23	25	20	22	18	24	26	22
4	8	9	8	7	11	6	9	8
5 Very dissatisfied	4	3	4	2	1	0	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count	1021	(615)	(706)	(542)	(377)	(234)	(292)	3787
Arithmetic mean	2,2	2,3	2,2	2,2	2,2	2,1	2,3	2,2

Question G5: Altogether, to what extent are you satisfied with your current work? Scale of answers from 1 = very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 28 Links Between Study and Subsequent Employment and Work Perceived by Former ERASMUS Students - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent of employed graduates)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95	Non-Mobile graduates 1994/95	ERASMUS students 2000/01
High use of knowledge	67	44	47	61
Field of study the only possible/the best for area of work	+	31	39	41
Appropriate level	72	76	67	72
High satisfaction with current work	52	74	63	67

Table summarises three questions of the current evaluation study; Question G2: If you take into consideration your current work tasks altogether: To what extent do you use knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study? Question G3: How would you characterise the relationship between your field of study and your area of work? Question G5: Altogether, to what extent are you satisfied with your current work?
Source: Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005..

+ Different formulation or question not asked

In comparison to non-mobile students, formerly mobile ERASMUS students

- believe to have higher academic knowledge and skills and to be better prepared for employment and work than formerly non-mobile students (see Table 29),
- note often a positive effect of ERASMUS in obtaining a first job, some a positive effect on the types of work tasks and on average no positive impact on income level (see Table 30),
- are in a somewhat better position than non-mobile students regarding the links between education and work assignments and in general employment situation (see Table 31).

Competences of Former ERASMUS Students Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students in the View of ERASMUS Experts by Country of Expert

Table 29 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of their Competences Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students by Field of Study (percent "better"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.)	95	96	96	96	97	94	95	95
Foreign language proficiency	95	96	95	95	96	91	94	95
Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture)	91	90	93	91	91	90	92	91
Preparation for future employment and work	59	65	70	69	64	72	67	65
Academic knowledge and skills (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)	52	49	48	55	53	63	57	53
Count (n)	1254	(749)	(795)	(611)	(457)	(261)	(428)	4555

Question A21: At the time of return, how do you rate your knowledge and competences as compared to non-mobile students in the following areas? Scale of answers from 1 to 5; 1 = much better, 3 = equal, 5 = much worse.
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 30 Perceived Positive Impact of ERASMUS Study Period on Employment and Work - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 (surveyed 1993)	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95 (surveyed 2000)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 (surveyed 2005)
Obtaining first job	71	66	54
Type of work task involved	49	44	39
Income level	25	22	16

Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment? Scale of answers from 1 = very positive impact to 5 = very negative impact.
Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 31 Former ERASMUS Students' Current Employment Situation – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	Non-Mobile graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005
Employed, self employed	84	81	82	71
Study/training	7	12	7	14
Unemployed	4	3	5	6
Job mobility	*	67	58	53
Temporary contract	27	27	27	35
Part-time employment	10	7	10	10
Public sector	*	29	39	36
Research and HE	13	*	*	16

Summarising table about questions E1, E5, E6, E9 and E10; Question E1: What is your current major activity? Question E5: What is the type of your current contract? Question E6: Do you work full-time or part-time? Question E9: Do you work in the public or private sector? Question E10: In which economic sector are you currently working?
* Question not asked

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

4.9 International Dimensions of Employment and Work

18 percent of the employed former ERASMUS students surveyed had been regularly *employed abroad* – at least for some time – since graduation. This cannot be exactly compared but might be slightly lower than previously: 18 percent of the 1988/89 ERASMUS students were employed abroad five years after graduation and 20 percent of the former ERASMUS students who had graduated in 1994/94 were employed abroad during the first four years after graduation.

Of the employed former ERASMUS students surveyed,

- 48 percent had considered working abroad and
- 22 percent sought employment abroad (see Table 32).

This is higher than among formerly non-mobile students who had graduated in 1994/95 (40% and 10%), but clearly lower than on the part of former ERASMUS students who had graduated in 1994/95 (69% and 31%) and of 1988/89 ERASMUS students (39% applying for employment abroad).

Table 32 International Mobility of Former ERASMUS Students Since Graduation by Field of Study (percent; multiple responses)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
I considered working abroad	46	47	46	48	52	55	52	48
I sought employment abroad	19	21	23	25	24	15	24	22
I have actually received an offer to work abroad	12	10	16	19	14	15	10	14
I have actually had regular employment abroad since graduation	19	16	20	18	19	14	17	18
I have actually been sent abroad by my employer on work assignments	8	9	16	14	18	8	9	12
None of the above	27	26	22	24	21	22	24	24
Total	131	128	144	148	148	127	136	137
Count (n)	(938)	(574)	(691)	(532)	(360)	(232)	(283)	3610

Question F2: Did you have international mobility experiences since graduation? Please consider the country immediately prior to the ERASMUS supported period as the home country in your responses (multiple reply possible)? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Asked “What is the *scope of operations of your organisation?*”, half of the employed former 2000/01 ERASMUS students answered “international”, almost one third “national” or less than one quarter each “regional” and “local” (see Table 33). An international scope was reported by about three quarters of former students from Ireland and Slovakia, but less than one third from Greece.

Table 33 Scope of Operations of Organisation of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent; multiple responses)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Local	33	22	10	17	20	43	30	23
Regional	24	19	12	18	20	42	17	20
National	28	38	28	32	36	24	33	31
International	41	46	70	60	55	11	49	50
Total	126	126	120	128	131	120	129	125
Count (n)	(892)	(549)	(680)	(527)	(348)	(224)	(265)	3485

Question E13: What is the scope of operations of your organisation? (multiple reply possible)? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

59 percent reported that their company/organisation frequently undertakes business or has contact to other countries, and 33 percent that these activities are frequent with the host country of their study period abroad (see Table 34).

Table 34 Business Contacts with Other Countries of Organisation of Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent "high extent"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
With other countries in general	51	55	74	67	65	32	59	59
With the host country of your ERASMUS study period abroad	36	30	39	36	31	15	31	33
With the host country of other study period abroad (if any)	28	27	39	31	34	17	29	30
Count (n)	(903)	(565)	(681)	(520)	(355)	(221)	(260)	3505

Question F5: To what extent does the organisation, institution or company with which you are associated do business or have contact with other countries? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

On average, the employed former ERASMUS students surveyed considered 31 percent of their *work* to be *embedded into an international context*. This, in contrast, was highest on average for former students from Greece (47%).

The majority of employed respondents consider their *international competences as important for doing their current work*:

- 45 percent professional knowledge of other countries,
- 57 percent knowledge and understanding of international differences in culture and society,
- 66 percent working with people from different cultural backgrounds, and
- 69 percent communicating in foreign languages (see Table 35).

Table 35 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of the Importance of International Competences by Field of Study (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge)	52	46	52	37	31	32	47	45
Knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc.	68	56	60	48	40	50	58	57
Working with people from different cultural backgrounds	69	61	71	65	60	67	69	66
Communicating in foreign languages	72	63	74	71	66	61	72	69
Count (n)	(930)	(570)	(684)	(530)	(357)	(226)	(273)	3570

Question F4: How important do you consider the following competences for doing your current work? Scale of answers from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

These proportions are 4-10 percent higher than among former ERASMUS students graduating in 1994/95, thus suggesting a growing relevance of international competences over time for the former ERASMUS students. The survey of 1994/95

graduates had shown as well, as one might expect, that these international competences were substantially more important for graduates having been mobile during the course of their study than for graduates not having been internationally mobile during the course of study.

Among 2000/01 ERASMUS students those from all Science and Engineering fields considered these types of international competences as less relevant for their work than those from Humanities and Social Science fields.

Up to 39 percent of the respondents each had frequent *work tasks related to the ERASMUS host country* (see Table 36):

- 38 percent using the language of the ERASMUS host country in work-related activities,
- 38 percent as well using the host country language in writing and reading,
- 25 percent using firsthand professional knowledge about the ERASMUS host country,
- 24 percent using firsthand knowledge of the culture and society of the ERASMUS host country,
- 14 percent travel to the ERASMUS host country.

These proportions are slightly lower than those reported by former generations of ERASMUS students.

Table 36 ERASMUS-Related Work Task of Former ERASMUS Students – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (% of employed graduates)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005
Using the language of the host country orally	47	42	38
Using the language of the host country in reading and writing	47	40	38
Using firsthand professional knowledge of host country	30	25	25
Using first hand knowledge of host country culture/society	30	32	24
Professional travel to host country	17	18	14

Survey 2005 Question F6: To what extent do the responsibilities of your work involve the following? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005

It is interesting to note that the distribution of work tasks related to the ERASMUS host country according to field of study by no means corresponds to the above named professional relevance of visible international competences. Work tasks related to

ERASMUS host countries are not only frequently named by graduates from Language fields, but also above average by graduates from Education and Engineering.

In sum, of the former ERASMUS students

- more than half each considered study abroad and foreign language proficiency as important recruitment criteria (see Table 37),
- more than half each work in an internationally active organisation and view knowledge and understanding of other cultures, societies and languages as important for their work,
- almost 20 percent worked abroad and more than 22 percent were sent abroad (see Table 38).

This is far more frequently reported by former ERASMUS students than by formerly non-mobile students. But the number of ERASMUS students reporting international dimensions of employment and work declined somewhat in recent years (see Table 38).

Table 37 Selected Recruitment Criteria of Employers in the View of Former Students – a Comparison with Previous Surveys

	ERASMUS students 1988/89	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95	Non-Mobile graduates 1994/95	ERASMUS students 2000/01
Field of study	+	73	70	74
Main subject/specialisation	60	55	59	59
Grades	49	35	32	35
Practical/Work experience	+	45	43	51
Reputation of HEI	27	24	20	33
Foreign Language Proficiency	64	60	17	60
Experience abroad	(53)	56	5	53
Personality	81	81	73	83

Question in the current study: Question D6: how important, according to your perception, were the following aspects for your employer in recruiting you for your initial employment after graduation, if applicable? Scale of answers from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

+ Different formulation or question not asked

Table 38 International Dimensions of Employment and Work of Former ERASMUS Students – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (%)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95	Non-Mobile graduates 1994/95	ERASMUS students 2000/01
International scope of employing organisation	+	+	+	51
Frequent contacts of employing organisation with other countries	71	+	+	59
Employed abroad since graduation	18	20	5	18
Sent abroad by employer	+	22	10	12
Professional knowledge of other countries important	+	40	20	45
Understanding of different cultures and society important	+	52	32	57
Working with people from different culture important	+	62	43	67
Communicating in foreign language important	+	60	30	70

Summarising table about several questions (here quoted based on the current study); Question F2: Did you have international mobility experience since graduation? Please consider the country immediately prior to the ERASMUS supported period as the home country in your responses (multiply reply possible); Question F4: How important do you consider the following competences for doing your current work?

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005

+ Different formulation or question not asked

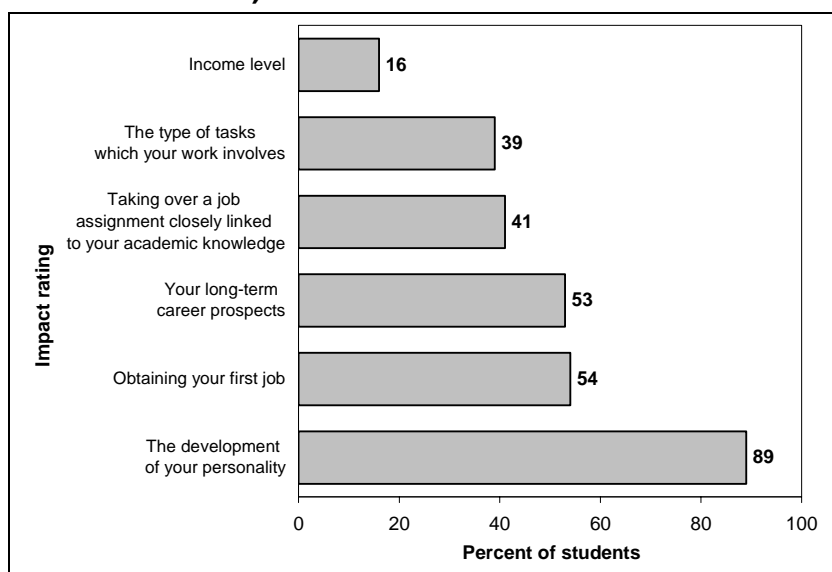
4.10 Perceived Impact and Assessment of Study Abroad

Asked about the impact of their study abroad experience on their employment and work (see Figure 17 and Table 39),

- 54 percent stated that it was helpful for obtaining a first job,
- 39 percent noted a positive impact as regards their work tasks,
- but only 16 percent viewed their study abroad experience as having led to a higher income level – as many as those perceiving a lower income level as the consequence.

These ratings of impact were less positive than those stated by former ERASMUS students who had graduated in 1995 (66%, 44% and 22%) and even less positively than those by 1988/89 ERASMUS students (71%, 49% and 25%). One might conclude: The more participation in temporary study abroad grows, the less it seems to make a difference for employment and work.

Figure 17 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of the Impact of Study Abroad (percent "positive impact"; responses 1 and 2)



Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment? Scale of answers from 1 = very positive impact to 5 = very negative impact. Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 39 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of the Impact of Study Abroad by Field of Study (percent "positive impact"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
The development of your personality	90	89	89	90	88	89	90	89
Obtaining your first job	53	50	62	59	55	40	50	54
Your long-term career prospects	47	55	62	55	53	46	48	53
Taking over a job assignment closely linked to your academic knowledge	42	37	40	46	39	32	40	41
The type of tasks which your work involves	45	34	37	38	35	35	42	39
Income level	14	16	22	19	13	10	15	16
Count (n)	1102	(655)	(731)	(560)	(402)	(241)	(306)	3997

Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment? Scale of answers from 1 = very positive impact to 5 = very negative impact. Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

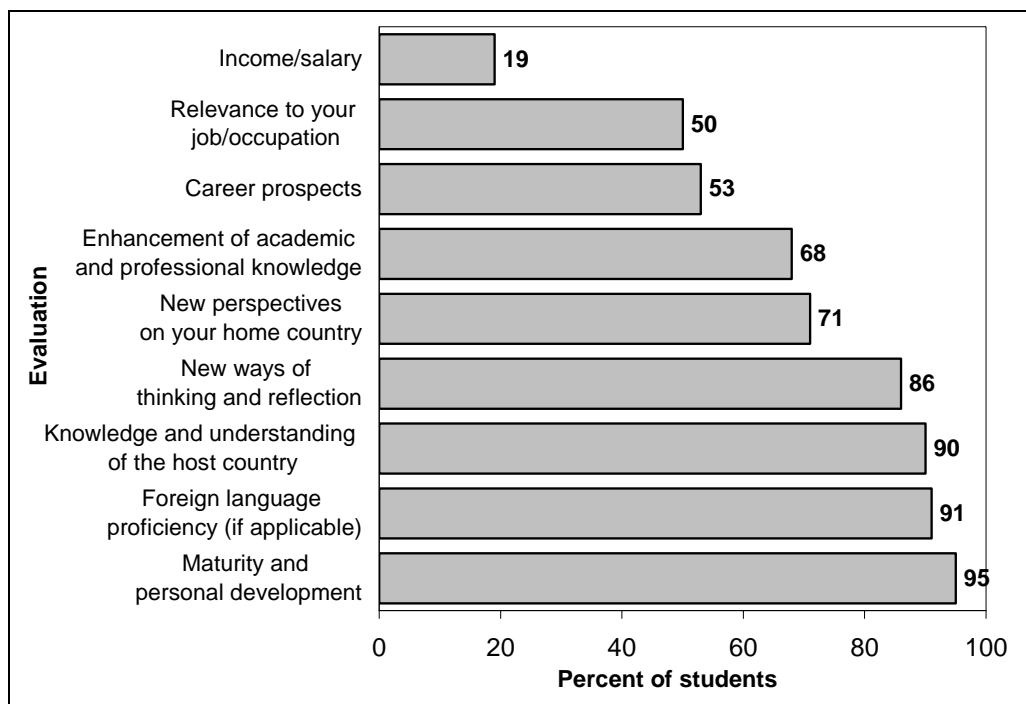
On the other hand, a high proportion of the 2000/01 students note a substantial positive impact on other dimensions not addressed in the same way in the previous surveys:

- Personality development (89%),
- Long-term career prospects (53%)
- Taking over an assignment closely linked to one's academic knowledge (41%).

Finally asked about the extent to which the 2000/01 ERASMUS students view their study abroad experience as worthwhile regarding (see Figure 18 and Table 40),

- Maturity and personal development: 95 percent (as compared to 93% on the part of former ERASMUS students graduating in 1994/95),
- Foreign language proficiency: 91 percent (86%),
- Knowledge and understanding of the host country: 90 percent (87%),
- New ways of thinking and reflection: 86 percent (77%),
- New perspectives of your home country: 71 percent (73%),
- Enhancement of academic and professional knowledge: 68 percent (69%),
- Career prospects: 53 percent (55%), and
- Income/salary: 19 percent (21%).

Figure 18 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Study Abroad (percent "worthwhile"; responses 1 and 2)



Question H2: From your point of view today, to what extent do you consider it was worthwhile for you to have studied abroad with regard to the following? Scale of answers from 1 = extremely worthwhile to 5 = not at all worthwhile.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 40 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Study Abroad by Field of Study (percent "worthwhile"; responses 1 and 2)

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Maturity and personal development	95	97	96	93	94	95	96	95
Foreign language proficiency (if applicable)	93	94	93	90	88	85	91	91
Knowledge and understanding of the host country	92	91	89	88	88	88	91	90
New ways of thinking and reflection	85	87	87	88	85	84	87	86
New perspectives on your home country	72	74	77	71	70	56	63	71
Enhancement of academic and professional knowledge	73	64	63	69	69	71	70	68
Career prospects	46	54	65	56	55	39	51	53
Relevance to your job/occupation	54	45	51	52	46	42	49	50
Income/salary	16	19	28	24	17	8	16	19
Count (n)	1184	(692)	(755)	(572)	(431)	(248)	(324)	4206

Question H2: From your point of view today, to what extent do you consider it was worthwhile for you to have studied abroad with regard to the following? Scale of answers from 1 = extremely worthwhile to 5 = not at all worthwhile.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

ERASMUS students note the highest value of study abroad as contributing to personality development and reflective thinking as well as enhancing the specific skills related to study abroad, i.e. foreign language proficiency and knowledge of the host country. The general academic and professional value is viewed somewhat more cautiously. It is interesting to note that the former aspects are viewed even more positively by the latest ERASMUS cohort surveyed than by ERASMUS students of earlier years, while the latter aspects are rated similarly.

Below-average impact and value of study abroad varies little by field of study with the exception of negative ratings by graduates from medicine. However, substantial differences exist between host countries. With some notable exceptions those former ERASMUS students rated the impact and value less highly who spent their study period abroad in Central and Eastern European countries or in Southern European countries.

The comparison with former studies shows that there are substantial change of study conditions and provisions during the ERASMUS period (see Table 41 to Table 45), but there are substantial changes by home and host country. Recognition/credits transfer increased for some time in the 1990s, but decreased recently.

Table 41 **Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Selected Modes of Teaching and Learning Emphasized by the Host Institution in Selected Host Countries (percent "high"; responses 1 and 2)**

	FR	ES	DE	UK
Facts and instrumental knowledge	56	56	58	52
Theories	49	47	55	54
Attitudes, socio-communication skills	40	36	46	55
Independent learning	48	47	69	69
Teacher-centred	58	50	40	44
Choice	50	57	70	59
Process/problem-based learning	38	35	47	50
Out-of-class student-staff communication	26	31	37	42

Question A13: To what extent were the following modes of teaching and learning emphasised by your host institution of higher education and its teachers. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 42 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Academic Level of Courses at the Host Institution as Compared to the Home Institution – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (average percent of courses)

	ERASMUS students 1990/91 (S)	ERASMUS students 1998/99 (S)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 (R)
More demanding	22	22	22
Equally demanding	50	47	48
Less demanding	28	31	30

Question A20: Approximately what percentage of the courses you took while abroad were academically more or less demanding than courses which you would have taken at the home institution during the same period? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

S = View of students after return

R = Retrospective view of graduates

Table 43 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Selected Problems During Study Period Abroad – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 (S)	ERASMUS students 1990/91 (S)	ERASMUS students 1998/99 (S)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 (R)
Accommodation	22	22	23	24
Financial matters	21	21	20	22
Administrative matters	21	18	23	19
Obtaining credits/credit transfer	*	18	19	16
Different teaching/learning methods	17	13	13	15
Teachers meeting/helping students	15	12	11	13
Taking courses in foreign language	10	10	11	9
Too high academic level	8	3	6	5

Question A12: To what extent did you have significant problems in the following areas during your study period abroad? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

S = View of students after return

R = Retrospective view of graduates

Table 44 Host Countries Where Former ERASMUS Students Faced Relatively High and Low Problems during Study Period Abroad

	High	Low
Accommodation	IR, IC, IT, PO, ES	SE, FI, AT, NO, CZ, DE, PL
Financial matters	DK	CZ, PL, RO, HU
Administrative matters	IC, IT	SK, FI, SE
Obtaining credits/credit transfer	SK, IC	RO, CZ
Different teaching/learning methods	RO, FR, IT	PL, HU, IC, CZ, SK
Teachers meeting/helping students	ES	CZ

Question A12: To what extent did you have significant problems in the following areas during your study period abroad? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Table 45 Former ERASMUS Students' Assessment of Recognition of ERASMUS-Supported Study – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 (S)	ERASMUS students 1988/89 (R)	ERASMUS students 1990/91 (S)	ERASMUS students 1998/99 (S)	ERASMUS students 2000/01 (R)
Degree of recognition	77	*	74	81	73
Degree of correspondence	73	*	72	80	74
Non-prolongation	53	59	54	45	59

Table summarises several questions; Question A16: Overall, to what extent were the academic studies you actually undertook successfully at the host institution recognised (granted credit or otherwise considered equivalent) upon return by the home institution? Question A17: To what extent did the workload of your studies at the host institution actually correspond to the amount of the typical workload expected at your home institution during a corresponding period? Question A18: Did the study period abroad prolonged the total duration of your studies?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

S = View of students after return

R = Retrospective view of graduates

* Not asked

4.11 Concluding Remarks

The objective of the student survey was to follow the first years of employment in the lives of the ERASMUS cohort 2000/01 and to analyse if their study period abroad had any impact on their transition to work, their early career and their tasks and position in the organisation.

The survey reveals that two thirds of the ERASMUS students in the academic year 2000/01 are employed nearly five years after their study period abroad. Of this group, two thirds were employed permanently at the time of the survey. Comparison to other graduate surveys shows that former ERASMUS students seem to somewhat more frequently change their employers in their early years of employment than formerly non-mobile students.

The *transition to work* of the questioned students could be described as relatively smooth. Even so the questioned former ERASMUS students started the job search comparatively late; they spent a short time span to seek for their first regular job (average 3.7 months). The students self assessed their international experience has very helpful in the *recruitment process*. In particular students in the area of foreign languages, business studies and engineering stated that their foreign language proficiency and their experience abroad were important recruitment criteria. The self-assessment reflects these results. *Former ERASMUS students note often a positive effect of ERASMUS in their first job.*

Even so, the respondents retrospectively assessed their competences at time of graduation quite positively; their job requirements do not match their level of competences but are described as higher (with the exemption of foreign language proficiency). Thus, in comparison to non-mobile students they assess themselves as having a *higher academic knowledge and skills and being better prepared for employment.*

The majority of former ERASMUS students perceive also a *close link between study and subsequent employment and work.* A comparison of the survey results with former surveys reveals also that former mobile ERASMUS students are in a somewhat better position than non-mobile students regarding the links between education and work assignments. Yet, it can not be concluded that an ERASMUS study period abroad leads automatically to a high-flying career. No significant impact on income level can be reported. In contrast, former ERASMUS students have a *high probability to work in an international work environment*: 69% are communicating in a foreign language during work, 50% are working in an international organisation and 18% have been regularly employed abroad. The comparison to earlier studies suggests a growing relevance of international competences over time for former ERASMUS students.

Overall, ERASMUS students note the highest value of study abroad as contributing to personality development and reflective thinking as well as enhancing the specific skills related to study abroad, i.e. foreign language proficiency and knowledge of the host country. The general academic and professional value is viewed somewhat more cautiously. Still, it can be concluded that the self-assessment of the former ERASMUS students of the academic year 2000/01 reveals a positive impact of ERASMUS student

mobility on the professional value of students and graduates. Here professional value refers mainly to the improved international competences, a smooth transition to work, and the probability to work in an international working environment. Yet, the overall ratings of professional impact were less positively than those stated in former studies. It could be concluded, that the higher participation in study abroad programmes reduces the impact for the individual.

5 The Employers' View of the Professional Value of Temporary Study in Another European Country

5.1 Introduction

An employers' survey was undertaken in the study on the professional value of ERASMUS mobility in order to include those who are the best possible source of information concerning the criteria of recruitment and utilisation of knowledge in various departments of the organisation as well as issues of the transition from higher education to employment. Their perceptions of the competences, careers and work tasks of formerly mobile students, therefore, are a valuable contribution to an overall assessment of the impact of temporary study in another country during the course of study on subsequent employment and work.

The responses to the questionnaires on the professional value of ERASMUS study periods abroad for the individual student allow us to extend the triangulation analysis and to compare the views of employers with those of the former students and the university leaders. Moreover, the employer survey provides information about possible mismatches between the employers' expectations and the European and international learning in higher education.

The following themes are addressed in the employers' survey (see Figure 19):

- basic information on the employing organisation and their staff, including their international activities,
- actual numbers of university graduates recruited and former ERASMUS students and other internationally mobile students among them,
- modes and criteria of recruiting university graduates,
- perceived competences of former ERASMUS students,
- positions and assignments of former ERASMUS students,
- demands of the organisations with respect to competences potentially fostered by study in another country,
- perceived match or mismatch with supply and suggestions for the change of European and international activities of the universities.

Figure 19 Themes of the Employers' Survey

The Organisation	Type, size, scope of operations, sector of economic, the employee's international experience		
Recruitment of young graduate	Ways of recruiting young graduates	Job requirement	Recruitment of former ERASMUS students
Work and competences of graduates	International work tasks	Competences and assignments of former ERASMUS students	Position and salary

The employer survey addressed two target groups

- Organisations that employ former ERASMUS students. As neither the agencies administering the ERASMUS programmes nor the institutions of higher education participating know the employers' addresses, the formerly mobile ERASMUS students were asked to state their employer's address in the questionnaire. Actually, about one third of the respondents provided their employers' addresses. The questionnaire survey eventually was sent to about 1,500 addresses traced that way.
- In addition, in order to address a higher number of employers, the questionnaire was sent to 4,500 employers in European countries without any prior knowledge whether they employed any former ERASMUS students. The addresses were sampled for an address database of employers in Europe. A stratified sampling strategy was employed taking into account by country, economic sector and size of the organisation.

The questionnaire of the employer survey was translated into 23 official languages of the European Union. Only Icelandic employers were sent the English and the Danish version, because the number of organisations sampled was small and proficiency of foreign languages could be taken for granted.

For the 10 pages-questionnaire, an attractive layout (colourful, good quality of paper, etc.) was chosen in order to increase the return. This was considered necessary, because response rates of employer survey tend to be lower than those of academic profession surveys or graduate surveys. In contrast to the other surveys undertaken, no online version of the questionnaire was provided assuming that a paper questionnaire could be more easily circulated within the organisation if need arises that questionnaires have to be responded by different persons.

The questionnaire was sent to the first target group mainly in the end of February 2006 and to the second target group mainly in the beginning of April 2006. The subsequent

analysis is based on 312 responses received by May 10, 2006. At that time, 10 percent of the employers of the first target group and two percent of the second target group had responded. The net response rate was 6%.

Table 46 and Table 47 compare the characteristics of the employing organisations of the graduate survey and the employer survey. No substantial differences can be observed according to economic sector and size of organisation.

Table 46 Economic Sector of Organisations Responding by Type of Survey (percent)

Economic sector	Type of survey	
	Student survey	Employer survey
Public sector	38	32
Private non-profit sector	7	10
Private profit sector	53	55
Other	3	4
Total	100	100

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Student and Employer Survey 2005/2006.

Table 47 Size of the Organisation by Type of Survey (percent)

Number of employees	Type of survey	
	Student survey	Employer survey
up to 9	13	16
10 to 49	16	15
50 to 99	8	14
100 to 249	10	13
250 to 999	14	18
1000 and more	38	24
Total	100	100

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Student and Employer Survey 2005/2006.

5.2 The Profile of the Organisations

55 percent of the organisations participating in the survey are private, 32 percent public and 10 percent non-profit organisations (see Table 46). More than half of the organisations have less than 250 employees (see Table 47). About two thirds are located in Western European countries and about one third in Central and Eastern European countries.

Table 48 show that about one tenth each of the responding employing organisations are higher education institutions and organisation primarily active in research and development. Most organisations responding are private-sector service organisations or public-sector service organisations. Among all public organisations higher education (27%), research and development (14%) and health (13%) are most frequent, among

non-profit organisations health (25%) as well as research and development (21%) and among private organisations manufacturing (11%).

Table 48 Economic Sector of Employers by Kind of Organisation (percent)

	Kind of organisation				Total
	Public	Non-profit	Private	Other	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3	0	3	9	3
Mining and quarrying	0	0	1	0	1
Manufacturing	0	0	11	0	6
Electricity, gas and water supply	0	0	3	9	2
Construction	0	0	6	0	3
Wholesale and retail trade, repair, hotels, restaurants	0	0	6	0	3
Transport, storage and communication	1	0	4	9	3
Financial intermediation (e.g. banking, insurance)	1	0	7	9	4
Computer and related activities (consultancy and supply)	2	0	6	0	4
Research and development	14	21	4	9	9
Real estate, renting and other business activities	1	0	3	0	2
Legal, accounting, book-keeping, auditing, business consultancy	0	0	8	0	4
Architectural and engineering activities/consultancy	1	4	3	0	2
Other commercial services	0	0	8	0	4
Foreign affairs, justice, public security	3	0	1	0	1
Other public administration (e.g. general public service activities)	10	0	0	0	3
Primary schools	6	4	0	0	2
Secondary schools, vocational schools	8	0	1	9	3
Higher education	27	11	1	0	10
Adult and other education	3	4	2	0	2
Health	13	25	2	9	8
Social work	2	11	0	0	2
Membership organisations (e.g. professional or religious organisation)	0	4	0	0	0
Culture, sport, entertainment	0	0	4	0	2
Other services	4	18	18	36	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(93)	(28)	(160)	(11)	(292)

Question A7: In which economic sector is your organisation predominantly active? Please mark one single item only.
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

Table 49 shows that the majority of organisations employ less than 50 higher education-trained staff. Half of the organisations employ less than 10 recent graduates (recruited during the last five years).

Table 49 **Number of Employees and Graduates in the Organisation (percent of employers)**

	Number of persons							Total
	0	1 to 9	10 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 249	250 to 999	1000 and more	
<i>Total organisation</i>								
Number of employees	3	13	15	14	13	18	24	100
Number of graduates from institutions of higher education	5	24	27	10	13	10	12	100
Number of young graduates	9	41	25	10	7	4	4	100
<i>Own location</i>								
Number of employees in	8	22	22	15	12	10	12	100
Number of graduates from institutions of higher education	12	33	29	7	8	7	5	100
Number of young graduates in own location	16	48	22	5	4	5	1	100

Question A3: How many persons are employed in your organisation and, if applicable, in your own location?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

Two thirds of the organisations indicated that they recruited during the last five years graduates with international study or work experience including foreign graduates. Among them, we note diverse paths of mobility:

Young graduates being citizens of the country of the organisation

... with international study or work experience	63 %
... who graduated abroad	31 %

Foreign young graduates (33 %)

... who graduated in their home country <i>with</i> international study or work experience	23 %
... who graduated in their home country <i>without</i> international study or work experience	19 %
... who graduated in your country	18 %
... who graduated in a third country	9 %

5.3 Recruitment of Young Graduates

Employers appreciating internationally experienced and competent graduates obviously will take those dimensions into account in the process of recruiting new staff. Therefore they were asked to state the role played by international experience among the various recruitment criteria. In addition they were asked whether they prefer graduates having opted for certain modes of mobility.

Many employer surveys have shown that both the academic knowledge and personality are the most important criteria of selection among graduates to be recruited. Table 50 suggests that the employers responding to this questionnaire survey name computer skills as well as foreign language proficiency almost as frequently as important recruitment criteria.

About one third of the responding organisations each put a strong weight on three aspects of international experiences addressed in the questionnaire:

- Work experience abroad during the course of study (34%),
- Study experience abroad (30%),
- Work experience prior to study (24%).

Altogether, employers from Central and Eastern European Countries place a stronger emphasis on international competences in recruiting graduates than employers from Western European countries.

Table 50 Importance of Different Recruitment Criteria in the View of Employers by European Region (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)

	European Region		Total
	Western European	Central and Eastern European	
Personality	91	89	90
Field of study	83	85	84
Main subject/specialisation	73	77	74
Foreign language proficiency	62	87	70
Computer skills	65	87	72
Practical/work experience acquired during course of study	53	65	57
Recommendations/references from third persons	45	47	46
Grades	41	41	41
Reputation of the institution of higher education	29	46	34
Work experience abroad	27	48	34
Study abroad period	25	41	30
Practical/work experience acquired prior to course of study	26	20	24
Count (n)	(199)	(92)	(291)

Question B2: How important are the following aspects in recruiting young graduates for your organisation? Scale of answers from 1 = 'very important' to 5 = 'not at all important'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

The former ERASMUS students themselves had been asked as well how important, according to their perception, various criteria had been for their employers to recruit them. The criteria addressed in the questions were phrased somewhat differently. Also, we have to bear in mind that the employers were not asked about the criteria employed in recruiting internationally mobile graduates, but in recruiting all graduates. Bearing in mind these differences, the comparison provided in Table 51 suggests that the former ERASMUS students do not seem to exaggerate the relevance of international experience for the employers' recruitment decisions.

Table 51 Importance of Different Recruitment Criteria of Employers in the View of Graduates and Employers (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)

	Former ERASMUS Students' view	Employers' view
Personality	83	90
Field of study	74	84
Main subject/specialisation	59	74
Computer skills	45	72
Foreign language proficiency	60	70
Practical/work experience acquired during course of study	51	57
Recommendations/references from third persons	34	46
Grades	35	41
Reputation of the institution of higher education	33	34
Work experience abroad ¹	-	34
Experiences abroad ²	53	-
Study abroad period ¹	-	30
ERASMUS study abroad period ²	37	-
Practical/work experience acquired prior to course of study	-	24

¹ This answer was not included in the Graduate Survey.

² This answer was not included in the Employer Survey.

Employer Survey question B2: How important are the following aspects in recruiting young graduates for your organisation? Scale of answers from 1 = 'very important' to 5 = 'not at all important'.

Graduate Survey question D6: How important, according to your perception, were the following aspects for your employer in recruiting you for your initial employment after graduation, if applicable? Scale of answers from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Student and Employer Survey 2005/2006.

Employers appreciating study periods abroad in their selection among candidates were asked to rate the importance of different characteristics of the study period abroad. Actually, they emphasised more strongly

- the language spoken during the study period abroad (73%),
- the subject area studied abroad (60%), and
- the length of study period abroad (50%).

In addition, they took into consideration the specific host country of the study period abroad (43%), the reputation of the host higher education institution (38%), while the mode of mobility, e.g. organisation of the period abroad: exchange program and self-organisation (15%), and other activities during the period abroad (14%) seldom seemed to be important. In all respects, employers from Central and Eastern Europe considered study abroad more important than employers from Western Europe (see Table 52).

Table 52 Employers Rating of the Importance of Characteristics of the Study Period Abroad by European Region (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)

	European Region		Total
	Western European	Central and Eastern European	
Language spoken during the study period abroad	68	83	73
The subject area during the study period abroad	57	67	60
Length of study period abroad	46	58	50
The specific host country of the study period abroad	37	55	43
Reputation of the host higher education institution	33	49	38
Mode of mobility (organisation of the period abroad: exchange program, self-organisation)	9	28	15
Other activities during the period abroad	11	23	14
Count (n)	(96)	(46)	(142)

Question B3: If study periods abroad play a role in the recruiting process: how important are the following characteristics of the study period abroad? Scale of answers from 1 = 'very important' to 5 = 'not at all important'. Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

The relevance of the modes of mobility was further elaborated by a specific question, which explicitly asked the employers actually taking into account international experience in their selection among applicants to state the arrangements for mobility they prefer in recruiting formerly mobile graduates. Actually, 57 percent of these employers stated preferences. The majority of them preferred students going abroad in the framework of ERASMUS, other organised exchange programmes and other scholarship programmes

Table 53 Employers' Preference of Modes of Mobility by European Region (percent; multiple responses)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
Self-organisation of the study period abroad	16	18	16
Study period abroad as part of an organised exchange programme	20	51	30
Study period abroad as part of the ERASMUS programme	32	59	41
Study period abroad as part of an scholarship programme	29	45	34
Study period abroad as part of other programmes	3	8	5
No preference of such kind	50	27	43
Other:	3	0	2
Total	153	208	171
Count (n)	(103)	(49)	(152)

Question B4: The modes of mobility can widely vary. Please state the modes you prefer when recruiting formerly mobile graduates Multiple reply possible.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

5.4 International Work Tasks of Graduates

Young graduates from institutions of higher education *with international experience* are much more often engaged with international work tasks (52%) than those *without international experience* (28%). One third of the employers stated that young graduates from institutions of higher education in general have often international work tasks. These results confirm the finding from the graduate survey that persons studying abroad are more likely to be subsequently assigned international work tasks than those who were not mobile in the course of their study.

Table 54 International Work Tasks of Young Graduates in the View of Employers by European Region (percent "often"; responses 1 and 2)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
Young graduates from institutions of higher education <i>with</i> international experience	51	52	52
Young graduates from institutions of higher education in general	32	39	34
Young graduates from institutions of higher education <i>without</i> international experience	25	34	28
Count (n)	(149)	(81)	(230)

Question C3: How often are young graduates from institutions of higher education in your organisation engaged with international work tasks? Scale of answers from 1 = 'very often' to 5 = 'not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

The relevance of preparation for international work tasks can be underlined by the fact that three quarters of the organisations do business or have contact with other countries. This holds true most for large organisations, but even 62 percent of the small organisations are internationally active.

Table 55 Employers' Business or Contact with Other Countries by Size of the Organization (percent)

	Size of the organisation			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Yes	62	83	90	78
No	38	17	10	22
Total	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(89)	(133)	(71)	(293)

Question C1: Does your organisation/institution/company do business or have contact with other countries?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

Employers were asked to state the extent to which European/international assignments are given to young graduates *with* and *without* international experiences. Actually, internationally experienced graduates are more often expected than non-mobile ones to

- use foreign languages in conversations and work-related activities (86% as compared to 42%),
- work with colleagues/clients from other countries (75% versus 36%),
- use information about other countries, European/international relations etc. (64% versus 28%),
- travel professionally to other countries (61% versus 30%), and
- be sent abroad for extended work assignments (45% versus 14%).

Table 56 Kind of International Work Tasks of Young Graduates with Respect to Their International Experience in the View of Employers (percent "high extent"; responses 1 and 2)

	Young graduates	
	<i>with</i> international experience	<i>without</i> international experience
Using foreign languages in conversations and work-related activities	86	42
Working with colleagues/clients from other countries	75	36
Using information about other countries, European/international relations etc.	64	28
Professional travel to other countries	61	30
Being sent abroad for extended work assignments	45	14
Count (n)	(190)	(260)

Question C9: To what extent do young graduates take over the following European/international aspects in their work assignments? Please answer this question both for young graduates with international experience (A) and for those without international experience (B). If you do not employ any young graduate with international experience, please do only answer part B. Scale of answers from 1 = 'to a very high extent' to 5 = 'not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

As Table 57 shows, employers from Central and Eastern European countries assign both their staff who had been mobile during the course of study and who had not been more frequently mobile with international work tasks than employers from Western Europe.

Table 57 International Work Tasks of Young Graduates in the View of Employers by European Region (percent "high extent"; responses 1 and 2)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
<i>Young Graduates <u>With</u> International Experiences</i>			
Using foreign languages in conversations and work-related activities	83	94	86
Using information about other countries, European/international relations etc.	59	73	64
Working with colleagues/clients from other countries	69	85	75
Being sent abroad for extended work assignments	37	60	45
Professional travel to other countries	55	74	61
Count (n)	(126)	(64)	(190)
<i>Young Graduates <u>Without</u> International Experiences</i>			
Using foreign languages in conversations and work-related activities	37	53	42
Using information about other countries, European/international relations etc.	26	33	28
Working with colleagues/clients	34	41	36
Being sent abroad for extended work assignments	13	15	14
Professional travel to other countries	25	42	30
Count (n)	(179)	(81)	(260)

Question C9: To what extent do young graduates take over the following European/international aspects in their work assignments? Please answer this question both for young graduates with international experience (A) and for those without international experience (B). If you do not employ any young graduate with international experience, please do only answer part B. Scale of answers from 1 = 'to a very high extent' to 5 = 'not at all'.
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

5.5 Competences and Work

Internationally experienced graduates had been recruited in many cases because they are expected to have attained higher "international competences" than non-mobile ones, and possibly might have been recruited supposing they have superior competences in other areas as well as the result of having lived and studied abroad. Actually, employers were asked to rate the competences of both internationally experienced young graduates and of those without international experience. As Table 58 shows, employers rate *young graduates with international experience by far more superior to those without international experience, as far as "international competences" are concerned:*

- Foreign language proficiency (88% versus 48%),
- Knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc. (76% versus 28%),

- Ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds (76% versus 40%),
- Professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge) (59% versus 16%).

But they also consider various general competences to be more strongly represented among the internationally experienced young graduates than among young graduates without international experiences. A substantial difference in these respects is observed for

- Adaptability (81% versus 57%),
- Initiative (79% versus 62%),
- Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence (75% versus 57%),
- Written communication skills (70% versus 58%),
- Analytical competences (70% versus 59%),
- Problem-solving ability (70% versus 58%),
- Planning, co-ordinating and organising (67% versus 50%).

Table 58 **Employers' Rating of Competences of Young Graduates with Respect to Their International Experience (percent "high extent"; responses 1 and 2)**

	Young graduates	
	<i>with</i> international experience	<i>without</i> international experience
<i>International competences</i>		
Foreign language proficiency	88	48
Knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc.	76	28
Ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds	76	40
Professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge)	59	16
<i>Knowledge and methods</i>		
Computer skills	69	66
Field-specific knowledge of methods	64	54
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	62	58
<i>General competences</i>		
Adaptability	81	57
Initiative	79	62
Getting personally involved	79	67
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	75	57
Analytical competences	70	59
Problem-solving ability	70	58
Written communication skills	70	58
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	67	50
Loyalty, integrity	66	62
Power of concentration	63	59
Accuracy, attention to detail	59	57
Applying rules and regulations	58	52
Count (n)	(187)	(250)

Question C4a: Please rate the competences of the young graduates in your organisation. To what extent do they have competences in the following areas on average? Please answer this question both for the group of young graduates with international experience and for the group of young graduates without international experience. Scale of answers from 1 = 'to a very high extent' to 5 = 'not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

As Table 59 shows, the employers rate the competences of internationally experienced graduates by and large as favourably as the former ERASMUS students rated their competences at the time of graduation. In some respects, the ratings on the part of the employers are more positive than those on the part of the former students, for example the foreign language proficiency, but in other respects less positive, notably "field-specific theoretical knowledge" "accuracy" and "power of concentration".

Table 59 **Employers' Rating of Competences of Young Graduates With International Experience by Employers and Self-rating of Competences by Graduates (percent "high extent"; responses 1 and 2)**

	Employers Rating of competences	ERASMUS Students Self- rating of competences
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	62	77
Field-specific knowledge of methods	64	64
Foreign language proficiency	88	78
Computer skills	69	57
Analytical competences	70	73
Problem-solving ability	70	75
Initiative	79	71
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	75	70
Power of concentration	63	76
Accuracy, attention to detail	59	74
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	67	71
Applying rules and regulations	58	62
Loyalty, integrity	66	78
Getting personally involve	79	78
Written communication skill	70	77
Adaptability	81	83
Count (n)	(187)	(4342)

Student Questionnaire: Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Employer Questionnaire: Question C4: Please rate the competences of the young graduates in your organisation. To what extent do they have competences in the following areas on average?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Employers 2005/06.

Employers from small and medium-size organisations rated the competences of young graduates with international experiences in the area of "computer skills", "adaptability" and "analytical competences" higher than those of big organisations. In contrast, their field-specific theoretical knowledge was rated lower in small organisations.

Table 60 Employers' Rating of Selected Competences of Young Graduates With International Experience by Size of the Organization (percent "high extent"; responses 1 and 2)

	Size of the organisation			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Adaptability	94	77	75	81
Getting personally involved	85	83	67	79
Computer skills	80	75	50	69
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	49	68	63	62
Analytical competences	80	73	56	70
Written communication skills	76	71	62	70
Problem-solving ability	76	71	62	70
Loyalty, integrity	86	63	50	66
Power of concentration	73	69	44	63
Accuracy, attention to detail	65	63	46	59
Count (n)	(51)	(84)	(52)	(187)

Question C4a: Please rate the competences of the young graduates in your organisation. To what extent do they have competences in the following areas on average? Please answer this question both for the group of young graduates with international experience and for the group of young graduates without international experience. Scale of answers from 1 = 'to a very high extent' to 5 = 'not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

The positive rating of the competences of international mobile graduates cannot be attributed exclusively to the ERASMUS study abroad period. Other modes of gaining international experiences might be relevant as well. To get an overall view of the rating of the competences of former ERASMUS students by the employers we asked "Do you see differences in the competences of graduates who were formerly mobile with ERASMUS in comparison to graduates who used another mode of mobility in your organisation?". Table 61 shows that 15 percent noted higher competences among former ERASMUS students than among other mobile students while nobody considered the opposite to be true. 31 percent did not perceive any difference, while more than half of the respondents did not provide any clear view – they either stated that they do not know or that they do not employ internationally mobile students of both kinds.

Table 61 Employers' Rating of Competences of Former ERASMUS Students Compared to Other Mobile Students by Size of the Organization (percent)

	Size of the organisation			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Yes, ERASMUS mobile graduates have higher competences	19	14	15	15
No difference	35	31	27	31
Yes, ERASMUS mobile graduates have lower competences	0	0	0	0
Yes, ERASMUS mobile graduates have other competences	0	5	9	5
Not applicable, there are no graduates to compare in my organisation	21	17	9	16
I do not know	26	33	40	34
Total	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(43)	(87)	(55)	(185)

Question C5: Do you see differences in the competences of graduates who were formerly mobile with ERASMUS in comparison to graduates who used another mode of mobility in your organisation?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

5.6 Position and Salary

An impressively high proportion of employers stated that internationally experienced graduates *more frequently take over a high position* after a couple of years in the organisation than those without international experience. 15 percent stated a clear difference and 27 percent somewhat of a difference in favour of internationally experienced graduates, while only 3 percent held the opposite true. The majority of employers (55%) did not note any difference in that respect. Again, the ratings were more favourable for the internationally experienced graduates on the part of employers from Central and Eastern Europe than from Western Europe (see Table 62).

Table 62 Higher Professional Responsibility of Internationally Experienced Graduates in the View of Employers by European Region (percent)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
Yes, substantially more frequent	11	23	15
Yes, somewhat more frequent	26	30	27
About the same	59	45	55
No, somewhat less frequent	2	0	1
No, substantially less frequent	2	1	2
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(149)	(69)	(218)

Question C7: Are internationally experienced graduates more likely to take over work tasks with high responsibility after a couple of years in your organisation?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

As regards salary, however, only 10 percent of the employers noted an advantage of the internationally experienced graduates at the beginning of their career. This was more often the case among private employers (16%) than among non-profit and public employers (4% each).

Table 63 Higher Salary of International Experienced Young Graduates in Their First Year in the View of Employers by Kind of Organisation (percent)

	Kind of organisation				Total
	Public	Non-profit	Private	Other	
Yes	4	4	16	0	10
No	96	96	84	100	90
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(77)	(26)	(109)	(6)	(218)

Question C8: Do young graduates in your organisation who have had international experience before get a higher salary on average?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

About twice as many employers (21%) state that internationally experienced graduates can expect a *higher salary* than others upon about five years of employment. They noted on average a surprisingly high income advantage of 27 percent for the internationally experienced graduates.

A higher salary for internationally experienced graduates at about five years of professional experience is more common in the private sector (30%) than in the non-profit and in the public sectors (13% each), as Table 65 shows. Employers in Central and Eastern European (27%), as Table 64 shows, are more frequently inclined to pay higher salaries to graduates with international experience than Western European employers (19%).

Table 64 Higher Salary of International Experienced Young Graduates After Five Years of Work Experiences in the View of Employers by European Region (percent)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
Yes	19	27	21
No	81	73	79
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(143)	(62)	(205)

Question C8: Do graduates with five years of work experience in your organisation who have had international experience before get a higher salary on average?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

Table 65 Higher Salary of International Experienced Young Graduates After Five Years of Work Experiences in the View of Employers by Kind of Organisation (percent)

	Kind of organisation				Total
	Public	Non-profit	Private	Other	
Yes	13	13	30	0	21
No	87	88	70	100	79
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(71)	(24)	(102)	(6)	(203)

Question C8: Do graduates with five years of work experience in your organisation who have had international experience before get a higher salary on average?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

5.7 Knowledge of the SOCRATES/ERASMUS Programme

Employers were asked to state their degree of knowledge about the SOCRATES/ERASMUS mobility programme. According to their responses,

- Only 17 percent know the programme and its details very well,
- 39 percent have some general knowledge about the programme,
- 34 percent know the name but do not know any details at all, and
- 10 percent never had heard about it before they received the questionnaire.

Knowledge about the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme seems to be more widespread among the employers from Central and Eastern Europe than among employers from Western Europe. 69 percent of the employers from Central and Eastern Europe stated at least some general knowledge about the programme as compared to 50 percent from Western Europe (see Table 64).

Table 66 Employers' Knowledge of the SOCRATES/ERASMUS Programme by European Region (percent)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
I know the programme and its details very well	15	22	17
I have some general knowledge about the programme	35	47	39
I know the name but I do not know any details at all	40	19	34
No, I have never heard about it before I got this questionnaire	10	9	10
Other	0	2	1
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(205)	(89)	(294)

Question C10: How well do you know the SOCRATES/ERASMUS exchange programme?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Employer Survey 2005/2006.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

Overall, the questioned employers represent a quite positive view about the impact an ERASMUS study period abroad has on the professional value of formerly mobile students. They seem to value the international experience of students in different ways: Firstly, internationally experienced students have an advantage in the transition process from higher education to employment. *International experiences are an important recruitment criterion for employers which advantage formerly mobile students.*

According to the ratings by employers internationally experienced graduates have a *higher competence level* not only of those competences which can be directly linked to international work tasks but also with respect to academic knowledge and skills, and general competences like adaptability, initiative, assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence, written communication skills, analytical competences, problem-solving ability, planning, co-ordinating and organising.

Outstanding are the differences in the *international competences* of internationally experienced graduates compared to graduates without international experiences: foreign language proficiency (88% versus 48%), knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc. (76% versus 28%), ability to work with people from different cultural backgrounds (76% versus 40%), professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge) (59% versus 16%). Also the *rating of other competences* of former ERASMUS students compared to other mobile students shows a light "plus" for former ERASMUS students.

The survey also reveals that internationally experienced graduates work more often in *positions with high responsibilities* (42% of the organisations). And in 21 percent of the organisations surveyed, internationally experienced graduates, according to the

respondents have a *higher salary* than those without international experience after about five years of employment.

Similarly to the other conducted surveys, regional differences occur. The professional value of international experiences is more strongly emphasized by employers from Central and Eastern Europe.

6 The Mobile Teachers' Views and Experiences

6.1 Introduction

Teaching staff mobility in the framework of ERASMUS does not serve primarily the professional enhancement of the teachers themselves. Rather, it is expected to contribute to students' learning – both that of the non-mobile and the mobile students. In addition, teaching staff mobility is expected to serve the development of the knowledge base of the departments as well as the improvement of curricula and teaching both at the home and the host university.

However, these contributions to the students' knowledge, to the curricula as well as to the teaching and learning processes in the departments of the home and the host universities are likely to improve the competences of the mobile teachers themselves. Therefore, teaching abroad might be expected to add value to the work tasks and to deserve reward which ultimately will be visible in the careers.

6.2 Prior Studies

Two surveys⁷ of teaching staff mobility in the framework of ERASMUS elicited some findings relevant for this new evaluation study.

More than half of the teachers mobile in 1998/99 with the support of ERASMUS stated subsequently that teaching in the framework of SOCRATES helped

- enhancing their own international and intercultural understanding,
- becoming familiar with teaching methods not used at the home institution, and
- improving their research contacts

A broader spectrum of possible impacts on the teachers themselves was addressed. More than half of the mobile teachers of the academic year 1990/91 reported in addition that the teaching period helped

- getting contacts for the purpose of teaching and
- improving foreign language competences

Both evaluation studies support the view that temporary teaching in the framework of ERASMUS is not as highly appreciated in their departments as the mobile teachers themselves consider appropriate. For example, many mobile teachers reported that they had to undertake the ERASMUS supported teaching activities besides their regular teaching and research activities. Moreover, many mobile teachers were not satisfied

⁷ R. Kreitz and U. Teichler (1997), *ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility: The 1990/91 Teachers' View*. Kassel: Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung der Universität Gesamthochschule Kassel, 1997. And: F. Maiworm and U. Teichler (2002), „The Academics' Views and Experiences“, in U. Teichler, ed. *ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme: Findings of an Evaluation Study*. Bonn: Lemmens, 2002, pp. 137-159.

with the administrative and financial support of their departments for their teaching activities abroad.

Actually, only one out of six mobile teachers of the academic year 1990/91 believed subsequently that their teaching activities abroad improved their career prospects. Eight years later, though, one out of three mobile teachers was convinced that their teaching abroad would enhance career prospects. Thus, we observe a striking change over time: a substantial increase from the early to the late 1990s in the proportion of mobile teachers expecting a positive career impact of their teaching mobility in the framework of ERASMUS. And this holds true, even though the average duration of the teaching period abroad became much shorter.

The data suggest that the teachers mobile with ERASMUS became more optimistic over time that their teaching activities in other European countries are favourable for their academic careers. However, the proportion of teachers remained higher also in the second survey who did not expect any substantial positive impact on their career. In addition, we have to bear in mind that the prior studies only inform us of the expectations of the mobile teachers and not their actual careers. The previous studies could not inform us whether the expectations actually became true.

The new evaluation study on the professional value of ERASMUS does not only draw from the prior evaluation studies named above. It also draws from other cross-national and national evaluation studies as well as from studies on university graduates and on the academic profession in general.

6.3 The Survey of 2000/01 ERASMUS Teaching Staff

The following chapter summarises the methodological approach used for the survey of former ERASMUS teachers.

Table 67 Overview of the Field Phase of the Survey of Former ERASMUS Teaching Staff

1	Target population	Teachers who have been supported in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/2001 (N=13,988)
2	Start of field phase	October 2005
3	End of field phase	February 2006
4	Sampling strategy	Census (all mobile teachers 2000/2001)
5	Questionnaire	Highly standardized, 12 pages, 81 questions, 206 variables; In English, French and German language Online
6	Number of filled questionnaires from ERASMUS teachers	755
7	Response rate	24 % (755 of 3123)

The *target population* of this survey are teachers who have been supported in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/01. This is the same reference year as for the survey of former ERASMUS students. The same year was chosen for several reasons. As the aim of the study is to analyse the professional impact of the teaching period abroad, four years seems to be an adequate time span to analyse such impacts. In the survey of university leaders, respondents are asked to refer their answers to a specific year of reference for the mobility of students and teachers. Misunderstandings can be reduced when the same year of reference can be used for both groups. Additionally, the same year of reference allows to comparing the results of both surveys because variations which might be related to the reference period are minimized.

According to the KENT database, 13,988 teachers have been mobile in the framework of ERASMUS in 2000/01.

When considering the *sample strategy*, it was considered that the survey of former ERASMUS teachers shall provide the opportunity to compare the professional impact between the various SOCRATES eligible countries. It also should make it possible to take sub-groups into consideration, e.g. by field of study and host country and to allow a comparison with the results of the student survey.

As the expected response rate of university teachers is relatively low, it was decided not to sample but to include the total population of the ERASMUS mobile university teachers: Altogether, 13,988 teachers have been mobile in the reference period 2000/2001. An estimated response rate of 19%⁸ suggests that about 2,658 responses can be expected for a census survey. It was suggested in the proposal to strive for 2,200 – 2,400 responses. Consequently, all ERASMUS teachers of 2000/01 were included in the teacher survey.

In the process of *mailing*, the teachers were contacted via email with the help of the ERASMUS co-ordinators of their home institutions. For this, an email was sent to all institutions with outgoing teachers in 2000/01. The email was sent to the email addresses of the ERASMUS co-ordinators which were available in the TAO database.

The ERASMUS coordinators were asked to forward an email to all outgoing teachers of 2000/01. In this email directed to the teachers, the outline of the survey was explained shortly and the teachers were asked to participate in the survey by filling in an online questionnaire. The link to the online questionnaire was included in the email. This email was sent in English, French and German.

Four weeks after the first mailing, a reminder letter was sent to the ERASMUS co-ordinators and they were asked to forward this to the same addresses. As it was not possible to detect who of the former ERASMUS teachers had already answered the questionnaire, the reminder letter had to be sent via email to the same addresses as the first email. Therefore, the reminder letter also thanked those former ERASMUS teachers who had already answered the questionnaire. Two further reminders were sent in January and February 2006.

⁸ This refers to the fact that according to the pre-test, about 25 % of the teachers are likely to fill in the questionnaire and that about 75 % out of the contacted ERASMUS co-ordinators will be willing to forward an email to the teachers.

However, in 10% of the cases it was not possible to contact the ERASMUS coordinators as their email addresses were not correct. The project team stopped the process of updating the addresses at the end of the field phase as it took a considerable amount of time due to the high number of missing and incorrect addresses.

A special *questionnaire* was developed for the survey. On the one hand, the special goal of the survey was reflected in the incorporation of appropriate questions: detailed chapters addressed the career-specific as well as the academic-substantive results of a teaching period abroad. In order to be able to compare the data gathered with results of earlier ERASMUS evaluations, on the other hand, as many background questions as possible were taken over from such previous surveys⁹.

The questionnaire directed at former ERASMUS teachers was expected to provide information on the following:

- To what extent and in which way the teachers expect a professional impact of their teaching activities in the framework of ERASMUS and to what extent they actually perceive the realisation of a professional impact?
- How do their universities regard or disregard these teaching activities at the time they are undertaken und subsequently?
- Did they change the employer (other university or other type of employer) and what does this imply for a potential professional impact of ERASMUS teaching?
- To what extent and in which way did the teachers perceive an improvement of their professional competences as a consequence of their ERASMUS teaching activities?
- What kind of support or barriers did they experience prior and during the teaching period of ERASMUS and were these activities integrated into the regular activities of their home departments?
- How was teaching during the ERASMUS supported period undertaken (duration, themes, students addressed, degree of integration into the host departments' programme etc.)?
- What were the teachers' career positions, competences, field and department as well as socio-biographic background at the time when they embarked on teaching in another European country as well as what other international experiences did they have (including other teaching and research activities abroad)?

The themes of the questionnaires and the explanatory model to be analysed are shown in Figure 20.

⁹ Cf. University of Kassel, Center for Research on Higher Education and Work: *SOKRATES 2000 Evaluation Study. Final Report*. Kassel: WZI; Brussels: Commission Nov. 2000, esp. §6, pp.118.

Figure 20 Themes of the Questionnaire of Former Mobile ERASMUS Teachers

Socio-biographic and professional background	Age, gender, citizenship, family status, location of employment, subject area of teaching, position, employment status		
Teaching abroad experience	The duration of teaching abroad, activities during abroad		
Impact	Impact on home department and programme	Impact on teacher's competences and activities	Impact on host department and programme
Career impact	Getting a higher academic rank, enlargement of task, raise of income level, enhancement of international scientific co-operation, increase of invitation abroad, etc		

Some questions reiterate themes addressed in the experts' questionnaire "direct impact of teaching mobility", "changes in activities at the home university", "long-term career impacts". Other questions take up issues named in the open experts' comments like prior ERASMUS experiences, motivation to participate and subsequent international experience.

The six chapters contained altogether 40 individual questions. The questionnaire was drawn up exclusively as an online version. The languages chosen were English, French and German.

The questionnaire for ERASMUS teachers of 2000/01 was developed in English and German. Contrary to the questionnaire for former ERASMUS students and the questionnaire for University leader, it was translated exclusively in French, as it can be assumed that the formerly mobile ERASMUS teachers have adequate language proficiency to answer the questionnaire either in English, French or German.

As it was supposed that formerly mobile teachers would have an internet connection and would be more willing to fill in an online questionnaire than the university leaders or the employers, it was decided to conduct the teacher survey exclusively online. However, the teachers' questionnaire was additionally provided as PDF version on the home page of the VALERA project (<http://www.valeras.org/academicus>).

The *response rate* for the teacher survey is about 24 %. Based on the feedback of the addressed institutions about the sending out of emails as well as a number of refusals to participate, the gross sample can be estimated to be 3123 teachers. Altogether 1005 teachers answered the online questionnaire. Due to double fillings and incomplete answers, the total number of completed online questionnaires is 755 which refers to a return rate of 24%.

6.4 Characteristics of Responding Teaching Staff

6.4.1 Representativeness of the responding teachers

The big countries such as Spain, UK, France, Italy and Germany have response rates between two and eight percent. Only eight countries have response rates higher than 6%. Besides some exceptions, the response rate is in all countries very low.

If one compares the data from our sample with some validated basic information about the teachers taking part in the program in 2000/01, it becomes clear that, despite the very low rate of return, there is a relatively high measure of agreement.

- *Home countries:* In our sample the distribution of mobile staff according to home countries (in 2000/ 01) deviates from the basic population - although in just over three quarters of all the countries the difference is clearly smaller than 1 percent. A difference of more than 1 percent between the basic population and our sample is in only eight countries. In three of these countries - United Kingdom, Spain and Germany - the difference amounts to 4.2 to 4.5 percent, otherwise here too mostly lower than 3 percent.
- *Host countries:* Our sample deviates by more than 1 percent from the basic population in only six host countries (2000/ 01), and in only one of these cases - Italy - just over 3 percent.
- *Teaching subjects:* The respondents were grouped according to a total of 15 specialist areas. The most numerous respondents to our survey were teaching staff from 'Engineering/Technology', 'Languages/Philological Sciences' and 'Business Studies/Management Sciences/Economics'. Representatives of these subject areas occupy the first three places also in the basic population, albeit in slightly altered sequence. With respect to representatives of other disciplines deviations - mostly less obvious - in the ranking sequence can be observed.
- Clear differences of three to four percent between the basic population and our data can be observed in only two subject areas - in 'Social Sciences' and 'Engineering/Technology'. Slight deviations up to one percent are observable in the following subject areas: 'Geography/Geology', 'Natural Sciences', 'Communication/Information sciences', 'Law', 'Mathematics/Informatics' and 'Business Studies'.
- *Sex:* Distribution according to sex in our sample corresponds almost exactly to that in the basic population

6.4.2 Profile of the ERASMUS Teaching Staff

The ERASMUS-supported mobile teachers were 47 years old on average in the academic year 2000/01, i.e. the year when they taught abroad. Actually, the average age was more or less identically to that of the mobile teachers 1990/91 (46%) and 1998/99 (47%) who had responded to previous surveys (Teichler 2002, p. 139).

Almost seventy percent of the recent respondents were between 36 and 55 years old in 2000/01. Thirteen percent were younger and 18 percent older. Mobile teachers from Central and Eastern Europe (46 years) were on average two years younger than those from Western Europe (48 years).

88 percent of the teachers informing about their professional position both in 2000/01 and five years later were full professors or in other senior academic positions while teaching abroad, and only 12 percent were in junior positions. Among the 1998/99 respondents 18 percent had been in junior positions.

About 67 percent of those surveyed recently are men and 33 percent women. In 1990/91, only 18 percent of the mobile teachers had been women, and up to 1998/99 this proportion had risen to 31 percent. Among the recent respondents, 36 percent from Central and Eastern Europe were women as compared to 32 percent of their Western European colleagues. Of the recent respondents, about half of those initially in junior positions were raised to senior positions, and about one sixth of those in other senior positions moved towards full professor positions within five years.

Most recent respondents were in a stable full-time position. Actually, only 2 percent of the Central and Eastern European teachers and 4 percent of the Western European teachers were employed part-time at the time the survey was conducted. 18 percent of Central and Eastern European respondents and 8 percent of Western European teachers had a short-term contract.

17 percent of the respondents taught Engineering, 12 percent Languages/Philology and less than 10 percent each other fields. Among the teachers from Central and Eastern European countries, the proportion of those teaching Engineering was substantially higher than among Western European teachers (see Table 68).

Table 68 Teaching Subject of ERASMUS-Supported Mobile Teachers by Home Region 2005 (percent)

	Home region 2005		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Agricultural Sciences	2	0	2
Architecture, urban and regional planning	2	1	1
Art and design	3	4	3
Business studies, management sciences, economics	9	10	9
Education, teacher training	9	10	9
Engineering, technology	13	31	17
Geography, geology	3	5	3
Humanities	8	1	7
Languages, philological sciences	13	9	12
Law	5	0	4
Mathematics, informatics	6	10	6
Medical Sciences	3	6	4
Natural Sciences	6	7	6
Social Sciences	7	1	6
Communications and information sciences	2	1	2
Other	10	4	9
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(595)	(136)	(731)

Question A3: In which of the following group of subject areas are you predominantly teaching?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Teaching staff survey 2005.

6.4.3 Mobility Flows of ERASMUS Teaching Staff

The mobile teachers surveyed had taught in 29 countries before they were mobile in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/01. Five years later, 67 of the 755 respondents (9%), i.e. were employed in a country different from that prior to the ERASMUS mobility period abroad.

Table 69 Home Countries of Responding Teachers 2000/ 01 – 2005/ 06 (percent)

Country	2000/ 01		2005/ 06	
	n	%	n	%
Austria	42	6	42	6
Belgium	43	6	41	5
Bulgaria	7	1	7	1
Cyprus	3	0	1	0
Czech Republic	14	2	12	2
Denmark	11	1	11	1
Estonia	1	0	0	0
Finland	47	6	56	7
France	87	12	85	11
Germany	139	18	140	19
Greece	17	2	15	2
Hungary	25	3	20	3
Iceland	1	0	1	0
Ireland	8	1	9	1
Italy	43	6	49	6

Latvia	5	1	5	1
Liechtenstein	2	0	1	0
Lithuania	4	1	6	1
Luxembourg	1	0	0	0
Netherlands	11	1	11	1
Norway	14	2	14	2
Poland	28	4	28	4
Portugal	42	6	42	6
Romania	50	7	53	7
Slovakia	9	1	9	1
Slovenia	1	0	0	0
Spain	38	5	35	5
Sweden	24	3	24	3
Switzerland	0	0	1	0
United Kingdom	38	5	37	5
Total	755	100	755	100

Question A1.2: “Where are you currently employed? – Country”

Question A2.2: “Where were you employed immediately prior to your ERASMUS teaching period in the academic year 2000/ 01?”

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

Actually,

- 49 of those professionally mobile had taught in Western European countries prior to the ERASMUS support period of teaching abroad, and 74 percent of them moved to other Western European countries;
- 18 of those professionally mobile had taught in Central and Western European countries, and only slightly higher proportion of them, i.e. 89 percent, moved to Western European countries.

As documented in Table 77 below, six percent of the respondents reported that the teaching period abroad influenced their decision to become professionally active in another European country. This allows us to conclude that more than half of the border-crossing mobility of the teachers over a period of five years was triggered by their temporary teaching mobility in the framework of ERASMUS.

Most temporary teaching staff mobility in 2000/01 – according to the respondents - was realised within Western Europe. About three quarters of the respondents came from Western European countries, and about three quarters of them taught for some period in another Western European countries. Yet, given the overall size of the countries, a remarkably high proportion of respondents from Western Europe, one quarter, taught temporarily in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast, almost all teachers from Central and Eastern Europe spent their teaching period abroad in Western Europe; only three percent moved to another European country.

As one might expect, the largest numbers of the respondents taught during the ERASMUS-supported period in the academic year in one of the large Western European countries: France (15%), Germany (14%), Spain and the United Kingdom (9% each). The mobility flows of mobile teachers, however, concentrated to a lesser extent on a few large countries than the flow of mobile students.

A more detailed analysis of the four mostly preferred destination countries shows that

- one fifth of all teachers going to France came from Romania and almost the same number from Germany (185). Most of those going to France taught Engineering (21%), Foreign Languages (15%) and Natural Sciences (12%);
- Germany was the preferred target country for teachers from France (13%), Poland (12%) and Italy (9%). About one quarter of the respondents going to Germany taught Engineering and a fifth Foreign Languages;
- Spain notably was chosen by teachers from France (14%) and Germany (12%) as well as from Austria, Italy and Romania (10% each). A large proportion of those temporarily going to Spain taught Foreign Languages (17%) and Business Studies (13%);
- many of those going to United Kingdom as a country of temporary teaching abroad came from Germany (34%), i.e. the country with the largest number of mobile teachers among the respondents. Sizeable proportions of those going to the United Kingdom taught Engineering, Education (19% each) and Business Studies (11%).

6.5 Motives for Teaching Abroad and Actual Activities

The decision to teach for some time abroad with support of ERASMUS often was taken because prior contacts existed. Prior institutional contacts with the host institutions were named by 81 percent and prior individual contacts with staff of the host institution by 85 percent of the respondents. 73 percent of the teachers stated that they decided to teach abroad in order to make their expertise to the host university. Table 70 shows that altogether a broad range of motives played a role for the teachers' decision to spend a period in another European country.

Table 70 Teachers' Reasons for Teaching Abroad in the Framework of ERASMUS by Home Country (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Country 2000/01																				Total
	AT	BE	CZ	DK	FI	FR	DE	GR	HU	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	ES	SE	UK	CEE	OT	
Existence of cooperative relations between the study programmes/faculties involved	83	67	86	90	85	72	85	82	68	80	100	86	74	79	96	74	75	92	85	67	81
Existence of co-operative relations beyond your programme /faculty	48	42	79	56	46	47	38	59	46	56	82	43	65	54	70	38	48	45	59	67	50
Good personal relations to, or prior co-operation with staff of the host institution	78	80	71	90	79	86	83	88	84	88	91	79	85	80	85	89	83	97	100	87	85
Recommendations of colleagues of your study area	41	46	36	40	28	36	23	59	48	30	60	29	42	46	62	17	35	44	39	33	37
The high academic standard of the host institution	66	49	64	50	40	41	45	76	54	66	40	36	70	69	94	50	33	70	80	67	56
Innovative teaching strategies of the host institution	45	36	36	20	32	28	32	65	52	28	36	36	62	51	79	26	26	41	75	20	40
Your general interest in a visit to the host country	78	61	43	70	67	54	79	76	63	49	70	71	57	50	56	57	67	84	52	53	64
Your good command of the language of the host country	23	38	57	20	36	43	43	59	58	38	30	64	69	45	63	42	42	42	58	27	44
Making your knowledge available to a higher education institution abroad	85	78	86	50	57	63	80	71	78	62	82	62	78	67	88	58	63	86	79	47	73
Being able to link the teaching period abroad with research activities abroad	46	38	57	40	43	54	56	82	58	68	36	62	67	56	81	57	38	56	71	47	56
Count (n)	(41)	(41)	(14)	(10)	(47)	(86)	(136)	(17)	(25)	(42)	(11)	(14)	(28)	(42)	(48)	(38)	(24)	(38)	(27)	(15)	(744)

Question B3: Regarding the ERASMUS programme: How important were the following aspects for your decision to teach abroad in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/01? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Very important' to 5 = 'Not important at all'. Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

Altogether, mobile teachers from Central and Eastern European countries named a much longer list of important aspects for them to teach abroad than teachers from Western European countries. Teachers from Central European countries more frequently aimed to go abroad not only, because they hoped to get acquainted with innovative teaching practices (66% as compared to 34% of the Western European teachers) and because they appreciated the high academic standard of the host institution (77% as compared to 52%), but also, because they were convinced to have a good command of the language of the host country (62% as compared to 40%).

Table 71 compares the responses by the region of origin and by the region of destination. The data presented suggest that the motives vary clearly according to the host region in many respects and somewhat less frequently according to the home region. In some cases, the combination of home and host region is most indicative.

Table 71 Teachers' Reasons for Teaching Abroad in the Framework of ERASMUS by Direction of Mobility (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Direction of mobility 2000/01				Total
	West - West	East - East	West - East	East - West	
Existence of co-operative relations between the study programmes/faculties involved	81	67	72	86	80
Existence of co-operative relations beyond your programme/faculty	47	67	47	63	50
Good personal relations to, or prior co-operation with staff of the host institution	83	67	85	88	84
Recommendations of colleagues of your study area	32	0	29	53	35
The high academic standard of the host institution	54	0	42	78	56
Innovative teaching strategies of the host institution	36	0	22	69	40
Your general interest in a visit to the host country	71	67	60	58	66
Your good command of the language of the host country	43	33	15	66	43
Making your knowledge available to a higher education institution abroad	71	100	71	80	73
Being able to link the teaching period abroad with research activities abroad	53	33	48	66	54
Other	63	50	67	60	63
Count (n)	(329)	(3)	(101)	(103)	(536)

Question B3: Regarding the ERASMUS programme: How important were the following aspects for your decision to teach abroad in the framework of ERASMUS in the academic year 2000/01? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Very important' to 5 = 'Not important at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

For example,

- a good command of the language of the host country was important for the decision to teach abroad notably for teachers spending the ERASMUS-supported teaching period in Western European countries. But this motive was more frequently named by teachers from Central and Eastern European

countries going to Western European countries (66%) than by teachers from Western European countries going to other Western European countries (43%).

- Innovative teaching strategies at the host institutions were most frequently expected as an attraction in Western European countries. But again, this motive was more frequently named by teachers from Central and Eastern European countries going to Western European countries (69%) than by teachers from Western European countries going to other Western European countries (36%). In comparison, innovative teaching methods at Central and Eastern European institutions were named as an important aspect only by 22 percent of the Western European teachers and by none of the small group of Central and Eastern European teachers going there.
- Similarly, a high academic standard of the host institution was often seen as an attraction to go to Western European countries. But teachers coming from Central and Eastern European countries going to Western European countries (78%) more frequently named this reason as important than teachers from Western European countries going to other Western European countries (54%). A high academic quality of the host institution was named as important by some teachers from Western European countries going to Central and Eastern countries (42%), but by none of the teachers from Central and Eastern European countries going to other Central and Eastern European countries.

Prior contacts were as well more frequently named as factors contributing to teaching mobility among those respondents who spent the teaching period abroad in Western European countries than among those going to Central and Eastern European countries. This holds true with one exception: Personal contacts to teaching staff at the host institution was also named as a major reason by Western European teachers going to Central and Eastern Europe.

6.6 The General Professional Value of ERASMUS Teaching Mobility Program

The questionnaire survey aims to establish the professional value of ERASMUS teaching in another European country in several respects:

- The overall value as seen by the formerly mobile teachers,
- career enhancement,
- enrichment of academic competences and activities in general, and
- international views and activities.

In response to a general question on the impact of the ERASMUS teaching period abroad, 58 percent of the formerly mobile teachers stated a positive impact on their professional development. In contrast, 26 percent noted a small or no impact at all on their professional development.

As one might expect, a *general positive impact* was by far more frequently stated by teachers from Central and Eastern European countries (81%) than by teachers from Western European countries (51%), but we note exceptions according to individual

country. Leaving aside countries with less than 10 respondents, we note highest proportions of positive impact reported by respondents living prior to the teaching period abroad in Romania (86%), the Netherlands (82%) and Portugal (76%) and lowest among teachers from France (31%), Norway (36%) and Germany (43%). Among Western European teachers those teaching abroad in other Western European countries perceived more often a positive impact on their professional development (55%) than those teaching temporarily in Central and Eastern European countries (42%).

The ratings varied substantially by fields of study. A positive impact was reported most often by those teaching Art and Design (81%), Agricultural Sciences (79%) and Medical Sciences (70%) and least often by those teaching Law (33%). Again, we do not take into account fields of study with less than ten respondents.

In response to the question to which extent teaching abroad turned out to be productive in various respects, 38 percent of the formerly mobile teachers stated that teaching temporarily abroad has helped them to improve their professional and career perspectives. Altogether, more teachers from Central and Eastern European countries (63%) held this view than teachers from Western European countries (33%).

But, again, we do not note a clear divide in this respect. Positive ratings were most frequent among formerly mobile teachers from teachers from Greece (82%) and Romania (79%) and least frequent among those France (12%), Estonia (31%), Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom (32% each).

6.6.1 Career Enhancement

Only 12 percent responded affirmatively to the question whether teaching temporarily in another European country contributed to a career enhancement in terms of getting on a *higher academic rank*. One has to bear in mind, though, that altogether only 15 percent climbed to a higher rank within the first five years after the teaching period abroad. Therefore, the figures suggest that teaching abroad was a positive factor in the majority of all the cases of visible career enhancement.

Table 72 shows the perceived impact of teaching mobile on all three dimensions of professional development and career addressed in the questionnaire. It confirms that teaching mobility has a stronger impact for teachers from Central and Eastern European countries than those from Western European countries.

Table 72 Professional Value of ERASMUS Teaching Assignments in the View of Mobile Teachers by Home Region 2000/01 (percent)

	Home Region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Positive impact on professional development	53	81	58
Enhancement of professional/career perspectives	33	63	38
Contribution to getting a higher academic rank	7	30	12
Raise of income level	1	10	3
Extension of temporary employment contract	4	16	6
Taking over a high ranking administrative position	7	33	12

Question E4: In general, how would you rate the impact of your ERASMUS teaching assignment(s) abroad with regard to your professional development?

Question E2: To what extent did you find your ERASMUS teaching period/periods abroad productive with regard to the following?

Question E3: During the last five academic years, to what extent were the following changes in your professional career influenced by or linked to your ERASMUS teaching assignment(s)?

Responses 1 and 2 on a 5-point scale from 1 = 'Very positive' (E4); 'to a very high extent' (E2, E3) to 5 = 'No impact at all' (E4); 'Not at all' (E2, E3)

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

Only three percent of the respondents stated that the ERASMUS teaching period contributed to a raise of the income level. As substantially larger number of formerly mobile teachers reported a career advancement, we might assume that only those responded affirmatively in this case who had a raise of income level without advancement on the career ladder.

A further 6 percent employed temporarily while teaching abroad stated that their extension of the contract was linked to their teaching activity abroad. As only 10 percent had been on a short-term contract at that time, this figure can be viewed as remarkably high.

In addition, 12 percent of respondents reported that teaching abroad helped them to move towards a high-ranking administrative position within higher education. Again, this was by far more often stated by formerly mobile teachers from Central and Eastern European countries (33%), notably those from Poland and Romania, than by formerly mobile teachers from Western European countries (7%).

It should be added that the questions raised in the surveys of previous generations of mobile teachers differed from those in this survey. Moreover, the previous surveys – in contrast to this survey – were undertaken shortly after the return from the teaching period abroad (in the subsequent academic year). In both previous surveys already addressed above, almost 20 percent of the respondents each had stated that ERASMUS teaching abroad had improved their career perspectives.

6.6.2 Enrichment of Academic Competences and Activities

The formerly mobile teachers, first, were asked how the teaching period helped raising their knowledge on issues of various teaching-related matters. In response,

- 82 percent indicated that they got to know content and concepts of study courses different from those in their own country;
- 53 percent reported that they learned new teaching and learning methods still unusual at home;
- 40 percent became acquainted with quality assurance procedures for teaching and learning so far unfamiliar to them.

Again, impact of teaching in another European country in those respects was most frequently stated by teachers from Central and Eastern countries spending the teaching period in Western European countries (see Table 73). However, getting acquainted with different concepts and content of study was viewed as valuable results of teaching abroad almost equally according to regions of origin and regions of destinations. This was most often emphasized by teachers from the United Kingdom, Austria, the Netherlands and Romania.

Table 73 Effects of Teaching Abroad by Direction of Mobility in the View of Mobile Teachers (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Direction of mobility 2000/01				Total
	West - West	East - East	West - East	East - West	
The structure of higher education in your host country	88	33	77	93	86
Concepts and contents of study courses which are different from those of your home programme(s)	85	67	71	78	81
Forms of teaching and learning not generally used in your home programme(s) (i.e. project classes, e-learning etc.)	51	33	28	74	51
Quality assurance procedures for teaching and learning not generally used in your home programme(s)	34	33	25	69	39
Count (n)	(328)	(3)	(102)	(103)	(536)

Question E1: Do you think that teaching abroad in the framework of ERASMUS was valuable for you in becoming acquainted with 5-point scale from 1 = 'Very valuable' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

Asked whether the ERASMUS-supported teaching period turned out to be productive for their subsequent academic activities, the respondents even stated more frequently an impact on their general academic activities and their research activities than their specific teaching-related activities (see Table 79):

- 65 percent reported a general improvement of their research contacts,
- 60 percent were able to broaden their specialist knowledge in the course of their teaching assignments abroad,
- 53 percent addressed disciplinary and theoretical discussions originating from the country or the institution of their temporary teaching period;
- 45 percent changed their teaching at home in terms of content, teaching method etc. because of their experiences at the host university, and
- 40 percent developed und implemented new teaching methods.

In response to another question, 17 percent of respondents held the view that the teaching period abroad was helpful for them getting more grants for research projects. This was stated twice as often by scholars from Central and Eastern European countries (29%) than by those from Western European countries (14%).

The perceived impact varied by field taught. Scholars in Agriculture and in Geography underscored the general academic and the research value of a temporary teaching period abroad. In contrast scholars in Architecture pointed out the value of teaching abroad for subsequent teaching-related activities.

Table 74 Impacts of Teaching Period(s) Abroad in the View of Mobile Teachers by Teaching Subject (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Teaching Subject															Total	
	Agri	Arch	Art	Bus	Edu	Eng	Geo	Hum	Lan	Law	Math	Med	Nat	Soc	Com		Oth
Enhancing your international/intercultural understanding	86	90	100	91	94	96	91	91	94	77	91	100	93	88	93	92	92
Improving your professional/career perspectives	57	44	62	37	47	47	48	33	26	20	26	46	42	27	21	38	38
Improving research contacts	79	60	60	58	64	69	78	72	70	70	72	68	70	29	50	59	65
Broadening your specialist knowledge	57	67	76	52	72	65	61	59	62	48	43	61	56	66	43	65	60
Developing and implementing new teaching methods	23	60	48	37	42	49	26	30	43	31	36	46	45	40	36	35	40
Changing of courses you offer in the home study programme(s) with regard to content, method, form etc.	43	60	57	46	43	58	52	42	36	40	40	41	47	48	21	37	45
Addressing disciplinary/theoretical discussions originating from the partner country/countries	71	60	52	46	60	49	65	65	50	43	53	59	49	46	36	59	53
Developing new co-operation activities/joint projects with the partner programme(s)/the host institution(s)	86	60	57	70	63	68	73	73	71	40	78	68	67	65	57	60	67
More competent use of the foreign language in which lectures were taught abroad	93	30	57	55	61	67	41	60	49	43	62	54	47	68	31	61	57
More intensive use of scientific foreign language publications for own teaching	43	20	52	33	45	53	36	43	38	40	28	36	33	54	21	32	40
Count (n)	(14)	(10)	(21)	(67)	(64)	(118)	(23)	(47)	(89)	(30)	(47)	(28)	(45)	(41)	(14)	(63)	(721)

Question E2: To what extent did you find your ERASMUS teaching period/periods abroad productive with regard to the following? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all' Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

Again, respondents from Central and Eastern European countries considered the teaching period abroad as more productive for their subsequent academic activities than respondents from Western European countries (see Table 75). The difference, however, was smaller than various other dimensions of impact addressed above.

Table 75 General Academic Impact of Teaching Abroad by Home Region 2000/01 (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Improving research contacts	60	80	64
Broadening your specialist knowledge	57	78	61
More competent use of the foreign language in which lectures were taught abroad	52	76	57
Addressing disciplinary/ theoretical discussions originating from the partner country/countries	49	64	52
Changing of courses you offer in the home study programme(s) with regard to content, method, form etc.	40	64	44
Count (n)	(603)	(142)	(745)

Question E2: To what extent did you find your ERASMUS teaching period/periods abroad productive with regard to the following? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

6.6.3 International Understanding and International Activities

Scholars formerly mobile for a teaching period in another European country supported by ERASMUS tend to be internationally mobile thereafter. 94 percent of all respondents reported that they were abroad for academic reasons at least occasionally in the subsequent five years. The proportion is almost identical among Western European and Central and Eastern European teachers. But

- Central and Eastern European scholars spent on average 29 days annually in other countries, while
- respondents from Western European countries spent only 23 days abroad annually.

Over the period of five years, as Table 76 shows,

- 83 percent attended conferences in other countries,
- 55 percent undertook research activities abroad,
- 41 percent taught again in other countries,
- 26 made teaching-related visits in the framework of ERASMUS and 38 percent other activities related to the international cooperation.

Here, the type of activities hardly differs between Western European scholars and their Central and Eastern European colleagues.

Table 76 Teachers' Activities Abroad by Home Country 2005/06 (percent; multiple responses)

	Home Country 2005/06																				Total
	AT	BE	DK	FI	FR	DE	GR	HU	IR	IT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	ES	SE	UK	CEE	OT	
Teaching abroad outside SOCRATES/ ERASMUS	45	48	44	35	29	50	46	41	17	57	40	31	25	28	37	41	48	44	33	43	41
Other teaching-programme related visits abroad in the context of SOCRATES/ERASMUS	28	15	11	27	31	21	38	24	33	26	40	15	33	22	37	29	22	31	11	23	26
Other internationalisation activities outside SOCRATES/ERASMUS	41	39	44	41	41	38	62	41	33	48	30	38	33	22	39	38	43	31	11	30	38
Research activities abroad	48	39	33	43	63	47	77	47	50	76	30	62	54	67	49	62	57	50	67	77	55
Participation in conferences, workshops etc. abroad	86	73	100	73	77	83	92	82	100	93	90	85	79	94	82	88	83	75	89	87	83
Other (please specify)	14	24	11	24	7	7	0	0	0	7	0	8	8	6	12	12	13	6	11	0	10
Total	262	239	244	243	249	247	315	235	233	307	230	238	233	239	257	271	265	238	222	260	253
Count (n)	(29)	(33)	(9)	(49)	(70)	(126)	(13)	(17)	(6)	(46)	(10)	(13)	(24)	(36)	(51)	(34)	(23)	(32)	(9)	(30)	(660)

Question B2: During the last five academic years, how many days have you spent altogether abroad for the following activities? Please estimate the days approximately.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

As already pointed out above, nine percent of the respondents moved to a higher education institution in another country in the five years subsequent to their temporary study abroad. Six percent of the respondents, i.e. the majority of those professionally mobile, stated that their border-crossing mobility was linked to their ERASMUS-supported teaching period abroad.

Some formerly mobile teachers were involved in other activities supported by the ERASMUS Programme:

- 28 percent were involved in Intensive Programmes, among them nine percent 'frequently' and 19 percent 'occasionally'. Of those users of the programme 81 percent alone come from Western European countries.
- Nine percent were active in ERASMUS Curriculum Development project.
- Ten percent participated in ERASMUS Thematic Networks.

The percentage of Western European teachers involved in other ERASMUS activities was slightly higher than that of the Central and Eastern European teachers.

The formerly mobile teachers were asked, in addition, about subsequent international activities influenced by or linked to their ERASMUS teaching assignment. Thus, they asked to assess the value of teaching abroad for their international academic career in the first five years after the ERASMUS teaching period abroad. As Table 77 shows,

- 49 percent observed an enhancement of international scientific cooperation,
- 38 percent increasing cooperation in international research projects,
- 36 percent an increase of international cooperation, and
- 16 percent taking over European or international responsibilities in higher education.

Table 77 Academic Impact by ERASMUS Teaching Assignments Abroad by Home Region 2000/01 (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Enhancement of international scientific co-operation	47	60	49
Increasing co-operation in international research projects	34	56	38
Increase of invitations abroad	33	50	36
Enlargement of tasks which your work involves	31	36	32
Taking over an administrative position in the SOCRATES programme	10	35	15
Award of funds for research projects by national/international research promotion agencies	14	29	17
Taking over of European/International responsibilities in higher education	15	20	16
Taking over of regional/national responsibilities in the higher education system	9	23	12
Getting a higher academic rank, i.e. from assistance professor to full professor etc.	7	30	12
Taking over a high ranked administrative position in the employing higher education institution(s)	7	33	12
Getting a position at another higher education institution in the home country	4	18	7
Extension of a temporary employment contract	4	14	6
Change to an higher education institution abroad	4	13	6
Raise of income level	1	10	3
Count (n)	(556)	(137)	(693)

Question E3: During the last five academic years, to what extent were the following changes in your professional career influenced by or linked to your ERASMUS teaching assignment(s)? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

This does not mean, however, that formerly mobile teachers note international research activities or general higher education policy activities as the major impact of the teaching period abroad. Rather, a higher proportion of them noted that the ERASMUS teaching period has been productive for international dimensions of teaching in various respects:

- 67 percent were encouraged to start new educational projects with partner institutions abroad,
- 57 percent noted a more competent use of foreign language in their teaching abroad, and
- 40 percent used academic publications written in foreign languages more frequently in their own classes.

In all three respects, teachers from Central and Eastern European countries reported a substantial impact of the ERASMUS teaching period abroad on the international dimensions of their teaching activities almost twice as often as teachers from Western European countries.

In the previous surveys of ERASMUS-supported teachers mobile in the academic years 1990/91 and 1998/98 somewhat different questions were asked about the general academic impact of teaching abroad. Some questions were similar. In both previous surveys, about half of the mobile teachers responding stated that the teaching period abroad was helpful for getting acquainted with other teaching methods, and also about half of the respondents each stated that the teaching period abroad was valuable for establishing research contacts. Thus, we can conclude that the value of ERASMUS teaching mobility for understanding and undertaking international activities of teaching and research has not changed substantially over time. This can be viewed as a success of the ERASMUS programme because teaching mobility has expanded substantially over the years.

6.7 Institutional Conditions for Teaching Mobility

More than 40 percent each of the formerly mobile teachers who were in the position to assess the situation of their departments stated that their departments both frequently received ERASMUS teachers from other countries and frequently sent some of their staff abroad. According to the respondents, frequent staff exchange could be observed at about the same proportion of departments involved in staff mobility in Western Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe. Surprisingly, Central and Eastern European respondents (62%) stated more often than Western European respondents (41%) that the teaching staff exchange between their department and all partner departments abroad was more or less balanced.

According to the mobile teachers, teaching mobility is highly appreciated at about one fifth of the higher education institutions each at the institutional level, at the departmental level and by the colleagues. Almost two fifth each noted somewhat of an appreciation for each group. Only less than one tenth noted that teaching mobility is not much appreciated or viewed as a burden within their institution of higher education, again similarly at the institutional level, at the departmental level and by their colleagues (see Table 78).

Mobile teachers from Central and Eastern European countries perceived the attitudes at their institution of higher education similarly at institutional level and somewhat more positive on the departmental level and by their colleges than mobile teachers from Western European countries. As the mobile teachers from Central and Eastern Europe appreciated the teaching period abroad and its impact substantially more positive than mobile teachers from Western Europe, these findings suggest that teachers from Central and Eastern European countries obviously observe a higher discrepancy between their often enthusiastic appreciation of ERASMUS teaching staff mobility and the often lukewarm appreciation within their institution than teachers from Western Europe.

Table 78 Teachers' Assessment of Teaching Mobility within the Higher Education Institution by Home Region 2000/01 (percent)

	Home Region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
<i>At the institutional level</i>			
It is highly valued	23	21	22
It is valued to a certain extent	37	42	38
It is perceived as an individual activity	33	32	33
It is largely perceived as a burden	2	0	2
It is not much appreciated	5	4	5
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(592)	(140)	(732)
<i>At the departmental level</i>			
It is highly valued	21	28	22
It is valued to a certain extent	37	45	38
It is perceived as an individual activity	34	22	32
It is largely perceived as a burden	3	1	3
It is not much appreciated	5	4	5
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(595)	(141)	(736)
<i>By colleagues</i>			
It is highly valued	16	29	19
It is valued to a certain extent	32	38	33
It is perceived as an individual activity	42	28	39
It is largely perceived as a burden	4	2	4
It is not much appreciated	6	3	5
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(544)	(137)	(681)

Question C4: In general, how is teaching mobility assessed at your higher education institution today at the following three levels? At the institutional level, at the departmental level, by your colleagues.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

About half of the respondents believe that the attitude toward ERASMUS teaching mobility has become more positive over the last decade. The attitude changed similarly at the institutional level, at the departmental level and by the colleagues of the mobile teachers (see Table 79). A change towards a more positive attitude was observed somewhat more often by teachers from Central and Eastern European countries than by teachers from Western European countries.

Table 79 Change of Attitudes within the Institution of Higher Education towards Teaching Mobility in the View of Mobile Teachers by Home Region 2000/01 (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
At the institutional level	49	65	52
At the departmental level	49	70	53
By your colleagues	44	65	48
Count (n)	(594)	(142)	(736)

Question C5: How has the attitude towards teaching mobility changed during the last 10 years at your higher education institution? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Became much more positive' over 3 = 'Remained the same' to 5 = 'Became much more negative'

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

According to the mobile teachers surveyed,

- 61 percent teaching abroad was an additional work load, while
- 39 percent teaching abroad was part of their normal workload, whereby 12 percent were explicitly relieved from regular teaching and research loads and 6 percent from other duties.

Table 80 shows that teaching abroad is slightly more often an integral part of the total work load at Central and Eastern European than at Western European higher education institutions.

Table 80 Usual Proceedings Regarding Workload of Teaching Abroad in the View of Mobile Teachers by Home Region 2000/01 (percent)

	Home region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Teaching abroad is part of the normal professional tasks or outgoing staff will be relieved of teaching, research or other duties	38	44	39
Teaching abroad means extra work for outgoing staff without receiving any compensation	62	56	61
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(584)	(141)	(725)

Question C3: Regarding compensation of teaching periods abroad, what is the most usual proceeding at your current home institution today? (Multiple replies possible)

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

The findings presented referred to the current situation at the mobile teachers' institution of higher education. When asked to compare the current practices with those about five years earlier, when the respondents went abroad, the respondents did not note any substantial difference. Also, the teachers surveyed note that the predominant practice at their institutions applied to themselves when they went abroad.

Table 81 suggests that the respondents were treated quite differently as regards the work load of teaching abroad according to their field. On the one hand, more than half of the mobile teachers from Medicine, Geography, Art & Design, Education and Architecture had taught abroad as part of their normal work. On the other hand, this holds true only for about one third of the teachers from Law, Mathematics, Economics and the Humanities.

Table 81 Teachers' Work Load of Teaching Abroad During the Academic Year 2000/ 01 by Teaching Subject (percent; multiple responses)

	Teaching subject															Total	
	Agri	Arch	Art	Bus	Edu	Eng	Geo	Hum	Lan	Law	Math	Med	Nat	Soc	Com		Oth
You were relieved of teaching and research duties	21	10	15	8	13	8	20	2	9	7	2	12	0	5	8	6	8
You were relieved of other duties	7	20	5	6	8	4	15	2	6	3	9	12	2	2	8	3	6
Your teaching period abroad was part of your normal professional tasks	21	30	55	23	40	35	40	31	36	23	17	52	36	46	33	44	35
Your teaching period abroad meant extra work for you which you did not receive any compensation for	50	40	35	70	59	65	50	71	61	77	79	44	68	59	58	56	62
Total	100	100	110	108	119	112	125	107	111	110	106	120	107	112	108	110	111
Count (n)	(14)	(10)	(20)	(64)	(63)	(113)	(20)	(45)	(87)	(30)	(47)	(25)	(44)	(41)	(12)	(63)	(698)

Question D1: Did your home institution relieve you of certain work to compensate your teaching period abroad during the academic year 2000/01? (Multiple replies possible)
Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

6.8 Impact of the Teaching Mobility on the Home Institution of Higher Education

All formerly mobile teachers are convinced that their ERASMUS supported teaching activities had a positive impact on their home institution of higher education. This was stated by

- 67 percent of the respondents from Central and Eastern European countries as compared to
- 47 percent of the teachers from Western European countries.

A positive impact of their ERASMUS supported teaching activity on the home institution was often observed by teachers from

- Agriculture (69%),
- Art & Design (67%),
- Geography (65%) and
- Medicine (64%).

On the other hand, a positive impact was relatively seldom stated by respondents from Mathematics (35%), Law (30%) and Communication Science (29%).

Finally, respondents were asked to state in which way teaching staff mobility has turned out to be beneficial for their home institution of higher education. Among 12 aspects addressed in the questionnaire, a positive impact was reported twice by the respondents. Accordingly, teaching mobility was most helpful for

- Improvement of advice given to mobile students (63%) and
- Providing knowledge on other countries (58%).

In addition, more than 40 percent of the respondents each noted a positive effect on

- the co-ordination of study programs between the home and host institution,
- the range of foreign-language teaching,
- the development of new study concepts and contents,
- the increase of comparative approaches.

Table 82 Impacts of ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility on the Home Institution in the View of Mobile Teachers by Home Region 2000/01 (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Improvement of guidance/advice available to mobile students	62	69	63
Providing knowledge on other countries, Europe etc.	58	57	58
Co-ordination of programmes between home programme and partner programmes	47	46	47
Provision of courses in a foreign language (foreign-language teaching)	39	64	44
Development of new concepts and contents for study programmes	35	64	41
Addressing issues comparatively	40	47	41
Use of publications in a foreign language	33	64	39
Providing knowledge on international relations or supranational organisations	38	39	38
Addressing disciplinary/theoretical discussions originating from partner country/from abroad	37	43	38
Setting up double degree programmes	36	28	34
Development of new teaching methods	26	55	32
Integration of language courses into the curriculum	25	42	29
Count (n)	(587)	(138)	(725)

Question E6: In general, how would you rate the impact of ERASMUS teaching staff mobility on your home institution regarding the following aspects? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'
Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey.

In the majority of aspects addressed, responses of formerly mobile teachers from Central and Eastern European countries are similar to those of the colleagues from Western European countries. In some respects, however, respondents from Central and Eastern European institutions of higher education clearly observed a positive effect of ERASMUS teaching staff mobility more frequently than respondents from Western European countries: Increased provision of courses in a foreign language, use of publications in foreign languages, innovation of the concepts and contents of study programmes as well as development of new teaching methods.

6.9 Concluding Remarks

Teaching Staff Mobility serves several purposes. Besides international teaching experiences for non-mobile students at the host institution, it shall also have an impact on the institutional development of the home institution and, of course, on the teachers' competences as well. The results of this survey show that ERASMUS mobility has an *impact on all of these aspects*. Furthermore, it was shown that mobile teachers do not only profit with regard to teaching competences but also with regard to their research work.

With regard to home internationalisation, it can be summarised that students at the home institution can profit by their teachers' mobility experience. The wide majority of formerly mobile teachers report that they learnt about *different teaching contents, concepts and methods*. After return, many applied this knowledge. The results show that they got encouraged to start new educational projects, they are more competent in using a foreign language in teaching, they are more open to comparative approaches and foreign literature and publications in their teaching. For mobile students, teaching staff mobility has a further implication. 63 percent of formerly mobile teachers view that their international experience has improved their advice given to mobile students.

Besides teaching skills, the results present that the mobile teachers *improved academic and international competences* as well. More than half of the respondents reported that they were able to broaden their specialist knowledge and that they also profit by disciplinary and theoretical discussions during their stay abroad. Interestingly, the impact on the research activities seems to be stronger than expected. Even though the main impact still lies on teaching, a majority of the formerly mobile teachers list *improvements of their research contacts* and subsequently more research activities abroad as a consequence of their teaching abroad.

The impacts described above also *influence the home institution* directly and indirectly. Accordingly, the majority of the questioned teaching staff viewed that their experience abroad also had a positive impact on their home institution of higher education. Besides teaching and research networking effects, mobile teachers get to know quality assurance procedures not known at their home institution. The improved contacts may also help to install double degree programmes. Yet, the impacts are in this regard assessed comparatively lower than in the areas of teaching and research.

Institutional support and appreciation for teaching staff mobility has slightly improved over time. Still, in nearly two thirds of included cases, teaching abroad is an additional work load and not an integrated part of the workload. The practises at the institutions have not changed in the last five years in the perspective of the respondents.

The *career impact or professional value* of their stay abroad is assessed surprisingly positive by the teachers. More than 50 percent of teachers from Western European institutions and 81 percent of institutions in the Central and Eastern Europe viewed a positive impact on their professional development. Narrowing down the positive detailed assessments to those respondents who in fact experienced a career step in the last five years, the percentage of those who affirm that teaching abroad contributed to their career enhancement and the extension of their temporary employment contract is significantly high.

Differentiating analyses underscore differences by home and host country as well as field of study. In general, *respondents from Central and Eastern European home institutions assess the impact and the professional values much more positive* than their Western colleagues. In reference to host institution, more positive impacts were seen if the teaching stay took place at an institution in Western Europe. Differences by field of study were less clear, but interesting results could also be found.

7 The University Leaders' Views

7.1 Introduction

Among the potentially interesting groups of actors and experts, university leaders are the most interesting group for an assessment of the professional value of student and teacher mobility besides employers.

The survey addresses university leaders as they are on the top position also responsible for policies related to ERASMUS within the universities. They should be well informed about staff policies and thus about the potential professional impact of teaching in the framework of ERASMUS, and they are certainly well informed about the universities' activities to support the transition to employment and about feedback from the employment system about the professional value of study in another European country.

The questionnaire survey raises questions matching those posed to the mobile students and teachers and thus serving a triangulation of perceptions. In addition, it addresses the value of teaching mobility for the competence development of the teaching staff and for the overall European and international activities of the university.

7.2 The Survey of Leaders at ERASMUS Higher Education Institutions

The following chapter summarises the methodological approach used for the survey of university leaders.

Table 83 Overview of the Field Phase of the Survey of Leaders at ERASMUS Higher Education Institutions

1	Target population	All university leaders of those institutions which had outgoing ERASMUS students in the academic year 2000/2001
2	Start of field phase	September 2005
3	End of field phase	February 2006
4	Sampling strategy	Census (All leader of Higher Education Institutions involved in the ERASMUS programme)
5	Questionnaire (see Annex A.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly standardized, 8 pages, 48 questions, 157 variables - Translated in 23 official languages of the European Union - Online and paper versions
6	Number of filled questionnaires from university leaders	626
7	Gross response rate	44% (626 of 1437)

The *target population* was defined as all university leaders of those institutions which had outgoing ERASMUS students in the reference period of the student survey (2000/2001). According to our database 2,003 institutions and, hence, the same number of university leaders belong to that group. 333 of these 2,003 institutions of higher education were also involved in the student and teacher survey of this evaluation project. The other 1,670 institutions were addressed for the first time in the range of this project.

As the total number of university leaders is relatively small, it was decided not to *sample* but to include the total population of all university leaders. An expected response rate of 50% means that around 1,000 answers could be anticipated in this survey.

The project proposal suggested *to send the questionnaires* to the rectors/presidents/vice-chancellors of all institutions having received ERASMUS support in the reference period directly. In the planning of this survey, it was decided to deviate slightly from this strategy. Instead of sending the questionnaires directly to the university leaders, it was decided to send the questionnaires to the ERASMUS coordinators asking to forward them. This modified procedure was mostly chosen due to practical reasons:

- The contact details of the ERASMUS coordinators were available, but not the detailed address of the university leadership.
- The ERASMUS coordinators were partly already involved in the student and teacher survey and were familiar with the project.

Even so, the ERASMUS coordinators were asked to forward the questionnaires to the university leaders.

Both groups received the questionnaire via their ERASMUS coordinator, hence there is no systematic difference regarding the *mailing strategy*. At the beginning of November one reminder was sent to those institutions which had not yet sent a filled questionnaire back. The reminder was directed to the ERASMUS coordinator asking if there had occurred any problems or if they had not received the questionnaire.

The *questionnaire* directed to the leaders of higher education institutions involved in the ERASMUS programme covers ERASMUS student mobility as well as teaching staff mobility. It asks university leaders of universities to provide information on: (see Figure 3):

- the institutional profile,
- internationalisation strategy and degree of internationalisation,
- the major SOCRATES/ERASMUS policies and activities,
- activities of strengthening the employability of graduates (curricular activities, support for the transition to employment, contacts with employers, etc.),
- the employment of former ERASMUS students and the professional impact of ERASMUS study abroad,
- the weight placed on teaching staff mobility within ERASMUS and the support provided,

- the staff policies in general potentially relevant for mobile teachers,
- the professional rewards for formerly mobile teachers.

Figure 21 Themes of the Universities' Leader Survey

Institutional profile	Size of the institutions, status, disciplinary profile, international program offered			
Internationalisation activities	The importance of internationalisation at the institution, involvement in international program, number of internationally-mobile student			
ERASMUS policies and activities	Policies and practices regarding employability of students	Policies regarding teacher mobility and general staff policies	Perceived professional value of ERASMUS student mobility	Professional rewards for mobile teachers

Based on experts' suggestions that selection effects of ERASMUS need to be considered, the university leaders were asked to state the criteria of selection for the ERASMUS programme at their institution, to provide information on other mobility programmes and to assess the Labour market value of the ERASMUS programme.

The English master questionnaire was translated into the 23 official languages of the European Union. The translation process took place parallel to the translation process of the student survey and was, hence, conducted similarly.

Compared to the student and teacher survey the questionnaire was shorter. It comprised seven pages of questions plus one page of explanations. Since we assumed that university leaders are more used to questionnaires, we shortened the explanation in comparison to the student questionnaire to one page.

Most of the questions were closed, only a small number of questions were open.

Similar to the approach of the student survey, the questionnaire was available in a paper and an online version.

Of the 2,003 questioned universities, a total of 1437 agreed to participate. More than 500 addressed higher education institutions refused to participate mainly due to two reasons. The first group had no outgoing students or teachers in the respective academic year 2000/01 (incorrect database). The second, smaller group refused to participate due to time pressure. Of the 1437 higher education institutions, 626 answered the questionnaire. This corresponds to a return rate of 44%. This rate is lower than expected. Telephone calls about the questionnaire with ERASMUS coordinators exposed not only their "work overload" but also a "survey fatigue".

7.3 Characteristics of Responding Higher Education Institutions

7.3.1 Regional Distribution of Responding Higher Education Institutions

Altogether, 626 higher education institutions from 27 countries responded. The majority of responding institutions are located in Western Europe (76% or 471 institutions). Polish institutions form the biggest group (35%) from Central and Eastern European countries. 22 percent of the responses from Western European higher education institutions came from German higher education institutions, followed by France, which accounted for 15 percent of the responses. Overall, German and France higher education institutions represent around one quarter (28%) of the included questionnaires.

7.3.2 Status and Size of Responding Higher Education Institutions

As one could expect, a majority of 77 percent of the responding higher education institutions belonged to the public sector and only 14 percent are private institutions (see table 84). Nearly two thirds of included institutions have up to 5,000 students enrolled. Higher education institutions with more than 20,000 enrolments present only 8 percent of the responding higher education institutions.

Table 84 Universities' Status by Number of Students Enrolled (in percent)

	Up to 500	Number of students enrolled					Total
		501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Public	69	68	79	83	86	98	77
Private	22	21	10	13	5	2	14
Other	9	11	11	4	9	0	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(100)	(150)	(102)	(71)	(76)	(43)	(542)

Question A3: What is the legal status of your higher education institution?
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

Analysing status by country, it shows that a fairly large proportion of almost one quarter of higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe are private, most prominently in Poland (31%), Bulgaria (27%), Slovenia (25%), and Czech Republic (23%). In Western Europe, the proportion of private higher education institutions is highest in Portugal (27%), Iceland (25%) and France (24%).

7.3.3 Fields of Study Programmes

The fields of the study programmes provided by the responding higher education institutions are rather diverse: most frequent fields are Economy/Business Administration/Management Sciences (at 61% of the institutions responding), followed by Mathematics/Informatics (47%), Social Sciences (47%), Engineering/Technology (46%), and Teacher Education (45%). Small institutions of higher education, naturally, offer a smaller range of fields, among them most frequently Art/Design (34%) and Economy/Business Administration/Management Sciences (30%) (see Table 85).

Table 85 Universities' Fields of Study Programmes by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; multiple responses)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Agricultural Sciences	12	7	19	19	14	28	14
Architecture, urban and regional planning	7	9	18	29	32	46	20
Art and design	34	23	27	44	35	50	33
Business studies, management sciences, economics	30	32	74	87	94	98	61
Education, teacher training	21	30	39	60	70	87	45
Engineering, technology	21	25	60	63	68	74	46
Geography, geology	9	4	13	37	57	87	26
Humanities	16	11	21	60	74	91	36
Languages, philological sciences	12	7	22	64	74	89	35
Law	15	7	16	43	70	87	30
Mathematics, informatics	19	15	49	77	86	93	47
Medical Sciences	16	12	29	32	42	72	28
Natural Sciences	13	8	30	49	70	85	34
Social Sciences	19	22	42	76	81	93	47
Communications and information sciences	19	7	26	57	65	85	34
Other	14	13	16	27	25	26	18
Total	280	234	500	824	956	1191	554
Count (n)	(99)	(149)	(102)	(75)	(77)	(46)	(548)

Question A4: Please provide some information on the disciplinary profile of your institution. In which groups of subject areas do your university offer degree programmes?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.3.4 Number and Ranks of Academic Staff

On average, the responding institutions of higher education employed more than 500 academic staff (full-time equivalent) in the academic year 2000/01, i.e. when the students and academic staff surveyed spent a period in another European country with ERASMUS support. Institutions with small student numbers have smaller absolute numbers of academic staff, as one might expect, but have also clearly lower student-staff ratios (see Table 86).

Table 86 Universities' Number of Academic Staff in the Academic Year 2000/2001 by Rank and Number of Students Enrolled (means)

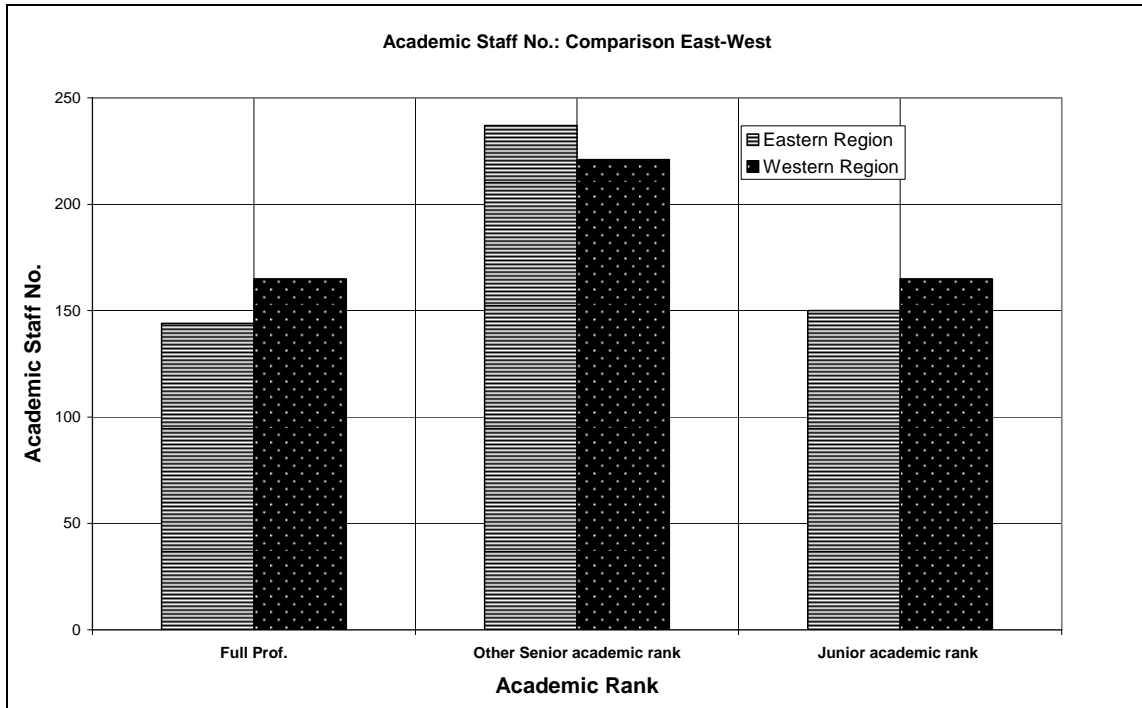
	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
<i>Full Professor</i>							
Arithm. mean	107.1	52.8	96.0	127.6	210.2	600.0	160.1
Median	28.0	47.0	63.5	77.0	160.0	348.5	65.0
Count	(55)	(87)	(78)	(57)	(65)	(36)	(378)
<i>Other senior academic rank (ass. professor, senior lecturer etc.) with unlimited contracts</i>							
Arithm. mean	104.5	75.1	169.6	236.6	456.3	703.6	223.7
Median	26.0	50.0	140.0	190.0	410.0	711.0	110.5
Count	(57)	(101)	(67)	(53)	(59)	(23)	(360)
<i>Junior academic rank with limited employment contracts</i>							
Arithm. mean	65.3	39.5	109.7	181.1	261.2	488.7	158.0
Median	35.0	21.5	40.0	130.0	210.5	519.0	69.5
Count	(35)	(56)	(51)	(39)	(50)	(19)	(250)

Question A7: Number of academic staff in the academic year 2000 / 2001 (please state full time equivalents).

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

In Central and Eastern European countries, the proportion of full professors among all academic staff is higher than in Western European countries. In reverse, the proportion of other senior academic staff is higher in the Central and Eastern region (see Figure 22).

Figure 22 Universities' Number of Academic Staff by Rank and Region (mean)



Question A7: Number of academic staff in the academic year 2000 / 2001 (please state full time equivalents).
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.3.5 Offered Degree Programmes Taught in Foreign Languages

The number of study programmes taught in foreign languages is generally viewed as one indicator of the higher education internationalisation process. 65 percent of responding institutions currently offer at least one degree programme in a foreign language, but only 6 percent of them, according to the information provided, provide a considerable number of them.

The responses vary to a lower extent than expected by the size of the institutions. Among institutions with up to 500 students, 48 percent do not offer any study programme in a foreign language. But even among institutions with more than 20,000 students, 38 percent do not offer such a type of study programmes (see table A5).

Table 87 **Universities' Degree Programmes Taught in Foreign Languages by Number of Students Enrolled (percent)**

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Yes, a considerable number	6	3	6	4	14	4	6
Yes, some	11	15	20	23	25	16	18
Yes, very few	28	34	35	32	26	40	32
No, none	48	44	38	34	22	38	39
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(102)	(150)	(104)	(74)	(76)	(45)	(551)

Question A5: Does your institution offer degree programmes taught in foreign languages?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.4 Internationalisation of Universities: Objectives and Activities

7.4.1 Objectives

Internationalisation of higher education is assessed as highly important by the responding administrators: 87 percent consider it important to raise the number of domestic students temporarily studying abroad, and 80 percent to raise the quota of foreign students at their institutions. Similarly, 87 percent consider improvement of teaching quality very important in the context of internationalisation. For 86 percent of the respondents, improved international visibility of their institutions is an important goal and for 83 percent the establishment of a coherent policy for internationalisation. Further important aspects are improved international recognition of their study courses, the internationalisation of curricula etc. (see Table 88). Thereby, the larger higher education institutions are slightly more strongly interested in improving research cooperation.

Table 88 Objectives of Internationalisation in the View of University Leaders by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Establishment of a coherent policy for internationalisation	79	79	82	89	88	88	83
Improvement of the international visibility of the institution	77	81	87	93	96	93	86
Internationalisation of curricula	57	62	67	84	76	86	69
Improvement of the quality of teaching / learning	78	86	88	93	93	82	87
Development of joint international curricula with higher education institutions abroad	52	51	58	73	67	77	60
Improvement of the international recognition of study courses (e.g. ECTS)	72	76	83	82	86	89	80
Establishment of international double degree programmes	46	46	53	71	61	77	56
Upgrading of the foreign language competences of students	66	66	79	68	82	80	72
Improvement of the quality of research	64	71	69	89	96	82	76
Participation in international research projects	56	63	70	86	99	91	73
Development and maintenance of a net of academic partner organisations abroad	77	77	75	86	86	80	79
Increase the number of domestic students temporarily studying abroad	86	86	88	84	89	93	87
Increase the number of foreign students at the institution	74	72	81	89	90	86	80
Increase the number of outgoing teaching staff	66	72	61	78	71	80	70
Increase the number of incoming foreign teaching staff	67	71	61	75	75	77	70
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(101)	(148)	(103)	(73)	(77)	(44)	(546)

Question B1: How important, are the following objectives of internationalisation at your institution? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Very important' to 5 = 'Not important at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

Most responding higher education institutions consider an increase in teaching staff exchange to be important. 70 percent each view an increased quota of outgoing teaching staff and also of incoming teachers as important. All these aspects are especially emphasized by Central and Eastern European institutions.

7.5 Student Mobility and Employability

7.5.1 Promoting Employability of Graduates

The majority of administrators surveyed rate the impact of participation in ERASMUS as fruitful for further job opportunities after graduation. In particular, 80 percent of the higher education institutions surveyed rate the promotion of their graduates' employment opportunities through participation in the ERASMUS study abroad programme as positive (see Table 89).

Table 89 University Leaders' Assessment of Increasing Employment Opportunities by ERASMUS by Number of Students Enrolled (percent)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Yes	38	40	47	44	45	49	43
Often	33	33	34	40	45	42	37
Sometimes	22	24	17	14	8	9	18
Rarely	6	3	2	1	1	0	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(99)	(144)	(100)	(72)	(73)	(43)	(531)

Question C2: Generally, do study periods abroad increase the opportunities of graduates to get a reasonable job? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Yes' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

University administrators believe that, compared with non-mobile students, graduates with ERASMUS experience have slightly better chances of getting a job quickly and a better job. A total of 58 percent of the respondents state that ERASMUS students get a better job than their non-mobile colleagues. 54 percent specify that ERASMUS students find a job quickly. Small sized higher education institutions are less optimistic in regard to these aspects (see Table 90).

Table 90 University Leaders' Assessment of Impacts of ERASMUS on Job Opportunities by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
On average, ERASMUS students get better jobs	49	49	74	67	54	64	58
On average, ERASMUS students get a job in a shorter time span	40	50	68	57	57	65	54
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(51)	(78)	(47)	(41)	(38)	(25)	(280)

Question C10: According to your experience or the data gathered: Have ERASMUS students better opportunities to get an appropriate job and to get a job faster than non-mobile students? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Absolutely right' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

In both respects, the answers differ clearly between Western European and Central and Eastern European higher education institutions. About three quarters of the Central and Eastern European institutions respond affirmatively, but only about 50 percent of the Western European institutions.

7.5.2 Measures to Increase the Employability of Graduates

Almost all higher education institutions surveyed are active in order to improve the employability of their graduates. Most of them try to contribute by establishing internships in study programs (75%) and by presenting their own institutions to the outside world (74%). 69 percent have implemented practice oriented elements in their courses (see Table 91).

Table 91 Universities' Measures to Increase the Employability of Graduates by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; multiple responses)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Internship in study programmes	70	75	85	74	76	66	75
Presentation of the institution by the occasion of special fairs	63	70	75	86	76	80	74
Implementation of practice oriented elements in study programmes	63	70	81	71	63	59	69
Common lectures / events at the university with representatives of employers	48	66	75	69	74	80	67
Special language courses	53	46	66	65	58	61	57
Evaluation of study programmes regarding the requirements of the labour market	45	56	60	63	54	39	54
Establishment of special employment agencies for graduates at the institution	15	22	31	40	46	55	31
Establishment of special preparatory courses for job-hunting graduates	23	19	25	26	38	34	25
Total	380	423	497	494	485	473	453
Count (n)	(88)	(144)	(102)	(72)	(72)	(44)	(522)

Question C1: Did your institution implement some of the following measures to increase the employability of the later graduates and ease the transition to work? (Multiple replies possible).

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

Altogether, Central and Eastern European institutions are more active in those respects (86% affirmative responses on average of the categories addressed in the questionnaire) than Western European institutions (71%).

7.5.3 Reinforcements of Competences through ERASMUS

A study period abroad contributes substantially - according to the responding higher education institutions - to students' foreign language proficiency (93 %), their international urbanity (87%) and their in-depth knowledge of the host country (84%). Furthermore, they frequently observe that the students' ability to work independently increases (78%) as well as personality and social behaviour (79%) (see Table 92).

Table 92 **Competences Reinforced by ERASMUS Study Period Abroad in the View of University Leaders by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Foreign language competences	94	88	96	93	93	100	93
International urbanity	85	87	88	89	84	88	87
In depth knowledge of the respective host country	84	81	83	84	90	81	84
Personality and social behaviour	78	79	81	78	71	86	79
Working independently	83	79	73	82	79	69	78
Planning, co-ordinating and organizing	67	55	67	67	62	62	63
Broad general knowledge	56	61	55	61	49	57	57
Understanding of complex social, organisational and / or technical systems	47	54	59	56	51	50	53
Cross-disciplinary thinking	57	52	48	56	49	45	52
Field specific knowledge of methods	60	51	52	36	49	54	51
Time management	48	50	51	55	52	52	51
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	59	44	45	43	53	45	48
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(94)	(145)	(99)	(70)	(72)	(42)	(522)

Question C7_1: Up to what degree students will gather the following competences especially during their ERASMUS supported study period? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Up to a very high degree' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.5.4 Comparison with Other Programmes and Selectivity of ERASMUS

84 percent of Western European higher education institutions and 69 percent of Central and Eastern European institutions offer foreign study periods to their students which are promoted by other sources than ERASMUS. Yet, most institutions see no major differences between temporary periods abroad supported by ERASMUS or other sources. Altogether, 73 percent of higher education institutions - 63 percent of the Central and Eastern European and 76 percent of the Western European - believe that the contribution towards employability is more or less the same. 24 percent assess employment value of ERASMUS as higher and 3 percent as lower (see Table 93).

Table 93 Assessment of Impact on the Employability of Graduates in the View of University Leaders by Number of Students Enrolled (percent)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
ERASMUS has an higher impact	18	24	27	23	22	40	24
More or less the same	78	75	70	74	73	60	73
ERASMUS has a lower impact	4	1	3	3	5	0	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(89)	(143)	(101)	(70)	(73)	(40)	(516)

Question C4: Have study periods abroad supported by the ERASMUS programme on average a higher or lower impact towards the employability of graduates compared to other types of study abroad, e.g. support from other grant programmes, free-mover mobility?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

Selectivity is often seen as a quality indicator for programmes in higher education. In this regard, ERASMUS was often described as a mass programme contrasting selective programmes or scholarships like for example the Fulbright programme. Therefore it was of interest to get knowledge about the existence of selection and the selection criteria applied to students who wished to participate in ERASMUS. The both dominating criteria– according to the administrator's answers – have been the academic achievement measured in grade point average with sixty nine percent and the knowledge of the host country's language with 67 percent. The bigger universities are more selective in that respect. Furthermore, Table 94 shows that the participating institutions from Central and East Europe are much more relying on these criteria with 88 percent and 90 percent respectively.

Table 94 Universities' Criteria Used for the Selection of Students to Join ERASMUS Exchange Programme by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Grade point average	61	64	71	71	78	78	69
Good knowledge of the host country's language	60	57	70	73	75	80	67
Importance of a stay abroad in the framework of specific study programmes e.g. philological study programmes	49	56	42	66	75	51	55
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(94)	(134)	(103)	(70)	(74)	(41)	(516)

Question C6: What are the criteria used by your institution for the selection of students to join ERASMUS exchange programme? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Very important' to 5 = 'Not important at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.5.5 Competences Appreciated by Employers

According to the higher education institutions, employers appreciate formerly mobile students' foreign language proficiency and ability to work independently (each 83%),

personality (78%) as well as their planning and organisational skills (74%) (see Table 95).

Table 95 **Competences Valued by Employers in the View of University Leaders by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Foreign language competences	79	76	87	85	90	100	84
Working independently	86	80	85	89	82	91	84
Personality and social behaviour	73	73	77	82	74	94	77
Planning, co-ordinating and organizing	76	68	80	80	76	85	76
International urbanity	69	66	80	70	66	74	71
Time management	65	64	74	75	74	79	71
Field specific knowledge of methods	59	60	64	71	64	76	64
Cross-disciplinary thinking	68	54	65	67	62	59	62
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	57	50	66	67	61	65	59
Understanding of complex social, organisational and / or technical systems	44	53	67	59	65	71	58
Broad general knowledge	52	50	46	47	55	50	50
In depth knowledge of the respective host country	35	40	51	51	40	56	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(80)	(114)	(84)	(55)	(67)	(34)	(434)

Question C7_2: Up to what degree the later employers will honour competences acquired during a study abroad period? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Up to a very high degree' to 5 = 'Not at all'.
Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

80 percent of university administrators are convinced that a temporary study period abroad has become a more important recruitment criterion over the last decade. Only one percent stated that study periods abroad are less important for the entry to the labour nowadays than about ten years ago (see Table 96).

Table 96 **Changed Significance of Study Periods Abroad in the View of University Leaders by Number of Students Enrolled (percent)**

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Considerable higher value as compared to the past	16	18	18	14	15	26	17
Higher value compared to the past	62	56	63	73	69	58	63
Stayed the same	22	25	18	12	15	16	19
Lower value than ten years ago	0	2	2	2	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(86)	(133)	(96)	(66)	(72)	(38)	(491)

Question C8: Did the value of temporary study periods abroad changed during the last decade as a criteria for employment?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.5.6 Sources of Information about Professional Careers of Graduates

The university administrators were asked what sources of information they have about the graduates' careers. More than half of the respondents inform themselves through graduate studies. Many respondents name less formal ways of information, such as informal information (44%), graduates' meetings (39%) and feedback by employers. Altogether, sources of information do not differ substantially by the size of the higher education institution (see Table 97).

Table 97 Universities Sources of Information on the Professional Careers of Graduates by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; multiple responses)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Not at all	9	7	5	6	7	0	6
Yes, by regular graduate studies	26	18	17	31	31	21	23
Yes, by occasional graduate studies	23	29	41	35	36	35	32
Yes, by feedback from employers	25	27	30	28	24	26	27
Yes, by graduates meetings	39	36	46	40	42	33	39
Yes, by informal information	47	45	45	42	40	40	44
By other information channels	16	20	18	14	8	28	17
Total	184	182	202	194	188	181	189
Count (n)	(93)	(147)	(103)	(72)	(72)	(43)	(530)

Question C9: Does your institution gather information about the professional careers of its graduates? (Multiple replies possible).

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.6 ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility

7.6.1 Overall Appreciation

According to the respondents, teaching staff mobility is positively viewed by administrators at more than three quarters of the higher education institutions – in half of these cases even highly appreciated. Most positive ratings are reported from universities with enrolment between 5,000 and 20,000 students (see Table 98).

Table 98 ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility in the View of University Leaders by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; multiple responses)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Teaching mobility is highly valued	33	40	27	44	45	42	38
Teaching mobility is valued to a certain extent	35	37	44	47	38	35	39
Teaching mobility is perceived as an activity of the individual teacher	29	29	28	21	22	30	27
Teaching mobility is largely perceived as a burden	4	3	4	3	0	0	3
Teaching mobility is not much appreciated	3	1	2	0	0	0	1
Total	104	110	106	114	104	107	108
Count (n)	(91)	(145)	(102)	(73)	(74)	(43)	(528)

Question D1: In general, how does the administration of your institution perceive or treat teaching staff mobility - including non-ERASMUS mobility?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

Altogether, teaching staff mobility seems to be more highly appreciated at Central and Eastern European universities than at Western European institutions. Especially the Baltic States, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia are much interested in raising their international reputation by participation of academic staff in the ERASMUS programme.

The attitude of university administrations to teaching staff mobility obviously has improved over time. 57 percent of the respondents noted a more positive rating than a decade ago. The ratings on the part of the departments and the teaching staff became even more frequently positive (see Table 99).

Table 99 Universities' Change of Attitudes Towards Teaching Staff Mobility by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
At the side of the universities administration	52	53	57	64	61	60	57
At the side of the departments	62	53	70	77	68	71	65
At the side of the individual teaching staff	66	71	69	81	75	63	71
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(92)	(138)	(101)	(73)	(76)	(43)	(523)

Question D2: Has the attitude towards teaching mobility changed during the last decade? 5-point scale from 1 = 'Becomes more positive' to 5 = 'Becomes more negative'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

Appreciation of teaching staff mobility increased more strongly at Central and Eastern European than at Western European institutions of higher education (see Table 100).

Table 100 Universities' Change of Attitudes Towards Teaching Staff Mobility by Home Region (arithmetic mean)

	Home Region			Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	Other	
At the side of the universities administration	2,3	1,8	3,0	2,2
At the side of the departments	2,3	1,8	3,0	2,2
At the side of the individual teaching staff	2,2	1,8	3,0	2,1
Count (n)	(426)	(125)	(2)	(553)

Question D2: Has the attitude towards teaching staff mobility changed during the last decade?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.6.2 Impact of Teaching Staff Mobility on the Higher Education Institution

Teaching mobility, according to the administrators surveyed, contributes strongly to the reputation of the higher education institution, to the innovation in teaching and to research cooperation:

- 77 percent note a strong contribution to the international reputation of the institution,
- 59 percent to the initiation of international research cooperation,
- about half each to the development of new curricula and teaching methods, and
- 37 percent to the establishment of double degree programmes.

In all respect, a more positive impact is perceived by respondents from Central and Eastern European countries than from Western European countries. 16 percent more positive ratings were made by Central and Eastern European respondents on average of the issues addressed.

The impact of teaching staff mobility on the study programmes is only in the minority of cases reflected strongly in the quality assessment of the study programmes. Only 11 percent of the respondents state that it plays a strong role in evaluation, accreditation or approval procedures, and a further 23 percent reported a considerable role.

7.6.3 Administrative Support

Slightly more than half (55%) of the higher education institutions support mobile teaching in organisation arrangements regarding the study period abroad in the administrative procedure of getting leave of absence. Administrators of about one third of the universities each state that mobile teachers are released temporarily from teaching and research assignments as well as from administrative duties. Only at a small proportion of institutions, replacement of the mobile staff is taken care of (see Table 101).

Table 101 Universities' Support for Mobile Teachers by Number of Students Enrolled (arithmetic mean)

	Up to 500	Number of students enrolled					Total
		501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Support in administrative matters regarding leave of absence	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.5	3.1	2.5
Preparatory organisation of administrative matters with the host institution abroad	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	3.1	2.5
Temporary release from teaching or research commitments	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.1
Temporary release from administrative commitments	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.7	3.2
Finding replacement staff	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.6	4.0	4.2	3.9
Total	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Count (n)	(90)	(142)	(101)	(72)	(71)	(42)	(518)

Question D4: Concerning the following aspects, up to what extent your institution is able and willing to support the teaching assignments abroad of its staff within the framework of the ERASMUS Programme? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a considerable degree' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

By and large, administrative support is more frequently in place at small than at large institutions of higher education. Again, Central and Eastern European institutes regard teaching staff more highly and support it more often administratively (see Table 102).

Table 102 Universities' Support for Mobile Teachers by Home Region (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Region			Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	Other	
Temporary release from teaching or research commitments	36	44	50	38
Temporary release from administrative commitments	30	47	0	34
Finding replacement staff	12	28	0	16
Support in administrative matters regarding leave of absence	50	73	0	55
Preparatory organization of administrative matters with the host institution abroad	52	69	50	56
Others	66	64	0	66
Total	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(423)	(124)	(2)	(549)

Question D4: Concerning the following aspects, up to what extent your institution is able and willing to support the teaching assignments abroad of its staff within the framework of the ERASMUS Programme?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.6.4 Benefits for Mobile Teachers

Only a small minority of respondents report that clear career benefits of teaching abroad are customary at their institution of higher education:

- 11 percent note a frequent career advancement,
- 7 percent additional financial support for their assignments, and
- 2 percent a higher income.

Such benefits are more frequently provided at Central and Eastern and at Western European institutions of higher education: 24 percent versus 8 percent career advancement, 14 percent versus 5 percent financial support, and 6 percent versus 1 percent higher remuneration.

International activities of teachers, however, seem to play a substantial role when new academic staff is hired. Somewhat of a reward is assigned, according to the respondents, by the majority of institutions to international contacts, international teaching and research activities as well as foreign language proficiency. Again, all these aspects play a more prominent role at institutions of higher education in Central and Eastern European countries than in Western European countries (see Table 103).

Table 103 Universities' Assessment of International Experiences During Application Procedures of New Academic Staff by Home Region (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Region			Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	Other	
Teaching assignments abroad	47	70	0	52
International scientific contacts	66	84	0	70
Former participation in international research projects	60	80	0	64
Foreign language competences	58	85	50	64
Others	74	75	0	74
Total	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(412)	(124)	(2)	(538)

Question D7: Up to what extent several aspects of a professional foreign assignment as listed below play a less or major role during application procedures of new academic staff?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

More specifically, between a third and half each of administrators from institutions of higher education state that involvement in various ERASMUS-supported activities plays a role when new academic is hired. Teaching staff mobility (49%) is most frequently named in this respect (see Table 104).

Table 104 Universities' Assessment of ERASMUS Activities in the Hiring of Academic Staff by Number of Students Enrolled (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
ERASMUS <u>student mobility</u>	48	45	39	54	39	49	45
ERASMUS curriculum projects	36	31	33	52	50	32	38
ERASMUS <u>teacher mobility</u>	47	49	45	54	50	51	49
ERASMUS intensive programmes	28	30	29	42	41	38	33
ERASMUS thematic networks	32	33	29	48	38	35	35
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(83)	(133)	(99)	(69)	(68)	(39)	(491)

Question D8: During such application procedures, does your institution honour the involvement of the candidates in different components of the SOKRATES / ERASMUS programme? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a considerable degree' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA University Leaders' Survey 2005.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

Internationalisation including the aspect of teaching staff and student mobility are an important topic for higher education institutions today. The survey has shown that 80% of the questioned institutions want to increase the number of foreign students at their own institution and the number of domestic students temporarily studying abroad (87%). 70% want to increase further the number of incoming and outgoing academic staff. Besides the ERASMUS programme, the majority of higher education institutions (69%) take also part in other mobility programmes. Yet, most institutions do not see major differences between ERASMUS and those other programmes.

The questioned university administrators see ERASMUS not only as an institutional instrument for internationalisation but also as an instrument for improving the professional value of their graduates. 80 percent of the responding higher education institutions support the statement that study abroad increases the employment opportunities of graduates. Every second respondent views that former ERASMUS students have slightly better chances to find a job and they assess also that former ERASMUS students have better jobs than their non-mobile colleagues. Many higher education institutions additionally try to improve the employability of their graduates by a variety of actions, evaluations and programmes. Yet, less than one third of the responding institutions have special employment agencies for graduates installed at their institution.

Explanations for the positive impact an ERASMUS study period has on the professional value of graduates can be referred to the competence gain. In the perspective of the university administrators, a study period abroad contributes not only to the international competences but also to the students' ability to work independently, their social behaviour, planning and organisational skills as well as their personality. Competences assessed to be highly valued by employers.

Teaching staff mobility as an instrument of internationalisation is also assessed positively by the questioned university leaders. Yet, only 38 percent stated that "teaching mobility is highly valued" by the administration, whereas 39 percent assessed it as "valued to a certain extent" and 27 percent as "an activity of the individual teacher". A positive development takes place over time. 57 percent of the respondents note a more positive rating of teaching staff mobility than a decade ago.

In contrast to student mobility, the impact of teaching staff mobility on the individual career is assessed as rather low. Only 11 percent note career advancements for former mobile teachers at their institution. The positive evaluation of teaching staff mobility can be rather found in the recruitment process. The survey reveals that international activities of teachers seem to play a substantial role when new academic staff is hired. Teaching staff mobility as instrument of internationalisation and institutional development was appreciated by the university administrators participating in the survey. Teaching staff mobility contributes strongly to the reputation of the higher education institution, to the innovation of teaching and to the improvement of research co-operations. Yet, the support for mobile teachers is in most cases limited to a temporary release from teaching and research assignments.

Overall, university administrators in Europe have a very positive attitude towards ERASMUS mobility and international experiences of their students and staff in general. In comparison, Central and Eastern European higher education institutions are more enthusiastic than their Western neighbours. They assess the professional value for their graduates as higher, they appreciate teaching staff mobility more highly and they also give mobility a more prominent role in the recruitment process. The survey design leaves the question open if this enthusiasm is caused by a stronger international orientation of Central and Eastern higher education institutions or if it can be explained by "starting effects" of ERASMUS.

8 ERASMUS Mobility: Experiences and Prospects in Four Selected Field of Studies

In the second phase of the project the findings of the surveys should be analysed more exactly as regards the specifics of study in the other European countries and its impact on subsequent employment and work. The second phase concentrates therefore on student mobility in four subject areas only (Mechanical Engineering, Business Studies, Sociology and Chemistry). For each of the four fields of study the results of the surveys undertaken in the first phase were discussed with actors of different backgrounds in a one-day seminar.

The first chapter provides an overview about the aims and procedure of the analysis of the second phase. The following chapters two to four covering each one field of study. Each disciplinary chapter starts with a short introduction into the subject followed by the subject specific data analysis and a summary report about the results of the seminars conducted. In the revised version of the report a final last chapter will present a cross-disciplinary conclusion.

8.1 Aims and Procedures of the Analysis

8.1.1 The Second Phase of the Project

Subsequent to an analysis of the professional value of ERASMUS Student Mobility across all fields of study on the basis of questionnaire surveys of former students, coordinators at higher education institutions and employers, an in-depth-analysis of selected fields was undertaken in early 2006 as the second phase of the project.

The second phase aims to

- analyse the findings of the surveys more exactly as regards the specifics of study in the other European country and its impact on subsequent employment and work,
- take stock on available documents on the relevance of international study experience in the respective field of study and the related areas of employment and work,
- gather additional in-depth information from experts and actors both regarding study and subsequent employment and work.

Decisions had to be made in the design of the second phase of the project regarding

- Fields of study to be chosen,
- The most promising and feasible mode of inquiry in collecting in-depth information,
- The themes to be given priority.

The choices made will be briefly explained before the findings are presented.

8.1.2 Fields of Study

International experience during the period of study plays a different role in the various fields of study and in various occupational areas. It might be embedded easily into the core knowledge of a field of study, such as foreign languages, European studies or international law. It might be important as field knowledge, for example, in the area of international trade. Or it might just happen to offer other areas of specialisation, other modes of inquiry on fields, the knowledge base of it is universal. Moreover, fields of study vary according to the extent to which they are shaped by academic and by professional perspectives.

Based on the discussion during an expert seminar held at the end of the first phase of the project, the project team came to the conclusion to choose four fields of study to be addressed in the in-depth study instead of two initially envisaged in order to take into account both different cultures of fields of study and different degrees of academic or professional emphasis. Eventually, the following fields of study were selected:

- Chemistry as an academically oriented field in the area of science and engineering,
- Mechanical Engineering as a professionally oriented field in this area,
- Sociology as an academically oriented field in the area of humanities and social sciences, and
- Business Studies as a professionally oriented field in the latter area.

The choice of individual fields with these categories was actually made on the basis of various pragmatic criteria, e.g. number of respondents, accessibility of experts and prior analyses undertaken.

8.1.3 Expert Seminars as Mode of Inquiry

According to the initial design of the project, experts and actors in the respective fields and study and professional areas should be asked to provide in-depth information beyond what can be drawn from an analysis of available documents and of the survey findings. Initially, telephone interviews were envisaged in order to gather elaborate explanations from a substantial number of experts and actors.

Again, on the basis of the expert seminar held at the end of the first phase of the project, the project decided to undertake expert seminars instead. A seminar with a limited number of participants representing various areas of expertise and various roles of actors should ensure a stimulating process of reflection. In a seminar, bits and pieces of expertise of the various participants invited can be confronted which each other in order to stimulate a dialogue between the different persons and their experiences and views. This might help to specify questions, to round up information or to move tacit knowledge towards manifest knowledge as a consequence of a confrontation of divergent views and observations.

9-13 participants were invited each to the four seminars undertaken, i.e. one each in the four fields of study chosen. With such a magnitude of participants, a compromise was chosen between the desire on the one hand to keep the number of participants small in order to secure a stimulating and active communication setting with a frequent

involvement of all participants and on the other hand to include the widest possible representation of different actors and experts from various countries. For each seminar,

- Teachers,
- Students,
- Employers and
- Representatives of academic or professional associations

were invited. If available, experts were invited as well who had been involved in major studies on the respective field of study and graduate employment and work, for example in “thematic networks” supported within the framework of the ERASMUS programme, the TUNING project etc.

Care was taken that experts from these 5 categories spread further

- By country: Altogether 19 countries were represented in the four seminars,
- Teachers from regular study programmes and those with a specific international or European emphasis,
- Current ERASMUS students, students after the study abroad period and graduates,
- Employers from industry and services.

The seminars were held in Frankfurt/Main (Germany), a convenient location both for flights from all parts of Europe and for the project team. They were held each as a one-day meeting with a dinner on the preceding evening.

All four seminars were chaired by a singly discussion leader addressing the seminar participants, asking questions and summarizing the responses. The discussion leader was supported by a second project team member making sure that all key topics were covered, all necessary supplementary questions were asked and all participants were addressed. One or two members of the project team wrote down the statements and eventually contributed to the progression of the discussion.

The seminar itself was arranged as a relatively free process of discussion (focus group character). Participants were not expected to give official presentations; rather they were encouraged to contribute on the basis of their or their peers’ experience and perspective.

Some days in advance the participants had received a handout presenting the rationale of the projects as well as the key themes to be addressed at the seminar. At the beginning of each of the seminars a second handout was distributed comprising in addition major findings of the former ERASMUS student survey of the first phase of the project. The seminar chair initially summarized the context of the first handout and the highlights of survey findings. Thereafter, the chair encouraged the participants to share their own experience and the hearsay known to them rather than closely interpreting the survey findings. Subsequently he summarized common elements and differences between the statements made in order to encourage a next round of reflection and interpretation.

8.1.4 Structure and Themes of the Seminars

The seminar was divided into three stage of discussion similar to the sequence of the questionnaires:

- Students` competences and work assignments,
- Transition to work,
- Study provisions and conditions.

This sequence was employed because the findings of the prior survey could be divided most easily according to this structure. Moreover, links between study and graduate employment and work could be addressed that way repeatedly, though from slightly different angles.

The findings of the seminar are reported in a more coherent manner, i.e. avoiding repetitions and overlaps in this report.

The seminars, thus, were consistently parallel in the overall structure. However, as one might expect, they differ in style and dynamics of ways issues were addressed. They varied in the time spent on various topics, among others the time spent on issues of study, competences, employment and work, the flow of communication, the degree convergence and divergence of views and last but not least in the extent, to which the status quo was addressed or recommendations for improvement were made.

The following report is structured in a disciplinary order. For each field of study a short introduction will be given followed by an overview about the relevant statistical results of the first project phase. Finally, the results of the conducted seminar about the field of study will be presented followed by an overall conclusion.

The results for each seminar will not be presented in chronological order or following the structure of the agenda. Rather, the summary will be organised in a way that impressions will be reflected. Furthermore, a separation of results should be avoided. Therefore, results belonging to one thematic question will be presented in one unit even so they might have been mentioned at different points of time during the seminar.

8.2 Mechanical Engineering

8.2.1 Characteristics of the Field of Study

Mechanical Engineering was chosen as a professionally oriented field of study in the area of science and engineering. The Mechanical Engineering industry is viewed as one of the most important employment and export sectors in the European Union and is highly internationally oriented.¹⁰

However, the sector of mechanical engineering is facing changing conditions. Globalisation, technical innovations and the need for cost efficiency are challenges companies of Mechanical Engineering and the educators of mechanical engineers have to meet. Apart from field specific knowledge, mechanical engineers have to be able to

¹⁰ EU Business; <http://www.eubusiness.com/Rd/engineering.2006-02-13>

think and work both interdisciplinary and internationally. The linkages to other related fields like Information Technology become more and more important, as the complexity of machines and equipments has increased. Companies of Mechanical Engineering have to develop their products in close cooperation with their customers and offer service and maintenance of their products to fulfil the requirements and needs of their customers. Mechanical engineers therefore do not only have to be specialists in their respective field, but as well need social and communicative skills as well as knowledge of business management. They have to communicate closely with their customers and the members of the project team who might have another disciplinary or cultural background in order to integrate different requirements and concepts successfully.¹¹

The course of studies in mechanical engineering requires Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Construction and Electrical Engineering as a basis and technical elements such as Engineering Mechanics, Materials and Thermodynamics. The importance of computerised simulations is increasing. They often comprise also courses in Business Studies and Computer Sciences. In general, students are required to specialise during their course of study on a selected area of Mechanical Engineering.¹²

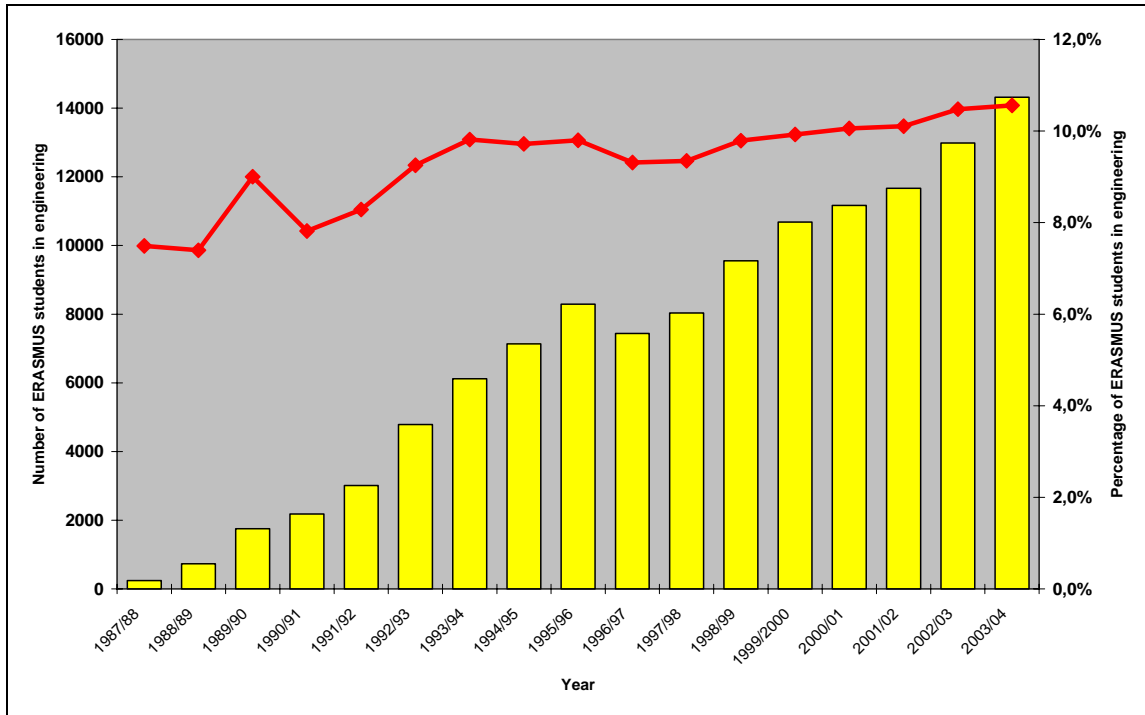
Even though the overall number of ERASMUS students and of Engineering ERASMUS students grew continuously since the start of the ERASMUS programme, the percentage of students of Engineering among all ERASMUS students remained quite stable at around 10 percent. Students of Engineering are well represented in the ERASMUS programme. In 2001, 13 percent of all higher education graduates were graduates of Engineering¹³, while 10,1 percent of the ERASMUS students studied Engineering.

¹¹ Feller, Carola; Stahl, Beate (2005): Qualitative Anforderungen an die Ingenieurausbildung und die künftigen Bachelor und Masterstudiengänge. IMPULS STIFTUNG.

¹² Die Zeit Studienführer <http://www.das-ranking.de/che6/CHE6?module=WasIst&do=show&esb=29>

¹³ European Commission - Community Research (2004): Europe needs more scientists. Report by the High Level Group on Increasing Human Resources for Science and Technology in Europe

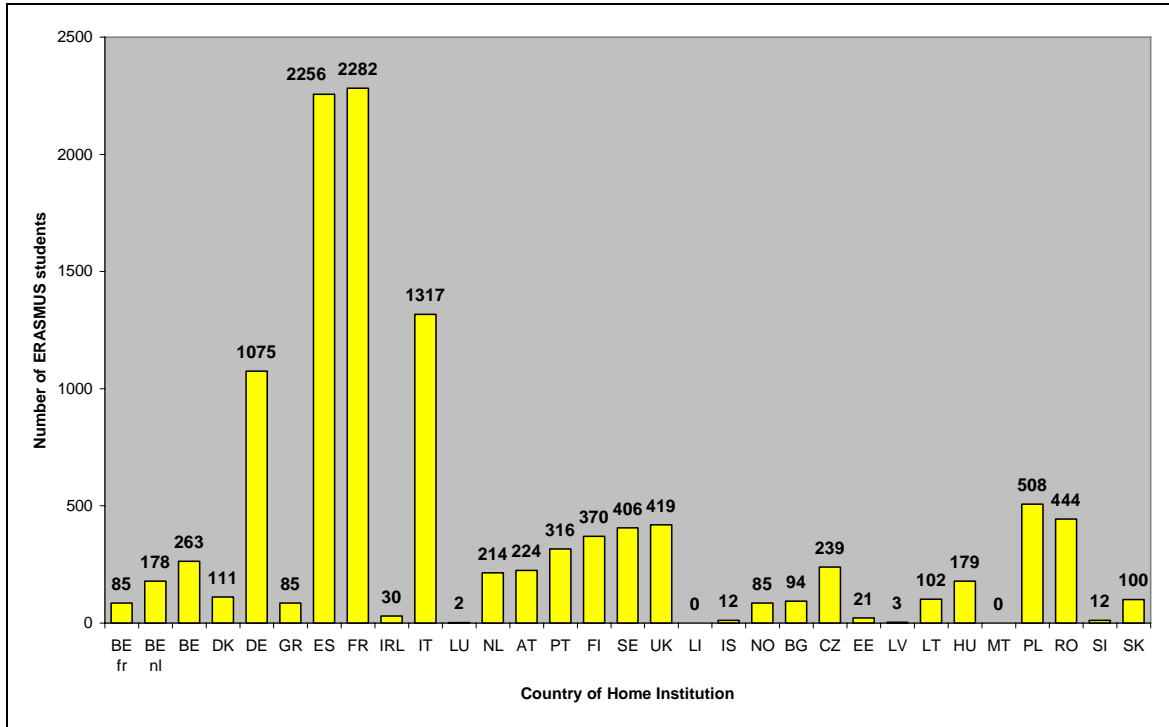
Figure 23 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Mechanical Engineering 1987 - 2004



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme,
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

As Figure 24 illustrates, high numbers of ERASMUS participants in the field of mechanical engineering are coming from institutions of higher educations in France and Spain followed by Italy and Germany.

Figure 24 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Mechanical Engineering by Country of Home Institution 2000/01



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme, http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

8.2.2 Results of the Survey with Former Students

The student profile

The overwhelming majority of former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS students are male (87%). The average age at the time of the survey (2005) was 28.

The period abroad

The Mechanical Engineering students had substantial experience abroad: they spent about 8 months abroad during their ERASMUS supported period in the academic year 2000/2001 and more than one third (39%) of them spent one or more additional periods abroad, altogether (including ERASMUS) the average time spent abroad was 10.2 months. Only a few students were on work placements/internships abroad (2 %).

Academic situation and study conditions

The graduates report a relatively low satisfaction with assistance/guidance/advice provided by their home institution for the study period abroad. Only about half of the respondents were satisfied with assistance by home institution regarding academic matters, administrative matters, information about the host institution and country, accommodation and language training.

But the graduates do not perceive significant problems during their study abroad. The single most frequent *academic problem* was related to "obtaining academic credits and credit transfer" (12 %); more frequent are problems regarding financial matters (17%), accommodation (17%) and administrative matters (14%).

Only about half of the respondents had frequent contacts with domestic students during course related activities (lectures, seminars, working groups etc.), extra-curricular activities (e.g. clubs, sport) or other leisure time.

The majority of the courses taken abroad by the Mechanical Engineering graduates were reported to be academically equally demanding as courses which they would have taken at the home institution during the same period; 31 % were reported to be academically less demanding and 16% to be more demanding.

Recognition

ECTS was only introduced in less than half of the programmes around the year 2000: 41 percent reported application of ECTS at the host institution (as compared to a percentage of 54% when including all former ERASMUS students).

The Mechanical Engineering graduates stated a respectable, but not perfect extent of recognition: 79 percent of study achievements abroad were recognized on average upon return.

A substantial proportion of ERASMUS students have invested study abroad as an additional study period: 41 percent reported a prolongation of overall study duration due to the ERASMUS period, in most of these cases as long as the ERASMUS period (about 8 months).

Competence profile

Former ERASMUS students seem to have a unique self-image of competences with respect to

- Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.);
- Foreign language proficiency;
- Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture);

These three aspects are the clear domain of former internationally mobile students, where they see their competences at the time of return to be better (or even "much" better) than those of non-mobile students. The vast majority also sees advantages regarding "preparation for future employment and work" (72 %). Still, the results show that ERASMUS does not lead to higher academic competences: the "academic knowledge and skills (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)" were rated by the majority to be equal to non-mobile students.

Table 105 Former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS Students' Assessment of their Competences Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students (percent)

	Better (1+2)	Equal (3)	Worse (4+5)
Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.)	97	3	0
Foreign language proficiency	95	5	0
Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture)	94	5	1
Preparation for future employment and work	72	24	5
Academic knowledge and skills (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)	39	55	5

Question A21: At the time of return, how do you rate your knowledge and competences as compared to non-mobile students in the following areas? Scale of answers from 1 to 5; 1 = much better, 3 = equal, 5 = much worse.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

According to most dimensions listed in Table 106 about three quarters of former ERASMUS students rate their competences as high. This profile is surprisingly balanced. Mechanical Engineering graduates are relatively strong in analytical competences, and relatively weak in planning, co-ordinating and organising (compared to other former ERASMUS students).

In most areas, job requirements are more demanding than the competences acquired by former ERASMUS students at the time of graduation. As compared to the average of all former ERASMUS students, Mechanical Engineering graduates consider their jobs highly demanding as regards foreign language proficiency and not so demanding as regards power of concentration as well as applying rules and regulations. Job requirements and competences seem to be balanced as regards theoretical knowledge, loyalty and written communication. Finally, former ERASMUS students have more often high foreign language skills than required by their job.

Table 106 Former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS Students' Self-assessed Competences at Time of Graduation and Job Requirements about 2-3 Years Later (percent "high"; answers 1 and 2)

	Competences at the time of graduation (1)	Job requirements about 2-3 years later (2)	Difference (1 - 2) (3)
Problem-solving ability	88	95	-7
Adaptability	87	81	6
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	85	74	11
Analytical competences	85	86	-1
Accuracy, attention to detail	81	83	-2
Initiative	76	92	-16
Getting personally involved	76	82	-6
Field-specific knowledge of methods	74	75	-1
Power of concentration	74	77	-3
Written communication skill	74	72	2
Foreign language proficiency	70	77	-7
Computer skills	70	76	-6
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	69	83	-14
Loyalty, integrity	68	69	-1
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	61	86	-25
Applying rules and regulations	55	59	-4

Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Question F7: Please, state the extent to which the following competences are required in your current work. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

International mobility

A high proportion of former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS students was regularly employed abroad (21%) and were sent abroad by their employers on work assignments (22%) during the first few years after graduation. Mechanical Engineering graduates are clearly in both respects above average .

ERASMUS related work tasks

Mechanical Engineering graduates are clearly more frequently assigned visibly international works tasks than the average former ERASMUS students, e.g. "using the language of the ERASMUS host country in work-related activities:

- Telephone conversation and face-to-face discussions (Mechanical Engineering: 49%, total ERASMUS students: 37%)
- Professional travel to foreign countries other than the ERASMUS host country (Mechanical Engineering: 50%; total ERASMUS students: 25%)

International competences are also important for the current work of a substantial number of ERASMUS graduates not active in visibly international jobs.

Further study

The VALERA survey confirms findings of prior studies that an enormously high proportion of former ERASMUS students continue to study after their first degree. In Mechanical Engineering 37% of graduates take up another study or a PhD programme. Therefore, transition to employment is postponed for many of them.

Job search and transition period

Compared to other studies of graduates in Europe, there are no indications that former ERASMUS students are different from others in terms of start of job search, period of job search, number of employers contacted etc. Only 3 % of the Mechanical Engineering graduates were employed part-time on their first job, compared to 17 percent of all former ERASMUS students. Their job conditions were hence comparatively good. But, short-term contract are more widespread on their first job (Mechanical Engineering 43%).

Perceived recruitment criteria

Former ERASMUS students, like other students, are primarily selected by employers according to both their academic knowledge and their personality. Their foreign language proficiency (Mechanical Engineering 60%) and their experiences abroad in general (Mechanical Engineering 63%) played a role for more than half of the former ERASMUS students. Almost half of the Mechanical Engineering graduates report additionally that the "ERASMUS study abroad period" was an important criterion in the recruitment process (total former ERASMUS students: 36%).

Area of employment

Employment in higher education, research and development is very high among former ERASMUS students from Mechanical Engineering (32%; compared to 16% total).

Four out of five (82%) former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS students work in an organisation with an international scope. This is clearly more frequent than among all former ERASMUS students (51%).

Retrospective assessment of the ERASMUS study abroad period

The value of the ERASMUS study abroad is substantially more positively assessed as regards personality development, knowledge, reflection etc. than as regards career and income. Almost all former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS students (94%) reported that the period was worthwhile for maturity and personal development. Additionally more than half of the former Mechanical Engineering ERASMUS students state, that the study abroad was worthwhile regarding:

- Knowledge and understanding of the host country (89%),
- Foreign language proficiency (88 %),
- New ways of thinking and reflection (84%),
- Enhancement of academic and professional knowledge (64%),
- Career prospects (61%) and
- 30 % believe that study abroad had a positive impact on the income level.

8.2.3 Results of the Seminar

Organization and Participants

The seminar addressing the field of study of Mechanical Engineering took place at the 20th March 2006 (9am - 3pm) at the Intercity Hotel in Frankfurt. Nine experts participated in the seminar, representing seven countries and different stakeholder groups.

Table 107 Participants' Institution and Function of the "Mechanical Engineering" Seminar

No.	Institution	Function
1.	International Society for Engineering Education (IGIP) (Czech Republic)	Working Group "Languages and Humanities in Engineering Education"
2.	Director of several organisations in the area of education (UK)	Former Director of Mercedes Benz UK
3.	University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück (Germany)	Responsible for: European Mechanical Engineering Studies - Bachelor Programme
4.	Luleå University of Technology (Sweden)	Former president of SEFI (The European Society for Engineering Education)
5.	TU Berlin (Germany)	Representative of TREE Thematic Network: Teaching and Research in Engineering in Europe
6.	National Institute of Applied Sciences, Lyon (France)	Current ERASMUS Student
7.	Hochtief Polska (Poland)	Senior Human Resource Specialist
8.	MEDIA (Altran Group) Consultant Mechanical Engineering (Spain)	Former ERASMUS Student
9.	Universidad Politecnica de Cartagena (Spain)	Current ERASMUS Student

Major Findings

Overall, the participants agreed that one should be *cautious not to overrate the impact of study abroad in the framework of ERASMUS*. Evidence of professional success of former graduate students does not suffice, because a comparison with non-mobile students would be needed. Other formerly mobile students might be equally successful, and ERASMUS students are a somewhat select group: On average, the participants presented the opinion that ERASMUS students were on average better students already before their stay abroad. One participant reported about a one-mark difference in average in this regard. Also the participants strongly argued that ERASMUS students are positively selected or that they are a positively self-selected group. Therefore it can be expected anyway that they are more successful in their subsequent career.

Still, *country-specific differences* were seen here. Students in some countries are hardly interested in study abroad. As the consequence, participation in ERASMUS is hardly selective at all and thus cannot serve as an indication as such of being one of the academically strong candidates. As an example, the English representative named the United Kingdom as an ERASMUS country with a very uneven balance. Substantially more students are coming in than going out. On the other hand, study abroad is highly

desired, highly selected and believed to boost subsequent professional careers for students from Central and Eastern European countries.

Also, a certain extent of *social selection* takes place normally. Students opting for ERASMUS can afford to have additional expenses and possibly a prolongation of their study. Additionally, some ERASMUS students were often already internationally experienced before they studied abroad. Many of them had stayed for a longer period abroad before. One university representative presented an interesting typology of students (see below). According to this typology, at the one hand there are students needing no additional motivation or guidance at all and at the other hand, there are students who need to get motivated and who are expecting a full service package.

Table 108 Typology of Mobile Students (presentation of a participant)

Type	Characteristics
Globetrotter	self-confident, autonomous; needs no support; studies and works everywhere
Backpacker	curious; short-visit, spontaneous decision on opportunities; home-base oriented; requires data on opportunities
Holidayer	considers study time abroad as holidays; no professional attitude
Programme rider	long-term orientation; requires an elaborated and accepted study programme
Full package rider	hesitating; requires full organized service
Forced international students	no original international orientation; focus on fulfilling rules

Despite the critical methodological comments, the overall assessment of an ERASMUS study period abroad was consistently positive. With regard to competence development, the impact of ERASMUS was mainly seen in the area of the so-called "*soft-skills*" and *personality development*. Summarising the participants' statements, a temporary study period is an asset for students in engineering because they are likely to have a more mature personality, have acquired stronger socio-communicative skills and have improved their foreign language proficiency. This holds true for most students having studied for a period abroad and not just for those who studied abroad under specifically good and suitable conditions. Interestingly, some participants even supported the idea that facing complicated bureaucracies abroad – to name an adversary example - will turn out to be positive challenge for improving one's abilities. On that basis one might even suggest that a too well organised service package for students would limit the positive impact of "finding one's way/getting along". One participant pointed out that employers prefer self-organised study programmes as they are an indicator for a high self-motivation, planning capacity and problem-solving ability.

In the discussion of competence gain and its preferable conditions, *two exceptions* have been named: First, if students spend most of the time abroad together with home country fellows, opportunities of gaining international/intercultural competences are

lost. Therefore, host institutions should be active in taking care that students cooperate in their study activities and spend their extracurricular activities with persons from the host country and third countries. Second, the language of instruction obviously is crucial for the linguistic value of study abroad. Study programmes offered in English are seen as important to attract students, but they minimise the chance of learning a third European language.

Besides the impact on students' competences, participants agreed about a more *field-specific knowledge gain* in the most cases. Even though mechanical engineering is a field strongly shaped by universal knowledge, there are country-specific elements as well: different professional cultures of engineering have developed as regards problem-solving styles, links between technological and managerial tasks etc. As a consequence, students can gain from a temporary study abroad in

- Studying at a partner institution of another country where study provisions are academically more demanding in general or in some areas than at the home institution,
- Getting exposed to different styles of academic problem-solving, links between technological and managerial task settings and other different styles of engineering knowledge and work,
- Using this period for strengthening their own profile in an area in which the host institution has to offer more than the home institution.

Several participants reported in this regard, that they carefully choose the host country and partner institutions based on the interest and career plans of students. Students planning to work in the area of service and maintenance are recommended to study in England. In contrast, theoretically oriented students should use their study abroad stay to get accustomed to the high level of mathematics taught at French engineering schools. Guidance in the selection of the host institution was assessed as very important.

The overall positive assessment of ERASMUS continued in the discussion about *transition to work and employment prospects of former ERASMUS students*. The discussion presented the picture that employers in the field of mechanical engineering view a study period abroad as favourable in principle, but by no means as a clear indication that the individual applicant is viewed as superior. This favourable eye on former ERASMUS students varies by type and activity of the former ERASMUS student during his or her stay abroad. This should not be surprising, because some students might have viewed the study abroad period as extended holidays or a time for adventure, some might have faced difficulties to adapt and to understand, some might have taken courses which do not fit to their profile or were unsuitable to substitute courses at their home institution. Therefore, employers might have a favourable look at former ERASMUS students at first glance in the recruitment process, and graduates with a temporary study abroad experience thus "*have a foot in the door*" in the job search and recruitment process, but employers tend to inquire specifically what this experience has meant for the individual candidate. The impact of ERASMUS may also depend on the "market situation". During the seminar it was reported that the English language competence of Spanish engineering students is on average not very high. Here, a good knowledge of English of a former ERASMUS student is a strong comparative advantage.

In contrast, the participants agreed generally that the *competence gain in socio-communicative skills, in intercultural abilities and problem-solving abilities is highly valued by employers*. Most employers appreciate these competences, because the ability to work in teams, adaptability or openness to other persons and similar abilities strengthened by international experiences are useful in many work settings.

Moreover, engineering firms nowadays are generally embedded in an *international environment*, not merely the globally active and multinational firms: acquiring knowledge from different countries, planning products for international markets or improving contacts with foreign customers became so much a general phenomenon that inter-cultural experience and understanding is expected from an increasing number of engineers. Obviously, we are moving towards a situation where *international experiences and understanding become a "must" for attractive and demanding careers*.

Yet, the participants also shared the view that one cannot expect that temporary study abroad put mechanical engineers automatically on the career ladder towards leading positions in their company. But, *former ERASMUS students can expect to fare more successfully than in an average career*. Many former ERASMUS students are likely to have an edge in interesting domains of specialisation, problem-solving abilities, socio-communicative skills; language proficiency and international understanding in order to fare somewhat better in their careers than other not having this experience. This holds true for ERASMUS students of most Western European countries. The impact is even stronger for many former ERASMUS students from Central and Eastern European countries and from some Southern European. They clearly stand out from their peers and are likely to fare substantially better in their professional career.

In the long run, former ERASMUS students in the field of Mechanical Engineering seem to be *more open for an international career*. The survey results showed that they are more likely to seek for employment in other countries and are more likely to be sent by their employers to extended periods of work to other countries than the average former ERASMUS students (in other fields of study). Temporary study in an another country obviously is very valuable for these professionally mobile graduates, but there are no indications that there is a clear gap between the professional value of ERASMUS study between those graduates opting for international careers and assignments and for those active in the home country and being in the mainstream of domestic work assignment. On the other side mobility seems to spread the feelings of being "rootless" as well as problems of reintegration.

At several points during the discussion, participants pointed out that Mechanical Engineering clearly is a field of study in which the *selection of the courses taken abroad – their theme and quality – is crucial for the academic value of temporary study abroad*. Whereas in many other fields most choices of courses might turn out to be beneficial, the actual study programme during the ERASMUS period in another country is crucial for success and failure in mechanical engineering:

- Many themes are considered indispensable components of study. Therefore, the risk of not getting recognition is high, if the courses taken abroad do not match the home programme.
- Non-recognition and prolongation is often more harmful for graduate careers of engineers than those from other fields of study.

- Also, establishing and sharpening a specific profile of knowledge through temporary study at another institution of higher education tends to require a careful design of the study period abroad.

Therefore, *close cooperation between the teaching staff and the home and host institution* is essential. This can be achieved more successfully if the number of partner institutions for student exchange is kept small. Here, representatives of successful international programmes emphasised several times, that they decided to reduce their number of partners to secure a high-quality exchange programme.

Furthermore, the *importance of teaching mobility for the success of student mobility* was strongly emphasised. The experiences abroad and the knowledge of the host higher education and the colleagues there help both institutions in the recognition process. Teachers who have been abroad know the quality and practices of the host institution by own experience and are more willing to accept different teaching methods and contents. At any event, teachers from both sides have to be actively involved in preparing a meaningful prior selection of the courses to be taken by the individual student during his or her study period in another country. The participants of the seminar clearly expressed the view that the current situation of recognition and coordination of course programmes is in many cases unsatisfactory. Considerable improvement has to be strived for in particular in favour of general recognition. Individual recognition was viewed as not working well in practice.

In the United Kingdom, some universities offer three-year programmes and corresponding four-years "international" or "European programmes". In those cases, a one-year study period is formally fully recognized, though causing a one year longer period of study. There were different views expressed whether that model faces problems, because it is viewed as costly and graduates might face problems as a consequence of a "prolongation" of study, or whether such an addition would be accepted and valuable. Representatives from other countries reported that one or two years longer study periods would not cause employment problems, if they seem to have contributed to a desirable enhancement of competences.

In order to ensure recognition upon return of the achievements during the ERASMUS period, *a firmer integration of the study abroad programme into the curriculum* as well as a close interaction with partner institutions were advocated by the participants. Also good counselling and guidance play an important role in the preparation phase. Students need to be prepared for different teaching methods and provisions. Course contents and chosen specialisations should be discussed between students and home teachers. One participant mentioned as a benchmarking example the Georgia Institute of Technology model of study abroad. Based on a careful analysis of the impact the study abroad period has on its students, it prepares their students before departure and evaluate the outcomes after return by using an assessment centre as an instrument.

Finally, the *Bologna Process* was seen as leading in some respects to additional problems, but generally poses a good opportunity to improve careful curricular design and improved advice for individual students in order to increase the academic value and thus the professional impact of study abroad. One participant stated that stronger efforts are needed now to identify courses abroad which could be recognised upon return, because many universities decided to structure the curricula of Bachelor programmes

more tightly now. Furthermore, one participant added that stricter rules governing the structure of study abroad would also increase the learning effect in academic terms.

8.2.4 Summary

The experts and actors in the field of mechanical engineering on one hand pointed out that temporary study abroad is an optional choice for some students: mobile students are appreciated by their employers because they opt for conditions and provisions of study helping them to mature and enhance some additional competences which are valuable for their subsequent employment and work. On the other hand, they saw the need that the Mechanical Engineering departments take strong active measures in cooperation with their partners in other European countries in order to ensure a higher value of temporary study in other European countries.

They viewed the current setting up of learning agreements for the individual ERASMUS students as not sufficient. They suggested close cooperation with partner institutions in order to identify equivalent courses as well as opportunities for students to strengthen a profile in areas of specialisation at the host university. Such a close cooperation among partner departments would only work if the number of partner departments is kept small.

8.3 Business Studies

8.3.1 Characteristics of the Field of Study

Business Studies was chosen as a professionally oriented field in the area of social sciences. Along with Foreign Language, it was the field with the highest number or the second highest number respectively of ERASMUS students from the start until now. More than 20% of Business Studies students are outgoing with the ERASMUS programme every year (see Figure 25).

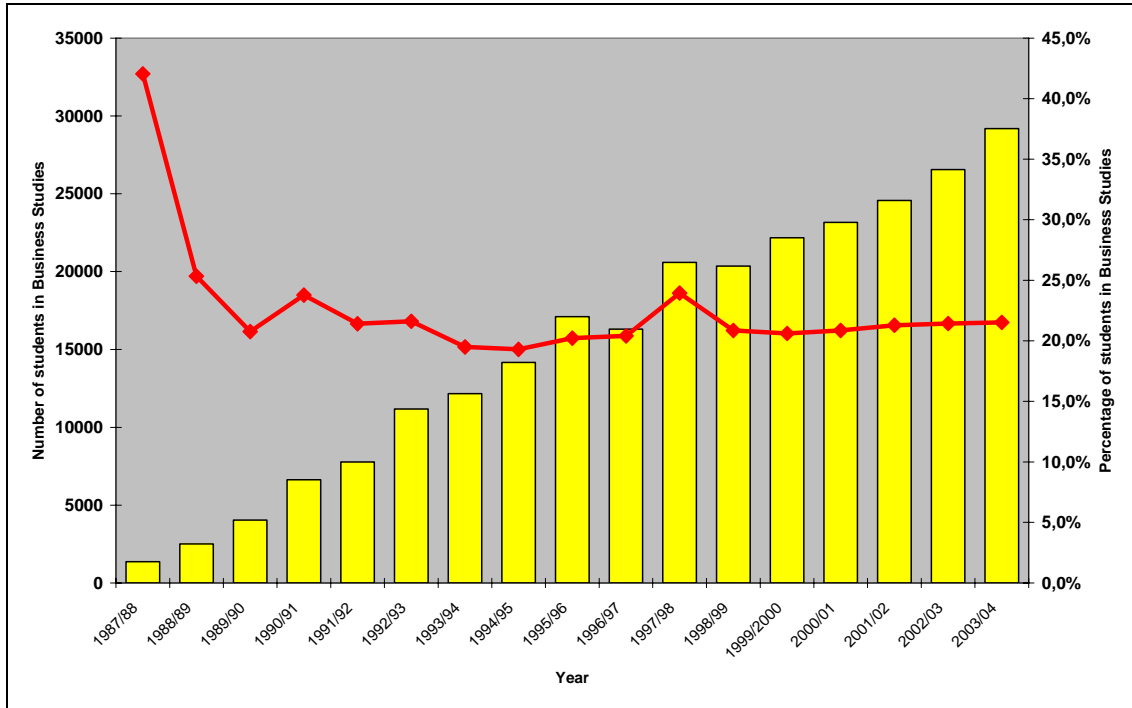
Business Studies is a broad subject not only offered by universities but also by universities of applied sciences, colleges, poly-technique or business schools. "Business Studies" is the umbrella term for a wide range of study programmes and specialisations in the field of Business, Economy and Management. The curricula vary by specialisation and focus of each study programme. As a rule, however, they comprise general basic theories and models of Business Administration and Economics, Management Subjects as well as Law, Mathematics and Statistics. Additional subjects can be: Psychology, Technical Subjects, Education, Foreign Languages, Communication, Sociology or Political Sciences. Currently, a growing number of Business Studies programmes offer also courses teaching so-called soft skills like intercultural communication, team work, presentation techniques and conflict management.¹⁴

Business Studies are a comparatively young field of study covering a broad knowledge about the steering, controlling and management of organisations. By their nature, Business Studies are relatively strongly oriented to the demands of the labour market. In

¹⁴ Die Zeit Studienführer <http://www.das-ranking.de/che6/CHE6?module=WasIst&do=show&esb=29>

particular, the growing forces of internationalisation and globalisation have led to an increased number of international business programmes in response to a growing demand of internationally trained graduates.

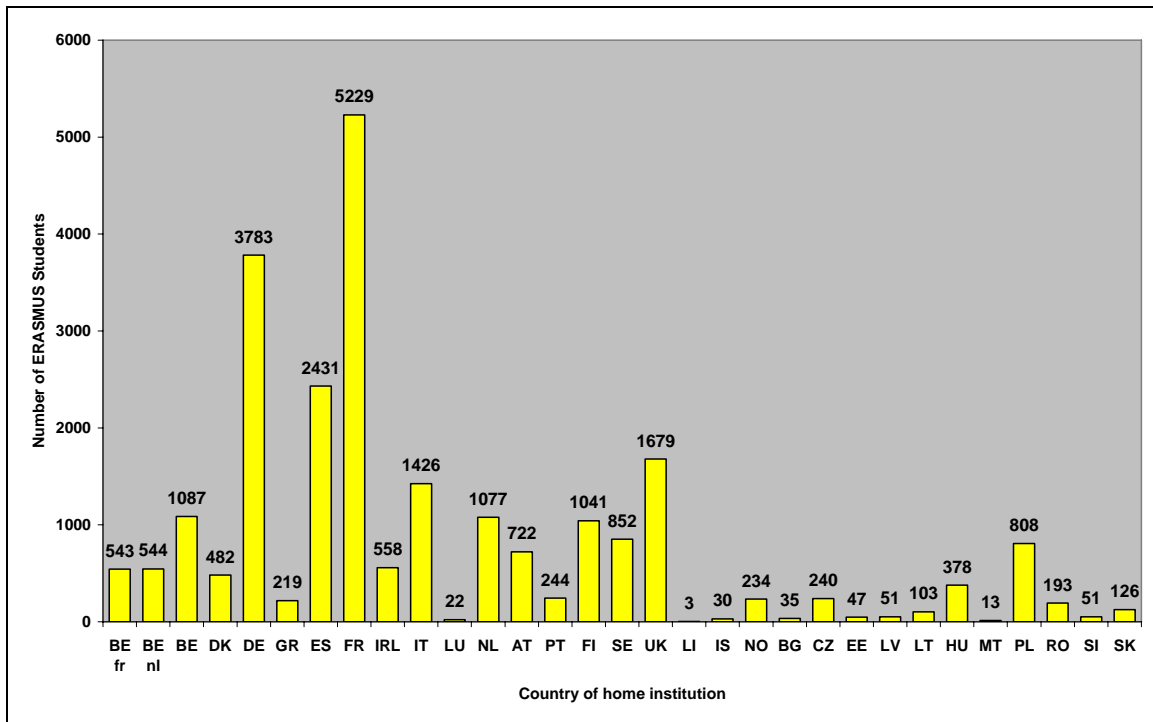
Figure 25 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Business Studies 1987 - 2004



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme,
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

Figure 26 shows the number of outgoing ERASMUS students in the field of Business Studies distributed over all European countries in the academic year 2000/01. Most students came from institutions in France, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom. Surprisingly high are the numbers of students from institutions in Finland.

Figure 26 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Business Studies by Country of Home Institution 2000/01



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme,
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

8.3.2 Results of the Survey with Former Students

The student profile

The majority of former Business Studies ERASMUS students are female (53%). The average age at the time of the survey (2005) was 29.

The period abroad

The Business Studies students had substantial experience abroad: they spent about 7 months abroad during their ERASMUS supported period in the academic year 2000/2001 and more than one third (44%) spent one or more additional periods abroad, altogether (including the ERASMUS stay) the average time abroad was 10.7 months. Compared to the other fields of study relatively few Business Studies graduates were on work placements/internships abroad (1 %; all fields: 6%).

Academic situation and study conditions

The graduates state a relatively low satisfaction with assistance/guidance/advice provided by their home institution for the study period abroad. Only about half of the Business Studies respondents were satisfied with the assistance of their home institution regarding academic matters, administrative matters and with information about the host institution and country. 43% were satisfied with accommodation and 48 % with language training.

But the graduates do not report significant problems during their study abroad. The single most frequent *academic problem* was related to "problems obtaining academic credits and credit transfer" (18%); equally frequent were also problems regarding financial matters (19%), accommodation (25%) and administrative matters (17%).

More than half of the respondents had frequent contacts with domestic students during course related activities (lectures, seminars, working groups etc.), 56 % during extra-curricular activities (e.g. clubs, sport) and 61 % during other leisure time.

43 % of the courses taken abroad by the Business Studies graduates were viewed to be academically equally demanding as courses which they would have taken at the home institution during the same period; 32 % were reported to be academically less demanding and 22 % to be more demanding.

Recognition

ECTS was only introduced in the majority of programmes around the year 2000: 67 percent reported application of ECTS at the host institution (total of former ERASMUS students: 54 %).

The Business Studies graduates reported a respectable extent of recognition: 78 percent of study achievements abroad were recognized on average upon return.

A substantial proportion of ERASMUS students have invested study abroad as an additional study period: 32 percent reported a prolongation of overall study duration due to the ERASMUS period, in most of these cases as long as the ERASMUS period (about 8 months).

Competence profile

Former ERASMUS students seem to have a unique self-image of competences with respect to

- Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.);
- Foreign language proficiency;
- Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture);

These three aspects are the clear domain of former internationally mobile students, where they see their competences at the time of return to be better (or even "much" better) than these of non-mobile students. The vast majority sees also advantages regarding "preparation for future employment and work" (69 %), while the area of academic competences seems to be ambivalent: 45% of former Business Studies ERASMUS students reported to have better "academic knowledge and skills" (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.) and an equal number state to have worse academic competences than to non-mobile students.

Table 109 Former Business Studies ERASMUS Students' Assessment of their Competences Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students (percent)

	Better (1+2)	Equal (3)	Worse (4+5)
Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.)	96	2	3
Foreign language proficiency	94	2	4
Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture)	92	1	7
Preparation for future employment and work	69	5	26
Academic knowledge and skills (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)	45	9	46

Question A21: At the time of return, how do you rate your knowledge and competences as compared to non-mobile students in the following areas? Scale of answers from 1 to 5; 1 = much better, 3 = equal, 5 = much worse.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

According to most dimensions listed in Table 110 about three quarters of former ERASMUS students rate their competences as high. This profile is surprisingly balanced. Business Studies graduates do not have a distinctive competence profile - their competences are similar to the average former ERASMUS graduate.

Table 110 Former Business Studies ERASMUS Students' Self-assessed Competences at Time of Graduation and Job Requirements about 2-3 Years Later (percent "high"; answers 1 and 2)

	Competences at the time of graduation (1)	Job requirements about 2-3 years later (2)	Difference (1 - 2) (3)
Adaptability	83	80	3
Foreign language proficiency	82	64	18
Analytical competences	77	88	-11
Problem-solving ability	77	94	-17
Written communication skill	77	76	1
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	76	85	-9
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	75	66	9
Power of concentration	75	85	-10
Getting personally involved	74	82	-8
Accuracy, attention to detail	73	87	-14
Loyalty, integrity	72	74	-2
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	71	86	-15
Initiative	69	90	-21
Computer skills	64	80	-16
Field-specific knowledge of methods	61	67	-6

Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Question F7: Please, state the extent to which the following competences are required in your current work. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

In most areas, job requirements are more demanding than the competences acquired by former ERASMUS students at the time of graduation. As compared to the average of all former ERASMUS students, Business Studies graduates consider their jobs highly less demanding as regards field-specific theoretical knowledge and knowledge of methods. Job requirements and competences seem to be unbalanced especially as regards "initiative", "problem-solving ability", "computer skills", "assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence" and "accuracy, attention to detail" where Business Studies graduates report higher job requirements. In contrast, former ERASMUS students have more often high foreign language skills than required by their job.

International mobility

Some former Business Studies ERASMUS students were already regularly employed abroad (20%) during the first years of employment or were sent abroad by their employers on work assignments (17%).

ERASMUS related work tasks

Business Studies graduates are clearly not more frequently assigned visibly international works tasks than the average former ERASMUS students, e.g. "using the language of the ERASMUS host country in work-related activities":

- telephone conversation, face-to-face discussions (Business Studies: 35%, total ERASMUS students: 37%)
- professional travel to foreign countries other than the ERASMUS host country (Business Studies: 31%; total ERASMUS students: 25%).

International competences are also important for the current work of a substantial number of ERASMUS graduates not active in visibly international jobs. This is often true for Business Studies graduates: 52 % reported that "professional knowledge of other countries" (e.g. economic, sociological, legal knowledge) is "important" for doing the current work compared to 46 % of all former ERASMUS students.

Further study

The VALERA survey confirms findings of prior study that an enormously high proportion of former ERASMUS students continue study after the first degree. In Business Studies every third (35%) belongs to this group. Therefore, transition to employment is postponed for many of them.

Job search and transition period

Compared to other studies of graduates in Europe, there are no indications that former ERASMUS students are different from others in terms of start of job search, period of job search, number of employers contacted etc.

Only 10 % of the Business Studies graduates were employed part-time on their first job, compared to 17 percent of all former ERASMUS students.

Short-term contracts are more widespread on their first job (Business Studies 40%; all former ERASMUS students: 54%).

Perceived recruitment criteria

Former ERASMUS students, like other students, are primarily selected by employers according to both their academic knowledge and their personality. The field of study was reported to be important by 71 % of the Business Studies graduates (all former ERASMUS students: 75%) and the main subject/specialization by 55 % (all former ERASMUS students: 61%). Their foreign language proficiency (Business Studies 62%) and their experiences abroad in general (Business Studies 61%) played a role for more than half of the former ERASMUS students. 42 % of the Business Studies graduates additionally reported that the "ERASMUS study abroad period" was an important criteria in the recruitment process (all former ERASMUS students: 36%).

Area of employment

Employment in financial intermediation (e.g. banking, insurance) and in legal, accounting, book-keeping, auditing, business consultancy are the most relevant economic sectors for former ERASMUS students from Business Studies (14% and 13%). 66% of former Business Studies ERASMUS students work in an organisation with an international scope (percentage of all ERASMUS students: 51%).

Retrospective assessment of the ERASMUS study abroad period

The value of the ERASMUS study abroad is substantially more positively assessed as regards personality development, knowledge, reflection etc. than as regards career and income. Almost all former Business Studies ERASMUS students (96%) report that the period was worthwhile for maturity and personal development. Additionally more than

half of the former Business Studies ERASMUS students state that the study abroad was worthwhile regarding:

- Knowledge and understanding of the host country (88%);
- Foreign language proficiency (89 %);
- New ways of thinking and reflection (84%);
- Enhancement of academic and professional knowledge (61%),
- Career prospects (63%); and
- 25 % believe that study abroad had a positive impact on the income level.

8.3.3 Results of the Seminar

Organisation and Participants

The seminar addressing the field of study of Business Studies took place at the 27th March 2006 (9am - 3pm) at the Intercity Hotel in Frankfurt. Nine experts participated in the seminar, representing seven countries and different stakeholder groups.

Table 111 Participants' Institution and Function of the "Business Study" Seminar

No.	Institution	Function
1.	The Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA), Germany	Deputy Manager of Education & Vocational Education Department Member of the UNICE working group "Education and Training"
2	Carlos III University (Spain)	Current ERASMUS Student
3.	Trinity College Dublin (Ireland)	President of EIASM (The European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management)
4.	Free University of Brussels (Belgium)	Current ERASMUS Student
5.	Fortis Bank (Poland)	Human Resources Department
6.	Jagiellonian University (Poland)	Coordinator of Institute of Public Affairs, Faculty of Management and Social Communication
7.	University of Jyväskylä (Finland)	Professor of School of Business and Economics
8.	Graduate School of Management of Troyes (France)	Current ERASMUS Student
9.	Reutlingen University (Germany)	Managing Director of ESB-Reutlingen (European School of Business)

Major Findings

Overall, the participants strongly supported the importance of an ERASMUS study period abroad for the personality development of graduates. In contrast to the other

fields of study addressed in the prior seminars, experts of business emphasized the differences between participation in the ERASMUS programme and *self-organisation* of a study period abroad. The majority of participants were convinced that self-organised study periods abroad are more valued by employers, because students had to be more active as far as self-organisation, the motivation and problem-solving in this process are concerned. Internships abroad are valued highly by employers as well due to the practical experience. Accordingly, ERASMUS should not be a too-well organised service-package for mobile students. Efforts should be made, however, to increase the secured well-informed decisions. The participants observed a intensive learning effect by "struggling through the jungle". Still, they disagreed to be seen as served programme students. ERASMUS study provisions as host institutions should serve the students through offering various ways of utilizing the temporary study period in another country. They were not in favour of perfectly integrated programmes organising everything ahead. Rather they should serve the well-informed student who is able to select the best opportunity for him-/herself. They underlined the self-learning aspects of each single step in this process. In their views also dropping-out of the programme (early return home) is not necessarily a failure but can be a valuable learning experience.

In this context, the term "*personality development*" was used as a general term covering several competences and attitudes. First of all, it was argued that students are gaining in intercultural awareness. They are more sensitive to cultural differences and aware of their own culture. Additionally, the higher adaptability of former ERASMUS students to new environments, new teaching methods and new cultures was emphasised. Overall, former ERASMUS students were described as more flexible, more innovative and more productive in teamwork processes. A successful study abroad was viewed to depend strongly on the students themselves.

As necessary pre-condition for intercultural learning, adaptability and tolerance, the participants underscored the *importance of contacts to local students*. If students spend most of the time abroad together with home country students, opportunities of gaining international/intercultural competences are lost. The host institutions need to get active to foster intercultural interaction. Teachers and ERASMUS coordinators should be active in taking care that students cooperate in their study activities and spend their extracurricular activities with persons from the host country and third countries.

Business Studies is a field with a more or less general knowledge strongly influenced by the "American school" adapted to different fields and cultures. A study period abroad can foster the *field-specific knowledge* by learning about varying approaches, markets and processes in different countries. In the seminar participants underscored the value of contrasting experiences for example different accounting standards and business laws. But, they viewed the experience of different teaching methods as valuable, too. Students not used to teamwork and case studies get confronted with new learning habits. They often need time to adapt but the medium- and long-term effects are very positive. Teamwork, presentation techniques and foreign language skills are highly valued by employers. The participating students supported this perspective. Even though they were struggling at the beginning to get used to different teaching methods, they adapted to this challenge and considered it as enhancing their competences.

The *academic learning outcome* seems to be affected by the language of instruction. If the language is previously not well-known, students have to use the time to improve their language proficiency. If the students are more versatile in the language of instruction, the academic value of the study period abroad is higher. The participants agreed that countries vary in their approaches to management. Students can profit from experiencing and comparing different approaches

Competences typically fostered by study periods abroad could be viewed in the past as "add-on" competences of a minority. In a globalising world, however, almost all business activities are international, and these *competences gradually become a "must"*. This also explains that internationally versatile students cannot expect high-flying careers as a rule. Rather, temporary study abroad can only be expected to be a "door-opener" in the job search and recruitment process. Having studied abroad is helpful to be considered. In Eastern and Central Europe it might play a substantial role in the selection among candidates. In Western Europe, however, it is not anymore an exceptional option, and some students have even been abroad several times.

International mobility plays an important rule in the first stage of screening the applicants, because formerly mobile students are assumed to be more open, more tolerant, are more ambitious, more goal-oriented and more strongly engaged in their work. Furthermore, employers expect them to be good team workers (also in international teams) and to be able to work in an international environment. As already stated, business today is international. Companies serve several national markets, products are adapted to the national cultures and demands. The company itself might have production lines in several countries. Employees need to get along in this international environment. Tolerance, intercultural competences and foreign language proficiency are basic requirements for a career.

Graduates in the field of Business Studies are expected to have a good methodological knowledge rather than an in-depth subject-matter knowledge. Business Studies are a field with a *medium degree of professional preparation*. Higher education institutions are expected to foster some basic knowledge in different areas as well as the tools and methods to adapt to changing working environments and working tasks. The employing organisation is expected to take care of the training for the specific work task and the specific business sector. "Trainee programmes", in which the trainees rotate through different departments and functions, are one way how initial learning after graduation is organized.

Overall, the professional value of ERASMUS mobility was viewed as *having in impact predominantly on the first years of the career*. The participants warned against overrating the long-term impacts. Job experience and job performance over the years become increasingly stronger factors in determining the graduates' careers. International mobility, though, *has a long-term career impact improving networks*. ERASMUS students develop networks in their host country but also internationally through other ERASMUS and international students they get to know during their stay. These contacts may help in later life to foster business contacts or to find a job abroad.

Prolongation of study due to non-recognition of credits was not viewed as having a negative impact on the transition to work, because a moderate prolongation does not seem to be detrimental. Employers rather are likely to explore how the study abroad had

been spent usefully. Further factors are personal characteristics and activities of the applicant before, during and after the study period.

As study abroad was viewed by a participant as a period of learning which could lead in many ways to an enhancement of professionally relevant experiences, proposals for improvements did not address any curricular details but rather called for *more transparency and better information for the students*. The students should be prepared to act as "well-informed" and responsible individuals when deciding about their ERASMUS stay and during the experience itself. Efforts to make good learning agreements were viewed to depend too strongly on single efforts of curricula coordinators. For example, one teacher reported, that the partner institution does not accept team presentations as exams. As a consequence ERASMUS students might be caught in the middle between the requirements of both institutions. Efforts should be made fostering trust between institutions based on better information, thus leaving ample choices for students to make individual strategic decisions how to use the study period in a suitable way.

In general, the participants of the seminar expressed reservations against higher regulations and homogenisation of study programmes. They advocated a *liberal market orientation* of study abroad: high information level, high degree of transparency and service orientation by all partners involved. Necessary preconditions are a limited number of partner institutions. The participants criticised that many institutions have too many partners with a low number of exchanging students. A high quantity of institutions makes coordinated approach and the exchange of information more complicated.

Besides various positive impacts, examples for the "*dark side of mobility*" were mentioned by the participants as well. Living a short to medium period in another country with a culture very different to one's own cannot only lead to intercultural competences but also to the negative effect of confirming prejudices and stereotypes. Also, if students are staying for a longer period abroad, they may lose their contacts at home. Reintegration problems may occur when returning to the home country and the home institutions.

The *ERASMUS programme* itself was criticised as being *too standardised*. The Bologna process and growing internationalisation of study programmes will lead to new modes of mobility demanding higher flexibility in the programme structure. Many students will do their Bachelor degree in one country and their (full) Master degree in another country. Tuition fees are being introduced in many European countries. ERASMUS should enable the students to do either their master or PhD degree abroad.

8.3.4 Summary

Altogether, the experts and actors participating in the seminar on Business Studies viewed temporary study in another European country as highly valuable. ERASMUS seems to be a valuable door-opener at the start of the career, because they are viewed as more motivated, more flexible and better than others as far as social skills are concerned. Students aiming to study for a period abroad, however, have to know competences such as these are not anymore expected only by a few experts, but increasingly become a must.

Study abroad has to be viewed in Business Studies as an opportunity for many options to learn abroad. Tight curricular designs and learning agreements might fit to other fields of study, in Business Studies, however, information and transparency is needed in order to allow for a multitude of options.

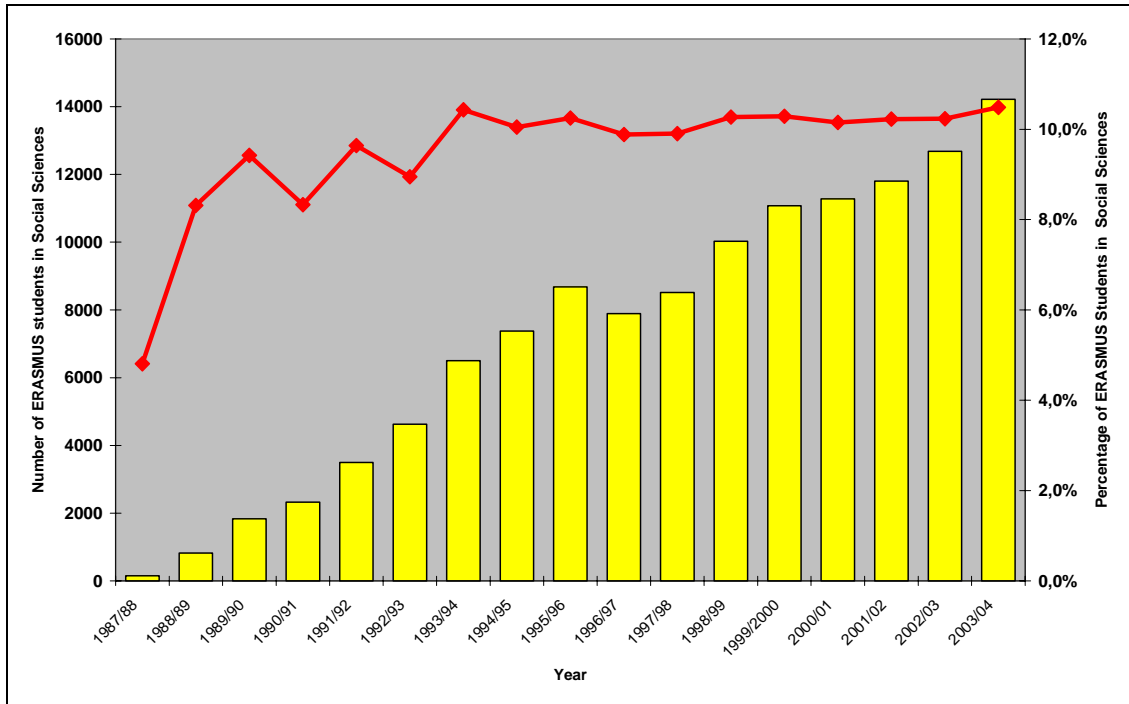
8.4 Sociology

8.4.1 Introduction to the Field of study

Sociology was chosen as an academically oriented field in the area of Humanities and Social Sciences. Academic research in the field of Sociology, like many other fields in Social Science, has adopted a comparative approach and an increasingly international scope in recent years. As a result, in addition to field specific knowledge, strong language skills and the ability to analyse critically, young sociologists are required to have cross cultural and interdisciplinary skills. Many young sociologists take up jobs not closely linked to the field since Sociology does not lead to a major domain.

European integration is one of the main causes for an increasing number of sociologists working outside their home country or in cooperation with peers from other countries. Sociology programmes vary substantially across countries as far as emphasis on theory, methods and thematic areas of analysis is concerned. Sociology programmes often include courses of neighbouring disciplines, e.g. Communication Science, Political Science, Economics and Cultural Studies. This is expected to widen their scope both for further research tasks and practical professional tasks. Moreover, knowledge of foreign languages, in particular English, is an asset for young sociologists, both for studying relevant research literature and for international communication. The proportion of students in Social Sciences among all ERASMUS students was small during the first years after the inauguration of the ERASMUS programme. After some years, it reached the level of 10% and remained relatively constant thereafter (see Figure 27).

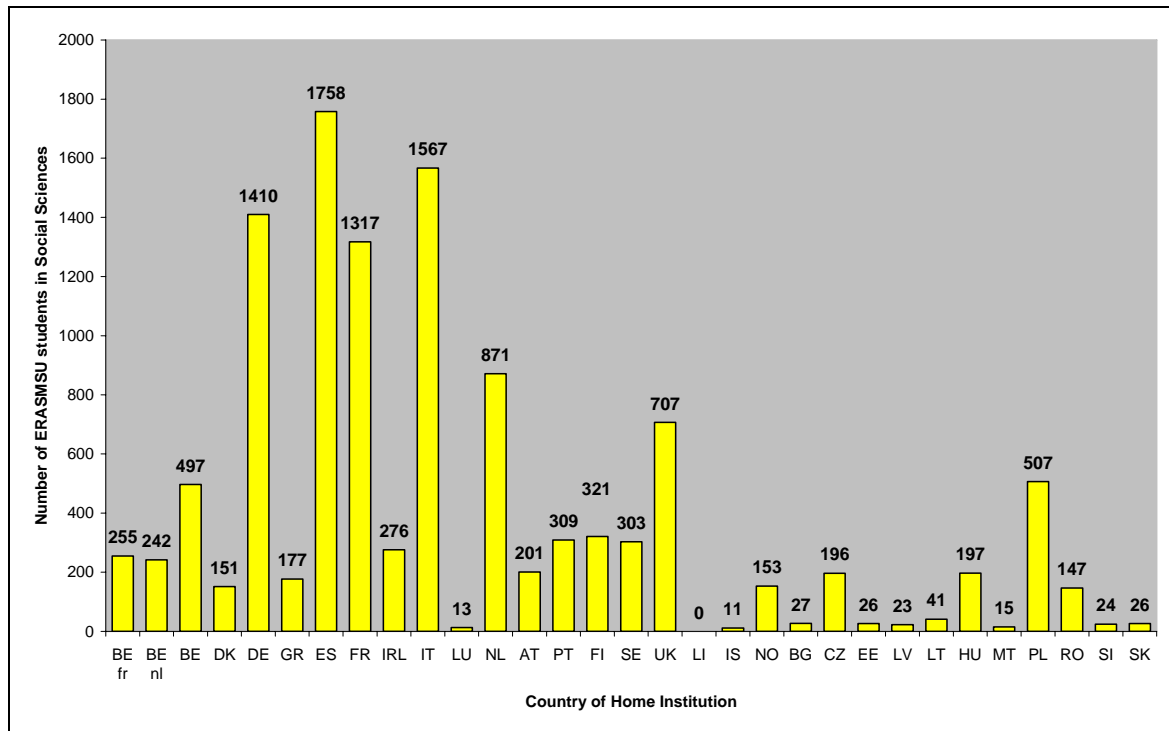
Figure 27 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Sociology 1987 - 2004



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme, http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

The highest absolute numbers of students in Social Sciences participating in ERASMUS can be found in Spain, followed by Italy, Germany and France. Among all ERASMUS students coming from a higher education institution in the Netherlands, the proportion of outgoing students in area of Social Sciences is quite high.

Figure 28 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Sociology by Country of Home Institution 2000/01



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme,
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

8.4.2 Results of the Survey with Former Students

The student profile

The vast majority of former Sociology ERASMUS students are female (74%). The average age at the time of the survey (2005) was 28.

The period abroad

The Sociology students had substantial experience abroad: they spent about 6 months abroad during their ERASMUS supported period in the academic year 2000/2001 and more than one third (35%) had one or more additional periods abroad, altogether the average of total duration spent abroad (including their ERASMUS stay) is 8.8 month. Compared to the other fields of study relatively many Sociology graduates were on work placements/internships abroad (8 %; all fields: 6%).

Academic situation and study conditions

The graduates state a relatively low satisfaction with assistance/guidance/advice provided by their home institution for the study period abroad. Only about half of the Sociology respondents were satisfied with the assistance of their home institution regarding academic matters, administrative matters and with information about the host institution and country. 33% were satisfied with accommodation and 27 % with language training (all fields: 44%).

But the graduates do not report significant problems during their study abroad. The single most frequent *academic problem* was related to "problems obtaining academic

credits and credit transfer" (16%); more frequent were problems regarding financial matters (36%), accommodation (27%) and administrative matters (22%).

About half of the respondents had frequent contacts with domestic students during course related activities (lectures, seminars, working groups etc.), 40 % during extra-curricular activities (e.g. clubs, sport) and 48 % during other leisure time.

41 % of the courses taken abroad by the Sociology graduates were viewed to be academically equally demanding than courses which they would have taken at the home institution during the same period; 31 % were reported to be academically less demanding and 15 % to be more demanding.

Recognition

ECTS was introduced in the majority of the programmes around the year 2000: 54 percent of Sociology graduates reported application of ECTS at the host institution (the same percentage as the total of former ERASMUS students: 54 %).

The Sociology graduates reported a relatively low level of recognition: 63 percent of study achievements abroad were recognized on average upon return (all fields: 74%).

A substantial proportion of ERASMUS students have invested study abroad as an additional study period: 40 percent reported a prolongation of overall study duration due to the ERASMUS period, in most of these cases as long as the ERASMUS period (about 8 months).

Competence profile

Former ERASMUS students seem to have a unique self-image of competences with respect to

- Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.);
- Foreign language proficiency;
- Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture);

These three aspects are the clear domain of former internationally mobile students, where they see their competences at the time of return to be better (or even "much" better) than those of non-mobile students. The majority sees also advantages regarding "preparation for future employment and work" (60 %), while the area of academic competences seems to be ambivalent: 41% of former Sociology ERASMUS students reported to have better "academic knowledge and skills" (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.) and a bigger group reported to have worse academic competences (52%) compared to non-mobile students.

Table 112 Former Sociology ERASMUS Students' Assessment of their Competences Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students (percent)

	Better (1+2)	Equal (3)	Worse (4+5)
Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.)	92	0	8
Foreign language proficiency	97	0	3
Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture)	94	0	6
Preparation for future employment and work	60	0	40
Academic knowledge and skills (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)	41	6	52

Question A21: At the time of return, how do you rate your knowledge and competences as compared to non-mobile students in the following areas? Scale of answers from 1 to 5; 1 = much better, 3 = equal, 5 = much worse.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005

According to most dimensions listed in Table 113 about three quarters of former ERASMUS students rate their competences as high. This profile is surprisingly balanced. Compared with the average former ERASMUS graduate, Sociology graduates saw their strengths in their written communication skills, adaptability and analytical competences.

Table 113 Former Sociology ERASMUS Students' Self-assessed Competences at Time of Graduation and Job Requirements about 2-3 Years Later (percent "high"; answers 1 and 2)

	Competences at the time of graduation (1)	Job requirements about 2-3 years later (2)	Difference (1 - 2) (3)
Written communication skill	89	87	2
Adaptability	84	89	-5
Analytical competences	82	89	-7
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	77	91	-14
Getting personally involved	77	89	-12
Foreign language proficiency	74	51	23
Accuracy, attention to detail	73	83	-10
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	72	81	-9
Problem-solving ability	71	94	-23
Power of concentration	71	89	-18
Loyalty, integrity	70	72	-2
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	68	87	-19
Initiative	66	91	-25
Applying rules and regulations	66	66	0
Field-specific knowledge of methods	64	85	-21
Computer skills	60	81	-21

Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Question F7: Please, state the extent to which the following competences are required in your current work. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005

In most areas, job requirements are more demanding than the competences acquired by former ERASMUS students at the time of graduation. As compared to the average of all former ERASMUS students, Sociology graduates consider their jobs more demanding as regards written communication skills, getting personally involved and field-specific knowledge of methods. Job requirements and competences seem to be unbalanced especially as regards "initiative", "problem-solving ability", "computer skills", "field-specific knowledge of methods", "assertiveness, decisiveness, and persistence" where Sociology graduates report higher job requirements than competences. In contrast, former ERASMUS students have more often high foreign language skills than required by their job.

International mobility

During the first years of employment a few former Sociology ERASMUS students were regularly employed abroad (7%; all fields 17%) or were sent abroad by their employers on work assignments (7%; all fields 12%).

ERASMUS related work tasks

Sociology graduates are less frequently assigned visibly international works tasks than the average former ERASMUS students, e.g. "using the language of the ERASMUS host country in work-related activities":

- telephone conversation, face-to-face discussions etc. (Sociology: 35%, total ERASMUS students: 37%)
- professional travel to foreign countries other than the ERASMUS host country (Sociology: 22%; total ERASMUS students: 25%).

International competences are also important for the current work of a substantial number of ERASMUS graduates not active in visibly international jobs. This is also true for Sociology graduates: 47% reported that "professional knowledge of other countries" (e.g. economic, sociological, legal knowledge) is "important" for doing the current work as compared to 46% of all former ERASMUS students.

Further study

The VALERA survey confirms findings of prior studies that an enormously high proportion of former ERASMUS students continue study after the first degree (Sociology: 35%). Therefore, transition to employment is postponed for many of them.

Job search and transition period

Compared to other studies of graduates in Europe, there are no indications that former ERASMUS students are different from others in terms of start of job search, period of job search, number of employers contacted etc.

19% of the Sociology graduates were employed part-time on their first job, compared to 17% of all former ERASMUS students.

Short-term contracts are more widespread on their first job (Sociology 58%; all former ERASMUS students: 54%).

Perceived recruitment criteria

Former ERASMUS students, as other students, are primarily selected by employers according to both their academic knowledge and their personality. The field of study was reported to be important by 73% of the Sociology graduates (all former ERASMUS students: 75%) and the main subject/specialization by 69% (all former ERASMUS students: 61%). Their foreign language proficiency (Sociology 53%) played a role for more than half of the former ERASMUS students but their experiences abroad in general only for 39% and 42% of the Sociology graduates additionally reported that the "ERASMUS study abroad period" was an important criterion in the recruitment process (all former ERASMUS students: 36%).

Area of employment

Employment in Social Work (16%), Research and Development (16 %) and in Higher Education (11%) are the most relevant economic sectors for former ERASMUS students from Sociology. Only 31% of former Sociology ERASMUS students work in an organisation with an international scope (total: 51%).

Retrospective assessment of the ERASMUS study abroad period

The value of the ERASMUS study abroad is substantially more positively assessed as regards personality development, knowledge, reflection etc. than as regards career and income. Almost all former Sociology ERASMUS students (96%) report that the period was worthwhile for maturity and personal development. Additionally more than half of the former Sociology ERASMUS students state, that the study abroad was worthwhile regarding:

- Knowledge and understanding of the host country (91%);
- Foreign language proficiency (93 %);
- New ways of thinking and reflection (86%);
- Enhancement of academic and professional knowledge (60%),
- Career prospects (47%).

Only 10 % believe that the study abroad was worthwhile regarding income/salary (all fields: 20%).

8.4.3 Results of the Seminar

Organisation and Participants

The seminar addressing the field of study of Sociology took place at the 3rd April 2006 (9am - 3pm) at the Intercity Hotel in Frankfurt. Twelve experts participated in the seminar, representing eleven countries and different stakeholder groups.

Table 114 Participants' Institution and Function of the "Sociology" Seminar

No.	Institution	Function
1.	University of Leuven (Belgium)	Representative of Flemish Sociological Association
2.	Intercollege (Cyprus)	Representative of Cyprus Sociological Association
3.	Jagiellonian University (Poland)	Former ERASMUS Student
4.	Lund University (Sweden)	International Coordinator of Department of Sociology
5.	Institute for Marketing and Polls (IMAS) (Romania)	Executive Director
6.	University of Helsinki (Finland)	Representative of Nordic Sociological Association
7.	Belgrade University (Serbia)	Representative of European Sociology Student Association
8.	School of Education of Leiria; (Portugal)	Representative of Portuguese Association of Sociology
9.	University of Bielefeld (Germany)	Organisational Executive of International Graduate School of Sociology
10.	Corvinus University (Hungary)	Representative of Hungarian Sociological Association
11.	Trinity College (Ireland)	Director of Employment Research Centre
12.	J. W. Goethe University (Germany/Poland)	Former ERASMUS Student

Major Findings

The sociological experts invited, as one might expect from representatives of a field of study specialized in analysing the causes and consequences of social behaviour, addressed the key issues of the seminar in a highly analytic and differentiated way. They hardly agreed on any general statement about the professional value of ERASMUS study for students of sociology, but rather referred to *variety of conditions*.

First, the participants underscored that *students in Sociology participating in ERASMUS are in various respects a select group*. The university is likely to select the academically best students, if the number of applicants surpasses the number of ERASMUS places available. A temporary study abroad is chosen by students who can afford to cover some of the amount of additional costs abroad not covered by ERASMUS. The proportion of ERASMUS students coming from higher socio-economic background is higher than among all students of Sociology. Therefore, an above-average career of sociologists participating in ERASMUS cannot be attributed solely to the ERASMUS period in another European country. Moreover, participants pointed out that the percentage of women among students of Sociology going abroad in the framework of ERASMUS is quite high.

Second, reference was made to *stage of study* chosen for a period in another country. If they go abroad in an early stage of study, one can expect a major impact on the personality development. At later stages of study, academic and professional knowledge is more likely to be enhanced by international experience. One participant even argued that an undergraduate student of Sociology hardly can be viewed as a sociologist; the confrontation with other sociological approaches and findings during a period of study abroad will have an important impact on the students' academic competences only in the course of graduate study.

Third, the professional value of temporary study in another country for students of Sociology has to be viewed, as the participants pointed out, in the framework of the *specific character of Sociology as a field of study*. During the initial years of study, students get to know a broad range of theories and methods as well as many thematic areas of sociological inquiry. In subsequent years, opportunities of specialisation are provided for a limited thematic area each. A clear divide between a broad first phase and specialised subsequent phases is more pronounced in a Bachelor-Master programme structure than in the traditionally long university programmes.

Fourth, as already pointed out, neither this early phase of laying the foundation nor the subsequent stage or stages of specialisation are geared to certain professions. *Transition to employment*, thus, is a *highly individualized process* that requires enormous initiative on the part of all students. As the process of transition is complex and in a substantial number of cases protracted and might include phases of inappropriate employment during the search period, it is not easy to trace the impact of ERASMUS on the transition to employment and the early career of graduates from Sociology.

The participants agreed that sociologists have a *divided labour market*. Either they take over assignments in academia or some specialized professional areas, notably in public administration, where the specific sociological knowledge might be highly relevant.

In this context, *areas of assignments seem to grow where systematic knowledge of other countries, cultures and languages is essential*. Or they are recruited by public or private

employers for a broad range of assignments on the assumption that sociologists are skilful in analytical thinking, methodologically versatile and able to understand a broad range of socio-communicative and organisational matters. In the context, employers are likely to consider the study period in another country as an indicator for competences such as taking initiative, being self-competent and ambitious as well as for socio-communicative skills.

This does not mean, however, that there is a clear divide in sociological study programmes between academic learning on the one hand and fostering of personality and socio-communicative skills on the other hand. Rather, sociological study programmes changed substantially since the 1990s in various respects towards a *closer interrelationship between academic learning and personality development*. First, the links became closer between components of study programmes reinforcing cognitive competences and affective-motivational and socio-communicative competences. Second, a methodological professionalization could be observed. Third, comparative perspectives became an increasingly important dimension of research, teaching and learning in Sociology. For all these developments, study abroad is an asset. The need was expressed that teaching in Sociology becomes increasingly international with the help of teaching staff mobility and a strengthening of comparative approaches. Some participants argued that ethnocentric views still were widespread among the teachers and a growing participation in teaching staff mobility might help to redress this state of affairs.

Moreover, the value of study abroad seems to vary for students from *different regions in Europe*. Many students from Western European countries consider the study period in another European country as a valuable contrasting field experience. They do not expect that this will be a substantial boost for their career perspectives. In contrast, students in Sociology going from Central and Eastern European countries to Western European countries are a select group of often highly motivated persons having a relatively profound foreign language proficiency and quite some prior knowledge on the host country.

In response to the diversity of study programmes, abilities and motives of the students and of their career prospects, the participants of the seminar underscored the need for *intensive und highly individualized guidance and counselling* of Sociology students prior to their period abroad. One might recommend a different host university depending on the academic and cultural motives of the students, the thematic area interested (for example study in a Scandinavian country might be most valuable for students interested in the “welfare state”) and the stage of study for which a temporary study period in another European country is envisaged.

A prolongation of the overall period of study as a consequence of study in another country was not viewed as a career obstacle, because many students of sociology seem to study somewhat longer in order to enhance their capabilities beyond what might be expected at the end of a normal period of study and thus improve their employment prospects. This also might explain that not so much care is taken for matters of *recognition* and that recognition of achievements of the study period abroad upon return by the host institution obviously is below the average of all fields of study.

Apart from emphasizing the relevance of the individual guidance and counselling, the *participants did not recommend major steps for improvement*. The participating students pointed out that better advance information on the study opportunities at the partner institution, a higher stipend and an introduction of the student mentor system where it does not yet exist would be desirable. Some experts pointed out the special programmes for foreign students for introducing the culture and society of the host country are especially valuable for mobile students in the field of Sociology.

8.4.4 Summary

Learning in another country is less important for students of Sociology than for students of some other fields because many of their employers are internationally oriented or because graduates have frequent visibly international tasks such as contacting clients in other countries. Rather, international learning becomes more important for students of Sociology, because understanding of one's own society is increasingly reinforced through comparative analysis and because most features of society analysed by sociologists become more internationally intertwined. Therefore, experts and actors in the area of Sociology are convinced that a temporary study abroad has a significant value for subsequent employment and work though this cannot be traced so easily for graduates of Sociology leading to a large range of occupations than for graduates from other fields of study which are more closely geared to certain areas of employment.

The value of temporary study abroad for students of Sociology seems to differ substantially not only according to the thrust of the individual study programmes but also according to the talents, motivation and career prospects of the individual students. Therefore, an improvement of individual guidance and counselling prior to the period abroad was recommended strongly. In this framework, the participants pointed out that cultural learning was the major benefit for students in Sociology studying abroad in an early stage of the study programme; in contrast, a period of study in another country at a later stage of the study programmes was viewed as valuable for a theoretical and methodical enhancement of the competences of mobile students in the field of Sociology.

8.5 Chemistry

8.5.1 Introduction to the Field of Study

Chemistry was chosen as an academically oriented field in the area of Science and Engineering. It belongs to the Natural Sciences and in many parts also to the new emerging Life Sciences. Chemists are working in industry, research laboratories and in smaller numbers also in public authorities. Study programmes in Chemistry focus on theoretical knowledge as well as practical experiences in the laboratory.

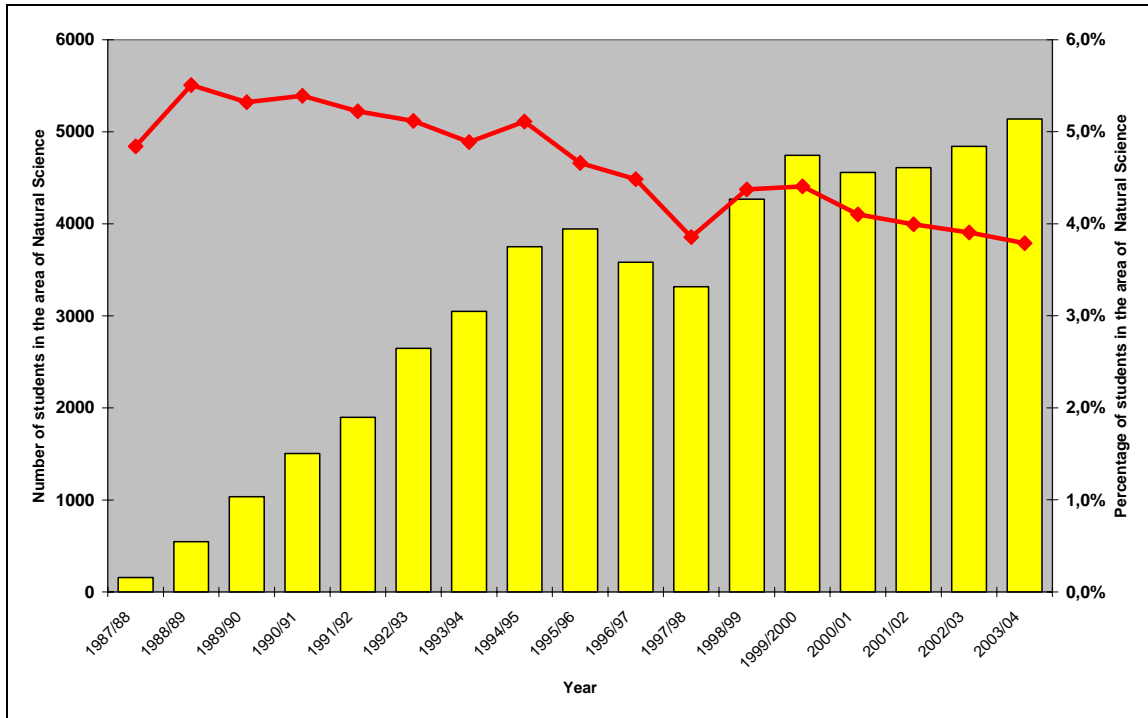
In general, study programmes in Chemistry cover in the first years the classical areas of Chemistry: Organic, Inorganic and Physical Chemistry supplemented by Physics, Mathematics, Biology and Analytics. In the last years of study, students can choose from a variety of specialisations, e.g. Theoretical Chemistry, Macromolecular Chemistry, Biochemistry or Technical Chemistry. Besides knowledge in Chemistry

students need a good level of English language proficiency to read and understand the field-specific literature.¹⁵

Students in the area of Natural Sciences do not represent a big group in the ERASMUS programme. Today approximately 4% of all ERASMUS students each year are studying Natural Sciences. Figure 29 shows that the percentage of students in Natural Sciences is even decreasing for several years. Unfortunately, we do not have exact numbers for the field of Chemistry.

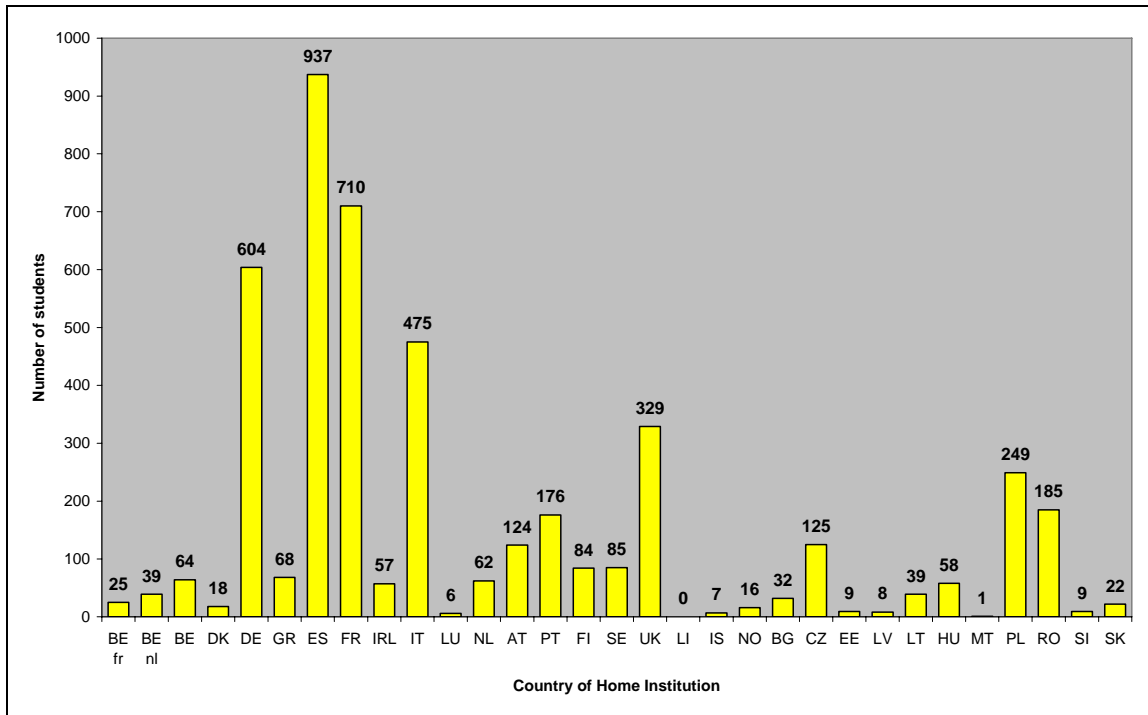
¹⁵ Die Zeit Studienführer <http://www.das-ranking.de/che6/CHE6?module=WasIst&do=show&esb=29>

Figure 29 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Natural Sciences 1987 - 2004



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme, http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

Figure 30 Total Number and Percentage of ERASMUS Students - Natural Sciences by Country of Home Institution 2000/01



Source: European Commission, SOCRATES programme,
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/stat_en.html

Figure 30 above gives an overview about the distribution by country of all outgoing ERASMUS students in the area of Natural Sciences. It shows no unusual distribution. The highest numbers of students in Natural Sciences are coming from the "big" European countries.

8.5.2 Results of the Survey with Former Students

The student profile

The majority of former Chemistry ERASMUS students are female (60%). The average age at the time of the survey (2005) was 30.

The period abroad

The Chemistry students had substantial experience abroad: they spent about 7 months abroad during their ERASMUS supported period in the academic year 2000/2001 and about one third (35%) had one or more additional periods abroad. Altogether they spent on average (including ERASMUS) 10.2 months abroad. Compared to the other fields of study relatively many Chemistry graduates were on work placements/internships abroad (18%; all fields: 6%).

Academic situation and study conditions

The graduates state a relatively low satisfaction with assistance/guidance/advice provided by their home institution for the study period abroad. Only about half of the Chemistry respondents were satisfied with assistance by home institutions regarding academic matters and administrative matters. 44% were satisfied with information about the host institution and country, 38% with accommodation and 40% with language training.

But the graduates do not report significant problems during their study abroad. The single most frequent *academic problem* was related to "taking courses in a foreign language" (9%); more frequent are problems regarding financial matters (22%), accommodation (14%) and administrative matters (13%).

Two thirds of the respondents had frequent contacts with domestic students during course related activities (lectures, seminars, working groups etc.), 44 % during extra-curricular activities (e.g. clubs, sport) and 54 % during other leisure time.

The majority of courses taken abroad by the Chemistry graduates were viewed to be academically equally demanding as courses which they would have taken at the home institution during the same period; only 19% were reported to be academically less demanding and 18% to be more demanding.

Recognition

ECTS was only introduced in less than half of the programmes around the year 2000: 45 percent reported application of ECTS at host institution (total of former ERASMUS students: 54 %).

The Chemistry graduates reported a respectable extent of recognition: 75 percent of study achievements abroad were recognized on average upon return.

A substantial proportion of ERASMUS students have invested study abroad as an additional study period: 32 percent reported a prolongation of overall study duration due

to the ERASMUS period, in most of these cases as long as the ERASMUS period (about 7 months).

Competence profile

Former ERASMUS students seem to have a unique self-image of competences with respect to

- Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.);
- Foreign language proficiency;
- Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture);

These three aspects are the clear domain of former internationally mobile students, where they see their competences at the time of return to be better (or even "much" better) than those of non-mobile students. The vast majority sees also advantages regarding "preparation for future employment and work" (81 %), and only former Chemistry ERASMUS students reported also higher academic competences: the "academic knowledge and skills" (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.) were rated by two thirds to be "better" than of non-mobile students.

Table 115 Former Chemistry ERASMUS Students' Assessment of their Competences Upon Graduation as Compared to Non-Mobile Students (percent)

	Better (1+2)	Equal (3)	Worse (4+5)
Knowledge of other countries (economy, society, culture etc.)	96	0	4
Foreign language proficiency	96	1	3
Intercultural understanding and competences (e.g. understanding and tolerance of international differences in culture)	94	0	6
Preparation for future employment and work	82	1	17
Academic knowledge and skills (e.g. theories, methods, disciplinary knowledge, reflection, etc.)	63	4	34

Question A21: At the time of return, how do you rate your knowledge and competences as compared to non-mobile students in the following areas? Scale of answers from 1 to 5; 1 = much better, 3 = equal, 5 = much worse.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

According to most dimensions listed in Table 116 about three quarters of former ERASMUS students rate they competences as high. This profile is surprisingly balanced. Chemistry graduates are relatively (compared to other former ERASMUS students) strong in field-specific theoretical knowledge and knowledge of methods, and relatively weak in written communication skills.

Table 116 Former Chemistry ERASMUS Students' Self-assessed Competences at Time of Graduation and Job Requirements about 2-3 Years Later (percent "high"; answers 1 and 2)

	Competences at the time of graduation (1)	Job requirements about 2-3 years later (2)	Difference (1 - 2) (3)
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	91	77	14
Problem-solving ability	84	93	-9
Adaptability	80	84	-4
Loyalty, integrity	79	67	12
Foreign language proficiency	76	64	12
Analytical competences	76	87	-11
Getting personally involved	76	76	0
Field-specific knowledge of methods	75	81	-6
Power of concentration	72	87	-15
Accuracy, attention to detail	70	91	-21
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	70	88	-18
Applying rules and regulations	68	70	-2
Initiative	67	90	-23
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	66	88	-22
Written communication skill	65	81	-16
Computer skills	54	68	-14

Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Question F7: Please, state the extent to which the following competences are required in your current work. Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

In most areas, job requirements are more demanding than the competences acquired by former ERASMUS students at the time of graduation. As compared to the average of all former ERASMUS students, Chemistry graduates consider their jobs highly demanding as regards knowledge of methods. Job requirements and competences seem to be unbalanced especially as regards "initiative", "assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence" and "accuracy, attention to detail" where Chemistry graduates report higher job requirements than their competences. In contrast, former ERASMUS students have more often high foreign language skills than required by their job.

International mobility

Some former Chemistry ERASMUS students were already regularly employed abroad (13%) or were sent abroad by their employers on work assignments (17%) during the first years of employment.

ERASMUS related work tasks

Chemistry graduates are clearly not more frequently assigned visibly international works tasks than the average former ERASMUS students, e.g. "using the language of the ERASMUS host country in work-related activities":

- telephone conversation, face-to-face discussions etc (Chemistry: 36%, total ERASMUS students: 37%)

- professional travel to foreign countries other than the ERASMUS host country (Chemistry: 30%; total ERASMUS students: 25%).

International competences are also important for the current work of a substantial number of ERASMUS graduates not active in visibly international jobs. This is rather seldom true for Chemistry graduates: only 16 % reported that "professional knowledge of other countries" (e.g. economic, sociological, legal knowledge) is "important" for doing their current work compared to 46 % of all former ERASMUS students.

Further study

The VALERA survey confirms findings of prior study that an enormously high proportion of former ERASMUS students continue study after the first degree (Chemistry: 51%). Therefore, transition to employment is postponed for many of them.

Job search and transition period

Compared to other studies of graduates in Europe, there are no indications that former ERASMUS students are different from others in terms of start of job search, period of job search, number of employers contacted etc.

Only 12% of the Chemistry graduates were employed part-time on their first job, compared to 17% of all former ERASMUS students.

Short-term contracts are more widespread on their first job (Chemistry 62%; all former ERASMUS students: 54%).

Perceived recruitment criteria

Former ERASMUS students, like other students, are primarily selected by employers according to both their academic knowledge and their personality. The field of study was reported to be important by 88% of the Chemistry graduates (all former ERASMUS students: 75%) and the main subject/specialization by 80% (all former ERASMUS students: 61%). Their foreign language proficiency (Chemistry: 55%) and their experiences abroad in general (Chemistry: 57%) played a role for more than half of the former ERASMUS students. 43% of the Chemistry graduates reported additionally that the "ERASMUS study abroad period" was an important criterion in the recruitment process (all former ERASMUS students: 36%).

Area of employment

Employment in higher education, research and development is very high among former ERASMUS students from Chemistry (55%; compared to 16% total). 58% of former Chemistry ERASMUS students work in an organisation with an international scope (total: 51%).

Retrospective assessment of the ERASMUS study abroad period

The value of the ERASMUS study abroad is substantially more positively assessed as regards personality development, knowledge, reflection etc. than as regards career and income. Almost all former Chemistry ERASMUS students (98%) report that the period was worthwhile for maturity and personal development. Additionally more than half of the former Chemistry ERASMUS students state, that the study abroad was worthwhile regarding:

- Knowledge and understanding of the host country (95%);
- Foreign language proficiency (89 %);

- New ways of thinking and reflection (91%);
- Enhancement of academic and professional knowledge (76%),
- Career prospects (66%); and
- 24% believe that study abroad had a positive impact on the income level.

8.5.3 Results of the Seminar

Organisation and Participants' Institution and Function

The seminar covering the discipline of Chemistry took place at the 3rd May 2006 (9am - 3pm) at the Intercity Hotel in Frankfurt. Nine experts participated in the seminar, representing five countries and different stakeholder groups.

Table 117 Participants' Institution and Function of the "Chemistry" Seminar

No.	Institution	Function
1.	Universita de Napoli (Italy)	Representative of Workgroup "Communication and Management Skills" European Chemistry Thematic Network Association (ECTN)
2.	University of Innsbruck (Austria)	Former ERASMUS Student
3.	University of Sciences and Technology Bordeaux I (France)	Former ERASMUS Student
4.	Université Louis Pasteur Strasbourg and FU Berlin (France and Germany)	Former ERASMUS Student
5.	University of Heidelberg (Germany)	Former ERASMUS Student
6.	Vienna University of Technology (Austria)	President of the European Chemistry Exchange Network (ECEN)
7.	University of Malta (Malta)	Exchange co-ordinator of Chemistry Department
8.	Dortmund University (Germany)	Professor of Department of Chemistry, Bologna Promoter, ECTN Member
9.	Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (Latvia)	Representative of Latvian Chemistry Society

As several invited participants, in particular from the employer perspective, cancelled on relatively short notice, these persons were additionally asked for their comments based on the keynotes of the seminar.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTATOR

German Chemical Industry Association (VCI); Representative of Bildungsinitiative Chemie (Education Initiative Chemistry)

Major Findings

The participants of the chemistry seminar agreed that the main impact of an ERASMUS study period abroad lies in the *improvement of foreign language skills and personality development*. Personal characteristics like maturity, independence and self-confidence were mentioned as positive consequences of a study period abroad. *Problem-solving and organisation abilities* - as very important personal characteristics for research work - were mentioned further as a result of organising the ERASMUS stay and of getting along abroad. Because of the fact, that ERASMUS students are more depending on the help of local student to find their way at the host institution, it was also argued that *teamwork skills* improve substantially during a period abroad. In contrast, no major gains were observed in academic or field specific-knowledge in general. Still, the overall evaluation of the ERASMUS programme in the field of chemistry is very positive. One participant reported about the positive feedback he gets from his colleagues about former ERASMUS students. At the beginning, they could not see any reason to participate in ERASMUS, but when the first students came back and worked in their research groups, they were very enthusiastic about the self-confident personality and motivation of those students. Thus, some participants concluded that the above-average performance of former ERASMUS students may also be an effect of self-selection. Overall, the participants of this seminar were less enthusiastic as far as a clear difference between ERASMUS and non mobile students was concerned. Proficiency of foreign languages and the ability to cope with complex situations are certainly improved, but this can, according to their views, also be attained at later times and in different ways.

Chemistry is a universal and highly standardised subject. Approximately 70% of the curricula with regard to themes and topics covered are similar across Europe. National differences can be found primarily in teaching and methodological approaches, technical skills and in particular in the amount of mandatory practical work in the laboratory. The major impact of an ERASMUS period abroad lies therefore not in an improved academic or field-specific knowledge but rather in the experience of different teaching approaches and focuses. *A major learning effect, depending on the host country, can occur in the area of technical practical skills*. Chemistry programmes in Europe distinguish sharply in the role laboratory work plays in the curricula. Whereas, laboratory work is heavily underscored by German and Austrian universities, it is hardly emphasized by French university Chemistry programmes. One student participant reported about the positive learning effects of practical and independent laboratory work during the ERASMUS period which were not part of his/her French curriculum so far. But even if the students already had a high degree of laboratory training, it was reported, that technical learning always is a major component. Each laboratory practises its own special techniques that are enriching the technical skills of visiting students. Like "craftsmen", students can improve their technical skills by visiting a range of laboratories. Two participants even stated that the research experience in another country enhanced their motivation for study and work in chemistry. One student explained it that way, that abroad she first understood the meaning and the content of her undergraduate courses at home.

Similar to Sociology, a *distinction was made between mobility on the undergraduate and the postgraduate level*. On the undergraduate level, the impact of mobility lies merely in the experience itself, the personality development and the gain in foreign language proficiency. As described above, academic learning effects mainly concentrate on different teaching methods. In contrast, students on a postgraduate level can profit substantially in academic terms by going abroad. Many students are choosing their host university based on the research work done there and the available laboratory equipment. Mobility on a postgraduate level often takes place in form of participating in research groups, doing internships in university laboratories and only to a limited degree to take classes and courses at the host university. Existing research co-operations between European universities facilitate mobility for students at this level. Leaving later for example during the PhD comprises the danger of being excluded from the domestic research and regional networks.

An important characteristic of Chemistry as field of study is that it has a very *high percentage of students continuing their education up to a doctorate degree*. PhD rates of chemistry graduates are over 60% in some European countries. Students and professors are less professionally oriented in the undergraduate and postgraduate level as the transition to work is postponed in many cases to after the PhD. Actually, many graduates either work in research (in the area of higher education or at research institutes) or in other assignments in industry. In the view of the participants, international experience is neither expected from the applicants nor is it a major "eye-catcher" on the CV when applying for a research position. For a position in industry, the participants assumed that international experiences may play a more prominent role in major international companies. In the case of small-and-medium-sized companies (SME), as one participant stated, it can also be a disadvantage. SME do not want "mobile and rootless" employees having a higher chance of leaving again. Yet, the overall impression is that career opportunities are not strong motives for student mobility among Chemistry students. Students are rather interested in the cultural experience, the improvement in foreign language proficiency as well as research. Host institutions can often offer a different research specialisation, research techniques and equipment not available at the home institution.

Separately conducted interviews with *employer representatives showed a somewhat different picture*. According to their view, international experience is highly valued by employers. One representative even stated that it is more or less mandatory for applicants in the German chemical industry. Employers do not only appreciate necessary foreign language proficiency (in particular English), because it is needed in the daily working life, but also the social skills fostered by a study period abroad. However, SME companies seem to be less interested in the specialisation of graduates or their grades, but in their social skills, their ability to think unconventionally, their problem solving abilities, their flexibility and motivation. All these competences are thought to be fostered by a study period abroad. Depending on the job position, international experience plays a stronger or weaker role in the recruitment process.

Another long-term effect of student (and teacher) mobility is the improvement of research contacts. One participant called it the *"networking effect of going abroad"*. Mobile students establish contacts which may help them to find a PhD project abroad and which may even last over their whole career. With regard to long-term career

impacts of an ERASMUS stay, these contacts may also have an influence on subsequent decisions to move or to work abroad. ERASMUS mobility also might contribute to the chance of being sent to temporary work assignments abroad by the employer.

Similar to other fields of study, *study achievements abroad are not consistently recognised upon return by the home institution*. Course descriptions in the native and English language are often not available and thus cause problems for the coordinator to assess and recognise the course content students took abroad. Additionally, chemistry seems to be a subject in which a high degree of ethnocentric view exists. Many professors think that their curriculum and their chemistry are better than abroad. For example, it was reported that courses teaching the same topics were not recognised because they used different experiments. All participating students supported this perspective. All of them had severe problems of recognition. As a consequence, many students prefer to spend their study period as project work or for their final thesis. For such practical, self-contained learning module recognition is more likely than for visiting lectures or seminars. Also, interdisciplinary research might not be accepted by home institution upon return. Chemistry students going abroad to work in a research project of a neighbouring science (e.g. Physics, Biology) often have severe bureaucratic problems. Comparable to the statements in previous seminars, the participants argued *against individual recognition and in favour for general (departmental) recognition*. One participant gave an example for "departmental central recognition" at his university: The dean of academic affairs at his university is solely responsible for recognition. He has a more holistic approach and is less concentrated on a specific kind of curriculum or teaching as a single professor.

Difficulties were observed in the *transfer or translation of marks gained from the partner institution to the home institution*. Translations of the foreign scaling system to the national one are often undertaken arbitrarily. As an example, one student participant reported that he just got the average year of his previous year grades independent of his performance abroad. The participants called therefore for a European grading scale. A common grading scale would foster mobility inside Europe and would diminish recognition problems. As a European grading scale might be too ambitious on a short-term base, an alternative suggestion by the participants was to offer a kind of ERASMUS certificate. The ERASMUS certificate should state courses taken abroad, a short description of the course content as well as grades in the respective national scale. Such a document would improve the transparency of the ERASMUS stay for outsiders and future employers.

According to the seminar participants, a *good proficiency of the language of instruction* is more important in chemistry than in other fields of study. Chemists employ many technical terms which differ strongly in many European countries. This causes problems in communication across different languages. Even if the courses are offered in English, students might misunderstand the presentation, because they do not know the terminology. The participants therefore plead for special language courses at the home and host institution. Some participants also observed limited proficiency of the English language on the side of the teachers which implies the danger of low quality teaching.

In general, *study provisions, counselling and guidance* before and during the ERASMUS stay were not addressed during the seminar. The participants did not observe any major problems of chemistry students in those respects, because student

work in small groups during their laboratory classes. They get to know each other and easily establish contacts with local students. The early inclusion of students into project research work supports this development as well. Additionally, chemistry is typically no mass subject. Courses on the postgraduate level are comparatively small. This facilitates the contact with professors and other students at the home but also at the partner institution.

European cooperation and coordination among departments of chemistry is promoted by the "*European Chemistry Exchange Network*" (ECEN). The aims of ECEN are "[...] *to cooperate with one another in order to help promote cultural and scientific development in each ECEN member university and Europe as a whole*". This network brings together, in the framework of ERASMUS, 52 European higher education institutes in 19 countries.¹⁶ The advantage of this network is the central point of application for the students for several universities Europe-wide and the central internet platform providing all relevant information. Additionally, all members of this network agree in their "Memorandum of Understanding" to use the ECTS system and to recognise courses of partner institutions. Recognition is facilitated, because representatives of each institution meet regularly and know each other. They are more willing to trust the teaching and examination modes of the partner institutions of the network.

8.5.4 Summary

Chemistry was presented in this seminar as a universal and strongly research oriented subject. Studying in another country has no major impact on the academic or field-specific knowledge as the curricula in Europe are quite similar. The main impact of a study period abroad was therefore seen in the improved foreign language proficiency, the maturity gain and the personal development. It was underscored, that typical researcher competences like problem-solving, endurance and teamwork are fostered by an ERASMUS stay. The main learning effect in academic terms refers to the practical laboratory skills of the students.

Chemistry seems to be a less outward-oriented subject, not closely geared to certain areas of employment. All student participants were more interested in a research career than in an industry career. Also, the student motivation to study abroad lies merely in the learning of another language and the experience itself than in improving ones chances on the labour market. Yet, the employer representatives valued international experience very much. They appreciated the foreign language proficiency as well as the soft skills and motivation indicated by a period abroad.

Similar to the other fields of study covered in this report, recognition problems occur in chemistry very often. In contrast, guidance and counselling during the ERASMUS stay as well as integration are no major problems in chemistry. Laboratory team work and small courses secure the contacts between students and with the teachers. The European Chemistry Exchange Network is of further noteworthiness. This network secures a certain quality standard in the framework of ERASMUS. Regular meetings of the involved institutions ensure a good understanding and trust in the network.

¹⁶ See: <http://www.chemie.tuwien.ac.at/ecen>

8.6 Concluding Remarks

Despite field specific differences, several results can be summarised across all four fields of study. Unanimously, the main impact of an ERASMUS stay is seen in the personal development of the students. The students do not only mature during their stay but they also gain in competences often summarised as soft or key skills. Independent of the different variations and focuses in each seminar, these competences can be enumerated as follows: socio-communicative skills, such as intercultural awareness, adaptability, flexibility, innovativeness, productivity, motivation, endurance, problem-solving abilities and being able to work productively in a team. The participants agreed that former ERASMUS students have on average higher competences in this regard, but it was also pointed out in each seminar that the ERASMUS programme includes a self-selection effect. Therefore, one should be cautious not to overrate the impact of study abroad in the framework of ERASMUS.

Another point of general agreement was the improvement of foreign language proficiency fostered by a study period abroad. Similarly, the knowledge gain about the respective host country was one point everyone agreed on. The results of the student survey confirm these core results across fields of study borders. Nearly all of them (between 80 and 90%) answered that the ERASMUS period abroad was worthwhile for the following:

- Maturity and personal development (ME 94%, BUS 96%, CH 98%, SOC 96%)
- Knowledge and understanding of the host country (ME 89%, BUS 88%, CH 95%, SOC 91%)
- Foreign language proficiency (ME 88%, BUS 89%, CH 89%, SOC 93%)
- New ways of thinking and reflection (ME 84%, BUS 84%, CH 91%, SOC 86%)

No disagreement existed with regard to the importance of contacts to local students and integration into the host institution for the development of international competences and language skills. The results of the student survey in the first phase show that around 50% of former ERASMUS students state that they had contact with local students. Accordingly, every second student merely had contact with other ERASMUS students of his/her own or other nationality. The "grouping" of students with one nationality seems to be a stronger problem in big ERASMUS fields like Business Studies (one third of all ERASMUS students), whereas Chemistry students quickly and easily get into contact with local students due to their small percentage and required group work in the laboratory.

Strong differences in the four seminars occurred in the effect an ERASMUS stay has on the academic and field-specific learning. The lowest impact on academic and field-specific learning was reported in Chemistry as an universal and highly standardised subject. In Business Studies and Sociology the learning effect with regard to field-specific knowledge about the host country society respectively market was underscored. The possibility of gaining with regard to academic knowledge was reported in the case of postgraduate mobility in all four fields of study. On this level, students can gain by choosing their host university in accordance to their speciality or thesis topic. In Chemistry a student can profit by going to a university offering better laboratory

equipment for certain experiments or a student of Sociology profits by spending a semester at a university with a good reputation in empirical methodology. Interestingly, the results of the student survey in the first phase show a different picture. Chemistry is the field of study, in which the highest percentage of students (76%) state that the study period abroad was worthwhile with regard to "enhancement of academic and professional knowledge". Comparing these results with the statements of the student participants in the Chemistry seminar, a possible explanation is the knowledge gain in practical laboratory skills during a study period abroad. Yet, independent of field of study and level of education, all seminar participants emphasised the learning effect of experiencing different teaching and examination methods.

In absolute terms the professional value of ERASMUS mobility in the transition to work did not distinguish sharply by field of study. The overall assessment was that ERASMUS is not the entrance to a high-flying career but rather a "door-opener" into the labour market. In the more professionally oriented study fields - Business Studies and Mechanical Engineering - it was argued that the globalisation process and the international business structures today make international competences necessary even for positions in national companies. A second argument structure, which was also presented in Sociology and Chemistry, two fields of study with more national labour markets, referred to the competences of former ERASMUS students. Former ERASMUS students have through their international experience not only gained international competences but also so-called soft-skills highly valued by employers today. An ERASMUS stay on the CV is seen as an indicator for such competences and can enhance the chances in the application process. Research work in Sociology and Chemistry were the two areas of employment where the lowest impact of ERASMUS mobility was seen.

Long-term career effects of an ERASMUS stay abroad were not seen in general. Yet, the participants agreed that formerly mobile students also have a higher probability of being mobile during their job. Mainly long-term networking contacts were mentioned by the participants in this regard. The former ERASMUS students do not only have contacts in their former host country but all over Europe which makes it not only easier for them to establish further contacts but facilitates also future mobility. Yet, each seminar emphasised also the significance of country specific statements. The overall impression is that ERASMUS has right now a higher professional value in the Middle and Eastern European countries than in Western Europe.

The core differences between fields of study occurred in the discussion about study provisions and conditions of the ERASMUS programme. The participants of the Business Studies seminar presented a kind of "liberal market" view. They favour a stronger self-organisation approach of student mobility under the conditions of improved information transparency. The experience of total self-organisation secures the highest impact on competences like problem-solving, endurance and self-confidence. They judge the ERASMUS programme as too standardised and are against stronger regulations regarding curricula design and learning agreement. In contrast, the participants of the mechanical engineering seminar demanded a better integration of the study period abroad in the curricula at the home institution. They favour a perfect adjustment of curricula between a limited number of partner institutions making recognition unnecessary. Recognition was also a main concern in the Chemistry

seminar. The participants here pleaded for a better networking inside the regulations of the ERASMUS programme. Course descriptions in English are a necessary precondition for the function of learning agreements. They promoted in this regard the European Chemistry Exchange Network as a good example. In Sociology the fewest comments were made with regard to study provisions and conditions. Mobility has still an individual character which does not need an institutional framework.

Although the seminars concentrated on the impact of ERASMUS student mobility, several comments referred to teaching mobility as having a major impact on the success of student mobility. Mobile teachers can not only motivate students to go abroad, but they also know the partner institutions and can better assess which institution fits the students' interest best. In the recognition process, mobile teachers play a central role. They know the classes and teachers abroad and are, in the perspective of the seminar participants, more willing to accept deviating curricula or teaching methods. To avoid ethnocentric views of professors and to make the recognition process more efficient, the participants, in particular in the Chemistry and Mechanical Engineering seminar, favoured the model of general recognition instead of individual recognition.

Summing up, it can be concluded that the overall assessment of the ERASMUS programme and its impact on the students is very positive. Second, the seminars have showed that the choice of study proved to be very reasonable. Mechanical Engineering and Business Studies as two professionally oriented subjects brought up different topics and arguments than the two more academically oriented fields of study Sociology and Chemistry. At the same time, Chemistry and Engineering as more standardised and science based subjects had a common argument structures as well as the two less standardised subjects Sociology and Business Studies. Together, these four contrasting subjects presented a wide variation representative for many fields in the ERASMUS programme.

9 Major Results and Recommendations

9.1 Summary of Core Results

9.1.1 Transition from Study to Employment

Temporary student mobility obviously stimulates former ERASMUS students to be interested in *advanced education*. Two out of five of the 2000/01 students – about as many as in previous generations – transferred to advanced study within the first five years after the study period abroad: most of them immediately after graduation and some of them somewhat later. This advancement rate is about twice as high among former ERASMUS students than among European students on average.

Former ERASMUS students of the year 2000/01 started slightly later than previous generations to seek for employment, but the average search period was less than 4 months and thus was *shorter* than that of previous generations of ERASMUS students surveyed. We do not know whether this can be attributed to the ERASMUS experience or indicates a general change in the transition from higher education to employment.

Many former ERASMUS students believe that the ERASMUS period abroad was *helpful in obtaining the first job*. But this advantage seems to be declining: it was perceived by 71 percent of the 1988/89 ERASMUS students, 66 percent of those graduating in 1994/95 and only 54 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS generation (see Table 118).

Table 118 Positive Influence of ERASMUS Study Period on Employment and Work - a Comparison with Previous Surveys as perceived by Former Students (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993	Graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005
Obtaining first job	71	66	54
Type of work task involved	49	44	39
Income level	25	22	16

Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment?
Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

During their first years of employment – at the time of the survey, the respondents were employed less than three years on average – more than half of the former ERASMUS students have changed their employer. According to a previous survey, this early change of employer is more common among former ERASMUS students than among formerly non-mobile persons.

The survey of former 2000/01 ERASMUS students as well as the employer survey 2006 confirm that employers put strongest emphasis on *academic achievement* and *personality* in recruitment. These two new surveys, however, differ from previous surveys, in showing that *other criteria have become more important* than previously,

among them computer skills according to the employers and foreign language proficiency according to both the graduates and the employers. Half of the former ERASMUS students believe that their international experience was among the important criteria for their employers to recruit them, and about one third of employers confirm that international experience is among the important criteria in selecting among graduates from higher education in general. As compared to prior studies, international experience, among it the ERASMUS experience, is in the process of gaining importance when employers select among applicants.

9.1.2 Graduate Career and Status

Six percent of former 2000/01 ERASMUS students report five years after studying in another European country that they were *unemployed*. This is higher than for the ERASMUS students 12 years earlier, when four percent were unemployed five years later.

The former ERASMUS students of the academic year 2000/01 *moved relatively quickly to more stable employment conditions* than at the time of their career start. While 54 percent had a fixed-term employment when they were employed for the first time after graduation, 34 percent reported such kind of employment at the time the survey was conducted, i.e. after about three years of employment on average. Similarly, the rate of part-time employed graduates was reduced from 17 percent to 10 percent during that period. In comparison to the 1988/89 ERASMUS students five years later, the recent generation of ERASMUS students had more frequently a fixed-term employment (only 27% among the 1988/89 generation) (see Table 119).

Table 119 Former ERASMUS Students' Current Employment Situation – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	Non-Mobile graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005
Employed, self employed	84	81	82	72
Study/training	7	12	7	14
Unemployed	4	3	5	6
Job mobility	*	67	58	53
Temporary contract	27	27	27	34
Part-time employment	10	7	10	10
Public sector	*	29	39	36
Research and HE	13	*	*	16

Summarising table about questions E1, E5, E6, E9 and E10; Question E1: What is your current major activity? Question E5: What is the type of your current contract? Question E6: Do you work full-time or part-time? Question E9: Do you work in the public or private sector? Question E10: In which economic sector are you currently working?
* Question not asked

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

72 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later believe that the *level of position and income is appropriate* to their level of educational attainments. In previous surveys, similar responses were given (72% and 76%), whereby formerly mobile students had reported more frequently an appropriate employment than graduates who had not been mobile during the course of study (see Table 120).

Table 120 Links Between Study and Subsequent Employment and Work Perceived by Former ERASMUS Students - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent of employed graduates)

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993	ERASMUS graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	Non-Mobile graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005
High use of knowledge	67	44	47	61
Field of study the only possible/the best for area of work	+	31	39	41
Appropriate level	72	76	67	72
High satisfaction with current work	52	74	63	67

Table four aggregates the responses to four categories; Question G2: If you take into consideration your current work tasks altogether: To what extent do you use the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study? Question G3: How would you characterise the relationship between your field of study and your area of work? Question G5: Altogether, to what extent are you satisfied with your current work?

+ Different formulation or question not asked

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

In contrast, the proportion of former ERASMUS students who consider their *income* to be higher than that of their peers who had not spend any study period abroad is on the decline. The respective figure was 25 percent among former ERASMUS students 1988/89, 22 percent among ERASMUS students graduating in 1994/95 and only 16 percent among those who studied in another European country with the help of ERASMUS in 2000/01. The last figure is even smaller than those who perceived a lower income than that of their mobile peers.

As regards the career of formerly mobile students, employers surveyed in 2006 express a more positive view. More than 40 percent are convinced that internationally experienced graduates are likely to take over professional assignments with *high professional responsibility*. Ten percent believe that internationally experienced graduates can expect a *higher income* than those without international experience from the beginning, and 21 percent consider such an income advantage as likely after a few years of employment (see Table 121). A substantial proportion of 2000/01 ERASMUS students, this might be added, believe as well that international experience will be helpful for them in their subsequent career.

Table 121 Higher Salary of Internationally Experienced Young Graduates After Five Years of Work Experience According Employers by European Region (percent)

	European Region		Total
	Western	Central & Eastern	
Yes	19	27	21
No	81	73	79
Total	100	100	100
Count (n)	(143)	(62)	(205)

Question C8: Do graduates with five years of work experience in your organisation who have had international experience before get a higher salary on average?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

The *experts* surveyed at the beginning of this study even had a more favourable view of the employment of former ERASMUS students. About one third each believe that they can expect a higher status, higher earnings as well as a better chance of reaching a position appropriate to their level of education.

Also, most university administrators surveyed are convinced that ERASMUS students have better job opportunities. Four fifth of them believe that a study abroad often increases the chance of getting a reasonable job. More than half state that ERASMUS students are more likely than non-mobile students to get a position appropriate to their level of educational attainment. Moreover, one quarter believe that ERASMUS has a more positive impact on the employability of graduates than any other type of study abroad, and only three percent perceive a lower impact in this respect. Finally, most administrators report that the professional value of temporary study abroad has increased during the last decade (see Table 122).

Table 122 Changed Significance of Study Periods Abroad as Perceived by University leadership by Number of Students Enrolled (percent)

	Up to 500	Number of students enrolled					Total
		501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Considerable higher value as compared to the past	16	18	18	14	15	26	17
Higher value compared to the past	62	56	63	73	69	58	63
Stayed the same	22	25	18	12	15	16	19
Lower value than ten years ago	0	2	2	2	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(86)	(133)	(96)	(66)	(72)	(38)	(491)

Question C8: Did the value of temporary study periods abroad changed during the last decade as a criterion for employment? Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

9.1.3 Competences and Work of Former ERASMUS Students

Retrospectively, the 2000/01 ERASMUS students, when surveyed five years later, rate their *competences* at the time of graduation *as high in many respects*. Most of them

considered themselves as highly competent, as far as academic knowledge, foreign languages and various work attitudes and work styles are concerned. According to the survey of those graduating in 1994/95, former ERASMUS students rated only their foreign languages clearly more often as high as those who had not spent a period abroad during their course of study, they rated their competences more moderate in many respects and in only in a few respects slightly more favourable than their non-mobile peers.

We do not know whether there was a general improvement of the impact of study or the impact of international experience. But one factor is obvious: The most recent surveys include a substantial number of Central and Eastern European countries where former ERASMUS students obviously have a more positive view on the professional value of ERASMUS and other kinds of international experience.

Table 123 **Rating of Competences of Young Graduates With International Experience by Employers and Self-rating of Competences by Graduates (percent; responses 1 and 2 of a 5-point scale from 1 = "to a very high extent" to 5 = "not at all")**

	Employers rating of competences	Former ERASMUS Students self-rating of competences
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	62	77
Field-specific knowledge of methods	64	64
Foreign language proficiency	88	78
Computer skills	69	57
Analytical competences	70	73
Problem-solving ability	70	75
Initiative	79	71
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	75	70
Power of concentration	63	76
Accuracy, attention to detail	59	74
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	67	71
Applying rules and regulations	58	62
Loyalty, integrity	66	78
Getting personally involved	79	78
Written communication skill	70	77
Adaptability	81	83
Count (n)	(187)	(4342)

Student Questionnaire: Question B7: Please, state the extent to which you had the following competences at the time of graduation?

Employer Questionnaire: Question C4: Please rate the competences of the young graduates in your organisation. To what extent do they have competences in the following areas on average?

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005 and VALERA Survey of Employers 2005/06.

By and large, the employers rate the competences of internationally experienced graduates as favourably as the former ERASMUS students (see Table 123). However,

there are distinctions in the rating of individual dimensions – some of them more favourably assessed by the graduates and some by the employers. *Altogether, employers believe far more often and in more respects that internationally experienced young graduates have higher competences than those without international experience:* accordingly, international experience seems to reinforce adaptability, initiative, the ability to plan and assertiveness. 15 percent of the employers surveyed even stated that they consider the competences of former ERASMUS students to be higher than those otherwise mobile in the course of study.

The *experts* surveyed at the beginning of this project have a substantially more positive view of the ERASMUS students. 73 percent of them consider the academic knowledge of ERASMUS students upon return from the study period abroad to be better than non-mobile students, and 82 percent view them as better prepared for future employment and work. Moreover, almost all experts state that ERASMUS students have higher socio-communicative competences at the time of graduation than non-mobile students and about three quarters believe that they excel in problem-solving and in leadership competences.

These overall quite positive ratings do not mean that graduates are viewed as more or less completely prepared for their subsequent assignments. In many respects, graduates perceive more demanding job requirements than they were prepared to cope with at the time of graduation. Many of them only believe that their *foreign language proficiency* is clearly higher than respective job requirements.

61 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later state that they can *use the knowledge acquired during the course of study* on the job to a high extent. This had been stated by 67 percent of the ERASMUS students 1988/89 five years later. The survey of graduates 1994/95 is not exactly comparable, but findings of this study suggest that formerly mobile graduates do not see a closer link between their knowledge and their work assignments than graduates who had not been mobile during their course of study.

39 percent of 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later stated the ERASMUS period had a *positive influence on the type of work tasks* involved. This percentage, again, is on the decline: from 49 percent among the 1988/89 employed five years later and 44 percent among ERASMUS students graduating in 1994/95. Moreover, this positive rating most likely is not based on all major dimensions of work assignment, but certainly to a high degree on the link between international experience and visible international work tasks.

Similarly, 41 percent of the *experts* surveyed believe that ERASMUS students have a better opportunity than non-mobile students to take over job assignments closely linked to their academic knowledge. Only three percent believe that non-mobile students have better opportunities than ERASMUS students in this respect.

About three quarters of former ERASMUS students express a *high degree of satisfaction with their employment and work situation*. Asked about characteristics of their professional situation, they state most often that they have largely independent work tasks, can use their competences, have challenging work tasks and have opportunities for continuing learning. The majority of experts surveyed even believe that former ERASMUS students have better opportunities than non-mobile students to

have independent work tasks, and almost half of them believe that they have more challenging work tasks.

9.1.4 International Assignments of Former ERASMUS Students

All studies undertaken in the past on the professional value of temporary study in another country have shown consistently that formerly mobile students differ most clearly from formerly non-mobile ones in taking over international assignments. This recent study confirms what already can be viewed as a conventional wisdom.

18 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later had been *regularly employed abroad* – at least for some time - after graduation. Of the 1988/89 ERASMUS students employed five years later, even 18 percent are employed abroad at that time, and among the former ERASMUS students graduating in 1994/95, 20 percent have been employed abroad at least at some time over the subsequent five years. This compares to possibly three percent of young European graduates employed abroad. One might add that 12 percent of the former ERASMUS mobile students recently surveyed have been sent abroad by their employers for some time; this figure was clearly lower than in the preceding survey.

Of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students, half had considered working abroad and almost one quarter had sought employment abroad. These figures are clearly lower than those of previous cohorts of ERASMUS students surveyed.

About half of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed note that their employing organisation has an *international scope*, and even a higher proportion report substantial international activities. Almost one third of the graduates themselves see their own work to be embedded into an international context. An even larger proportion consider their international competences as important for doing their current work: About two-thirds view communicating in foreign languages and working with people from different background as important for their job. For more than half, their knowledge and understanding of international differences in cultures and societies are important, and almost half consider their knowledge of other countries as important (see Table 124).

Table 124 **Relevance of International Competences as Perceived by Former ERASMUS Students by Field of Study (percent "important"; responses 1 and 2)**

	Field of study area							Total
	HUM	SOC	BUS	ENG	MNAT	MED	OTHER	
Professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economical, sociological, legal knowledge)	52	46	52	37	31	32	47	45
Knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc.	68	56	60	48	40	50	58	57
Working with people from different cultural backgrounds	69	61	71	65	60	67	69	66
Communicating in foreign languages	72	63	74	71	66	61	72	69
Count (n)	(930)	(570)	(684)	(530)	(357)	(226)	(273)	3570

Question F4: How important do you consider the following competences for doing your current work? Scale of answers from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Source: University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

Actually asked how much they use their *international competences*, a substantially smaller proportion state that they frequently use such abilities. Only somewhat more than one third often communicate in foreign languages, about one quarter frequently use firsthand knowledge of other countries and cultures, and only one of seven frequently travels to other countries. Thereby, it is interesting to note that the 2000/01 ERASMUS students consider their international competences more often as important than those surveyed earlier, but that they actually take over these tasks less often than former ERASMUS students (see Table 125).

Table 125 **ERASMUS-Related Work Task of Former ERASMUS Students – a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent of employed graduates)**

	ERASMUS students 1988/89 surveyed 1993	Graduates 1994/95 surveyed 2000	ERASMUS students 2000/01 surveyed 2005
Using the language of the host country orally	47	42	38
Using the language of the host country in reading and writing	47	40	38
Using firsthand professional knowledge of host country	30	25	25
Using first hand knowledge of host country culture/society	30	32	24
Professional travel to host country	17	18	14

Question F6: To what extent do the responsibilities of your work involve the following? Scale of answers from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Source: Maiworm and Teichler 1996; Jahr and Teichler 2002; University of Kassel, VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS Students 2005.

However, the previous survey suggested that former ERASMUS students twice as often take over visibly international tasks than formerly non-mobile students. This corresponds to the responses of employers stating twice as often that internationally

experienced students take over international tasks than students without international experience; employers state this both regarding international tasks in general as well as specially regarding use of foreign languages, international cooperation, using information and travel abroad. Also most of the experts surveyed are convinced that former ERASMUS students take over such assignments substantially more often than formerly non-mobile students.

9.1.5 Additional Observations about the Professional Value of Study Abroad

One has to bear in mind that competences, transition to employment, career and professional assignment of former ERASMUS students cannot be attributed predominantly to the temporary study experience in another European country. Their employment and work success might be caused to some extent by other factors:

Mobile students are more likely to have been internationally mobile prior to their course of study than non-mobile students, and early mobility might have a major influence on interest in subsequent mobility and on international competences.

ERASMUS students are to a certain degree a *select group in various respects*, notably regarding academic achievement, interest in study abroad, foreign language proficiency and according to some observers as well socially select in their ability to fund a more costly study.

Half of the ERASMUS students are internationally mobile during the course of study beyond the ERASMUS-supported period.

ERASMUS students might not be better prepared for employment and work in general and for international professional mobility and for visibly international work assignments than those who had been internationally mobile during their course of study with the help of other means and in other academic and organisational settings of mobility.

In many respects, *ERASMUS has a mobilizing and reinforcing value*, and often it has some value added as regards graduate career and notably international mobility and international work assignments, but certainly ERASMUS has not such a strong impact on the careers of graduates as their more favourable careers and the stronger international components of their careers per se might suggest.

The ERASMUS programme is intending to serve students from all eligible countries to more or less the same extent. But, certainly, *graduates from some countries seem to benefit more strongly than from other countries*. There are noteworthy variations between individual countries. The most striking finding in this context, however, is the fact that former ERASMUS students from Central and Eastern European countries report advantageous employment and work in general and international assignments more frequently than their peers from Western Europe. The former ERASMUS students from Central and Eastern European countries are a more select group, but they also benefit more strongly from the study period abroad.

There are *differences according to field of study* as regards the professional value of studying for some period in another European country. But in most respects, they are

not so substantial that one may consider the professional value for some fields as marginal and for others as overwhelming.

The study focussed selectively on four fields of study in order to elaborate distinctions by field of study more in-depth – also with the help of expert workshops – in an exemplary way. The four fields chosen were Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, Business Studies and Sociology.

Many findings of the first and second phase are similar in these four fields. Unanimously, the *main impact is seen in the maturity, the personal development and the competence gain of mobile students*. Strong differences in the four seminars occurred in the impact an ERASMUS stay has on the academic and field-specific learning. The lowest impact on academic and field-specific learning was reported in Chemistry as a universal and highly standardised subject. In contrast, the learning effect with regard to field-specific knowledge about the host country society respectively market was underscored most strongly in Business Studies and Sociology.

The professional value of ERASMUS mobility in the transition to work did not differ sharply by field of study. *The overall assessment was that ERASMUS is not the entrance to a high-flying career but rather a "door-opener" into the labour market*. In the more professional oriented study fields - Business Studies and Mechanical Engineering - it was argued that the globalisation process and the international business structures today make international competences necessary even for positions in national companies. A second argument structure, which was also presented in Sociology and Chemistry, two fields of study with more national labour markets, refers to the competences of former ERASMUS students. Former ERASMUS students through their international experience have not only gained in international competences but also in so-called soft-skills highly valued by employers today. An ERASMUS study period on the CV is seen as an indicator for such competences and can enhance the chances in the job search process. Research work in Sociology and Chemistry are the two areas of employment where the lowest impact of ERASMUS mobility was seen.

It is interesting to note that the experts participating in the workshops suggested different *strategies for enhancing the professional value* of the ERASMUS supported period in another country. Each field-specific workshop ended with a different approach for enhancement.

As regards Mechanical Engineering, the participants in this seminar viewed the *emergence of learning agreements* for the individual ERASMUS students as not sufficient. They suggested close cooperation with partner institutions in order to identify equivalent courses as well as opportunities for students to strengthen a profile in areas of specialisation at the host university. In contrast, the representatives in the seminar covering the field of Business Studies did not argue for tight curricular designs and learning agreements. Rather, they favoured a stronger self-organisation approach of student mobility under the conditions of improved information transparency. The experience of self-organisation seems to secure the highest impact on competences like problem-solving, endurance and self-confidence.

Other than suggesting *improvement of guidance and counselling* before the ERASMUS stay, the fewest comments were made with regard to study provisions and conditions in the seminar about Sociology. Mobility has still a predominantly individual character in

this field of study which does not need a strong institutional framework. As regards the Chemistry seminar, *recognition* was named as a main concern. The participants demanded a better *networking* with the ERASMUS programme. The European Chemistry Exchange Network was referred to as a good example.

Also the experts surveyed at the beginning of this study had been asked to suggest possible means of improving the ERASMUS programme and related activities at institutions of higher education. In response, they do not suggest any significant change of the character of the ERASMUS programme and the typical related activities at all, but rather consistent improvements within the given logics of the established practices in various respects: more intensive preparation, more academic, administrative and financial support for the students while abroad, better means of assessments and recognition, closer links between higher education and the employment system, more money and less bureaucracy on the part of the European Commission, and – last not least – stronger efforts to make the benefits of ERASMUS known outside higher education.

Altogether, the findings of this project, first, suggest, that the former ERASMUS students note a more modest professional value of their temporary study in another European country than employers and other experts addressed in this study. As most experts view temporary study in another country as desirable, they might tend to overrate its impact. Moreover, employers and other experts might state a positive impact in general when they assume that this might be advantageous only for some former ERASMUS students; thus, the methods of asking experts about the value for the ERASMUS students in general might lead to an exaggerated result.

Second, a comparison of the survey of 2000/01 ERASMUS students five years later with similar surveys of earlier cohorts of ERASMUS students suggests *that an advantageous employment and work situation and a visibly more international role of former ERASMUS students as compared to formerly non-mobile students declines over time in many respects*. The more international components of employment and work become common and the more students acquire international competences, the less – so we might conclude – former ERASMUS students can expect an advantageous career as compared to non-mobile persons. Some of the findings, however suggest, that international competences might have grown among students – notably mobile students – more quickly than international work tasks: As a consequence, a lower proportion of former ERASMUS students take over visibly international work tasks. We cannot establish clearly how far these two directions of explanations are suitable.

9.1.6 The Professional Value for Mobile Teachers

ERASMUS is highly appreciated by the mobile students themselves, because a relatively long period under conditions contrasting those at home at an early stage of the formation of competences relevant for employment and work is viewed as strongly influential in many respects. The conditions for a professional value of teaching abroad are completely different. Persons already in the middle of their career (47 years old on average) and mostly already internationally experienced spend a period of about two weeks on average in another country with the support of ERASMUS. One should not be surprised, if one noted that the professional value of temporary teaching in another

country was viewed substantially more modest than the professional value of temporary study in another country.

Surprisingly, though, *the formerly mobile teachers note a substantial value of temporary teaching abroad in the framework of ERASMUS*. Temporary teaching abroad notably, first, is appreciated for its *enhancement of subsequent academic work* of the formerly mobile teachers. 58 percent of the respondents note a positive impact on their own professional development in general. Asked more specifically,

- 65 percent report a general improvement of their research contacts,
- 60 percent broadened their academic knowledge while teaching abroad,
- 53 percent got involved in academic discussions originating from the country or the institution of their temporary stay,
- 45 percent improved their teaching as a consequence of the experiences abroad,
- 40 percent developed and implemented new teaching methods.

These responses show that the academic value of teaching abroad is not limited to curricular issues and teaching methods. On the contrary, even a higher proportion of teachers underscores the *value for research and their general academic activities* affecting both research and teaching. The experts surveyed at the beginning of this study, in contrast, perceive a slightly stronger spread of subsequent innovation in teaching than improvement of research and general academic activities.

Similarly, the *experts* surveyed at the beginning of this study believe that teaching abroad contributes positively to their general academic knowledge. The majority of them state that former ERASMUS teachers are *better*, as far as *academic competences* are concerned, than those not mobile for teaching purposes.

Second, temporary teaching abroad is viewed by the mobile teachers themselves as valuable as well as regards the *international dimensions of their subsequent career*. In the subsequent years, they have spent on average altogether almost one month abroad annually – mostly to attend conferences, but often as well to undertake research activities or to teach. Asked about the causal link, half of the formerly mobile teachers believe that the teaching period has enhanced their international scientific cooperation activities, while one third each saw invitations from abroad and cooperation in research project increasing as a consequence of their ERASMUS teaching period abroad.

The *experts* surveyed present an even more optimistic view about the *improvement of international competences* on the part of the mobile teachers. More than three quarters each believe mobile teachers are superior to non-mobile teachers after the teaching period abroad in their knowledge of higher education of the host country, intercultural understanding and competences as well as foreign language proficiency.

Third, the majority of formerly mobile teachers are convinced that ERASMUS teaching mobility has a *positive impact on their institution of higher education*. More specifically, more than half of them argue that teaching mobility has been helpful for improving advice provided to mobile students and for providing knowledge on other countries. Almost half the respondents consider teaching mobility beneficial to improve the coordination of study programmes between the participating institutions of higher

education, the range of foreign language teaching, the developments of new study concepts and the growing relevance of comparative approaches (see Table 126).

Table 126 Impacts of ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility on the Home Institution as Perceived by Former Mobile Teachers by Home Region 2000/01 (percent; responses 1 and 2)

	Home Region 2000/01		Total
	Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe	
Improvement of guidance/advice available to mobile students	62	69	63
Providing knowledge on other countries, Europe etc.	58	57	58
Co-ordination of programmes between home programme and partner programmes	47	46	47
Provision of courses in a foreign language (foreign-language teaching)	39	64	44
Development of new concepts and contents for study programmes	35	64	41
Addressing issues comparatively	40	47	41
Use of publications in a foreign language	33	64	39
Providing knowledge on international relations or supranational organisations	38	39	38
Addressing disciplinary/theoretical discussions originating from partner country/from abroad	37	43	38
Setting up double degree programmes	36	28	34
Development of new teaching methods	26	55	32
Integration of language courses into the curriculum	25	42	29
Count (n)	(587)	(138)	(725)

Question E6: In general, how would you rate the impact of ERASMUS teaching staff mobility on your home institution regarding the following aspects? 5-point scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'

Source: University of Kassel, VALERAS Teaching Staff Survey 2005.

Also, *the administrators of the higher education institutions surveyed note a very positive effect of teaching staff mobility on their institution: More than three quarters believe that teaching staff mobility has contributed to the international reputation of the higher education institution. More than half observe a positive effect on international research activities and only half of them each name positive effects with respect to various dimensions of teaching and learning.*

Fourth, it is worth noting that 9 percent of the formerly mobile teachers are professionally active five years later in another country than the country where they had taught prior to the ERASMUS supported period – in many cases in the country of their temporary teaching period abroad. This is certainly a higher degree of *mid-career international mobility* than one could have anticipated.

Among the experts surveyed, even more than two-thirds believe that teaching abroad *increases the opportunity for international academic mobility*. Certainly, however, one cannot expect that a similar proportion of academics actually will be mobile.

The professional value of teaching abroad for *status and income looks more modest at first glance:*

- 3 percent observed a raise of income,
- 6 percent an extension of a temporary contract, and
- 12 percent the move towards a high-ranking administrative position

as a consequence of teaching abroad. But one has to bear in mind on the one hand that the overall number of teachers climbing a higher position since the teaching period abroad has been not very high. On the other hand, more than one third of the mobile teachers surveyed state that teaching abroad enhanced their career perspectives. This suggests that a large proportion of them note smaller steps of enhancements or prospect for future enhancement as a consequence of teaching abroad.

Also, the *administrators* surveyed present a cautious view as regards the career impact of temporary teaching abroad. 11 percent argue that career advancement is frequent and 2 percent that a higher income is customary as a consequence of teaching abroad. In contrast, the surveyed experts initially more frequently expect better career opportunities for a higher income level (12%), getting a higher position at another institution of higher education (19%) and getting a higher rank at the same institution (44%).

Altogether, *the professional value of teaching in another European country seems to be substantially higher for academics from Central and Eastern European countries than for academics from Western European countries.* This difference is far more striking for teachers than for students. To illustrate this difference for the teachers,

- 10 percent of teachers from Central and Eastern European countries, but only one percent from Western European countries note a raise of income level,
- 30 percent of the former and 7 percent of the latter perceive a contribution of teaching abroad to getting a higher rank,
- 81 percent of the former and 53 percent of the latter report a positive impact on the overall professional development.

This difference is striking, but it does not mean that the perceived professional value of teaching abroad is altogether small for Western European academics. For example, 60 percent of the Western European teachers state that teaching abroad helped improving international research contacts. This is less frequent than among teachers from Central and Eastern European countries (80%), but yet remarkably high.

Though the professional value of teaching temporarily in another country with the help of ERASMUS is viewed as extraordinarily high, teachers, university administrators and experts surveyed by no means consider the state of affairs as more or less ideal. Critique is frequently voiced that most academics have to take care of the temporary teaching period abroad outside their regular assignments, i.e. as an additional work load, instead of integrating it into the regular work assignments. Moreover, measures are recommended by a substantial number of respondents to take temporary teaching abroad into account in any decisions as regards career advancement.

9.2 A Look Back to the Initial Evaluation Questions

The design of this evaluation study was specified by the European Commission in a detailed way in the call for tender. As in most assignments for evaluation studies, the targets set and the funds provided for inquiry for this evaluation study were substantially more limited than the general evaluation objectives named. For example, a thorough assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of student and staff mobility would require to compare the competences and subsequent activities of ERASMUS-supported students and teachers with the “comparison groups” of those mobile by other means and those not having been mobile, but the call for tender left merely room for surveying the ERASMUS-supported persons, while only other actors and experts could be asked to formulate sophisticated guesses about the differences between the ERASMUS-supported persons and the comparison groups. Moreover, an evaluation study providing a thorough account of the current situation might lose its credibility if it embarks on a broad range of recommendations, because impressive recommendations presented at the end of evaluation, as a rule, speculate far beyond what could be solidly covered by the account of the facts.

This notwithstanding, this chapter will discuss the findings of the study in the light of the evaluation questions raised in the call for tender, which were summarized there under four headings: relevance, effectiveness, impact, and durability. Moreover, it will finally present recommendations mostly as far they are supported by the thoughts presented in the various workshops with experts and actors.

Regarding the *relevance of the support for student mobility*, four questions were raised in the call for tender:

1. *Does the supply correspond to the identified mobility needs of students at university in the participating countries?*
2. *Can the mobility measures meet the needs of the labour market in these countries?*
3. *In the context of globalisation, is ERASMUS mobility an effective tool for helping students to find an occupational specialisation sought after on the labour market?*
4. *What is the relevance of the action compared to the demands of the various areas and levels of teaching?*

This evaluation study has shown that ERASMUS-supported student mobility continues to be high on demand by the students and to be highly appreciated by the employers. Reports from Western European countries shown an increasing interest of students in some cases and stagnation in other cases. Most strikingly, though, students from Central and Eastern European countries are keen to participate in ERASMUS-supported mobility, and those actually having been mobile report a strong professional value of temporary study in another European country.

Employers note a substantial increase of job roles requiring the graduates to be internationally versatile. This is obviously true for graduates who are internationally

mobile, but employers experts and graduates themselves consider visible international competences are highly relevant as well for many job roles at home. Foreign language proficiency has become one of the key criteria for recruiting graduates, but also study and work experiences abroad during the course of study are more frequently appreciated than merely for the supply of staff expected to work abroad temporarily or even permanently.

The relevance was strongly confirmed in the SCRATES evaluation study 2000 when evidence could be provided that former ERASMUS about twice as often take over visible international job tasks as formerly non-mobile students. The graduate survey undertaken in this evaluations study suggests that former ERASMUS students take over visible international tasks to a somewhat smaller extent than in the past, but we have reasons to assume that this is still substantially more often the case for former ERASMUS students than for formerly non-mobile students.

This evaluation study underscores the relevance of temporary student mobility within Europe in another direction. Employers do not only assess the "international competences" of former mobile graduates as higher, but also various general competences such as adaptability, initiative, assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence as well as their written communication skills, their analytical competences, their problem solving abilities and their planning and organisation skills. Also, many other actors and experts addressed in this evaluation study are convinced that the international experience of students during the course of study enhances their professional competences in many respects.

9.2.1 Relevance

Regarding the *relevance of support for teaching staff mobility* programme, two further questions were raised in the call for tender.

- *Does the supply correspond to the identified mobility needs at university in the participating countries?*
- What is the relevance of the mobility in terms of the demands of the various areas and levels of study?

Actually, it turned out that most experts, university leaders and mobile teachers themselves are in favour of a further expansion of teaching staff mobility. There are hardly any precise concepts about "demand", because the frequency of teaching staff mobility generally desired seems to be substantially higher than the actual mobility, because teaching abroad often implies additional work load and additional costs.

This evaluation study, however, different from previous accounts of teaching mobility within ERASMUS. This study was expected to focus on the value of the ERASMUS-supported teaching staff mobility for the mobile persons themselves and thereby only indirectly for the human resources of the institutions of higher education involved as well as for the internationalisation of the institution as a whole.

The study showed clearly that the mobile teachers themselves note not only a valuable contribution of the teaching staff mobility through their teaching during this period and an enhancement of international understanding and interest in new teaching approaches, but also a positive impact on the general competences of the teachers and their future

research activities in cooperation with partners abroad. Not only the teachers themselves, but also university leaders and various experts consider the professional value of teaching staff mobility as higher than one could have expected in advance.

Many university leaders and various experts consider teaching staff mobility as relevant for promoting and fostering student mobility as well as international learning of the non-mobile students and, altogether, for the internationalisation process of the institution as a whole. Altogether, teaching staff mobility seems to be increasingly appreciated within the higher education institutions involved. In particular in the Central and Eastern European countries teaching staff mobility is valued by more than three quarters of the institutions. Positive effects of teaching staff mobility on the institution are seen by the majority in regard to the international reputation, international cooperation and the development of new curricula and teaching methods.

The seminars of the second phase further underscored the importance of teaching staff mobility and the consequent improved knowledge about partner institutions for the recognition process. This was underscored for all fields of study addressed in the seminars. Notably, teachers knowing a foreign system are much more willing to trust the examination system of a foreign country.

9.2.2 Effectiveness

In regard to *effectiveness*, the call for tender raised two questions:

1. *Do the ERASMUS mobility funds help to release other sources of funding (private or public)?*
2. *Which elements have a positive or negative impact on access to employment and career development?*

This evaluation study confirms the already conventional wisdom that the ERASMUS sub-programme of SOCRATES is extraordinarily successful in mobilizing large number of students and large numbers of teachers through a limited support for each mobile person. Previous studies have shown that students themselves, their parents, national scholarships etc. had to take over an increasing share of the costs of living and studying for a period abroad. Similarly, it was shown that the mobile teachers and their institutions add own resources to a varying extent in order make up for the incomplete cost coverage by the ERASMUS stipend. This evaluation study shows that ERASMUS continues to be a motivator for the teachers and students to be mobile because they consider the period abroad as valuable for themselves.

A previous evaluation study had shown that the professional “success” of former ERASMUS students is slightly less impressive in various respects than that of European graduates who had been mobile during their course of study with other means. This does not come as a surprise, because participation in ERASMUS by and large is not highly selective and because the ERASMUS bursaries are lower than in many other cases. This evaluation study did not provide the opportunity of comparing the professional value of ERASMUS student mobility as compared to mobility through other means or non-mobility. Moreover, the results of the previous evaluation had not caused the decision-maker in the European Union to increase the bursary per student. Therefore, we cannot be surprised to note that obviously most actors and experts have

adjusted their expectations to the current conditions. The actors and experts invited to the seminars addressing individual fields of study, however, were convinced that the professional value of temporary student mobility could be improved if student mobility was more closely tied to curriculum development and if the period abroad would focus on certain stages in the study programme which vary by field of study. These recommendations will be presented below.

Similarly, ERASMUS teaching staff mobility can be viewed as highly effective on the basis of this evaluation, since the short teaching period supported with relatively limited funds per persons is viewed contributing significantly to the teachers' subsequent academic activities and to the internationalisation of their institutions as a whole. Previous evaluation studies of ERASMUS-teaching staff mobility, however, have shown that the small support provided per mobile teacher has led in most cases to choices of relatively short periods of teaching abroad which most of the teachers have to take over as additional work load. Moreover, the incomplete coverage of the costs abroad by ERASMUS is made up to a varying extent by the individual institutions of higher education or the teachers themselves. This evaluation study shows in addition, as already pointed out, that both the teachers themselves and the university leaders appreciated the value of teaching abroad under the given circumstances. Only few persons continued to discuss more ambitious and promising solutions, such as integrated mutual teaching staff exchange for a whole semester.

9.2.3 Impact

This evaluation study has put strongest emphasis on establishing the *impact* of ERASMUS-supported mobility. In the call for tender, the following questions were raised in this domain:

1. *In term of the planned objectives and unforeseen results, what are the main achievements of ERASMUS mobility for students and teachers?*
2. *With regard to the impact on employment and career development, is it possible to compare the ERASMUS mobility of students and teachers to participating countries, on the one hand, and non-ERASMUS university mobility to European countries and third countries in general on the other hands?*
3. *To what extent has the ERASMUS mobility of students and teachers had an impact on the development of the European dimension at the participating universities (cooperation, recognition of periods of study, joint curriculum development, thematic networks, intensive courses, etc.)?*
4. *To what extent have students and teachers who have benefited from ERASMUS mobility put this experience to good use in their career/search for employment?*
5. *What was the impact on access to employment for participating students? A detailed answer is needed with regard to: a) country of origin, b) host country, c) a third country, d) several countries.*
6. *Can good practices with regard to access to employment and/or career development be envisaged?*

7. *To what extent are the factors favouring access to employment (to be determined during the evaluation: theoretical knowledge, knowledge of other working environments, of other ways of working and of other languages) promoted by ERASMUS mobility?*

The previous chapters have provided a detailed account of the impact perceived by the formerly mobile students, formerly mobile teachers as well as by university leaders, employers and various other actors and experts addressed in this evaluation study. We can summarize the highlights as follows:

- The triangulation of views shows that experts, university leaders and employer note a higher professional value of temporary ERASMUS-supported study in another European country than the former ERASMUS students themselves. We cannot establish clearly whether the former overestimate or the latter underestimate the impact of student mobility.
- The evaluation study confirmed the finding of previous surveys that former ERASMUS students view the study period abroad as leading to international mobility, international competences and visibly international work tasks while hardly promising career enhancement as compared to formerly non-mobile students. However, other actors and observers surveyed more often believe that ERASMUS contributes as well to general career enhancement.
- A comparison of the responses of the survey of 2000/01 ERASMUS students five years later to those of previous cohorts of ERASMUS students suggests that an advantageous employment and work situation and a visibly more international role of former ERASMUS students as compared to formerly non-mobile students declines over time in many respects. The more international components of employment and work become common and the more students acquire international competences, the less pronounced is the professional value of ERASMUS.
- The professional value of ERASMUS for former students – as well as for former teachers - from Central and Eastern countries obviously is substantially higher than for those from Western European countries. In contrast to this difference by groups of countries, the differences by fields appear to be modest.
- Though mobile teachers tend to be already internationally experienced, are mature persons often well established in their career and spend only a short teaching period abroad, the formerly mobile teachers report a strikingly strong professional value of the ERASMUS-supported teaching mobility period. The majority of them observe enhancement in international research cooperation and in their general academic competences, while a slightly lower proportion report a substantial value for subsequent teaching activities. Some of the mobile teachers note visible career advantages and some opt subsequently for an academic career in another country, not infrequently that of their ERASMUS-supported teaching period.

One has to take into consideration, though, that the desirable competences of formerly mobile students and teachers and their subsequent activities and professional „successes“ cannot be attributed predominantly to the temporary study and teaching

experience in another European country. A substantial proportion of formerly mobile students had been already mobile prior to study, and some of them are mobile additionally by other means during the course of study. Moreover, the ERASMUS students are a somewhat select group in some respects, notably regarding prior international contact, international orientation and foreign language proficiency. Most of the formerly mobile teachers have been exposed to other higher education systems and cultures on many occasions during their life course. It is not possible to disentangle clearly the impact of the ERASMUS-supported period and other factors involved. It is interesting, though, that the actors and experts addressed in this evaluation study most of whom are aware of the multitude of factors in play claim that the professional value of the ERASMUS-supported experience is strong.

9.2.4 Durability

Finally, as regards *durability*, the call for tender raised the following questions.

1. *What could form the basis for developing ERASMUS mobility (other than Community funding)?*
2. *With regard to labour market access for students and career development for teachers, what is the opinion of those involved (students, teachers, universities and companies) on how to improve the performance of the ERASMUS action and ensure its durability at European level?*

This evaluation study was expected to address actors and experts in the field. Among those from the domain of higher education, more or less all considered ERASMUS as valuable programme. Among the employers, 39 percent stated that they know ERASMUS very well, 17 percent had some knowledge, 34 percent knew about without any details, and 10 percent had not heard about ERASMUS at all; irrespective of the degree of knowledge about ERASMUS, most employers appreciated as well the opportunity for student to acquire international experience. Neither the former nor the latter provided any comments about the overall funding of the SOCRATES schemes and the relative role of the European Union versus the European nation states in the promotion of student and staff mobility in higher education.

Some of the experts and actors pointed out, as already noted, that the bursaries for individual mobile students and individual mobile teachers should be higher. It remained open, however, whether one expected an overall increase of the SOCRATES budget or not.

The analysis of the former students' responses by the authors of this evaluation study, however, reveals, as already pointed out, that the professional value of temporary study in another European country gradually declined over the years. For example, a smaller percentage each of the former ERASMUS students surveyed in this evaluation study than prior generations of former ERASMUS students surveyed in preceding evaluation studies noted a positive influence of ERASMUS in obtaining a first job, getting a higher income level and taking over job tasks for which visible international competences are needed. We interpret this finding as primarily caused by the growing internationalisation and Europeanisation in general, which lead to a gradual decline of the uniqueness of the ERASMUS experience.

9.3 Recommendations

As a consequence of the findings of this study with respect to the relevance, impact and durability as well as some dimensions of effectiveness, the actors and experts invited in the second phase of the project to field-specific seminars were encouraged to consider means how the professional value of ERASMUS student mobility could be enhanced. Moreover, the experts surveyed at the beginning of this evaluation study also had been asked to consider possible improvements.

It is interesting to note that the experts participating in the workshops suggested different strategies for enhancing the professional value of the ERASMUS supported period in another country. Each field-specific workshop ended with a different approach for enhancement.

As regards Mechanical Engineering, the participants in this seminar viewed the emergence of learning agreements for the individual ERASMUS students as not sufficient. They suggested close cooperation with partner institutions in order to identify equivalent courses as well as opportunities for students to strengthen a profile in areas of specialisation at the host university. In contrast, the representatives in the seminar covering the field of Business Studies did not argue for tight curricular designs and learning agreements. Rather, they favoured a stronger self-organisation approach of student mobility under the conditions of improved information transparency. The experience of self-organisation seems to secure the highest impact on competences like problem-solving, endurance and self-confidence.

Other than suggesting improvement of guidance and counselling before the ERASMUS stay, the fewest comments were made with regard to study provisions and conditions in the seminar about Sociology. Mobility has still a predominantly individual character in this field of study which does not need a strong institutional framework. As regards the Chemistry seminar, recognition was named as a main concern. The participants demanded a better networking with the ERASMUS programme. The European Chemistry Exchange Network was referred to as a good example.

Also the experts surveyed at the beginning of this study had been asked to suggest possible means of improving the ERASMUS programme and related activities at institutions of higher education. In response, they do not suggest any significant change of the character of the ERASMUS programme and the typical related activities at all, but rather consistent improvements within the given logics of the established practices in various respects: more intensive preparation, more academic, administrative and financial support for the students while abroad, better means of assessments and recognition, closer links between higher education and the employment system, more money and less bureaucracy on the part of the European Commission, and – last not least – stronger efforts to make the benefits of ERASMUS known outside higher education.

Taking the suggestions stated by the actors and experts into account, the authors of this evaluation study conclude that the ERASMUS programme will have better chances in the future if it becomes again more ambitious as far quality of the experience abroad is concerned. In the predecessor programme, the Joint Study Programme, as well as in the early years of the ERASMUS programme, strong emphasis was placed on the curricular

integration of the study experience in another country which eventually should ensure a high degree of recognition and a high academic and professional value of learning in a contrasting educational environment. Over the years, more attention was paid to participation of large numbers and representative composition by countries, fields and socio-biographic background as well as to efficient administrative processes. Moreover, it had turned out to be difficult to assess the institutional application for ERASMUS support according to criteria of academic quality.

This evaluation study, however, shows that temporary study in another European country as such is gradually losing its uniqueness, but it continues to be viewed as potentially highly valuable. Moreover, the actors and experts see the opportunity of improving the quality of the ERASMUS experience through more targeted ways of embedding the experience abroad into the overall study programmes, whereby different models might be suitable between fields of study as well as individual study programmes and partnerships within a field of study. Thus, the time seems to be ripe for another major approach of ERASMUS student mobility, where more ambitious curricular aims will be intertwined with the financial support for mobile students.

10 Literature

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