



The experience of studying abroad  
for exchange students in Europe

Research Report  
Erasmus Student Network Survey 2005  
in partnership with Petrus Communications

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Erasmus Student Network



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# 1. Introduction

*This report will present results of the research done by the Erasmus Student Network in partnership with Petrus Communications. The aim of the research was to evaluate the experience of studying abroad and the quality of services offered to foreign exchange students at European universities. The research was performed during June and July, 2005. The online survey was filled out by 7754 exchange students from universities around Europe.*

Student mobility is a key issue in providing excellence in European education. Making a success of mobility is crucial for institutions, and of course for the students themselves. We feel strongly that successful international exchange and study programmes play a major role in economic and social stability worldwide. Of equal importance, it is a unique personal experience for students who have a new opportunity to develop both their academic and non-academic skills.

The aims of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) are to support and enhance student mobility. At 200 Higher Educational Institutions' ESN local branches, groups of ESN volunteers, often former exchange students, help local students during their period abroad. They assist them, mostly at the beginning of their stay, to adapt and to solve practical problems, all to make their stay abroad worthwhile.

We launched this survey to identify the motivations and learning experiences of international and exchange students, and above all to look at the **'success' of their experience** from a number of perspectives. We particularly wanted to identify themes that contribute to the success or failure of international educational experiences. What is more, we wanted to see if and how incoming students benefit from the presence of student organisations at the receiving institution. Analysis will show how **specific services prove indispensable** while studying abroad and how, through the active participation of local students, a university can become a friendly and hospitable place for exchange students.

The **phenomenal response** we received for this project in such a short time (7754 responses in 2 months) strongly underlines that educational issues and mobility are topics that concern and motivate youth all over Europe. *If you want to participate in the next edition of the ESN Survey, please write to Ewa Krzaklewska at [vicepresident@esn.org](mailto:vicepresident@esn.org).*

## 2. Key results

Exchange students who answered to our survey were mostly studying abroad through the **Socrates/Erasmus Programme** (85,7% of all respondents). Others went abroad through several other exchange programmes that last no longer than a year (12,6%). A small number of students who had enrolled normally at the university abroad (1,7% – i.e. not part of an exchange programme) also answered the survey but this report does not include results concerning this group.

The respondents were **more often female** (61,5%), and were, on average, **23,5 years** old. They studied business/management (20%), engineering/technology (19%), languages and philological studies (11%), social sciences (8%) and many other fields of studies. Most students were from Western European countries (78%); the other 22% of students came from Central and Eastern European countries.

All students spent an average of **7 months abroad**, mostly (86%) in 2004 and 2005. The main host countries were Spain (13%), Italy (12%), Germany (10%), Sweden (9%) and France (8%).

**Motivations** for going abroad varied for different groups of students. While the top motivations were generally to practice a foreign language, to have new experiences and to enhance future career prospects, female students and students from Central and Eastern Europe were more often academically oriented.

Most of the respondents (68%) were **very satisfied with their stay abroad** and 26% were rather satisfied. Students neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, rather dissatisfied or very dissatisfied constitute a clear minority (4%, 0,9% and 0,5% respectively). Students were generally **less satisfied with their studies than with their stay** (4,0 compared to 4,6 at the five point scale).

Our respondents were **most satisfied with the social dimension of their stay** (social life, atmosphere of the city and country, contact with the host country culture). They were less satisfied with the problem-solving dimension (information before and after the stay, finances, International Office assistance). Despite some of the areas of dissatisfaction, **98% of respondents would recommend studying abroad** to their friends.

As far as learning processes are concerned, students considered study abroad programmes an **opportunity to acquire cultural skills and knowledge** (92% of respondents believed they have learned more about the culture of the host country) and to enrich one's academic life. It was a time for self-development, and becoming more independent. Students not only learned new skills but also developed social networks. Furthermore, it gave them an opportunity to explore new places and new possibilities and to decide about future career tracks.

As far as student **activities** are concerned, most of the students took courses at the university (94%) during their stay. 27% of students worked on their thesis and 33% did independent study. A little over a quarter of students did laboratory work (27%). When it comes to extracurricular activities, **73% took language courses**, 18% of the sample worked, 13% did internships and 7% did volunteer work. Almost all of the students (93%) travelled around the host country.

Students who took part in **extracurricular activities** such as internships (13%) or volunteer work (7%) were more satisfied with their contact with the local culture and local students.

57% of respondents had heard of the **Erasmus Student Network**. Students whose universities had an ESN section were in contact with ESN on average several times a month. **71% of students are (very or rather) satisfied with the ESN section** at their host university, 22% were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 5% were only rather dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied.

The respondents were most satisfied with the **help of ESN** in following aspects:

- providing information about the stay and about studying after arrival
- enhancing contacts with other exchange students
- social and cultural activities: trips, visiting tours, parties.

**The more frequent contact students had with ESN, the more satisfied they were with the ESN's work and, additionally, the more satisfied they were with the stay in general.**

The research demonstrates that the higher a student's satisfaction is with an organisation whose role is taking care of exchange students (like ESN or any student organisation working with visiting students), the higher his/her level of satisfaction with his/her stay and studies is likely to be.

**Disabled students** articulated slightly lower levels of satisfaction with their stay. In their case we identified a relation between satisfaction with the Buddy/mentor/tutor system provided by ESN and the overall level of satisfaction. We conclude that ESN can enhance the satisfaction of disabled students via the Buddy system.

28% of respondents were aware of another student organisation taking care of exchange students.

**79,3% of respondents would consider moving to a foreign country**; 14,8% are undecided and only 5,9% would not consider it. Of the students who would consider moving to foreign country, 69% would prefer to move there for a long time but not permanently. Students from Western Europe are more mobile than students from Central and Eastern Europe.

The Erasmus Student Network has a slight but statistically significant influence on respondents' **attitude to mobility**, which is related to enhancing their satisfaction with the social aspects of their stay.

### 3. Methodology

The ESN Survey was developed by ESN Survey team, led by the ESN Vice President, Ewa Krzaklewska, and with the support of Petrus Communications.

The questionnaire was available online during June and July, 2005, on the ESN website at [www.esn.org/questionnaire](http://www.esn.org/questionnaire). Students were able to complete the survey entirely online and only in English. Beforehand, it was piloted online among approximately 100 students. It was then launched to university-level students throughout Europe, who had completed or were in the process of completing an international exchange or independent study programmes abroad.

The information about the survey was spread through the local branches of the Erasmus Student Network, Petrus Communications' contacts and other associations concerned with educational issues (European Association of International Education, European Universities Association, AEGEE), as well as through the international offices of individual universities. Students received emails notifying them about the project and were informed about the possibility of winning 5 travel vouchers, each worth 100 Euros, if they would fill out the questionnaire. As a verification procedure respondents were supposed to use a code at the beginning of the questionnaire.

In sum, we received 7754 valid questionnaires for analysis.

### 4. Acknowledgements

We would particularly like to thank all the ESN sections that worked hard to make the survey a success. The most active sections were ESN Linköping, ESN Copenhagen, ESN at Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona and ESN Roma.

We would also like to express our appreciation to EAIE, as through its structures we managed to gather about 1500 questionnaires. Additionally, the following organisations helped in the distribution of the survey: European University Association, AEGEE, the Italian National Socrates Agency and the Polish National Socrates Agency.

And finally, thanks to the ESN Survey Team: Patrick Fiquet, Katja Boh, Nicola Casati, Natalia Drela, and Karin Siöö, as well as Davide Capecchi, Karri Teikari; Gill Willson for her expertise and all ESN members and supporters – especially Petrus Communications – that helped us in the research process and the publication of this report.

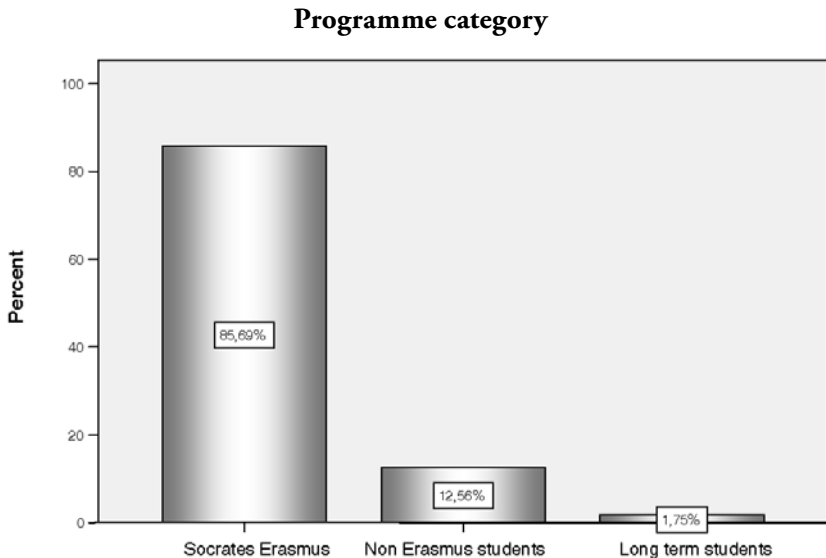
# 5. Students' characteristics

## 5.1 Main categories of respondents

We divided the respondents into three main categories:

1. Students who studied abroad within the Socrates/Erasmus Programme (85,7% of all respondents)
2. Students who did short term exchanges within other educational study abroad programmes, which lasted not more than 12 months, through bilateral agreements or programmes of other foundations (DAAD, Campus Europea etc.) (12,6%)
3. Students who were enrolled at the university abroad (1,7%).

Figure 1. Main categories of students who took part in the survey (n=6975)



In this report we will concentrate on the analysis of Socrates/Erasmus students (hereafter *Erasmus students*) and we will compare them to students who spent not more than a year in a foreign university (hereafter *non Erasmus students*). We did not include data concerning long-term students in this report.

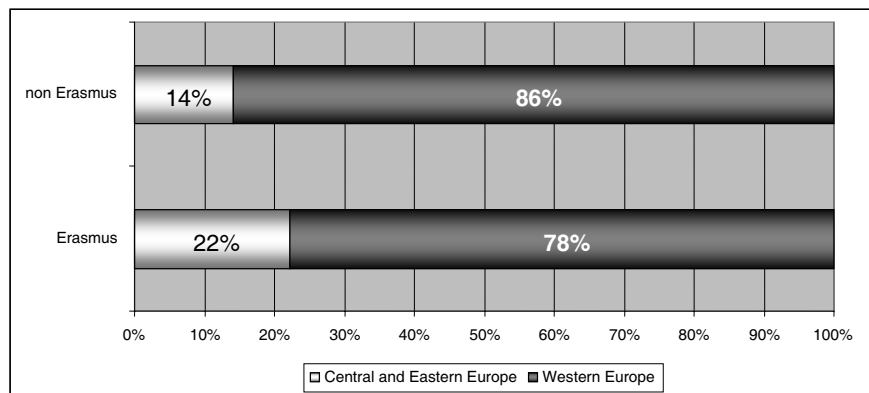
## 5.2 Demographic profile

The average **age** of respondents was 23 years. Erasmus students' mean age was 23,4 compared to non Erasmus students who were on average 23,7 years old. The youngest respondents come from the United Kingdom (21,5) and Belgium (21,8), and the oldest (on average about 25 years old) from Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, as well as Switzerland and Bulgaria.

Concerning **gender**, 61,5% of our respondents were female and 38,5% male. This ratio mirrors the tendency among those doing exchange abroad and does not differ much between Erasmus and non Erasmus students.

Students came from **100 countries** within and outside of Europe, with much higher participation for European countries. Most students are from Western European countries (78%), while only 22% of students came from Central and Eastern European countries<sup>1</sup>. However, we observe higher numbers of students from Central and Eastern Europe among Erasmus students than among non Erasmus students.

**Figure 2. Region of birth of Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6004)**



<sup>1</sup> In this report, the countries included in the category Central and Eastern Europe are: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herz., Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldavia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. The Western Europe category includes: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

## 5.3 Educational background

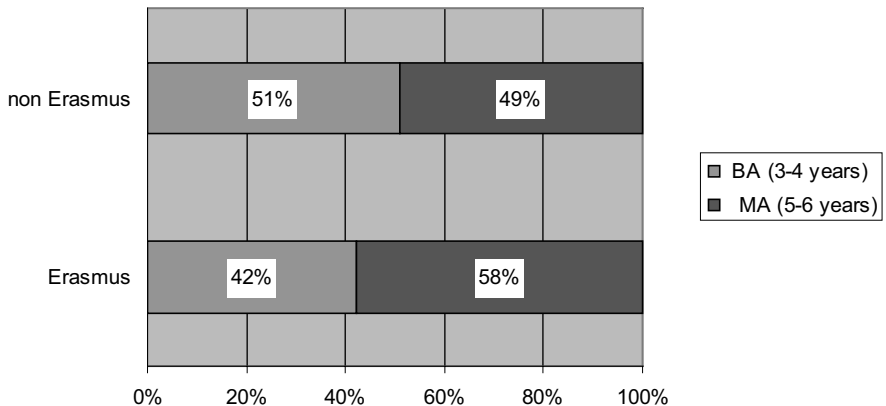
Students studied at more than 1200 different universities, but the majority of responses came from 300 of these. Universities were located in 45 countries, mostly European.

Figure 3. Country where the home university is located (n=5928)

Country	N	Percent	Country	N	Percent
Italy	1197	20,2	Czech Republic	122	2,1
Germany	705	11,9	Netherlands	116	2,0
France	437	7,4	Austria	115	1,9
Poland	427	7,2	Slovenia	104	1,8
Spain	424	7,2	Denmark	86	1,5
Finland	374	6,3	Romania	79	1,3
Switzerland	317	5,3	Norway	72	1,2
Hungary	247	4,2	Greece	70	1,2
Sweden	223	3,8	Bulgaria	37	0,6
Belgium	184	3,1	Slovakia	26	0,4
Portugal	169	2,9	Estonia	23	0,4
United Kingdom	169	2,9	Ireland	18	0,3
Lithuania	130	2,2	Latvia	16	0,3

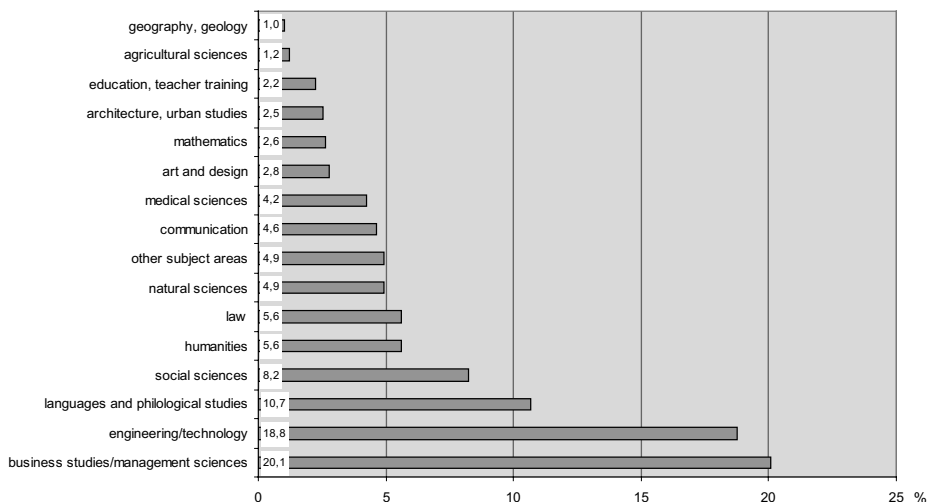
Among all respondents, 43% were Bachelor (BA) students and 57% Master (MA) students. Within Erasmus students there were more MA students than BA students, while for other exchange students the numbers of MA and BA students were almost equal. Most respondents will graduate in 2005, 2006 or 2007.

Figure 4. Level of studies of Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6012)



The most popular **major subjects** among the respondents were: business studies/management sciences (20%), engineering/technology (19%), languages and philological studies (11%) and social sciences (8%). When it comes to differences among the programmes, non Erasmus students did medical studies or business more often than Erasmus, while Erasmus students more often than non Erasmus studied languages.

Figure 5. Majors of Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6012)



## 5.4 Income/Parental status

61% of all the respondents described their family's income as average. 31% described it as above the country's average. 8% described it as below the country's average. Non Erasmus students evaluated their income as above their country's average more often than Erasmus students did.

Figure 6. Family's income of Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6507)

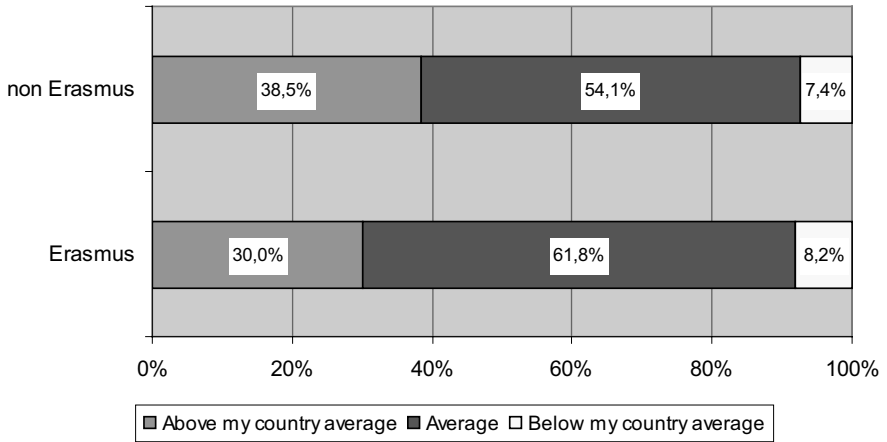
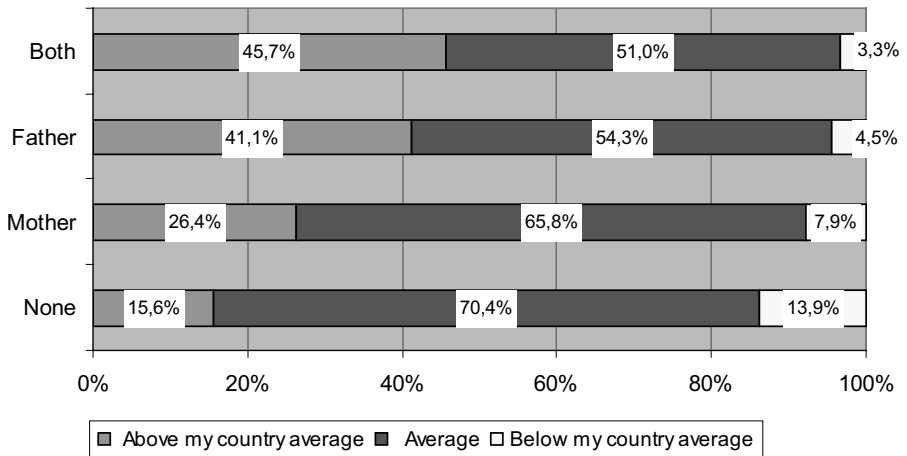
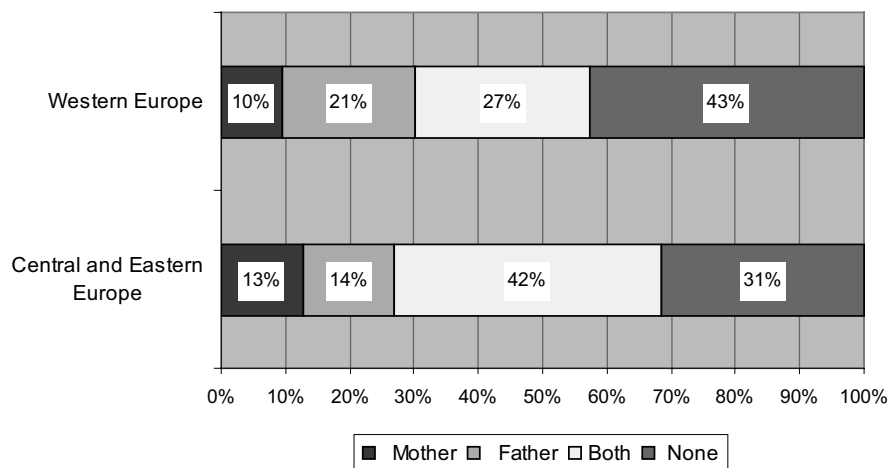


Figure 7. Family's income and the educational attainment of the parents (n=5853)



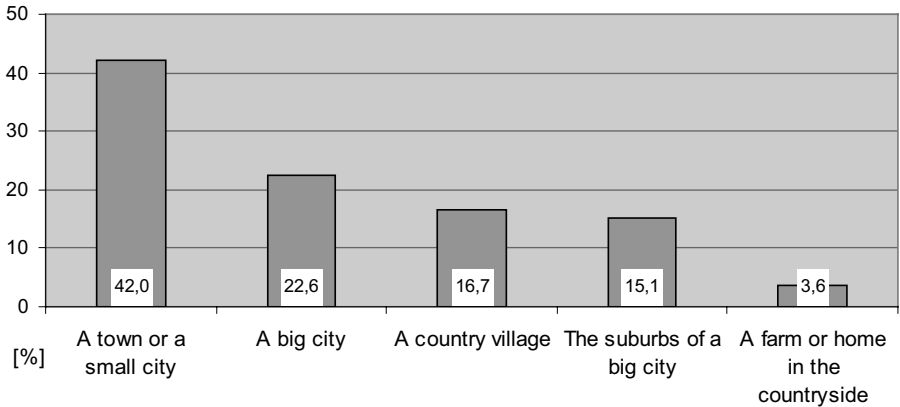
Among the respondents, there were more students from Central and Eastern Europe than from Western Europe with both parents university educated (42% to 27%). The number of students from the families where none of the parents has a higher education degree was much higher among Western Europeans (43% to 31% for Central and Eastern Europe). While Central Eastern European students may come from the families of more educated parents, still more of them declared that their family's income is below the country's average.

Figure 8. Who in family has a higher education degree? – family's educational attainment for students from Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe (n=5938)



Most of our respondents came from a town or a small city (42%) or from a big city (22,6%). 16,7% of students came from a country village and 15,1% from the suburbs. Only 3,6% came from a farm or a home in the countryside. Students who came from the suburbs of a big city and big cities indicated their income as higher, and furthermore their parents had a better educational attainment.

Figure 9. Areas where the students' family lives (n=5938)



## 5.5 Disabled students

Disabled students constituted only 2,2% (141 students) of the respondents. 92% of these studied within the Socrates/Erasmus Programme. They come mostly from Western Europe (62%), but the number of Central and Eastern European students was higher than for all the respondents (38% compared to 22%). They described their income as above average (28%) and average (62%), which did not differ significantly from the income of all the respondents.

## 6. Experience of studying abroad

Students spent on average 7 months abroad, mostly (86%) in 2004 and 2005. The countries they have chosen most frequently were Spain (13%), Italy (12%), Germany (10%), Sweden (9%) and France (8%).

### 6.1 Motivation for going abroad

Top motivations for students for going abroad were to practice a foreign language (60% for Erasmus, 41% for non Erasmus), to have new experiences (53%, 49%), to enhance future career prospects (41%, 40%) and to learn about different cultures (32%, 33%). While for Erasmus students language motivation was indisputably the highest, the career dimension and the opportunity to have new experiences were more important for non Erasmus students. The chance to improve one's academic knowledge, even if it was not a top priority for any of the groups, was higher for non Erasmus students (29% compared to 23%). Cultural motivation (to learn about different cultures and to live abroad) was also quite high for both of the groups.

Motivations differed between various groups.

#### 1. Gender:

- female students more often chose learning about different cultures, practicing a foreign language and enhancing future employment opportunities as their motivation to go abroad
- more female than male Erasmus students studied abroad in order to improve their academic knowledge
- male students wanted to have fun and to meet new people more often than female students

#### 2. Age:

- the youngest group of students (up to 21 years old) more often had academic motivations but also more often wanted to have fun and to meet new people
- the students aged 22-25 more often than others chose as a motivation “to have new experiences”

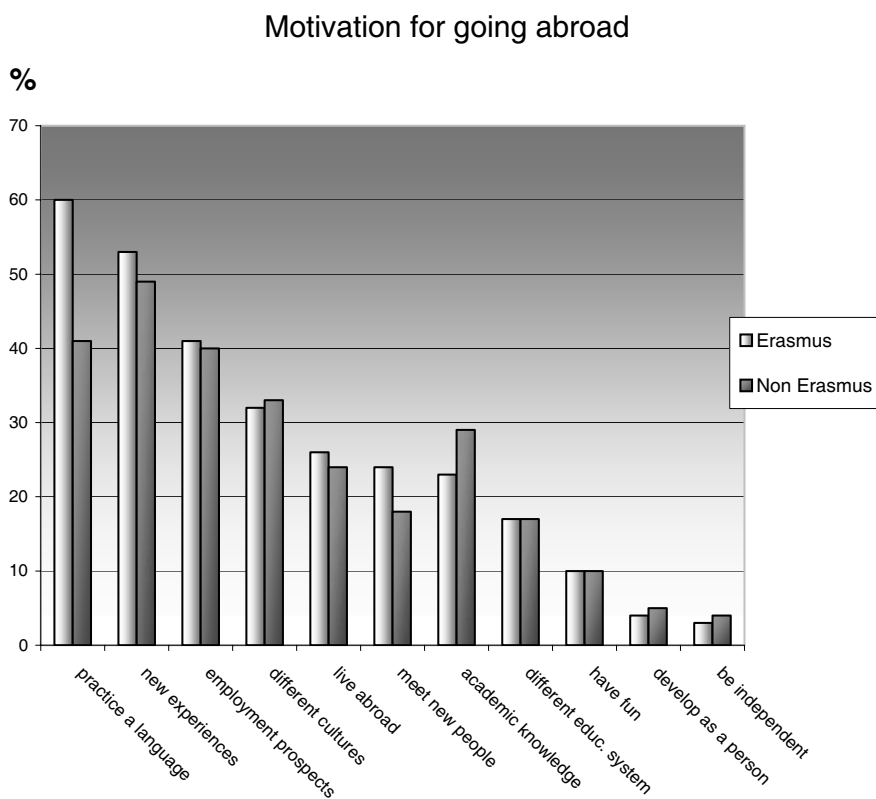
#### 3. Income:

- students who reported their income as below average had more often than others motivation to improve their academic knowledge; they also more often wanted to live in a foreign country
- students with income above average more often than others wanted to have fun

#### 4. Region:

- students from Central and Eastern Europe wanted more often than others to improve their academic knowledge, to learn about different education systems, to live in a foreign country and to learn a foreign language, but at the same time they also wanted to have new experiences

Figure 10. Motivation for going abroad for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6975)



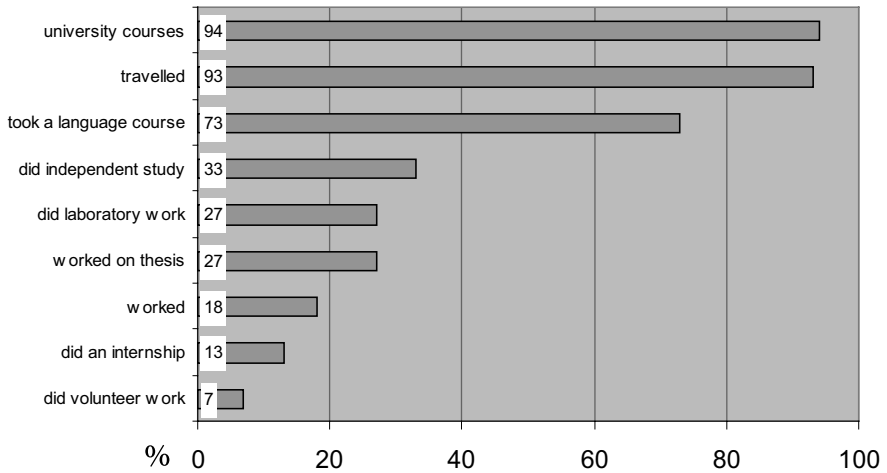
#### 5. Erasmus vs. non Erasmus:

- Erasmus students more often than non Erasmus wanted to go abroad to practise a foreign language, to have new experiences and to meet new people
- non Erasmus students were more often academically motivated

## 6.2 Activities during the stay

Most of the students took courses at the university during their stay. 27% of students work on their thesis and 33% did an independent study. A bit more than a quarter of students did laboratory work (27%). When it comes to extracurricular activities, 73% took language courses. 18% of the researched sample of students worked, 13% did internships and 7% volunteer work. Almost all of the students (93%) travelled around the host country.

Figure 11. Activities during the stay for all the respondents (n varies from 5975 to 6743)



Differences between both groups are present only when it comes to the participation in language courses: 75% for Erasmus comparing to 59% for non Erasmus, and volunteer work: 7% for Erasmus comparing to 13% for non Erasmus.

In order to see how the behaviour abroad differs among different nationalities, we compared three countries: France (Western European country), Italy (Southern European country) and Poland (new EU country). The results show that Polish students more often wrote their thesis while abroad, as well as they more often had jobs.

Figure 12. During your stay, did you work on your thesis? Results for France, Italy and Poland (n=1978)

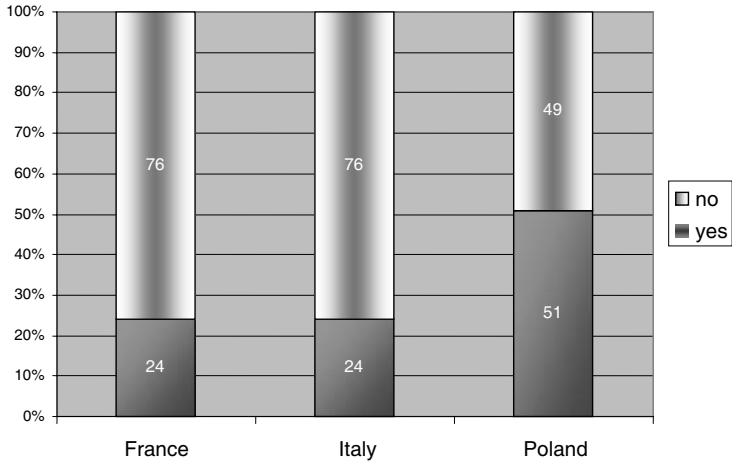
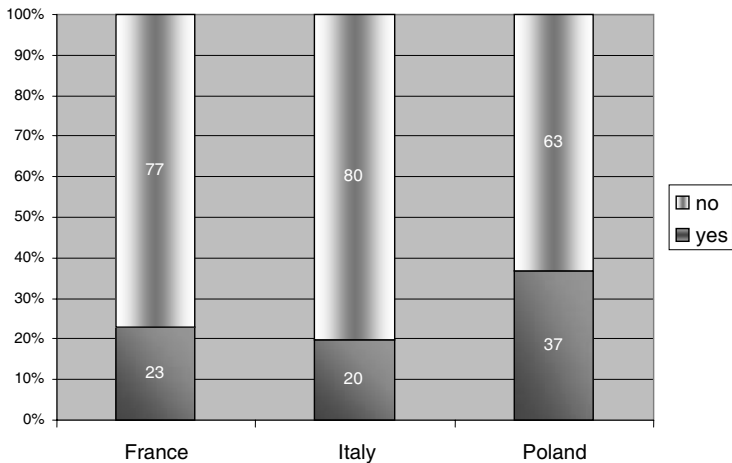


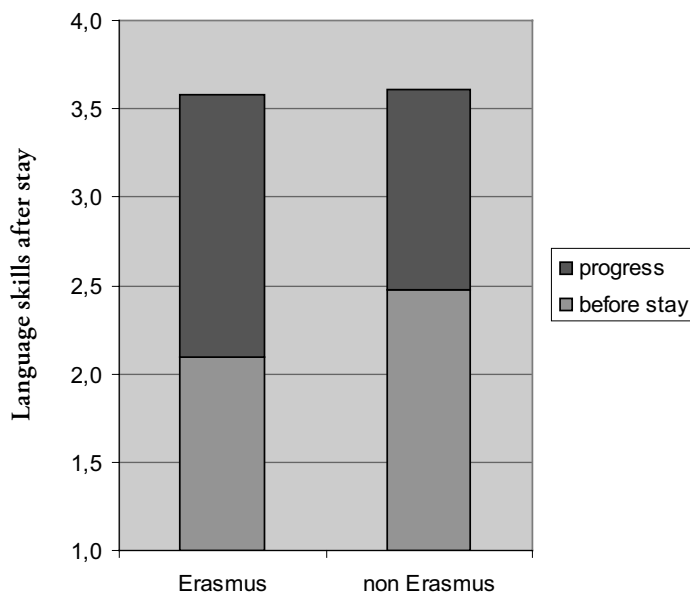
Figure 13. During your stay, did you work? Results for France, Italy and Poland (n=1930)



## 6.3 Language acquisition and communication

Most of the students declared that their language skills improved during the period of studies abroad. Students evaluated the language skills before the stay as 2,1 and after the stay as 3,6 (on the scale 1 - not at all to 5 - very well). Language Acquisition Progress score (LAP) was designed to illustrate the progress in the foreign language<sup>2</sup>. On average, students during the stay improved their language skills by 1,4 points. For Erasmus students the progress was better – 1,5 points compared to 1,1 for non Erasmus students. It is important to note that the language skills before their stay of non Erasmus students were higher than those of Erasmus students.

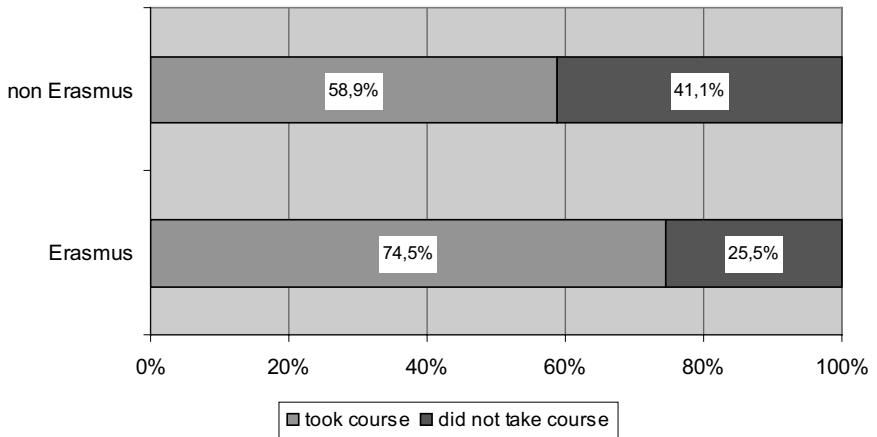
Figure 14. Language skills before and after stay and Language Acquisition Progress for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6853)



As mentioned earlier, participation in language courses was more common for Erasmus students (74,5%) than for non Erasmus (58,9%) (figure 15).

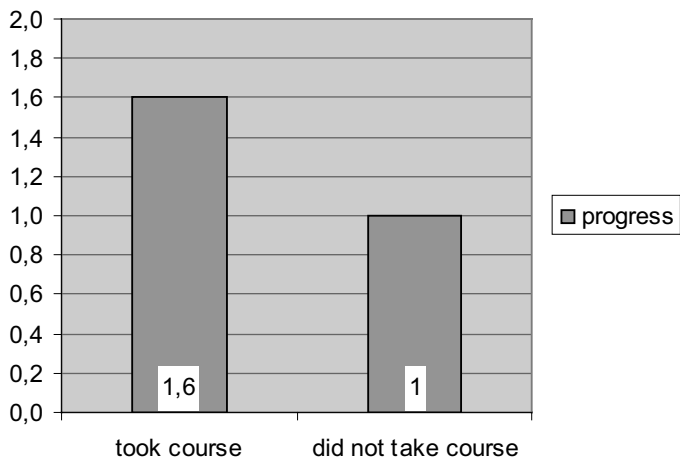
<sup>2</sup> LAP equals declared competency in the host country's language during the time when the research was conducted, so after the completion of the stay or near its end, minus declared competency in the foreign language before going abroad.

Figure 15. Participation in the language courses by Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6853)



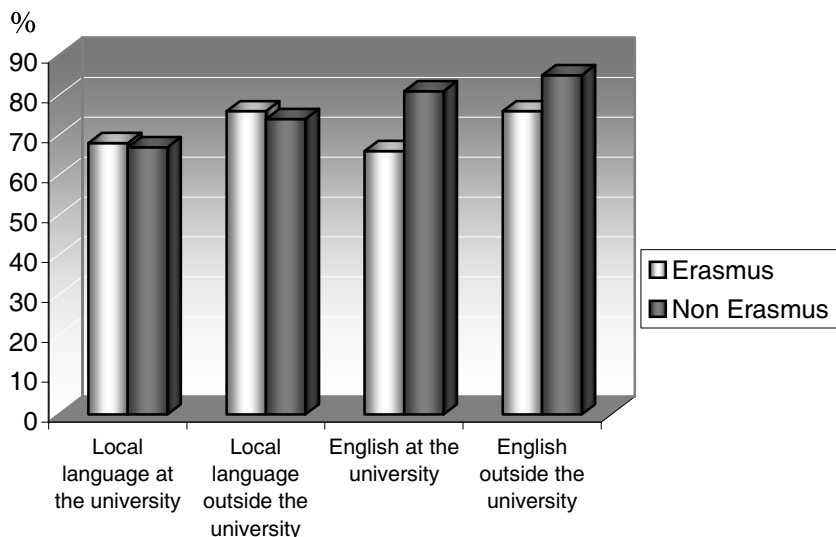
Those who participated in the language course reported also higher score for LAP (figure 16). Also those who worked, did internship or did volunteer work reported slightly higher LAP score. When it comes to motivation, people who went to exchange to improve academic knowledge, to study in a different academic system, to learn about different cultures or to practice a foreign language, reached higher LAP. Those who went to have fun reported lower LAP.

Figure 16. Language Acquisition Progress for those who participated in language courses and for those who did not participate (n=6465)



Students communicated in the local language or in English during their stay. Both Erasmus and non Erasmus used both options almost equally frequently, although English was a little less used by Erasmus students. Those who communicated in the local language outside and at the university reported higher score for LAP. Those who communicated mostly in English may have improved their English language skills, but this progress was not measured by our questionnaire.

Figure 17. Communication in local language and in English at the university and outside the university for Erasmus and non Erasmus students



## 6.4 Non-formal learning dimension

Aside from formal academic and language courses, an active informal and non-formal learning takes place while students stay abroad. Non-formal learning can take place during internships, voluntary work or participation in projects outside of university. But the learning processes are going on throughout whole stay abroad.

To identify what are the soft skills that students acquire, respondents were asked to answer the open question: *What is the most important thing you learned as an exchange student?*

Students most appreciated the following aspects of stay (the points are illustrated with quotes that were answers to the aforementioned question):

### 1. acquiring cultural skills and knowledge

- communication and work in international environment  
*"I learned to work in a group with people of different skills and culture."*
- knowledge about host country  
*"That the French live in a totally other rhythm, they work different, and it was sometimes hard to accept."*
- how to survive in the foreign country  
*"I learn to be able to study in a foreign country in a foreign language and to do everything on my own."  
"To understand different culture and being able to adjust to it."*
- openmindedness, tolerance  
*"Different countries, different costumes! but respect is the key word."  
"That aiming to understand different cultures and habits helps you understand and develop yourself."*
- language  
*„that learning a language is so much easier when you are immersed in it"*

### 2. maturity and self development

- being independent  
*"to be independent and take responsibility for my own learning"*
- determination in solving problems  
*"to overcome all obstacles no matter the circumstances and to be patient"*
- self confidence  
*"to take decisions and stay firm in all situations"*
- flexibility  
*"the importance of being flexible and being open-minded to new systems"*
- personal growth  
*"to test my limits as a human being when I am alone in some difficult situation in a foreign country"*

### 3. social networks

- creation of friendships
  - “build a network around the world”*
  - “to integrate in a group of international of foreign students with different backgrounds”*
- how to live together
  - “share the kitchen”*
- communication skills
  - “to speak with all people more easily”*
  - “communicate easy with foreign people (students and non-students)”*

### 4. academic enrichment

- adaptation to different academic system
  - “a view into a very different educational system”*
- planning career path due to exchange
  - “what I'd like to be, my main field of activity in the future”*

### 5. value of discovery and exploring new possibilities

- openness to new
  - “to live your life at the moment & not worry to much about the future because the people in Spain don't care to much about their cars; houses but live. To try everything new; and not to be afraid about new experiences”*
- grabbing opportunities
  - “to avail oneself of the opportunity”*

As we see the active process of growing and maturation takes places for most of exchange students. They are very reflective about their own development and they appreciate new qualities acquired and skills learned.

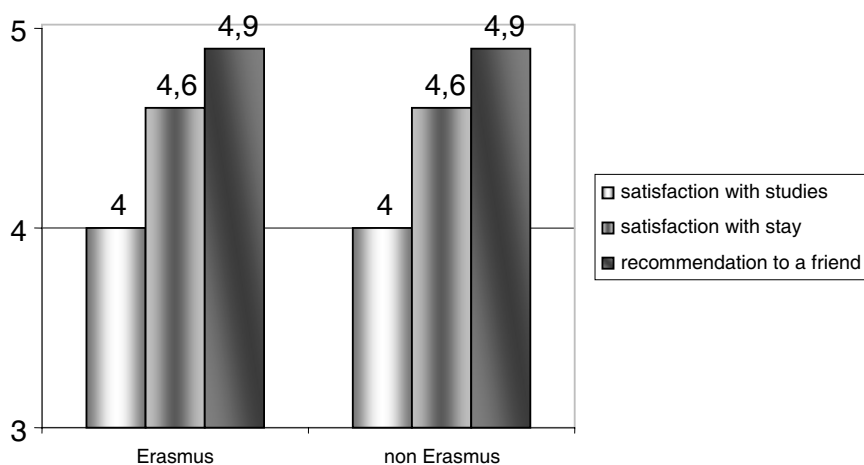
## 7. Students' satisfaction with stay abroad

Students' satisfaction with their stay was measured using four categories of questions concerning:

- satisfaction with stay;
- satisfaction with studies (concerning the academic dimension of stay);
- recommendation to a friend to spend a period abroad (which is treated as an indicator of satisfaction);
- satisfaction with twelve aspects of stay<sup>3</sup>.

Answers for the first three questions are summarised in figure 18. While answers for all questions were positive, students were more likely to recommend the stay to their friends than to indicate that they were “very satisfied” with their stay or studies. Furthermore, students were generally less satisfied with their studies than with their stay. It is worth mentioning that satisfaction with stay is a better predictor than satisfaction with studies for a recommendation to a friend.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 18. Variables describing students' satisfaction (scale: 4 – rather yes, 5 – definitely yes for recommendation to a friend and 4 – rather satisfied, 5 – very satisfied for two other variables; n=6700)



<sup>3</sup> Satisfaction overall as well as of specific aspects was measured on the five point scale from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied. The rule is valid for the whole report.

<sup>4</sup> Pearson's correlation coefficients 0,45 and 0,2, respectively.

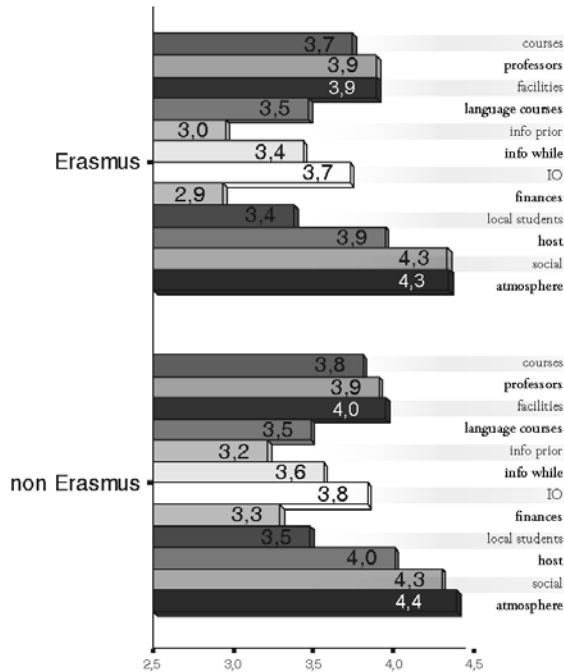
## 7.1 Aspects of stay

Twelve elements of stay were differentiated in the design of the questionnaire:

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

The summary of the answers for questions about respondents' satisfaction with the aspects is presented in figure 19.

Figure 19. Students' satisfaction with aspects of stay (scale: 1 – very dissatisfied, 5 – very satisfied; n=6550)



**Figure 20. Mean students' satisfaction with aspects of stay** (scale: 1 – very dissatisfied, 5 – very satisfied; n=6550)

	ERASMUS	NON ERASMUS
<i>courses</i>	3,7	3,8
<i>professors</i>	3,9	3,9
<i>facilities</i>	3,9	4
<i>language courses</i>	3,5	3,5
<i>info prior</i>	3	3,2
<i>info while abroad</i>	3,4	3,6
<i>International Office</i>	3,7	3,8
<i>finances</i>	2,9	3,3
<i>local students</i>	3,4	3,5
<i>host country's culture</i>	3,9	4
<i>social life</i>	4,3	4,3
<i>atmosphere</i>	4,3	4,4

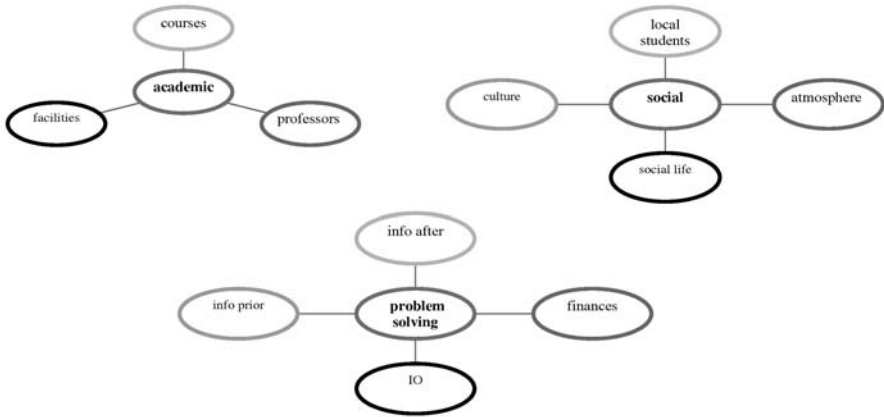
Students were most satisfied with social life and with the atmosphere of the city and country where the university was located and least satisfied with the level of information they received before their arrival, as well as with their financial situation.

By using 'principal component analysis', the twelve aspects of studying abroad were grouped into three factors:<sup>5</sup> the first reflects academic dimension of stay and it included professors, courses and university facilities; the second factor represents social dimension incorporating social life, contact with local students and atmosphere of the city and the country where university is located; the third factor presents a problem-solving dimension by including the provision of information, help from the International Office and financial situation.

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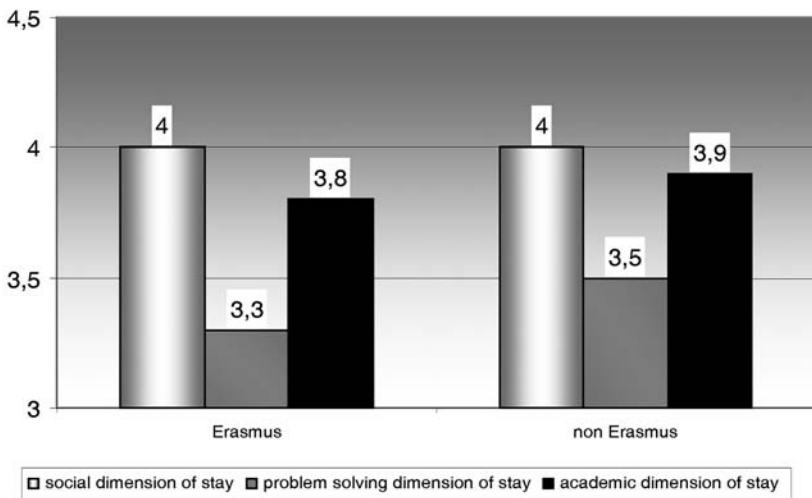
<sup>5</sup> In order to interpret the data a principal component analysis was conducted on the correlations of the twelve aspects of stay. Three components were extracted with eigenvalues of more than one. The factors were rotated with both varimax and direct oblimin, giving essentially similar results. The three factors accounted for 56% of the total variance.

Figure 21. Three dimensions of stay abroad and their elements



Students were most satisfied with the social dimension and least satisfied with the problem-solving dimension. However, non Erasmus students' scores within this problem-solving dimension were higher than those of Erasmus students (figure 22).

Figure 22. Students' satisfaction with dimensions of stay (n=6550)

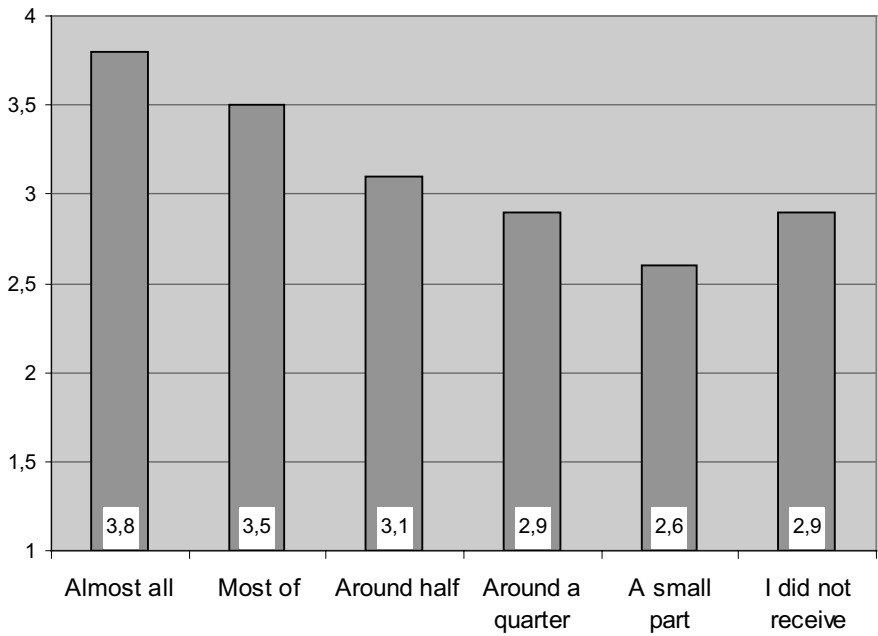


While all dimensions had an influence on respondents' satisfaction with stay, studies and recommendation, the academic dimension had the most significant influence on satisfaction with studies<sup>6</sup> and the social dimension had the greatest significant influence on overall satisfaction<sup>7</sup> and recommendation<sup>8</sup>.

## 7.2 Financial situation

The level of grant received towards overall expenses significantly influenced the satisfaction with students' financial situation. While this influence was hardly unexpected, there is one element of it which is surprising – respondents who have not received a scholarship were more satisfied with their financial situation than the ones whose grant covered only a small part of their expenses (figure 23).

Figure 23. The influence of the part of the overall expenses covered by the grant on the satisfaction with financial situation (n=6707)



<sup>6</sup> partial correlation coefficient = 0.49

<sup>7</sup> partial correlation coefficient = 0.4

<sup>8</sup> partial correlation coefficient = 0.2

Students from Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) received on average 298 euros per month while students from Western countries (West) about 226 euros (figure 24). Moreover, CEE students declared that their grant covered a significant part of their expenses (figure 25), even if among CEE students there are more families whose income is below country's average, so they probably could count on a smaller family support.

Mean scores of satisfaction with financial situation are lower for Western students (2,94 compared to 3,10 of CEE students). Still, that does not mean that their financial situation abroad was objectively worse. Western students might be used to the higher standard of living; this is why their financial expectations are higher. Also, a bigger percentage of students from Poland worked to get money, which could improve their financial situation (figure 12).

Figure 24. An average (mean) scholarship received by students from CEE and Western countries (n=5801)

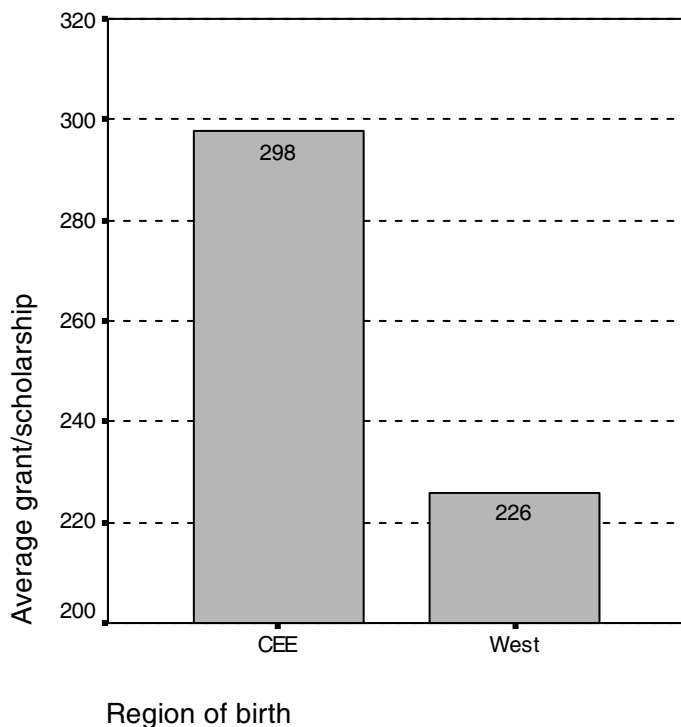


Figure 25. Part of overall expenses covered by the grant for CEE students and students from Western European countries (n=5986)

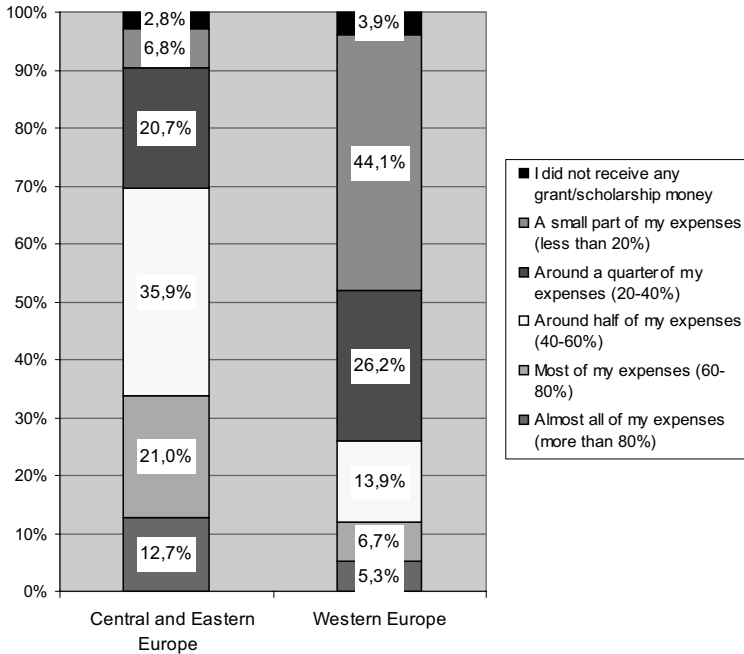


Figure 26. An average (mean) scholarship received by Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6425)

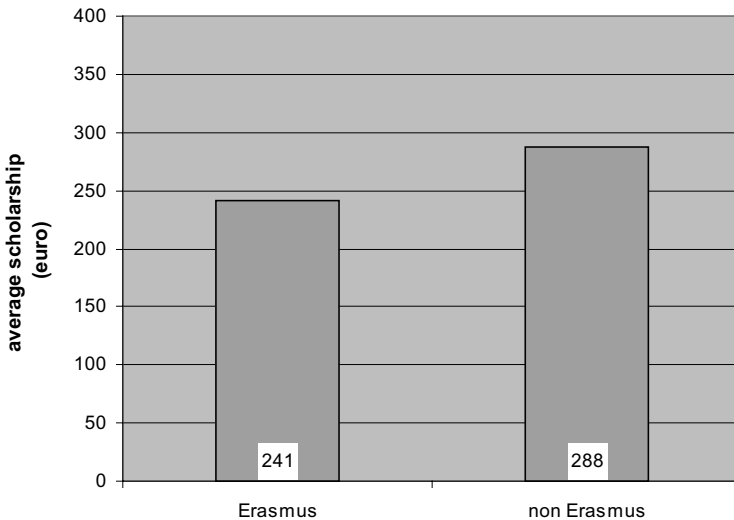
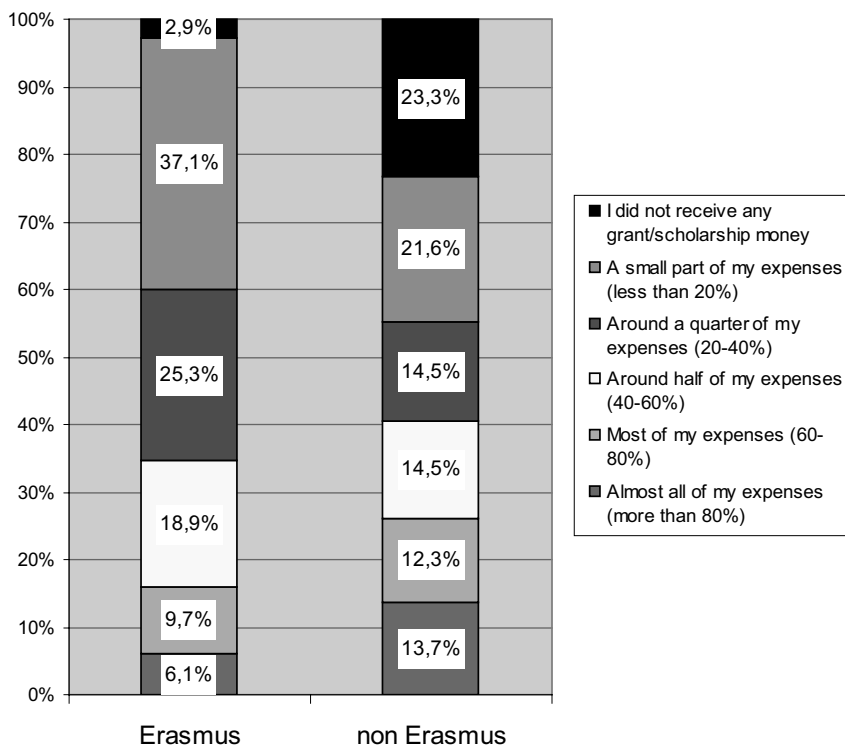


Figure 27. Part of overall expenses covered by grant for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6641)



While comparing Erasmus students with non Erasmus students following conclusions were drawn:

- taken altogether, a large number of students came from families with an income greater than their country's average. However, Erasmus students were more likely than non Erasmus students to come from families whose income is below their country's average;
- the average value of received scholarships was higher for non Erasmus than for Erasmus students (288 and 241 euros, respectively). At the same time, 23,3% of non Erasmus students did not receive any grant or scholarship money compared with 2,9% of Erasmus students (figure 27);
- grants for non Erasmus students, if received, covered a larger part of their expenses (figure 27).

## 7.3 Satisfaction with host country

There are three aspects of stay which we can call country-specific:

- atmosphere of the city and the country where the university is located;
- contacts with local students;
- contact with the host country culture.

Figure 28 presents respondents' satisfaction with these aspects for fourteen European countries. It should be noted that due to the low number of respondents from some countries the results are not representative in the narrow sense of the word. In the table, there are listed the countries with more than 100 respondents.

The five countries that had the highest overall mean scores were: Poland, Italy, Austria, France and Czech Republic.

Figure 28. Respondents' satisfaction with specific aspects of host country

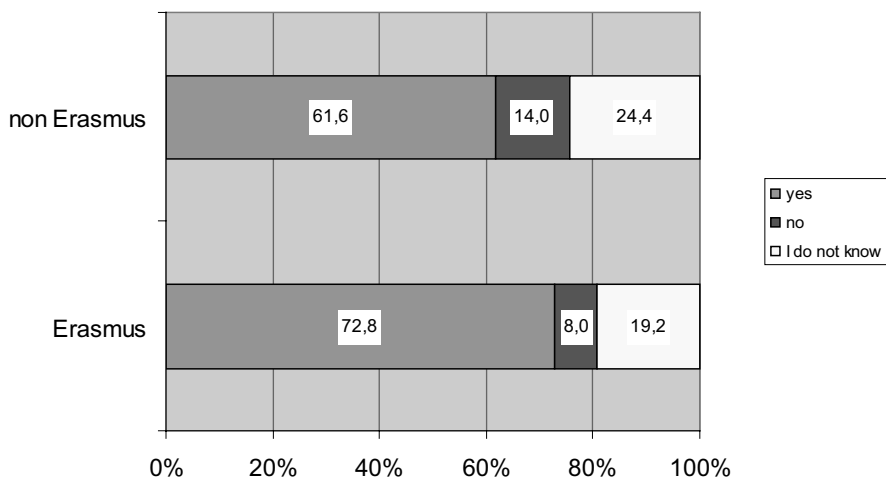
Host country	The atmosphere of the city and country		Contacts with local students		Contact with the host country culture		Overall		N
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
Austria	4,26	12	3,57	1	3,94	1	3,94	3	121
Belgium	4,38	4	3,26	13	3,82	12	3,82	11	146
Czech Republic	4,44	2	3,38	7	3,91	6	3,91	5	142
Denmark	4,32	8	3,26	12	3,82	13	3,82	12	368
Finland	4,22	13	3,35	8	3,80	8	3,80	13	253
France	4,33	7	3,43	3	3,92	3	3,92	4	469
Germany	4,34	6	3,38	6	3,89	7	3,89	7	556
Italy	4,35	5	3,42	4	3,96	4	3,96	2	776
Netherlands	4,3	10	3,33	9	3,83	9	3,83	9	292
Poland	4,45	1	3,54	2	3,99	2	3,99	1	170
Spain	4,43	3	3,31	11	3,91	10	3,91	8	780
Sweden	4,31	9	3,39	5	3,85	5	3,85	8	528
Switzerland	4,18	14	3,25	14	3,75	14	3,75	14	122
United Kingdom	4,29	11	3,31	10	3,83	11	3,83	10	326

## 8. Satisfaction with student organisations

### 8.1 Erasmus Student Network

57,5% Erasmus students and 55,7% non Erasmus students have heard about Erasmus Student Network. The differences between those two categories of students are also small as far as questions about ESN's sections at home and host university are concerned. 72,8% Erasmus Socrates students and 61,6% non Erasmus students declared that there was an ESN section at their host university. The ratio is lower for home university: 42,2% and 40,3%, respectively. The difference between declarations concerning ESN sections at home and host universities may be explained by the fact that students on exchange were more likely to be exposed to an ESN section.

Figure 29. Ratio of respondents who declared that there is an ESN section at their host university (n=3806)

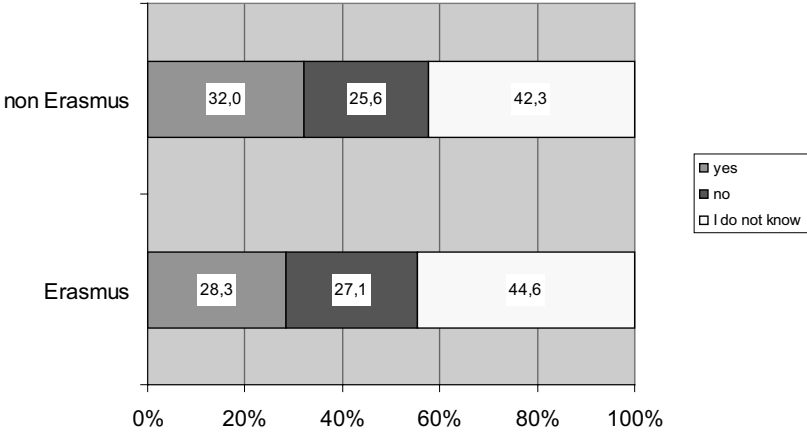


Respondents have learned about the ESN from the following sources:

- an ESN section at the receiving university 37%;
- an ESN section at the home university 19%;
- a friend 17%;
- International Relations Office 15%;
- internet 12%.

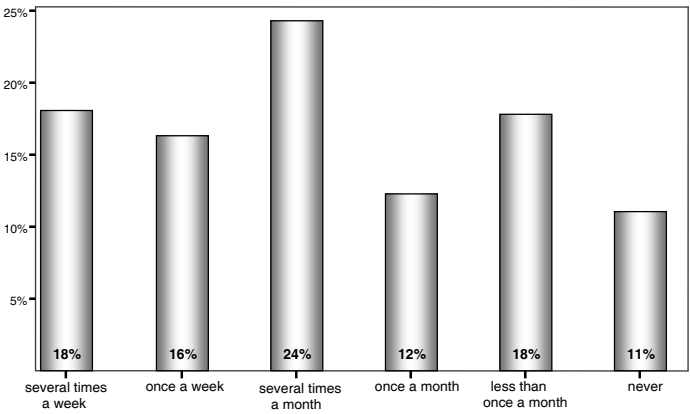
32% of non Erasmus students and 28,3% of Erasmus students declared that there was another student organisation at the host university whose aim was to help exchange students.

Figure 30. Ratio of respondents who declared that there was another student organisation helping exchange students at their host university (n=6528)



Our respondents were on average in contact with ESN several times a month, but the frequency varies as shown on figure 31. The contact frequency with ESN was similar to the one declared by students who were in touch with another student organisation and therefore may be treated as a general tendency.

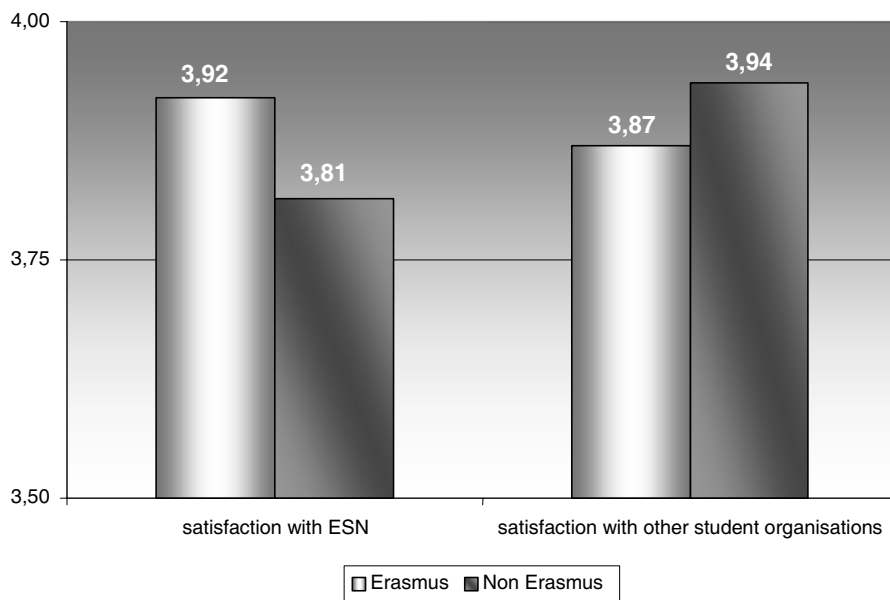
Figure 31. Respondents' frequency of contact with ESN (n=2741)



## 8.2 Satisfaction with ESN

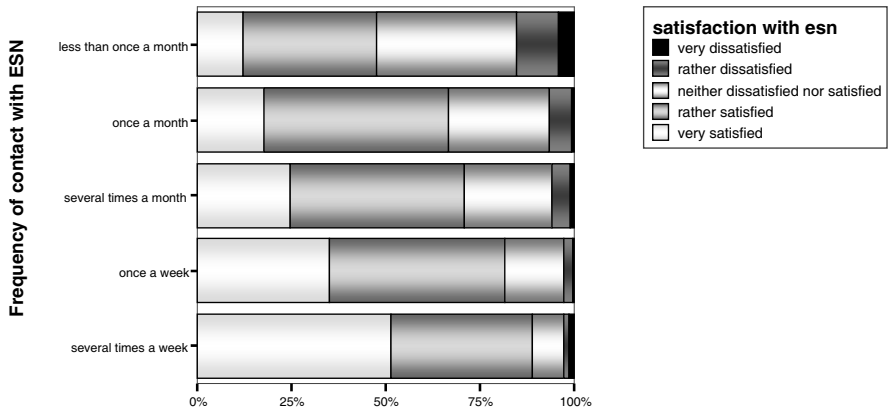
Overall satisfaction with ESN and other student organisations is about 3,9. The satisfaction with ESN for non Erasmus students was slightly lower than with other student organisations, most probably due to the fact that the number of non Erasmus respondents was lower.

Figure 32. Satisfaction with ESN and other student organisations (n=4002)



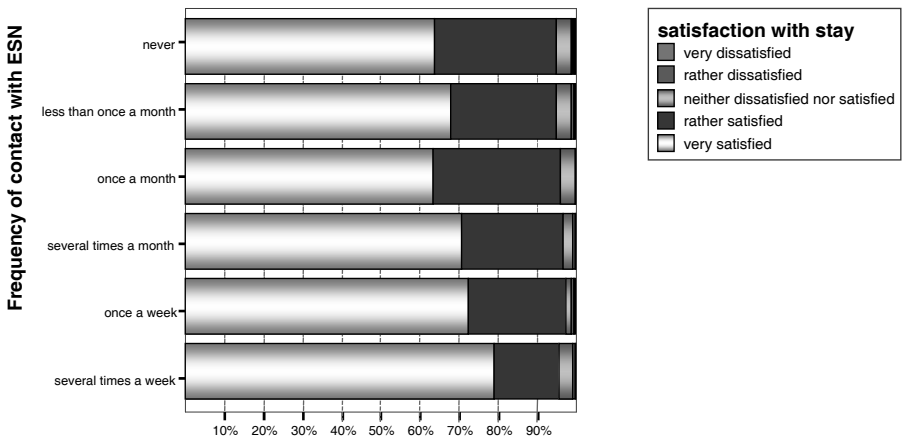
Erasmus students who contacted ESN frequently were more likely to express their satisfaction with ESN. 51% of respondents who have contacted ESN several times a week were very satisfied with it. The same ratio for students who contacted ESN less than once a month amounts to 13,1% (figure 33).

Figure 33. The influence of frequency of contact with ESN on satisfaction with ESN (n=2409)



The same influence may be observed for general satisfaction with stay. **79% of Erasmus respondents who contacted ESN several times a week were very satisfied with their overall stay abroad.** The same ratio for students who contacted ESN less than once a month amounts to 69% (figure 34).

Figure 34. The influence of frequency of contact with ESN on satisfaction with stay (n=2778)

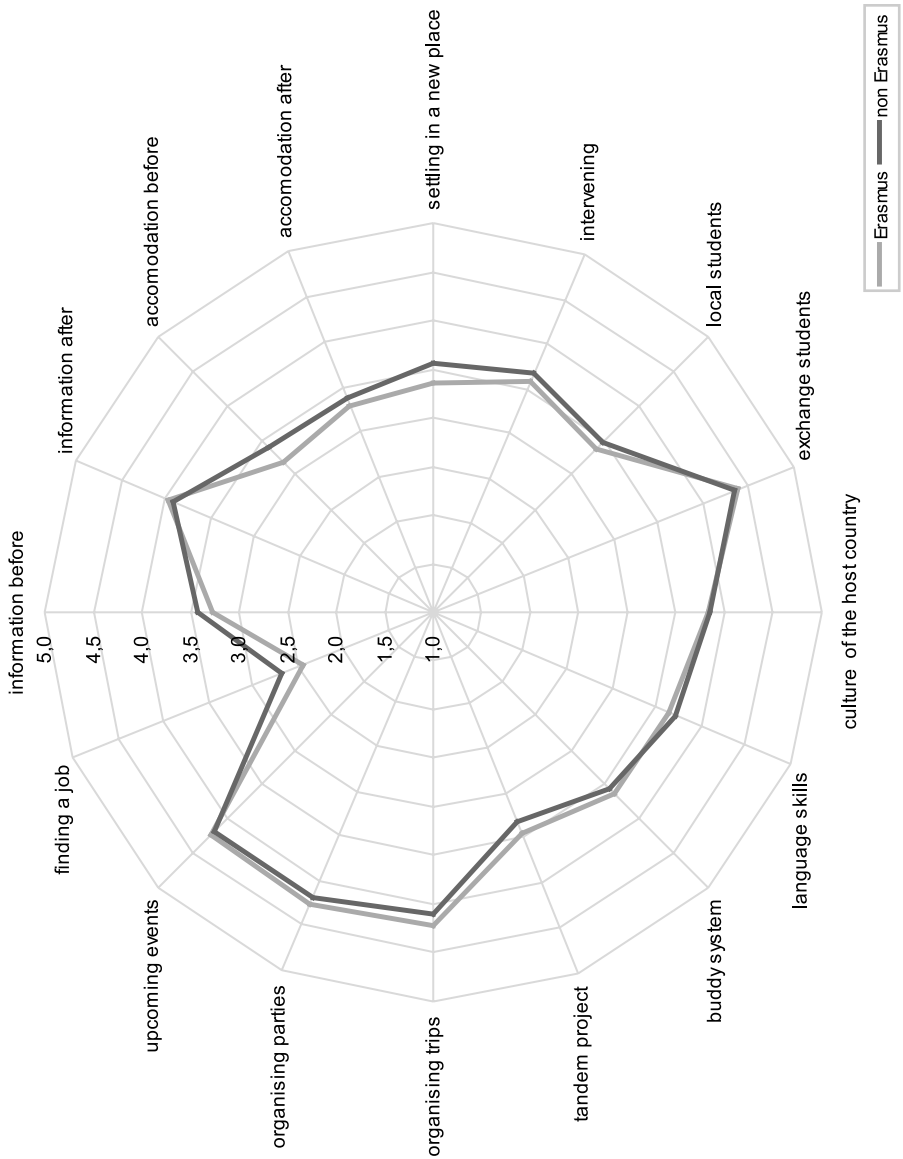


## 8.3 Services of ESN

Sixteen elements of ESN service were differentiated in the design of the questionnaire:

- a) providing information before arrival
- b) providing information after arrival
- c) helping with finding accommodation before arrival
- d) helping with finding accommodation after arrival
- e) helping with settling in a new place (visa, banking)
- f) intervening on your behalf when having problems
- g) getting in contact with local students
- h) getting in contact with other exchange students
- i) helping to understand more about the culture of the host country
- j) practicing your foreign language skills
- k) buddy/mentor/tutor system
- l) tandem project/language exchange programme
- m) organising trips and visiting tours
- n) organising parties and informal meetings
- o) informing about upcoming events
- p) helping with finding a job.

Figure 35. Satisfaction with elements of ESN's service for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=2287)



Respondents were most satisfied with ESN help in their social contacts with exchange students during parties, trips etc. There is still a lot to be done as far as contacts with local students are concerned. Students were least satisfied with ESN's help in finding a job, which is due to the fact that this is a secondary occupation of ESN sections. Satisfaction for Erasmus students with factors such as information before arrival and finding accommodation before arrival is also low, as most of the students become aware of ESN section after they arrive at the host university.

**Figure 36. Mean scores of satisfaction with elements of ESN's service for Erasmus and non Erasmus students and for both groups (n=2287)**

	Erasmus	Non Erasmus	Total
providing information before arrival	3,27	3,42	3,28
providing information after arrival	3,96	3,91	3,96
helping with finding accommodation before arrival	3,19	3,39	3,21
helping with finding accommodation after arrival	3,29	3,37	3,30
helping with settling in a new place (visa, banking)	3,35	3,56	3,37
intervening on your behalf when having problems	3,58	3,66	3,59
getting in contact with local students	3,37	3,46	3,38
getting in contact with other exchange students	4,38	4,33	4,37
helping to understand more about the culture of the host country	3,83	3,85	3,83
practicing your foreign language skills	3,63	3,71	3,64
buddy/mentor/tutor system	3,62	3,57	3,62
tandem project/language exchange programme	3,43	3,32	3,43
organising trips and visiting tours	4,21	4,09	4,20
organising parties and informal meetings	4,26	4,18	4,26
informing about upcoming events	4,24	4,19	4,24
helping with finding a job	2,43	2,68	2,46

All the elements can be divided into two factors using principal component analysis<sup>9</sup>. The first factor seemed to reflect the problem-solving dimension of ESN's

<sup>9</sup> In order to interpret the data a principal component analysis was conducted on the correlations of the sixteen elements of ESN's service. Two components were extracted with eigenvalues of more than one. The factors were rotated with both varimax and direct oblimin, giving essentially similar results. The two factors accounted for 68% of the total variance.

service (figure 37). The second factor appeared to represent the social dimension of ESN's help (figure 38).

Figure 37. Problem-solving dimension of ESN's service

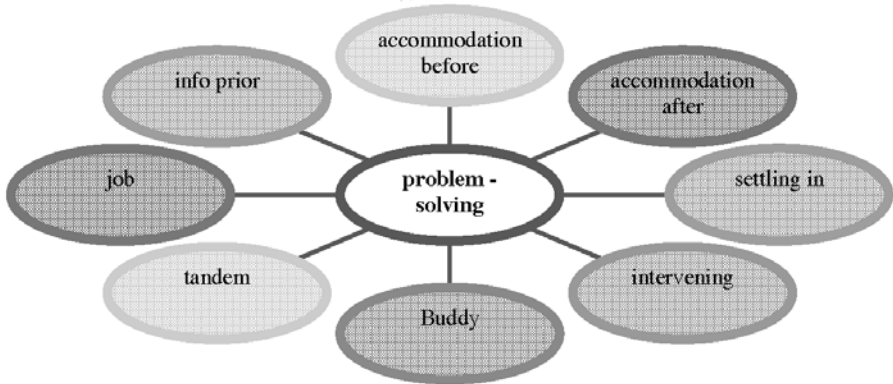
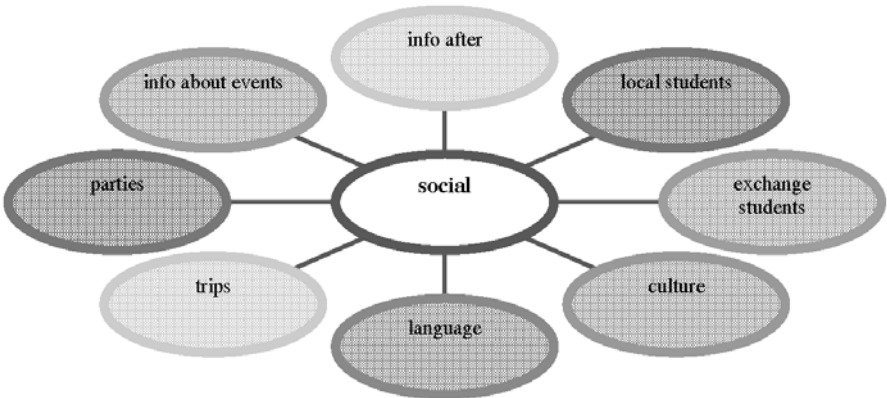


Figure 38. Social dimension of ESN's service



Both Erasmus and non Erasmus students were more satisfied with the social dimension of ESN's service (figure 39). The discrepancy between satisfactions with both dimensions is larger for Erasmus students.

Figure 39. Satisfaction with problem-solving and social dimension of ESN's service among Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=1196)

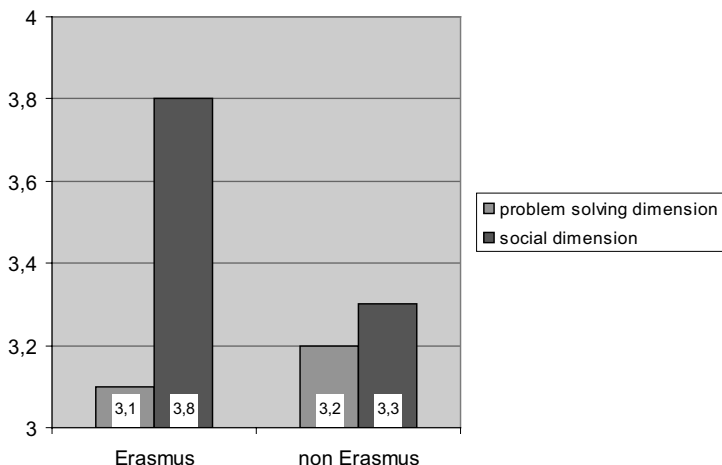
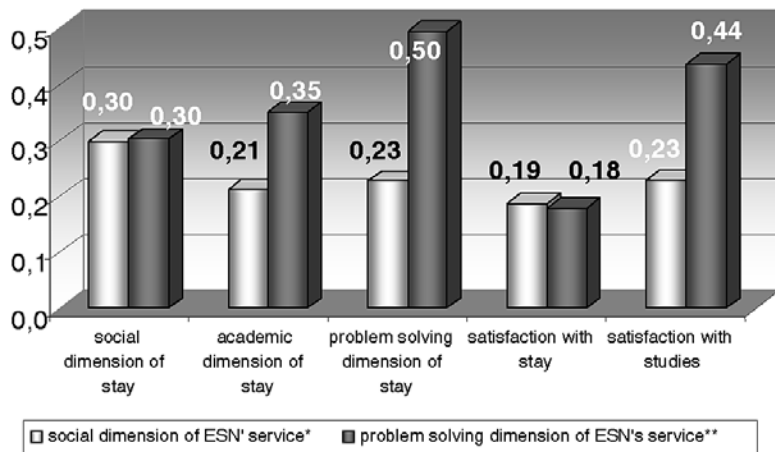


Figure 40 shows that **both dimensions of ESN's service (social and problem-solving dimension) influence overall satisfaction**. The problem-solving dimension has a more significant impact on enhancing students' satisfaction with the academic dimension of stay (third column) and satisfaction with studies abroad (fifth column).

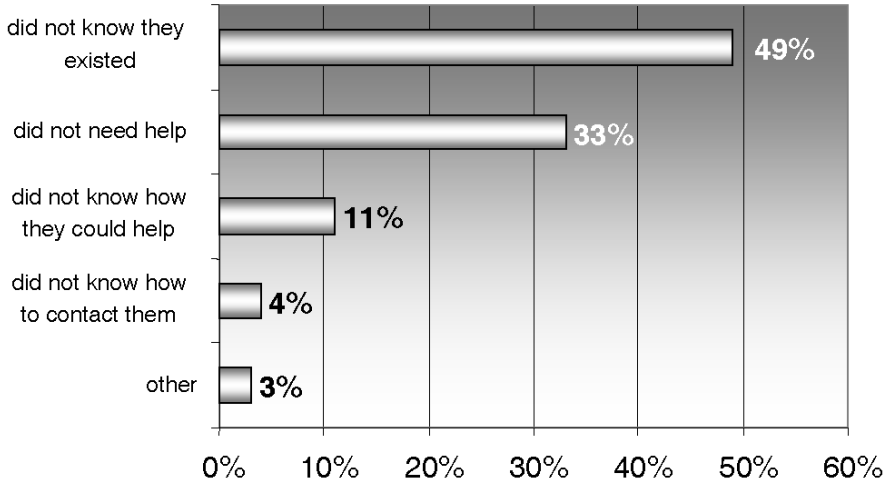
Figure 40. Interdependence between satisfactions with dimensions of ESN's service and aspects of stay (correlation coefficient)



\*n=1205 \*\* n=219

Almost half of the students who did not use the help of either ESN or any other student organisation did so because they did not know that these organisations existed. Only one third declared that they did not need help (figure 41).

Figure 41. Reasons for not using help of ESN nor of other student organisation (n=4380)



## 8.4 Cultural dimension of stay

As it was said before, the cultural dimension is a very important one for students and it is both a motivation for going abroad and the main learning outcome. Cultural learning had two sources: local culture and local students, and contact with other exchange students.

When it comes to the contact with the local culture, 92% of respondents believed they have **learned more about the culture** of the host country and their satisfaction with this dimension was quite high: 74% of students declared that they are satisfied. The ratio of satisfied students was a bit lower for Erasmus students as compared with non Erasmus (73,9% and 76,3% respectively). Students were less satisfied with the contact with local students (Erasmus 49,1%, non Erasmus 54,4%).

What are the aspects that can enhance cultural learning?

First of all, the **knowledge of the local language** is the key to the local culture. Those who communicated in the local language at the university as well as outside of the university obtained higher scores of satisfaction with contact with local students and local culture.

Figure 42. Communication in the local language at the university and satisfaction with contact with local students and local culture

Communication in the local language at the university		Satisfaction with contact with local students	Satisfaction with contact with the host country culture
Yes	Mean	3,42	4,03
	N	3882	3881
No	Mean	3,31	3,8
	N	1844	1844
Total	Mean	3,38	3,96
	N	5726	5725

Figure 43. Communication in the local language outside the university and satisfaction with contact with local students and local culture

Communication in the local language outside the university		Satisfaction with contact with local students	Satisfaction with contact with the host country culture
Yes	Mean	3,41	4,03
	N	4331	4331
No	Mean	3,3	3,75
	N	1373	1372
Total	Mean	3,39	3,96
	N	5704	5703

What is more, **extracurricular activity** also affects both of these aspects. Those students who did internship or volunteer work during their exchange were more satisfied with their contacts with the local students and with the contact with the local culture.

Figure 44. Volunteer work and satisfaction with contact with local students and local culture

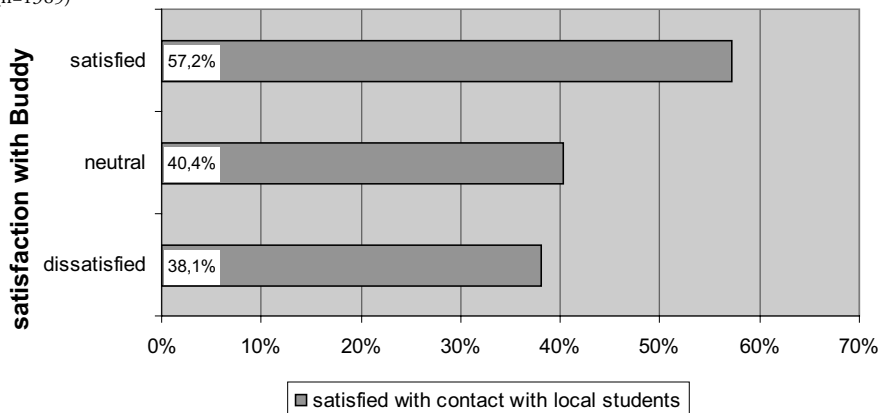
Volunteer work		Satisfaction with contact with local students	Satisfaction with contact with the host country culture
Yes	Mean	3,57	4
	N	412	410
No	Mean	3,37	3,95
	N	4869	4871
Total	Mean	3,38	3,96
	N	5281	5281

Figure 45. Internship and satisfaction with contact with local students and local culture

Internship		Satisfaction with contact with local students	Satisfaction with contact with the host country culture
Yes	Mean	3,55	4,09
	N	645	646
No	Mean	3,36	3,94
	N	4646	4646
Total	Mean	3,38	3,96
	N	5291	5292

Third, a direct bridge to the local culture can be a **Buddy** – a personal mentor who assists a foreign student while s/he is abroad, starting from the arrival and even answering questions before leaving. Most ESN sections try to offer this service to some or all of their students. The more satisfied the students are with their Buddy, the more satisfied they are with the contact with local students (figure 46). It is important to assure the quality of this help: it seems crucial that students who arrive at the university have their own personal mentor who guides them and provides information, as well as helps to find accommodation, a job and intervenes on their behalf when they face problems.

Figure 46. Satisfaction with Buddy/mentor system versus satisfaction with contact with local students (n=1385)



The cultural dimension does not rely solely on the contact with the local culture. **Interaction with other exchange students** is also very important. ESN's help in getting in contact with other exchange students was rated very highly, particularly by Erasmus students (see figure 35).

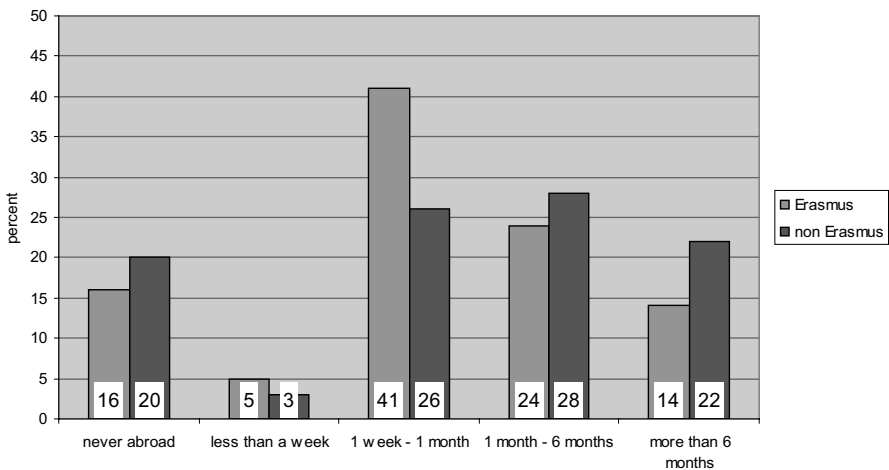
## 9. Students' mobility

Respondents' mobility was measured with the following:

- The longest period spent abroad before going on exchange;
- Willingness to move to a foreign country (destination and period of stay);
- Plans to continue studies in a foreign country;
- Considering serious relationship with a person from a foreign country.

Almost all (84%) Erasmus students had been abroad before going on exchange. 41% had spent between one week and one month abroad. In comparison with other students more Erasmus students had been abroad before, but they had spent less time there.

Figure 47. Period of staying abroad before going for exchange for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6769)



All students declared strong willingness to move to a foreign country. When asked about considering moving abroad, positive answers (“yes” and “definitely yes”) were given by 83% non Erasmus and 78% Erasmus students.

Figure 48. Considering moving abroad for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6765)

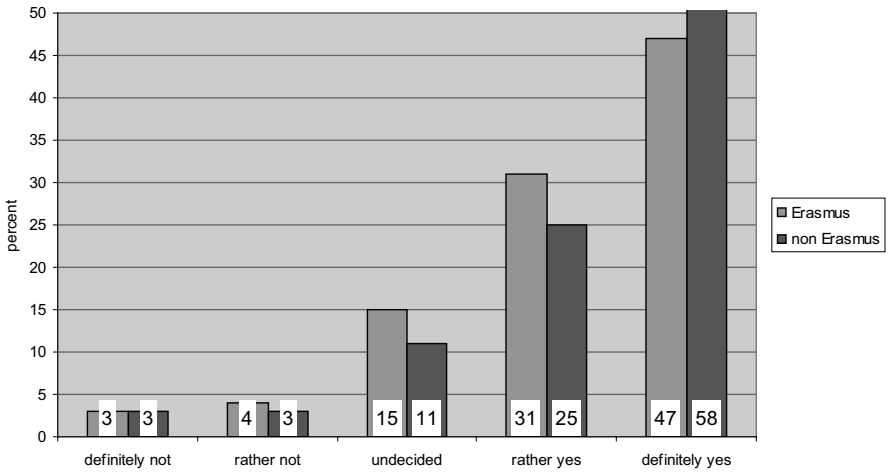
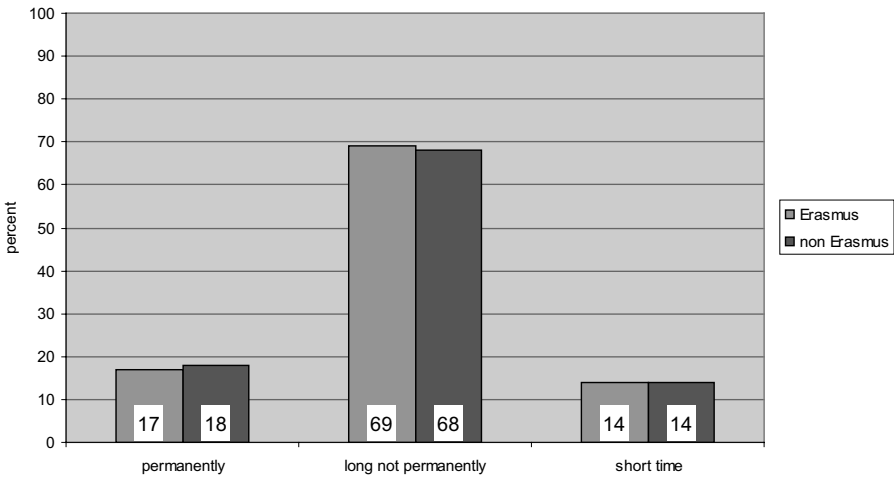
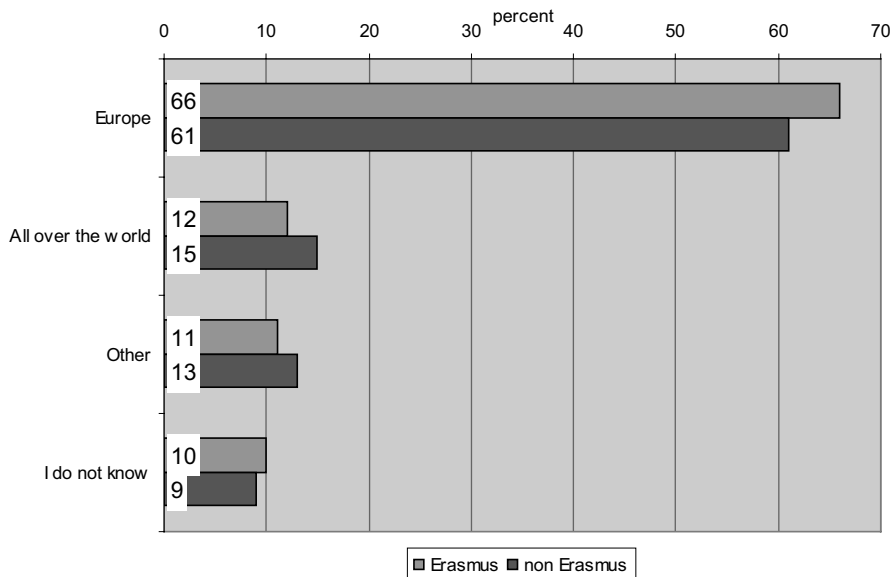


Figure 49. Desired period of staying abroad for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6299)



Most of the students would like to move to a place somewhere in Europe. The proportion is slightly higher for Erasmus students (66%) than for non Erasmus ones (61%). A relatively low group of respondents (15% of non Erasmus and 12% of Erasmus students) indicated that their desired destination is anywhere/all over the world. The results show that student mobility is limited to European countries and this trend is stronger among Erasmus students (figure 50).

Figure 50. Desired destination of moving abroad for Erasmus and non Erasmus students (n=6070)



Respondents vary a lot as far as the question about their plans to continue studies is concerned. Similar number of respondents answered “undecided”, “definitely yes” and “definitely not”. Students’ plans are strongly influenced by their age. The younger the respondent the more likely s/he is to consider continuing studies abroad.

Figure 51. Plans to continue studies in a foreign country (n=7754)

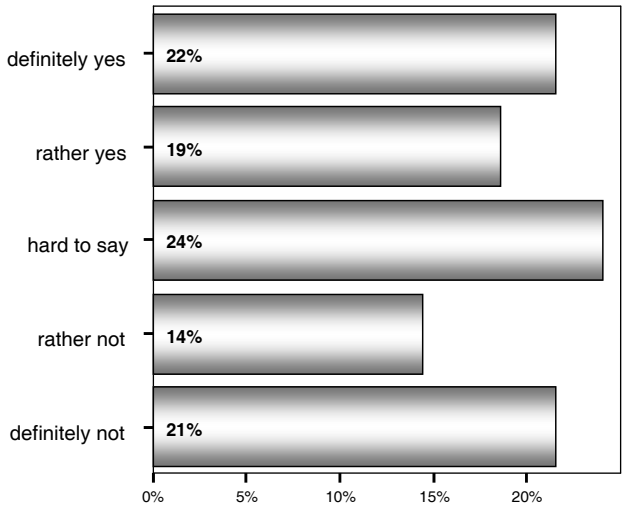
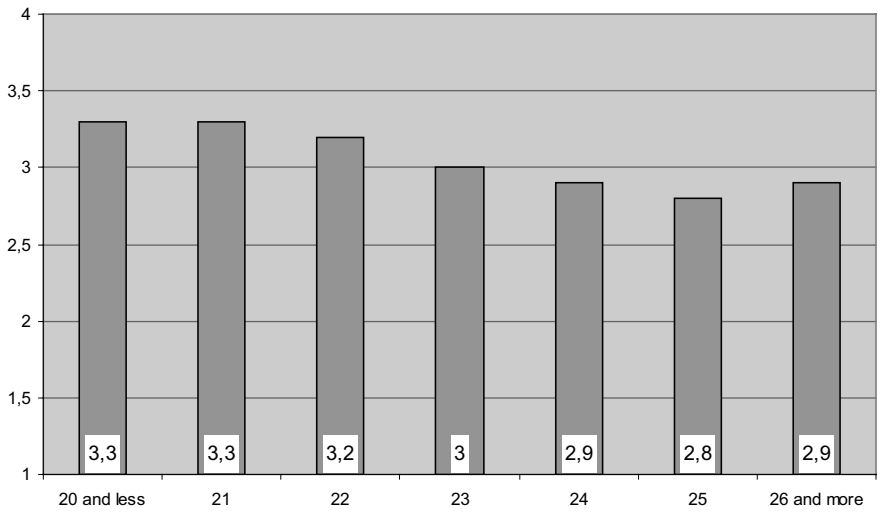
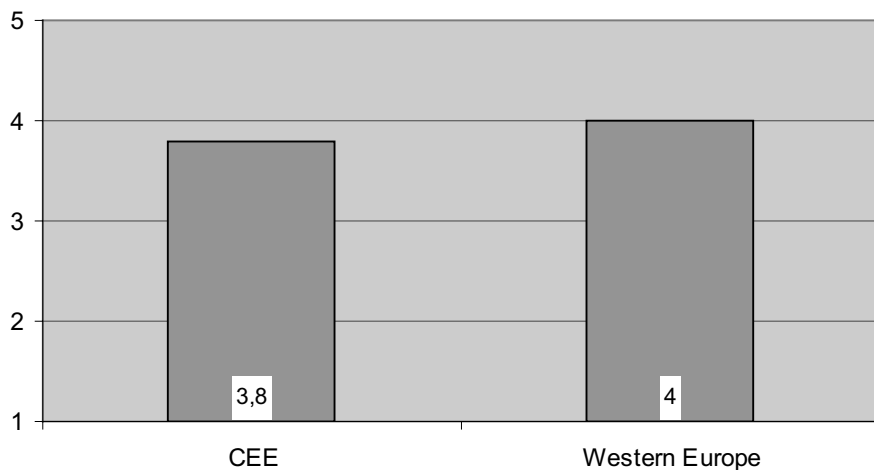


Figure 52. Plans to continue studies in a foreign country for respondents of diverse age categories (scale: 1 – definitely not, 5 – definitely yes; n=6550)



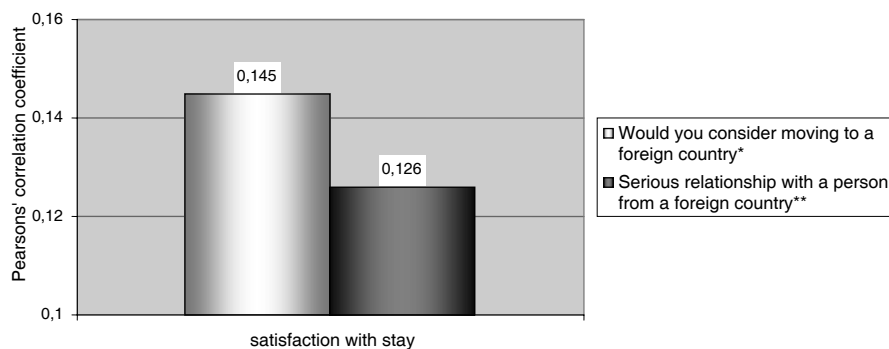
57,3% of students would consider having a serious relationship with a person from another country (those from Western countries are more likely than their counterparts from CEE).

Figure 53. Considering serious relationship with a person from a foreign country (scale: 1 – definitely not, 5 – definitely yes; n=6363)



The future mobility indicators are influenced by students' satisfaction with their stay. Students who are more satisfied are more likely to declare that they would consider moving abroad and that they would consider a serious relationship with a foreigner.

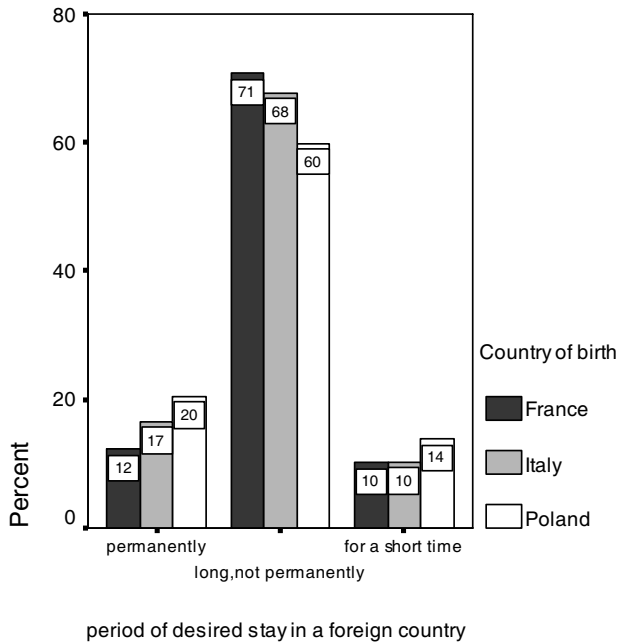
Figure 54. The influence of satisfaction with stay on a future mobility's indicators



\* n = 6728 \*\* n = 6442

Three countries were chosen in order to illustrate the influence of the country of birth on a declared mobility: **France, Italy and Poland**. These countries had high numbers of respondents and vary as far as cultural factors are concerned. Students from France are the most mobile out of the analysed group of students. 71% of the respondents from this country who consider moving abroad would like to stay abroad for a longer time but not permanently (as compared to 68% for Italy and 60% for Poland). Respondents from Italy are situated in between students from France and Poland.

Figure 55. Desired period of staying abroad for students from France, Italy and Poland (n=2005)



At the same time, when asked about the length of desired stay abroad students from Poland declared more often that they would like to stay permanently abroad and less frequently that they would like to stay for long but not permanently. To conclude, students from Poland are less mobile but if they consider moving abroad they lean more often toward permanent migration.

The respondents from France and Italy declared more often their consideration of a serious relationship with a person from a foreign country than students from Poland (4,0 compared to 3,8 on 1-5 scale where 1 means “definitely not” and 5 means “definitely yes”).

## 10. Recommendations

*Written with Davide Capecchi, ESN President*

There is clear evidence, and therefore we recommend, that **mobility of a higher quality for a lower number of students** is better than one of lower quality for a higher number. We are concerned about this as it seems that the recent decision of the European Commission to increase the number of Erasmus students to 3.000.000 in the period 2007-2011 tends to link, as a mechanism, this impressive number with the success of the programme itself. We would like to stress that increasing the number of students should lead to an increase in funding and to a continuous effort to constantly improve the quality of the programme.

Examples from our survey confirm that the Erasmus students **who received no money at all were more satisfied than those who received a small and insufficient amount**. This is an unambiguous signal for us to recommend concentrating scholarships on a lower number of students, and to support these with services of higher quality. Taking into account all assisting bodies, those students who were given **frequent support from Erasmus Student Network** or other student organisations, were more satisfied with the stay in general compared with those given less frequent support.

Therefore, we state that the new generation of Erasmus students requires:

- actions for finding a **balance between different groups**, between the genders, encouraging more disabled students to participate, supporting those of lower family status;
- that a project is undertaken to provide more equal access to the Erasmus programme for students coming from the **Eastern and Central Europe** compared to the Westerners;
- fostering the learning processes of the **host language**, both in the form of courses and through informal learning processes, with the aim of increasing the overall satisfaction with the stay and the level of cultural integration;
- a dramatic improvement in provision of information about **the reality of what the student should expect in the host country**; and more information about the programme in general prior to departure, as well as help with finding inexpensive and decent accommodation;

– tools for **limiting the barriers between the Erasmus and the local students** by fostering the initiative of the local students, as well as supporting and recognising the participation of exchange students in extracurricular activities such as internships and volunteer work;

– finally and consequently, to foster and auspicate creation of a **student organisation which supports the mobility of students** at all Higher Education Institutions that take part in the exchange programmes.

Given that 66% of Erasmus students declare that they would like to stay in Europe for a long (but not permanent) period after finishing their studies, in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy, and in view of the Erasmus Mundus programme, it would be worthy to consider corresponding data for students in other parts of the world, and compare them as a flux, in order to understand, also diachronically, how the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area increases or decreases among the young generations. This would be a real indicator of the state of the Strategy as a whole.

## Annex 1: ESN Survey Questionnaire

## YOUR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

*Dear Exchange Student!*

*The Erasmus Student Network aims to assist each and every exchange student by making their stay at universities in Europe and beyond as beneficial and as enjoyable as possible. We would like you to help us in achieving this by providing us with information about your experiences as an exchange student.*

*It will help us improve our services for those who will study abroad in the future.*

*Please fill in the questionnaire below prepared by Erasmus Student Network and Petrus Communications. It consists of 4 parts, and should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. It is anonymous, so you can be totally honest.*

**WIN A TRAVEL VOUCHER WORTH 100 EUROS!**

*All those who fully complete the questionnaire, will have a chance to win one of 5 travel vouchers, each worth 100 Euros, for travel anywhere in Europe. Full details are provided at the end of the questionnaire.*

## PART 1. YOUR STAY AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

1. What is the name of university you are studying/studied at as an exchange student?

*(please refer to your most recent exchange)*

.....

2. City where this university is located: .....

3. Country where this university is located: .....

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

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

6. Through which program did you study abroad?

a) Socrates/Erasmus Program

b) Other:

7. Why did you decide to study abroad as an exchange student? *Choose a maximum of three answers.*

- to improve my academic knowledge
- to study in a different educational system
- to have new experiences
- to learn about different cultures
- to have fun
- to meet new people
- to practice a foreign language
- to be independent
- to live in a foreign country
- to develop as a person
- to enhance future employment prospects
- other:

8. During your stay, did you:

a) take courses at the university	Yes	No	f) travel around the host country	Yes	No
b) work on your thesis	Yes	No	g) work	Yes	No
c) do an independent study	Yes	No	h) do an internship	Yes	No
d) take a language course	Yes	No	i) do volunteer work	Yes	No
e) do laboratory work	Yes	No	j) learn more about the culture of the host country	Yes	No

9. During your stay, did you communicate in:

a) the local language at the university	Yes	No	c) English at the university	Yes	No
b) the local language outside the university	Yes	No	d) English outside the university	Yes	No

10. How well did you know the language of the country you studied in before arrival?  
(1=not at all, 5=very well)

Not at all                        Very well

11. How well do you know the language of the country you studied in now, after your stay?

Not at all                        Very well

12. Amount of received grant/scholarship?

..... Euros/month

13. What part of your overall expenses did the grant cover?

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

14. Please evaluate the following aspects of your stay

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

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

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

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

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

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

Definitely not    1.    2.    3.    4.    5.    Definitely yes

18. What is the most important thing you learned as an exchange student?

## PART 2. ABOUT ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK (ESN)

19. Have you ever heard of Erasmus Student Network?

- a) Yes
- b) No – *Go to question 29*

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

- a) from a friend
- b) from an ESN section at my home university
- c) from the ESN section at the receiving university
- d) from my International Relations Office
- e) on the internet
- f) other:

21. Is there an ESN section at your home university?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

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

- a) Yes
- b) No – *Go to question 29*
- c) I don't know – *Go to question 29*

23. During your stay as an exchange student, how often did you have contact with Erasmus Student Network?

- a) several times a week
- b) once a week
- c) several times a month
- d) once a month
- e) less than once a month
- f) never – *Go to question 29*

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

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
a) providing information before arrival	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) providing information after arrival	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) helping with finding accommodation before arrival	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d) helping with finding accommodation after arrival	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) helping with settling in a new place (visa, banking)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) intervening on your behalf when having problems	1	2	3	4	5	NA

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
g) getting in contact with local students	1	2	3	4	5	NA
h) getting in contact with other exchange students	1	2	3	4	5	NA
i) helping to understand more about the culture of the host country	1	2	3	4	5	NA
j) practicing your foreign language skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA

## 25. Please evaluate the services of ESN

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
a) buddy/mentor/tutor system	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) tandem project/language exchange program	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) organising trips and visiting tours	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d) organising parties and informal meetings	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) informing about upcoming events	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) helping with finding a job	1	2	3	4	5	NA

26. Did ESN help you in any other way? How? In what area?

27. Were there any areas/issues where ESN could have provided you with additional assistance, but did not do so? Please explain.

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

**Very dissatisfied**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Very satisfied**

29. Was there any other student organisation at your host university helping exchange students?

*(please refer to the one that helped you most)*

a) Yes – name of organisation:

- b) No – go to question 36
- c) I don't know – go to question 36

30. During your stay as an exchange student, how often did you have contact with this organisation?

- a) Several times a week
- b) Once a week
- c) Several times a month
- d) Once a month
- e) Less than once a month
- f) Never – go to question 36

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

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

32. Please evaluate the services of this organisation:

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
a) buddy/mentor/tutor system	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b) tandem project/language exchange program	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c) organising trips and visiting tours	1	2	3	4	5	NA

	very dissatisfied	rather dissatisfied	neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	rather satisfied	very satisfied	I did not use (not applicable)
d) organising parties and informal meetings	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e) informing about upcoming events	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f) helping with finding a job	1	2	3	4	5	NA

33. Did this organisation help you in any other way? How? In what area?

34. Were there any areas/issues where this organisation could have provided you with additional assistance, but did not do so? Please explain.

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

Very dissatisfied

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

Very satisfied

36. If you didn't use assistance of ESN or any other student organisation, explain why.

- I didn't know they existed
- I didn't know how to contact them
- I didn't know how they could help me
- I didn't need help
- Other:

37. If you didn't use assistance of ESN or any other student organisation, do you think there were any areas/issues where you would have liked to get help?

## PART 3. FUTURE MOBILITY

38. What was the longest period you had spent abroad alone before going on exchange?

- I had never stayed abroad alone before
- less than a week
- from a week till a month
- from a month till 6 months
- more than 6 months

39. Would you consider moving to a foreign country?

*If you do not consider moving to a different country go to question 42.*

40. Where? .....

41. For how long?

- a) permanently
- b) long time, but not permanently
- c) for a short time

42. Do you plan to continue your studies in a foreign country?

**Definitely not**

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

**Definitely yes**

*If you do not consider continuing your studies in the different country go to question 44.*

43. Where? .....

44. Do you have any other plans to work, travel, or live abroad? Describe them in a few words.

45. Would you consider being in a serious relationship with a person from a foreign country?

**Definitely not**

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

**Definitely yes**

## PART 4. PERSONAL INFORMATION

46. Age: .....

47. Gender:

- a) female
- b) male

48. Country of birth: .....

49. Home university: .....

50. City where your home university is located: .....

51. Country where your home university is located: .....

52. Major/area of studies: .....

53. Year of study at your home university: .....

54. Level/type of studies:

- a) BA (3-4 years)

- b) MA (5-6 years)
- c) PhD, doctoral studies

55. Year of graduation: .....

56. Are you a disabled student?

- a) Yes
- b) No

57. Are you married?

- a) Yes
- b) No

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Thank you for filling out the questionnaire!!!*

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## Annex 3: About ESN

**Erasmus Student Network (ESN)** is the widest European student organisation concerned with student mobility. We are a non-political, non-profit and non-religious organisation counting with over **2500 members** from **207 local sections** in **28 countries**. Our network provides its services annually to about **150.000 international students** in Europe.

### The aims of ESN

- To promote the social and personal integration of the exchange students
- To represent the needs and expectations of exchange students on the local, national and international level
- To provide relevant information about academic exchange programs and student mobility

### ESN is operating on three levels:

- **207 Local Sections.** Every ESN Section is run by a Board, composed normally by President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Webmaster. In addition, many volunteers are helping in a variable number with the buddy/mentor programme, the language exchange and other similar activities;
- **28 Countries** (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom);
- **International Level.** The International Board is working in the new Headquarters in Brussels, rue du Trône 98.

The **207 Local ESN Sections**, even if in a broad variation one to another, are offering daily help and guidance to a number of exchange students that ranges from 80.000 to 150.000. Such help is provided before and during the stay abroad. Namely, the services generally offered at a local level are

- Mentor Program
- Orientation Week
- Help in finding accommodation
- Language exchange
- Help with visas, banking, and any other relevant practical issues
- Parties and trips around host country
- Informal meetings and gatherings
- Information to local students about opportunities of exchange.

ESN has developed important projects at the international level, like a **survey on students' satisfaction**. Our **Membership card** has been produced in 35.000 exemplars and distributed around Europe to 32.000 exchange students (at the date). We were invited and actively participated in many **international events** and numerous local conferences meant to reflect and to elaborate suggestions upon issues related with mobility and in general the governance of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area.

## Annex 4: About Petrus Communications

### **Petrus Communications**

Specialises in market research and direct marketing among students and recent graduates all over Europe. Our aim is to help graduate recruiters, educational institutions and organisations understand and engage with students to achieve their recruitment objectives.

### **What Petrus Does**

Education in Europe is changing rapidly, as are the communication tools used by students and those who advise and teach them. When designing communication campaigns, or advising on target institutions, we don't just look at the students themselves, but the broader issues affecting their decisions.

We offer services in two broad areas:

#### Market Research

- Desk research and market information
- Focus groups and student panels
- Online and face to face surveys.

#### Direct and Campus Marketing

- Organising events and campus activities
- Implementing Email and web campaigns
- Facilitating partnerships with institutions and organisations.

Petrus offers tailor made or off the shelf services which range from getting posters put up in 10 countries, to developing a pan European business game or partnerships with key target institutions.

If you would be interested in having a more detailed analysis on the survey data, please contact Petrus Communications.

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