Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

Master's Degree Programme

Second Cycle

(ex D.M. 270/2004)

In Comparative International Relations

Final Thesis

Education policy in Europe and the Impact of the Erasmus programme

Supervisor
Ch. Prof. Stéphanie Novak

Assistant supervisor
Ch. Prof. Sara De Vido

Graduand
Sara Zambonin
Matriculation Number 865413

Academic Year
2017/2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ……………………………………………………………………....3

Introduction……………………………………………………………….....9

Chapter 1: The progressive Europeanization of education policies……………………………………………………………………13

1.1 The EU approach to education policies ……………………………………...13

1.2 The Erasmus programme: its origins and structure………………………...23

1.3 Intra-EU mobility for a more cohesive Europe……………………………...26

1.4 Globalization, Internationalization and Europeanization in the Higher Education sector…………………………………………………………………29

1.5 EU's and Member States' Competences……………………………………..34

1.5.1 EU competences and the knowledge economy framework…………….....37

1.5.2 Parallel competences and the use of soft law measures.…………………39

1.5.3 European Court of Justice's cases…………………………....……...42

1.6 Conclusion…………………………………………………………………...51

Chapter 2: The operationalization of education policies in the EU………………………………………………………………………..53

2.1 The Bologna Process for a common European Higher Education area……….53

2.1.1 The knowledge economy discourse in the framework of the Bologna Process…………………………………………………………………….58

2.1.2 The Bologna Process: convergence through harmonization…………….59

2.1.3 The use of soft law in the Bologna Process………………………………..61

2.1.4 From an informal meeting to a binding responsibility…………………..62

2.2 The Bologna Process and the introduction of the Bachelor-Master structure..64

2.2.1 The heterogeneity in the implementation of the two-cycle degree programme in the signatory States……………………………………………...67

2.3 The ECTS system……………………………………………………………69

2.4 The Diploma Supplement…………………………………………………...73

2.5 The recognition of professional qualifications…………………………………74

2.5.1 Legal practice in the EU…………………………………....……...76

2.6 Conclusion…………………………………………………………....……...77

Chapter 3: The Erasmus impact on Higher Education in the EU……………………………………………………………………………..79

3.1 The impact of Erasmus at system, institutional and individual level…………79

3.2 The effects of the Erasmus programme at the Institutional level……………...83
3.2.1 Administrative support and services……………………………………...83
3.2.2 The impact of the Erasmus programme on the Institutional level: barriers and developments………………………………………………...85
3.2.3 The enhancement of cooperation at the Institutional level……………...88

3.3 The internationalization of Higher Education: Erasmus impact on teaching staff mobility…………………………………………………………………...89
3.3.1 Teaching staff skills in a foreign academic environment and the improvement of teaching methods……………………………………..90
3.3.2 The impact of teaching staff mobility on non-mobile students…...……93
3.3.3 The impact of mobile teaching staff on research programmes……...….95

3.4. Language policy in the European Higher Education Area……………………96
3.4.1 English taught courses in Europe: North-South divide…………...…….98
3.4.2 English Taught Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Europe……..…...100

3.5 Conclusion……………………………………………………………………..103

Chapter 4: The impact of Erasmus on individuals……………..105

4.1 The socioeconomic backgrounds of Erasmus students………………………..105

4.2 Barriers to the Erasmus programme…………………………………………...109

4.3 Building cross-cultural relationships…………………………………………...113

4.4 The Erasmus programme and the shaping of a European awareness and identity……………………………………………………………………………..116
4.4.1 European identity…………………………………………………………116
4.4.2 Are Erasmus students more pro-European after taking part in the programme?...118
4.5 Erasmus students' profile and the Erasmus Impact Study…………………..120

4.6 Conclusion………………………………………………………………………126

Conclusion…………………………………………………………………125

References………………………………………………………………..129

Abstract

L'istruzione in ambito europeo è da sempre una competenza riservata agli Stati membri, infatti ogni stato è responsabile per il proprio sistema di istruzione e formazione. L'Unione Europea in questo frangente ha solamente il compito di supportare e coordinare le azioni degli stati, secondo quanto riportato nel articolo 6 TFEU. Le sfide comuni a cui gli stati membri sono stati sottoposti negli ultimi decenni, hanno fatto si che il ruolo dell'Unione si rafforzasse nel campo dell'istruzione, soprattutto dell'istruzione superiore. L'avvento della cosiddetta economia della conoscenza, di nuove tecnologie e la crescente richiesta di lavoratori e professionisti altamente qualificati, hanno reso l'educazione superiore una delle tematiche centrali nell'agenda europea. Sin dai Trattati di Roma del 1957, si è riscontrato un progressivo aumento delle attività a livello Europeo in questo ambito, dapprima riguardanti solamente la formazione professionale, e poi inglobando anche l'educazione superiore.

Sempre più spesso gli stati membri hanno collaborato in materia di politiche sull'educazione, per cercare di risolvere problematiche comuni, legate alla disoccupazione, soprattutto a quella giovanile, e legate alla mobilità intra-europea di lavoratori e di studenti. Di conseguenza, cittadini europei che si trasferivano in un altro stato membro per lavorare o studiare, avevano bisogno del riconoscimento delle loro qualificazioni professionali e dei loro titoli di studio; ciò ha fatto si che l'Unione Europea intervenisse per difendere i diritti dei cittadini europei. In altre parole, questo può essere spiegato attraverso alcune decisioni della Corte di giustizia, che si sono proclamate a favore dei cittadini europei che per motivi di lavoro o studio si sono trasferiti in un altro paese membro. È il caso Gravier v City of Liège che più di tutti può essere considerato un punto di svolta nella tutela delle politiche d'istruzione a livello europeo. La sentenza della Corte datata 1985, significò un passo avanti nel riconoscimento dell'istruzione superiore come facente parte del processo di formazione professionale, e quindi avente fondamento giuridico; e nel disconoscimento della discriminazione sulla base della nazionalità in ambito educativo. I Trattati infatti già contenevano disposizioni riguardanti la formazione professionale. Il caso Gravier è

importante poiché contiene i capisaldi per la tutela degli studenti in mobilità, alla base dei programmi di scambio, quali appunto il programma Erasmus.

Nato ufficialmente nel 1987, con non poche difficoltà soprattutto legate al budget attribuitogli, il progetto Erasmus è oggigiorno uno dei programmi di scambio a livello di istruzione superiore, più conosciuto in Europa e in tutto il mondo. La sua popolarità risiede nel fatto di avere dato la possibilità a milioni di studenti di frequentare uno o più semestri in un'altra Università europea o extra europea. Fanno parte di questo progetto anche stati al di fuori dell'Unione Europea, anche se nacque come un progetto prettamente europeo, volto a sostenere e incrementare la mobilità degli studenti, dando loro la possibilità di migliorare capacità linguistiche, accademiche, ma anche le loro cosiddette "soft skills".

Alcuni concetti cardine del progetto Erasmus, furono ripresi dal Processo di Bologna nel 1999, riconosciuto come strumento fondamentale per la creazione di sistemi universitari, a livello nazionale, più compatibili e comparabili. Il Processo di Bologna fu preceduto dalla Dichiarazione di Sorbona nel 1998. In questa occasione quattro stati Europei, Francia, Italia, Germania e Gran Bretagna, si incontrarono per l'anniversario dell'Università di Sorbona, e su iniziativa francese, si iniziò a pensare ad un sistema universitario più omogeneo, con l'introduzione del nuovo sistema basato su due cicli, uno di primo e uno di secondo livello, che potesse aiutare la mobilità degli studenti e degli insegnanti, la cooperazione tra le Università anche in ambito di ricerca, e che potesse, perciò, aumentare l'attrattiva degli atenei europei verso studenti stranieri, provenienti anche da paesi extra europei. I primi quattro paesi firmatari, approvarono questo progetto di riforma internazionale, ognuno per i propri motivi. Italia e Francia speravano di ristrutturare il loro sistema universitario, soprattutto l'Italia. La Germania voleva aumentare l'attrattiva dei propri atenei e attrarre più studenti stranieri. La Gran Bretagna, pur avendo già un sistema molto simile a quello iscritto nel progetto, firmò lo stesso la dichiarazione pur di non venire esclusa dalla rivoluzione del sistema universitario che era in atto. Ben presto i paesi firmatari aumentarono, fino ad arrivare a 48 nel 2015, anche la Commissione Europea è un membro a tutti gli effetti e la sua partecipazione ha dato un'impronta più europea al processo e una maggiore legittimità. Il processo viene portato avanti da conferenze ministeriali che si svolgono circa ogni due anni. I comunicati che vengono stillati riportano gli obiettivi raggiunti e ne pongono

di nuovi. Questi comunicati non sono vincolanti e gli stati firmatari non incorrono in sanzioni se non rispettano o non raggiungono gli obiettivi. Ma, poiché il processo sta diventando sempre più importante e gli Stati cercano sempre di fare "bella figura" agli occhi degli altri membri, alcuni obiettivi sono stati raggiunti in poco tempo, come l'istituzione del sistema su due cicli. Infatti durante queste conferenze le attività di ogni stato vengono controllate e poi rese pubbliche nel sito ufficiale in cui sono riportati i progressi di tutti i membri. È importante ricordare che ogni stato resta libero di implementare le direttive della Convenzione di Bologna in base alle proprie possibilità e ai propri mezzi, anche se alla fine tutti gli stati vengono esaminati con lo stesso criterio.

Molti sono i paesi non europei che ne hanno preso parte, spinti dal desiderio e dalla necessità di avere un sistema universitario più aggiornato e più competitivo, in grado di fornire una formazione altamente qualificata ai propri studenti. Il nuovo sistema su due cicli fu allo stesso modo pensato per assegnare un titolo di studio superiore, spendibile nel mercato del lavoro in un tempo minore. Infatti il primo ciclo ha generalmente una durata di tre anni per un ammontare di 180 crediti assegnati, mentre il secondo ciclo, ha una durata media di due anni per un totale di circa 120 crediti. Con la Conferenza di Berlino fu introdotto un terzo ciclo, chiamato dottorato, incentrato sulla ricerca. Questo sistema ha portato non poca confusione anche a livello amministrativo, poiché molti corsi di laurea sono stati accorciati e in alcuni casi non si è provveduto ad una equilibratura, spremendo, a volte, cinque anni di studio in tre. Alcuni accademici ritenevano che dopo tre anni non si possa essere in possesso di una così alta qualifica con cui poter affrontare il mondo del lavoro e che quindi altri due o più anni di studio fossero necessari. Nonostante le molte perplessità, la maggior parte degli stati firmatari ha introdotto questo sistema, votato anche al sostegno della mobilità e di progetti come Erasmus, il quale da la possibilità di passare un semestre all'estero che possa avere lo stesso peso in crediti e la stessa durata di un semestre nella propria Università di origine.

Erasmus, inoltre, fu seguito dall'introduzione di alcuni strumenti e attività volte a migliorare l'esperienza all'estero degli studenti. Gli atenei di tutta Europa infatti hanno introdotto un metodo unanime per il riconoscimento dei crediti accumulati all'estero: il sistema europeo di trasferimento e accumulo crediti (ECTS). Inoltre ciò ha fatto si che si dovesse trovare un certo equilibrio tra i curricula proposti dalle diverse Università

europee. Inoltre Erasmus ha portato alla necessità di avere, sia negli istituti ospitanti, sia in quelli di origine, degli uffici amministrativi adatti alla gestione dei flussi in entrata e in uscita degli studenti. È ormai cosa comune avere in ogni ateneo un ufficio Erasmus che si occupi della parte amministrativa e burocratica, prima e dopo la partenza, e in alcuni casi anche durante. La mobilità però non riguarda solo gli studenti, ma anche gli insegnanti, i quali, pur trattenendosi per un periodo più breve nell'Università ospitante, possono avere l'opportunità di insegnare in un ambiente diverso e in una lingua diversa. Il problema della lingua infatti è stato in qualche modo arginato, proponendo agli studenti stranieri e non, dei corsi singoli, o interi corsi di laurea interamente somministrati in lingua straniera. Nella maggior parte dei casi la lingua scelta è la lingua Inglese. Questo fa si che anche gli studenti non in mobilità cioè coloro che non scelgono o non possono per altri motivi, prendere parte ad un programma come l'Erasmus, possano in qualche modo sperimentare un ambiente di studio più internazionale e in alcuni casi apprendere le conoscenze in maniera diversa. Infatti la tendenza è quella di dirigersi verso un approccio all'insegnamento più incentrato sugli studenti, cioè più *student-centred,* tipico dei paesi anglosassoni. In questo caso le classi risultando più eterogenee, includendo studenti in mobilità da diverse parti del mondo e cambiando, in alcuni casi, la tradizionale concezione di lezione frontale. La problematica della lingua di insegnamento sembra essere un problema più dei paesi del sud dell'Europa, in quanto la conoscenza dell'Inglese nei paesi nordici è più elevata e il numero di corsi proposti interamente in lingua straniera è maggiore.

Un altro punto trattato in questo lavoro è l'impatto che l'Erasmus ha sui singoli individui, quindi soprattutto sugli studenti. Prima di tutto è essenziale capire chi siano i partecipanti. In altre parole, si può assumere che la maggior parte dagli studenti che ne prendono parte hanno una certa situazione familiare. Cioè provengono da famiglie nelle quali almeno uno dei due genitori ha conseguito una laurea e/o ha già avuto esperienze simili. Inoltre, queste famiglie tendono ad avere un reddito medio alto, in grado quindi di provvedere al sostentamento dei figli nel periodo di mobilità all'estero. Infatti una delle barriere che gli studenti sperimentano maggiormente e che più trattiene gli studenti dall'intraprendere questa esperienza, è sicuramente il fattore economico. La maggior parte degli studenti che non prende in considerazione l'idea di un periodo di studio all'estero, ritiene ci sia un costo troppo alto e ritiene gli aiuti dati dall'università troppo

bassi. Inoltre, altri fattori hanno un ruolo fondamentale nella scelta di partire o meno, come la paura di vivere senza familiari e amici, il timore di incontrare una cultura e una realtà nuova e diversa e di non riuscire a laurearsi in tempo una volta tornati.

Per riassumere, si può dire che l'Unione Europea ha progressivamente aumentato la propria influenza in materia di istruzione, utilizzando vari strumenti e norme non vincolanti. Inoltre i giudizi della Corte hanno dato un nuovo impulso al proliferare di norme volte alla protezione di lavoratori e studenti in mobilità anche sotto il punto di vista sociale. Il Processo di Bologna poi, prendendo spunto da alcuni principi già delineati dal progetto Erasmus, ha dato una sterzata al sistema universitario Europeo. Si può quindi affermare che l'istruzione superiore abbia acquistato una dimensione più europea, e abbia aiutato in alcuni casi, il sistema universitario a diventare più competitivo a livello mondiale, e abbia quindi anche aumentato la cooperazione tra gli istituti di educazione superiore e in generale tra gli stati membri. La progressiva globalizzazione e mercificazione dell'istruzione poi, ha reso ancora più importante avere un sistema di educazione superiore competitivo e in grado anche di essere economicamente vantaggioso per i governi nazionali. In un periodo storico in cui i fondi per l'istruzione subiscono tagli continui, è difficile a volte pensare ad un sistema universitario in grado di provvedere alle necessità economico sociali che la nostra società globalizzata ci impone. Innovazione e progresso devono essere supportati anche dai singoli governi nazionali, per poter diventare fornitori di conoscenze a tutti gli effetti.

Punto centrale del mio lavoro era quindi quello di dimostrare come l'educazione sia progressivamente diventata sempre più importante agli occhi dell'Unione Europea e come essa abbia ampliato la sua influenza in questo campo. In alcuni casi apportando modifiche positive e utili, in altri casi oscurando le attività degli stati membri. Il progetto Erasmus poi è una sorta di test, nel quale le caratteristiche delle politiche europee sull'istruzione vengono riassunte, in modo più o meno efficace.

Introduction

The process of economic integration of the European Union has led to a progressive political integration, as citizens of member states interact more often with one another and feel less bounded by national borders. From this progressive integration resulted the will of creating a more united Europe also under the socio cultural aspect. We can now talk of the existence of a European identity and a European cultural identity, fostered also by cultural and education policies and cultural and education programmes, promoted by the EU institutions. In this sense the Erasmus programme has become the most well-known and well-established programme in the European framework, and has then expanded also worldwide, by introducing non-European countries in the programme.

As written in the treaties, the EU has to foster national cultures and identities, but has also to promote culture at the European level, which would consequently help forging a common European identity and cultural identity, and, therefore, the European Union shall support and implement the dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples, non-commercial cultural exchanges and artistic and literary creation. The EU is now more interested in giving to its citizens the support for the development and the free movement of ideas and culture, in the respect of national identities and cultures, and, moreover in respect of the European principles of solidarity, defence of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Education in the realm of European policies has always been a complex issue. In fact, member states have not been so eager in leaving the EU a piece of their sovereignty, as Education has always been conceived as a national competence and duty. Therefore, education was not initially explicitly included in the treaties, even though they already contained the basis for the further development of vocational training and consequently of education at the supranational level. The history of education policies in Europe started almost right after its birth, back then education was seen through the lenses of vocational training, and this was strictly connected to

workers' rights. Only in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty higher education became more entrenched with supranational policies.

In the 1970s and 1980s the climate was favourable for a deeper cooperation at EU level among member states. In these years the EU saw also the birth of several exchange programmes for universities students and teaching staff. The Erasmus programme has then become the most well-known one, and acquired a great importance in the European higher education area. It can be held responsible for some changes at the institutional level and also at the individual level, having influenced those who participate in the programme. Moreover, the Erasmus programme has been the subject of various studies concerning the influence that this programme has had on the conception of Higher Education in Europe and on its structure.

Internationalization then has been an important factor in the subsequent increase of cooperation among Universities and in the opening of national borders for reasons related to studying. Higher Education institutions have been pushed to open up to the world for economic, cultural, political and academic reasons. For certain reasons exchange programmes, in this particular case the Erasmus programme, improve all these rationales by putting internationalization at the centre of Universities' missions.

Then the progressive development and growing interdependence with the so called knowledge economy and with the globalization, made Higher Education institutions the main providers of knowledges and of high skilled labour forces. In this sense the Bologna Process of 1999 has played a major role in boosting the cooperation at supranational level of member states and in particular of Higher Education Institutions themselves. The Process took into consideration also some points fostered by the Erasmus programme, such as the importance of students' and staff mobility, the establishment of a system of credit recognition and the boosting of cooperation among Universities. The Bologna Process has been an important step forward towards the progressive internationalization of Higher Education and toward the creation of a European Higher Education Area.

This progressive shift of competences in Higher Education, from national governments to the supranational level, has not always been favourably welcomed by

member states. In some cases, they have been sceptical and hostile in loosing part of their competence on education policies.

The main aim of this work is firstly to give a broader overview of education policies' history in Europe, and how this competence has progressively shifted to the supranational level and moreover, why member states decided to enhance their cooperation in this field. In fact, chapter 1 is dedicated to the evolution of education policies from the Treaty of Rome to the birth of exchange programmes, above all of the Erasmus programme, and to the broaden of EU competences over this issue, thanks to the use of soft law measures, like in the Bologna Process, and to some decisions of the European Court of Justice that gave new impulse to the legal basis of Higher Education. A part of this chapter will be dedicated to the analysis of three cases: The Blaizot case, the Gravier case and the Grzelczyk case.

The second chapter is dedicated to the operationalization of Higher Education policies in Europe, so, in other words, to the ways in which the EU has been able to practically enhance cooperation among Higher Education institutions, and provide students and staff members with the adequate means for improving their education and therefore their professional qualifications. As for example the Bologna Process for the creation of a European common area for Higher Education, the two-cycle degree system, the ECTS system for the recognition of credits, the Diploma Supplement and the EU Directives aiming at the recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications.

Chapters 3 and 4, will be dedicated to the Erasmus' impact both on the institutional and on the individual level. In other words, these chapters investigate the impact that the Erasmus programme has had on some aspects of the structure of Higher Education institutions and on their behaviour towards the progressive internationalization of Higher Education and the subsequent enhancement of cooperation among Institutions. Also the individual level will be taken into consideration, both from the point of view of students and teaching staff. This section aims at giving a broader prospect on the common features of Erasmus students and what may differentiate a mobile student from a non-mobile student. In this part also barriers that students and teaching staff face will be taken into consideration.

In sum, the overall aim of this work is to provide a broader overview on how Education has been dealt at the European level, and how the EU has progressively entered this realm, that has always been among member states' competences. Central in this work are also the reasons that pushed member states to cooperate in the education and research fields, in order to be always up to date with the progressive internationalization and globalization that hit almost all aspects of nowadays society. The importance of the Erasmus programme then is given by the fact that it enhances and fosters the growing internationalization of Higher Education and of Universities, and this is the reason why the analysis of the programme has also been central in this work.

Chapter 1

The progressive Europeanization of education policies

The first paragraph of this chapter will be dedicated to the history of education policies throughout European history. It will take into consideration the principal steps towards the progressive harmonization and Europeanization of higher education policies, so, how the European Union progressively became an important actor in the higher education sector and in education policies decision-making. Moreover, this chapter will deal with the reasons that pushed member states to cooperate in the field of higher education, and to cope with the progressive raise of the so called knowledge economy, and how important intra-European mobility has been in fostering the free movement of students and workers, and then the Erasmus programme's origins.

Member states have always been reluctant in leaving the EU the power to legislate over a competence that has always been proper of member states. For this reason, the last part of the chapter will be dedicated to the EU's and member states' competences and how the EU progressively widened its competences in this field, through for example, soft law measures or through a broader interpretation of treaties' provisions and through the European Court of Justice's judgements.

1.1 The EU approach to education policies

Education has not always been a top priority for Member states, as each country had its own national policies concerning education. Education was not included in the Treaty of Rome, as the main priorities were connected to economic integration. "Yet, the founding treaties already contained the basis for later initiatives in the field of education" (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001 p. 2). In particular, article 128 of the EEC Treaty already fostered a common vocational training policy. It was only in the 1980s

that vocational training, and then higher education acquired a greater visibility at the community level.

In fact, in the last decades, we are witnessing "EU's own recent strategy to exploit the knowledge economy more effectively, we are seeing governments in Europe accepting the need for congruence between their systems" (Corbett, 2005 p. 11). Europe wants to reach a more concrete European Higher Education area by 2020, in which students and academics would move more easily among Higher Education Institutions. This right of course should be guaranteed to all citizens in the same way. This was one of the main aims of the Erasmus programme, even though on a smaller scale. So, giving the possibility to students, to study in another country, even for a short period of time, and then having credits recognized at home. It was the starting point for the progressive creation of a European area for Higher Education.

The progressive Europeanization of education policies started with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 (Pépin, 2007). It can be argued that limited action occurred in the field of Education, above all until the 1960s. Notwithstanding the fact that at the European Congress held in Hauge in May 1948 the discussion over a more united Europe also beyond the mere economic and agricultural sector, had already started. In particular, they discussed the future role and structure of the European Council, and they left cultural and educational cooperation in its hands, as they were considered politically sensitive issues (Pépin, 2007 p. 122). In the framework of the Hauge meeting, the leaders participating, in particular Spanish statesman Salvador de Madariaga, proposed the creation of the College of Europe. It was, and still is a post-graduate Institution, in which graduates from all European countries could study and live together and prepare for a future career related to Europe cooperation and integration.

However, as mentioned before, vocational training was recognized among the Community actions since the beginning, as it was connected to workers and workers' conditions. In fact, art. 118 of the Treaty of Rome, title III on social policy, in the social provisions section, stated that Members states had to cooperate in the social field in particular in relation to employment, social security, labour law and working conditions and basic and advanced vocational training. Moreover, art. 128 of the Treaty stated that the Council had to "lay down general principles for implementing a common vocational

training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market." In this case vocational training was taken into consideration as an important tool for promoting employment and boosting the economic situation of member states. Back then training education was still deeply connected to the market and to the importance of economic integration. So, still no big step forwards had been done in order to foster cooperation properly in the field of education.

So education still remained a sort of taboo, still deeply rooted within nation-states' policy. Instead Vocational Training experienced a development at European level in the 60s, as "the aim was to overcome the shortage of skilled workers, to alleviate the high levels of unemployment in some regions, such as the south of Italy, and to improve workers' living conditions" (Reuter-Kumpmann, 2004 p.15). Still Education policy was conceived as a merely national issue as "the States furthered the national interest and protected national culture by preserving the independence of its Universities" (Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002 p.11). Universities and Higher Education Institutions were considered the guardian of States' culture and identity and of the safeguard of teaching and learning without the menace of external political incursions and violations (Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002 p.11). So, states wanted to "protect" their national education system also from external negative influences, coming from other member states or from the supranational level.

A first major step forward has been made with the 1963 Council Decision (63/266/EEC) "Laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy". For example, some of these general principles are related to "broaden vocational training on the basis of a general education, to meet requirements arising from technical progress, new methods of production and social and economic developments", and moreover, to guarantee to both adults and young people to receive an adequate instruction suitable for working life. In addition, this Decision supported cooperation between member States and the Commission in the field of vocational training "in particular with a view to promoting employment facilities and the geographical and occupational mobility of workers within the Community" (Council of the EEC). This decision is important to be taken into consideration in the realm of Education policy in Europe because, first of all some principles are still valid today and

the Decision is still in force, then because it already referred to "general education" and so supported, at a later stage, both the European Court of Justice's interpretation of higher education as integral part of vocational training, and the Commission proposal for the creation of Erasmus programme (Pépin, 2007 p.122).

At the end of the 60s, and in the first years of the 70s, the economic social context, characterized by the students' movements protesting against the crisis of education systems concerning also their future employment prospects (Barker, 2008 p.45), by the rising youth unemployment and by the economic consequences of the oil crisis, played an important role in pushing member states to cooperate, for example through the creation in 1967 of the OECD centre for Educational research and Innovation (CHERI) (Pépin, 2007 p. 123). The consequences of the oil crisis reverberated throughout all industrialised countries; growth rates remained low when compared with those of emerging economies, this brought to the raising of unemployment, and the subsequent will of Member States to find a common solution to a common problem (Robert and Lennert, 2012 p.818), and were also important for a greater action in the field of vocational training and of the emergence of education as a field of cooperation between member states (Pépin, 2007 p. 123). "It is a well-known fact" argues Professor Sofia Corradi, "that the issue of young people, especially of students, was brought to the attention of governments by the student movements" (Corradi, 2015 p.21). The General assembly of the European Conference of Rectors of 1969, that took place in Geneva, focused on University autonomy. Corradi states that this progressive autonomy that University gained, so, the possibility of Universities and Higher Education Institutions in general of stipulating agreements directly between them, without depending on States, boosted a deeper cooperation among institutions and "would deeply influence Community action in this entire sector" (Corradi, 2015 p.22). The Community in fact, assumed a "facilitative approach" towards Institutions, by providing the means through which they could exchange information and set international programmes or visits. It is the case of the agreement between Italian and French Universities, set after the Conference of Italian and French rectors held in Pisa on the 6th and 7th of December 1969. Afterwards, Italian and French students were able to spend a period in a foreign University and then having it recognised by their University at home. Then, still in the wake of student movements in the end of 1960s,

the Italian Parliament approved Law 910 of the 11th of December 1969: "Provvedimenti urgenti per l'Università". It has been embraced as a revolutionary act in the field of Higher Education, as it lessened the rigidity of the Italian education system, by giving the possibility of students to choose their own curriculum, which had to be approved by the Faculty Council. "It removed several of the obstacles to the possibility that Italian students could complete a part of their curriculum in a foreign university" (Corradi, 2015 p.46).

In 1971 for the first time Ministers of Education met and agreed upon a wider cooperation on educational issues, they recognised that the actions developed so far concerning vocational training should be supplemented by greater cooperation in the field of education as such (Council of the European Communities, 1971). After five years of discussions among rectors of European Universities, among which also those of East European Universities were present, in 1976 the European Council of Ministers adopted the "Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education", and it provided the base for the further cooperation at the European level in the field of education (Pépin, 2007; Corradi, 2015). The Community main aim was to intensify the contacts among Higher Education Institutions, and subsequently provide students with the recognition of their studies abroad. This Resolution has been followed by the birth of the Joint Study Programmes, a sort of pilot project in studies exchange programmes. The community tried to promote a sort of mixed formula, which combined the voluntary commitment of education ministers in the institutional framework of the Community. Ministers did not meet as an "Education Council" but within the Council, and according to Garben (2008, p.16), this mixed formula leaves room for member states autonomy as it fosters cooperation among member states without having to respect formal decision-making procedures. A Resolution is a non-binding act, so it did not provide legal basis and it did not force States to comply with it. Even though it was not binding it proved the political interest of member states to cooperate in the field of education. It "contained six priority areas for action: education of the children of migrant workers; closer relations between education systems in Europe; compilation of documentation and statistics; higher education; teaching of foreign languages; and equal opportunities" (EU Commission, 2006). The first acts of the Community involved pilot

exchange programmes, short study visit, exchange of information between Higher education institutions, and these first exchanges between Universities set the basis for the future Erasmus project. Moreover, "for the first time Member states recognised the economic importance of Higher Education for the Community" (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001 p. 11), that was strictly connected also to the progressive changes in scientific, technological and social fields. The progressive implementation of educational policies by member states was then blocked towards the end of the 1970s for an institutional crisis. The work on cooperation then gradually took off in the 1980s. In 1981 the Directorate General for Social Affairs grouped together vocational training, education and youth policy, underlining the deep connection among these three fields. Then, four years later the European Court of Justice's broader interpretation of art. 128 in the Gravier case, set forth the unavoidable relation between vocational training and education. In this case also the 1963 Decision was taken into consideration. The new legal opportunities offered by this different and unprecedented interpretation of art. 128, gave a new impulse at the Community level and the years 1980s are marked by the rise of several exchange programmes in the field of higher education and vocational training. The first one was COMETT, which boosted the cooperation between higher education and industry in the field of technology, then Erasmus, PETRA, Youth for Europe, Lingua, FORCE. They gave a major impulse to education in Europe because they were tools for enhancing cooperation between higher education institutions, but also between higher education and the job market. The climate was favourable for the progressive development of these programmes, also because of the so called *Adonnino report* was adopted by the Milan European Council in June 1985. It was not a binding act and it was adopted as a political act. It helped raising awareness toward the importance of creating a "People's Europe" and of boosting a socio-political and cultural cohesion among Member States. Also during the long discussion before reaching an agreement on the Erasmus programme, "heads of States and Governments again insisted that the Erasmus Programme was vital to the realization of a *Citizens' Europe" (*Corradi, 2015 p. 82).

Moreover, in this period also the Single European Act was adopted. It put the emphasis mainly on the creation of a single market, but it also highlighted the

importance of the free movement of people and of human resources for economic success and social cohesion.

Furthermore, from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s several directives have been implemented on the mutual recognition of diplomas for professional purposes, above all in the health care sector. The mutual recognition was based on a system of mutual trust and recognition among member states. Furthermore, in the realm of higher education, diplomas' recognition and the recognition of study's periods abroad was fostered by the progressive importance that the Erasmus programme gained in the European arena, and thank also to the experimental use of the ECTS system for the recognition of credits.

In the case of the Erasmus programme, the EU established a relationship and a sort of partnership directly with Higher Education institutions without the mediation of national governments. Even though the budget dedicated to these type of programs, with the Erasmus programme at the forefront, seemed to be always too low, the progressive development and establishment of these programs have become a characteristic feature of Higher Education in Europe. Moreover, strictly connected to education in those years was the social policy, meant to fight youth unemployment and give new impulses and new competences to young people to be spent in the labour market. In fact, education and training gave a major impulse to the modernization of economies and to the development of new technologies; thank also to the increasing cooperation between Universities for research programmes.

Only with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, "has general education, under which higher education is subsumed, became a responsibility of the European union" (de Rudder, 2000). Article 126, eventually gave a legal base to the long dispute on the validity of education at union level. "Community action was meant to support and supplement national action. Member States remained responsible for the content and organization of their system" (Pépin, 2007 p. 125). The Maastricht treaty was a turning point in the development of education policies at the European level.

It has been a huge step forward in the field of cooperation in the realm of higher education, even though the EU recognizes states' competences in the realm of education policies content, education systems' organization and respects their linguistic and cultural particularism. "Over the last 30 years the European programs for research and

education, in particular the Erasmus program, have been the motor for broader and more strategic approach to internationalization in Higher Education in Europe" (De Wit and Hunter, 2015 p.3). The overall actions of both Member States and the EU towards a common framework for education policies, helped opening borders among European Universities. From this moment on, education started to become a more central issue in the European agenda. Erasmus first, and the Bologna Process then, helped the progressive internationalization of Higher Education.

The Maastricht Treaty has been a turning point in the field of Education policies, as the Bologna Process. The period between these two events has been marked by the emergence of the concept of knowledge-based economy (Pépin, 2007). Throughout the 1990s, new concerns were taking place in the education policy discourse both at national and supranational level. Globalization, technological changes and innovations, required new skills and raised competition with other knowledge-based economies (E.g. The US, China and India), progressively required innovations and changes in the way people conceived Higher Education (Ravinet, 2008; Nokkala, 2006; Pépin, 2006), a new vision and approach of national system was then needed (Pépin, 2007 p. 126). In fact, "By the end of the 1990s, Europe was facing important economic challenges of global competition […] Emerging market economies were accessing the financial markets, competences were changing, new skills were needed in all sectors, ICT was using new types of knowledge, and the labor market was under pressure" (Moniz, 2011 p. 3). At the European level many required the update of skills and competences. For example, Delors' 1993 White Paper on "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment" was a key document for raising awareness towards the requirements for being a successful knowledge-based economy and society. "Education and training have a key role to play in stimulating growth and restoring competitiveness and a socially acceptable level of employment in the Community" (European Commission, 1994). The average of young people enrolled at University, according to the 1994 White Paper, was 30%, less than USA and Japan. It is then stated that it exists a link between this data and long-term unemployment of young people, as, not receiving the adequate education and preparation raise the possibility of not finding a job. "Tertiary education institutions play a major role in equipping students with the tools to overcome the threat of unemployment by offering academic qualifications and the opportunity for students to

develop their skills and abilities" (Rachaniotis et al., 2013, p. 479). Therefore, education and training, had to play a key role in the development of a new model for economic growth, competitiveness and employability, through the improvement of the quality of training, the foster of innovation in education through exchanges and joint programmes. In this sense Universities should respond to the new paradigm of the knowledge economy by providing a suitable range of basic skills and competences of technological and social nature. Member States should then use the means in their power to achieve these goals, also through the involvement of public authorities, and "then adapt their measures to those conducted elsewhere in other Member States" (European Commission, 1994). Subsequently, in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, a specific provision on education in the Preamble stated that Member States are "determined to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating". Moreover, a specific strategy for employment was included in the Treaty, in Title VIII. In particular art. 125 stated that "Member States and the Community shall, in accordance with this Title, work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change". The decade ended with the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998 and the subsequent Bologna Process in 1999. It was an intergovernmental process, not initiated at the EU level, but, for example, the Council of Europe and the European Commission became then members of the Process. The Bologna Process' main aim is to restructure the education system, in order to make it more compatible and comparable. It developed on the principles laid down by the Erasmus programme, so promoting exchanges and recognition of academic qualifications and increasing cooperation among Higher Education Institutions. The Bologna Process has been an important tool for the progressive harmonization of education policies and systems throughout all Member States, its main peculiarity is that it started as a voluntary forum outside the EU framework, and it progressively became more and more binding, by requiring more efforts from its participants and by monitoring their progresses. The Lisbon Strategy of 2000, aimed at turning Europe into a successful knowledge economy. "What we are seeing is a new kind of partnership, with state actors and with non-state actors,

suggesting a new conception of European policy-making in higher education based on cooperation and not legislation" (Corbett, 2005 p. 203).

So, the new millennium started with the Lisbon Strategy. This strategy included education as a major issue on which the European knowledge-based economy should flourish. According to Rodrigues "the education and training systems should be reformed in order to better cope with the challenges of globalisation and the transition to a knowledge economy" (Rodrigues 2005, p. 11). A central goal then was to achieve changes in work which increase competitiveness and improve employment (Huws 2006, p. 31). Of course "actions by any one Member State, ran the argument of the European Council, would be all the more effective if all other Member States acted in concert" (Moniz, 2011, p. 16). Moreover, still according to Moniz, "the Lisbon Strategy helped to build a broad consensus on necessary reforms with regard to information society development", however he argues that, "the guidelines were too ambitious and not sufficiently coordinated, which limited their impact on national policy-making" (Moniz, 2011, p.17). the Lisbon Strategy was then re-launched in 2005 with a greater focus on growth and better employment policies.

The progressive internationalization of Higher Education has been influenced by both the globalization of economies and societies and the growing importance of knowledges (Mottareale, 2017, p.160). Moreover, during the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education, globalization has been defined as the reality of an always more integrated world economy, in which new technologies in the field of information and communication, an international network of knowledges, the role of the English language and other forces beyond academic institutions' control, play an important role (Altbach, 2007, p.7). In fact, "representatives of the business sector and government argue that institutions of Higher Education make an important contribution to national wealth production and to the performance of the nation in the global economy" (Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002, p.1). But, notwithstanding these forces beyond academic institutions' control, Universities are themselves engines for change, adapting their missions and systems to the ever-growing globalization paradigm (Mottareale, 2017, p. 160). In this framework, the aims boosted by the Bologna process, and by its subsequent follow-up groups, played an important role in dealing with the progressive internationalization and globalization in the field of Higher Education. "In

Europe these pressures (marketization and commodification of Higher Education) led European leaders to draw up the Bologna declaration and engage in a process aiming, among other things, at turning European higher education into a competitive product on a global scale” (Mottareale, 2017; Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002).

1.2 The Erasmus programme, its origins and structure

Even though the Erasmus project was going to become one of the most famous and well-established students’ exchange programme in the world, it did not have an easy beginning. The programme was first born in a favourable period for cooperation in Higher education field, but, while the COMETT programme has been adopted more easily, and states approved it with simple majority, the Erasmus programme had a much more difficult genesis. The Commission submitted the first proposal for the Erasmus programme in January 1986, and in June of the same year all member states agreed on the importance of adopting such a programme. But, in November, surprisingly, they could not reach an agreement, for budget problems. In fact, five states argued that the budget should have been decreased, the other states, instead of adopting a programme with an inadequate budget (not sufficient for students’ scholarships) preferred not to agree on the proposal at all, and they withdrew the entire proposal (Corradi, 2015). In December, under the pressure of Heads of States and Government, who thought that the Erasmus programme was essential for the success of a Citizens’ Europe, the programme, as initially thought, was put again on the agenda for urgent consideration by the Council of Ministers. Although Ministers were reluctant to endorse such an action, it received a strong support from the academic community, via university associations. Europe-minded academic bodies had long thought it important to improve academic mobility through European Community incentives (Papatsiba, 2006, p. 98). Two main reasons can be at the basis of the will of member states of promoting this programme. The economic and professional reason, so using the programme for promoting labor market, and a civic and social reasons, for promoting European consciousness and a Citizens’ Europe (Papatsiba, 2005, 2006). The programme was then the formally approved in May 1987 and ratified by the European Council of Ministers (competent for other questions) the 15th of June 1987. Its approval has been difficult because of budget issues and also for the lack of legal basis, in fact decisions in

the realm of education required unanimity and subsequently had to be adopted by other branches of the council of Ministers, whose competences were other than Education (Corradi, 2015, p.21).

The Erasmus programme, acronyms for **E**uropean **R**egion **A**ction **S**cheme for the **M**obility of **U**niversity **S**tudents, was then formally adopted in June 1987. Right after its birth, in a great rush, as the academic year started in September, 3244 students from 11 member states went abroad to study, but the Commission had been supporting pilot exchange programmes from 6 years. In the first year 3244 students from 11 member states went abroad to study. Back then it solely focused on academic education, now it involves also workplace traineeships, staff training, teaching activities and cooperation between Universities and involvement of local and regional institutions, NGOs within Europe and beyond. It is worth mentioning the Joint Studies Programmes, activated in the mid 70s, as a pilot exchange programme, often "considered the ancestor of subsequent mobility programmes" (Papatsiba, 2006, p. 98) the programme experienced various financial and administrative difficulties, but it enjoys the credit for the progressive community support to exchange programmes and for the popularity of these type of programmes. As it promoted cooperation among higher education institutions and it stimulated Community support.

Erasmus is the European Commission's flagship education and training programme. Since 2014 it has become Erasmus + and it provides services in the field of education, training, volunteering and sport. It also provides mobility for higher education students and workers. "For nearly 30 years, the EU has funded the Erasmus programme, which has enabled over three million European students to spend part of their studies at another higher education institution or with an organisation in Europe" (European Commission). But not just students can benefit from this programme, also people searching for a traineeship abroad, a specific training course or for an experience as a volunteer across Europe and beyond. The European Commission describes the main purposes of its programme, by stating that:

> Many studies show that a period spent abroad not only enriches students' lives in the academic and professional fields, but can also improve language learning, intercultural skills, self-reliance and self-awareness. Their experiences give students a better sense of what it means to be a European citizen. In addition, many employers highly value such a period abroad, which increases the students'

employability and job prospects. Staff exchanges have similar beneficial effects, both for the people participating and for the home and host institutions.[1]

Erasmus' aims are improving quality of education, providing all students with the same level of education recognisable in all member states, fostering mobility and promoting equity, social cohesion, solidarity and active citizenship. In fact, the project does not solely focus on education, but also on the improvement of a common socio cultural area in which people should feel free to move and should feel at home in every part of the EU. The programme has the purpose of enhancing young people's active participation in the life of the Union, by putting them at the centre of one of the most successful and enduring EU's project.

All 28 member states take part in the programme. The first 11 EU countries who took part in the programme since 1987 are Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom. Also non-EU countries take part in the programme but non-EU individuals and organizations need to be eligible in order to take part to the programme. Some of them cannot take part directly but have to do it through an organization that is already part of the programme. Eligible countries are divided in Programme countries, which are on the same level as EU countries, and Partner countries, which are subjected to specific conditions and cannot take part in all the activities. Programme countries, so non-EU countries that participate in the programme are the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. Partner countries are divided in 14 different geographical regions, for example those who include countries neighbouring the EU are: region 1 Western Balkans, region 2 Eastern Partnership countries, region 3 South-Mediterranean countries and region 4 Russian Federation which include territories of Russia as recognised by international law. So, the Erasmus project has expanded almost throughout the whole world, and this geographical expansion means also an expansion in the number of projects and activities that the programme can provide to young people and also to adults. In fact, adult education and training is one of the added activities that in 2014 transformed the Erasmus programme in Erasmus +. That "plus" stands for a

[1] Europa.eu https://europa.eu/youth/tr/article/53/5947_de

widening in the aims of the programme and in the targets. For example, the programme promotes teaching and research activities on European integration through Jean Monnet actions. In fact, since it has been launched in 2014, the Erasmus+ Programme includes also other programmes in the field of education, training, youth and sport, such as Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Grundtvig, Jean Monnet, Erasmus Mundus, Alfa, Edulink, Youth in Action and Sport. Erasmus + is meant to last until 2020 and then a new Erasmus programme will be proposed by the Commission and it will last seven more years. The programme aims at contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy for a sustainable growth, jobs, social equality and inclusion.

1.3 Intra-EU mobility for a more cohesive Europe

The free movement of people throughout the European area have always influenced the way in which citizens perceive their relation with the EU. "When nationals of different member states are asked what it means to be a 'European citizen', the freedom to move is always cited as the most important right" (PIONEUR Research group, 2006). The most immediate and effective thing that citizens experience as European citizens is the right to move freely in the EU area without needing a visa or a passport. The right of free movement of people is included in article 21 of the TFEU, among the right and duties of European citizens. Moreover, article 45 of the TFEU provides rights and duties of workers, who can move freely within the territory of member States in order to find a job, and chose to live in a country other than his/her own for the purpose of employment without being discriminated for their nationality.

In the Europe that we are now used to know, people can freely move regardless the reasons behind their choice of moving to another country. The reasons that push people to move from their home country to another EU member state are various. People may leave their country for job seeking, studying or for taking part in educational programmes (such as Erasmus project), for vocational training, but also for reasons related to family, so reconciliation with a family member living abroad, for following their partner, for retiring. Europeans internal borders are constantly crossed by European citizens who bring with them their stories and their faith for the future that they may wish to find in another country. All these movements of people throughout the

Union increase the interconnection among member states and among people, and enhance their European consciousness and their attachment to a European socio cultural area.

“Mobility is also one of the main pillars of the Bologna Process, enabling the development of international cooperation and giving substance to the European dimension of education” (Rachaniotis, 2013, p. 459). Moreover, the OECD stated that the progressive increase of people moving throughout Europe for reasons related to study or vocational training, can be related to: “globalized economies highly depend on each other; the European unification process required harmonization of rules, means and measures that guarantee the mobility of all Europeans; EU countries are obliged to treat students from other EU member states as their ‘home students’ and the wide utilization of new technologies has ensured faster, safer, and in some cases less expensive transportation and communication” (OECD, 2010). Moreover, it can be argued that “globalization is a process characterized by intense interaction of communication and trade beyond national boundaries, thus challenging the role of the state in education and educational policy” (Papadakis and Tsakanika, 2006, p. 289).

Rachaniotis et al. (2013), further state that the increase of students’ mobility flows throughout Europe, influences also member states educational policies, and drastically changes the relation between national education policies and intra-European mobility. The authors take into consideration some practical examples, such as in Luxemburg, where a study related period abroad is compulsory in order to obtain a master degree in some programmes. Furthermore, in France spending a period abroad for engineers is mandatory, as having a medium-high level of English is required, then in Austria students from polytechnic are also required to spend at least a semester abroad, in order to be able to graduate.

Nowadays it is very common seeing people moving to another member state in order to find a job. Workers can experience a long-term labour mobility, so moving to another member state and staying there for at least one year, or they can be cross-border workers and move to another member state only for work but still reside in his/her home country. Moreover, some people are just sent in another member state in order to work for a limited period of time. “In 2016, 11.8 million EU-28 movers according to

migration statistics of working age (20-64 years) were living in an EU Member State other than their country of citizenship, making up 3.9% of the total working-age population across the EU-28." Almost 50% of workers from the 28 member states move to Germany or to the UK. While, "around half of all movers across the EU-28 Member States are Romanian, Polish, Italian and Portuguese" (EUROSTAT, 2016). So, the major labour mobility flow goes from Romania, Poland, Italy and Portugal to Germany and the UK.

Something important that need to be highlighted, is that the majority of workers who move around Europe are high-skilled workers and well-educated students seeking for a job. In fact, "while once they were predominantly low-skilled economic migrants, more recently they tend to be better educated, highly skilled labour migrants, and they also partly come with other motivations, such as to retire and to study." PIONEUR research group, 2006). The demand for high skilled workers is also very high, as innovation-driven industries are always more interested in specialized workers in order to keep up with international competiveness, above all in the technological field. Knowledge is the new bargaining chip, in an economy that highly values high skilled work forces and technological innovation.

Europe is one of the global leader in supplying high skilled labour and "in 2017, almost one third (31 %) of the European Union (EU) working-age population possessed a tertiary level of educational attainment. This was 8 percentage points higher than the corresponding share from a decade earlier and almost 1 point higher than a year before." (EUROSTAT). It means that every year more people reach a high degree of education and then have more chances to become highly specialized workers.

On the other hand, periods of studying or training abroad are not always automatically recognised, and sometimes the same qualification valid in a member state has not the same value in another. "The European Commission created policies and regulations to facilitate the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, but obstacles to the free movement of professionals still remain. These barriers are created by national differences in education, training, and qualifications." (Van Riemsdijik, 2013). Directive 2005/36/EC, (see paragraph 2.4 of this dissertation) on the recognition of professional qualifications, tried to unify the system but differences still exist because

minimum training requirements are not satisfied by all professionals in different member states in the same manner, as educational and training programmes are pursued in different ways in all member states. Also because “the knowledge economy required skilled professionals which leads to mobility and raises the issue of quality education, employability of graduates across borders and standardization of qualifications” (Woldegiorgis, 2013).

Moreover, the free movement of people, be they students or workers, resulted also in the improvement of the openness and the competitiveness of the entire high-skilled labour market. As a response to globalization, supranational institutions alongside nation states have been invited to harmonize their policies. “Thus, harmonization is more or less synonymous with convergence that coordinates different systems through ‘eliminating major differences and creating minimum requirements or standards” (Woldegiorgis, 2013).

Then, “the free movement of people triggered the most effective spill-over dynamic into the social sphere, as the ever denser economic integration made European social action necessary” (Wasserfallen, 2010, p.5). People who moved throughout European member states need assurances also from the social point of view: certainty of receiving an education, of being able to work, settle down and consequently transmit all these social values to their families. Member States realizes the importance of coordinating social policies at the supranational level. As the European Court of Justice’s cases considered in chapter 1.6, show us, moving freely throughout Europe requires a set of rules and provisions aiming at providing an equal treatment among European citizens in whatever European State they are (Hailbronner, 2005). Free movement of people triggered, even the most sceptical Member States, to accept the need to legislate over some social provisions at the supranational level, for the benefit of mobile citizens (Wasserfallen, 2010, p.5), be they students or workers.

1.4 Globalization, Internationalization and Europeanization in the Higher education sector

Of great importance in this work is, not just the Erasmus programme in the European Higher Education framework, but also the increasing internationalization and

Europeanisation that higher education in Europe faced, and is still facing, and the progressive strengthening of cooperation among member states.

As stated above, internationalization and cooperation in the field of higher education has always been an important issue for member states. Held and McGrew (2000) in their debate on globalization for example argue that international cooperation and coordination of national policies became necessary arguments for managing the consequences of a globalizing world, in which interdependence accelerate and social interaction speed up. (Held and McGraw, 2000). But, internationalization became a key issue in the 1990s (Teichler, 2004; Enders, 2004). In literature, three terms have been used almost with the same aim in the European context: internationalization, globalization and Europeanisation. These three terms differ in some respects. Internationalization refers to the increasing cross-border activities and in particular to physical mobility, academic cooperation and knowledge transfer, globalization refers to the fact that national borders may become blurred or even disappear, and it is often related to the marketization of higher education and competition, Europeanization then is the European internal version of internationalization and it is referred to the convergence contexts and structures (Teichler, 2004).

The term globalization "in a broad sense, can be defined as a common term for the social, political, economic and cultural coalescence of the world" (Wittman, 2014, p.193), it can be used in various field such as economic, scientific, cultural, etc. in particular globalization in the higher education field is often employed merely to depict supra-national trends and policies related to marketization, increasing supra-national competition as well as the growth of trans-national education and commercial knowledge transfer (Teichler, 2004).

In the framework of member states' cooperation, knowledge economy and the marketization of Higher education have always played a major role. The governments of major ''knowledge exporting'' countries are enormously active in shaping the rules of border-crossing commercial knowledge transfer in order to maximise their national gains" (Teichler, 2004). The rhetoric of globalization is not just a narrative, but an ideology, that sometimes justify certain policies (Enders, 2004); as Teichler (1999) argues, it should sound suspicious that the most powerful actors praise

internationalization almost unconditionally, by claiming to strengthen national capacities in the face of global competition (Enders, 2004). In the context of marketization of higher education, competition plays an important role, as rivalry and competition among Universities, and lead them to find new ways for emerging in the international market of knowledges and higher education. With marketization, it is meant the use of knowledges and higher education as commodities, it is nowadays a feature of the progressive globalization that has entered also the education field. Instead the progressive internationalization, that hit Europe since 1990s, brought to a progressive enhancement of physical mobility. The progressive blurring of nation states borders put member states more in contact and initiate a new era of cooperation in higher education (Teichler, 2004).

As a result, internationalization of education pushed member states to cooperate more with each other, and consequently made them more affected by supra-national decision making. In fact, “international mobility of the workforce, the globalisation of the economy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are among the most important factors that give rise to the internationalisation of education. In response, “active policies for internationalisation have been developed at supra-national, national and institutional levels” (Van der Wende et al., 1999). As Motarreale (2017) puts it, global changes in Higher Education Institutions in the realm of cooperation and competition, make internationalization of the Universities the response to globalization. “Challenges from internationalization and globalization are pushing Universities to develop new forms of internationalization activities, supported by multilateral agreements or programs to expand their reach over national borders” (Van Damme, 2001, p. 417). Such internationalization activities, always according to Van Damme (2001), involve the growth of financial input given by attracting fee-paying foreign students, the broadening of curricula and experiences for domestic students in foreign-partner institutions, the enhancement of the quality of education and research by pushing students and teaching staff into a more competitive international environment. So, Universities are always more embedded and deeply influenced by the international environment with which they have to cope. Higher education institutions have to keep up with the increasing challenges set up by the competitive world of globalization and of the knowledge economy (Mottareale, 2017; Held and McGraw, 2000).

Furthermore, “countries look at internationalisation and cooperation as a potential source for additional funding in the emerging global educational marketplace” (Van Damme, 2001, p. 429), as many countries have to face too limited resources in the field of education. “Many countries recruit international students to earn profits by charging high fees, as for example, in the United Kingdom” (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p. 292). The authors then argue that some countries are not just driven by financial reasons, but they decide to cooperate with other countries and to embrace internationalization, in order to enhance research and knowledge capacity and to increase cultural understanding (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p. 292).

Brandenburg and de Wit (2011), offer a more negative point of view on globalization and internationalization in the realm of Higher Education. Globalization and internationalization should not be seen as the main goals for Higher Education, but as means to achieve what is really meaningful: “the future of Higher Education is a global one and it is our job to help preparing the Higher Education world for this” (Brandenburg and de Wit 2011), without losing its substance, so the improvement of research and education quality, in favour of a wider internationalization and homologation. Moreover, the role of Universities must be central in helping understanding these global changes and how to deal with them. According to the authors, Higher Education as a tradeable commodity should not be considered the main goal of our society, but again, a mean to enhance competition and cooperation among all higher Education Institutions; which is essential for example, also for facing competition with other globally active knowledge economies, like the US and Japan.

On the other hand, the progressive globalization and internationalization of higher education may seem in contrast with the maintenance of national features. With its incorporation in the Maastricht treaty, education gained much more importance at Union level. It was not an easy path but it has been the results of many years of work, mobilization and cooperation among players at different levels. As said before education has not been central in the European agenda since the beginning, as it was embedded within member states’ competences and duties.

Until 1970s education policies were coordinated by Member States. “National governments have been very hesitant to transfer national responsibilities in education

(but also culture) to the European level. Education was considered a principal responsibility of the nation state" (Huisman, 2004). Education, in particular the field of Higher Education, was considered as a competence of the single state, and policies governing this field should be developed at the national level. The Europeanization of Higher education was something to be avoided, also taking into consideration the fact that education was not even regulated by the treaties. Moreover, national legacies and traditions were considered fundamental values of a State and needed to be protected (Richardson, 2012). Above all linguistic particularism was something that states feared of losing, in favour of another foreign language, in the majority of the cases, in favour of the English language, and in a sense the fluidity of the language policy in Europe tried to maintain the multiplicity of languages existing in Europe (Phillipson, 2006, p. 24). This fluidity in language policy, according to Phillipson, is given by the fact that in Europe coexist many official languages and by the "unresolved tension between linguistic nationalism (monolingualism), EU institutional multilingualism, and English becoming dominant in the EU" (Phillipson, 2006, p. 24). In fact, English has the potential to become the global language thank to its malleability and openness towards shifts in vocabulary and use (Schulzke, 2014, p. 236), but "critics also argue that the spread of English threatens the survival of other languages, thereby endangering the minority cultures that are linked to those languages and providing another mechanism by which the citizens of core English-speaking countries assert global dominance" (Schulzke, 2014, p. 226).

Member states, also for linguistic reasons, have been not so eager in letting the EU enter their sphere of influence in higher education field. "Education has often been invoked as an important instrument of nation building and of State power consolidation" (Clots-Figueras and Masella, 2012) and an important tool for nation-building policies (Huisman, 2004). In fact, education has been listed among those competences protected by the subsidiarity principle, whose administration belong primary to member States and to a lesser extent to the EU.

Moreover, according to Kwiek (2007), "national education systems contributed to the creation of civic loyalties and national identities and became guardians for national languages, cultures, literatures and consciousness". Education is deeply eradicated and deeply connected to states' identity, and seen as a traditional function of the nation-state

(Garben, 2008). Still Kwiek stresses the role of Universities, as German thinkers conceived it, as a major provider of national consciousness. From his point of view, education and in particular higher education has always been deeply related to the identity of a people and to the creation of a national awareness. It cultivates not just individuals, but individuals as nation's citizens (Spybey, 1996). This conception has strictly connected States and their higher education systems. Since the take-over of globalization and internationalization of higher education, in order to face the new matrix of knowledge economy, nation states are not the only players in the field of higher education. The internationalization of higher education and the progressive cooperation among European member states, have led to the widening of EU's interest and powers over this field. This issue will be analysed more in detail in one of the paragraphs below.

It can be argued that globalization and internationalization in the education field and the progressive marketization of knowledges, and moreover, the importance gained by knowledge economy brought member states to question their effectiveness in the education field and pushed them to find a new way in order to face the new matrix and the new environment that they were experiencing. "Curriculum development, increasing of student's mobility programmes, more cooperation and integration in the research field, the use of English as the lingua franca for scientific communication, the growing international labour market for scholars and scientists, the growth of communications firms and of multinational and technology publishing, and the use of information technology (IT)" (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p. 291) are some of the characteristics of today's conception of Higher Education.

1.5 European Union's and Member States' Competences

In order to better understand the extent to which education policies have been dealt both at national and supranational level, it is fundamental to understand which are the competences attributed to the EU and which are those of the member states. Moreover, this part of the chapter will analyse the role played by the EU in the realm of education policies and how its competences have been widened and ended up touching areas that have always been among member states competences. Of course, during this process

also the legal basis through which the EU pursued policies in the education field have been widened, thank also to the European Court of Justice judgements.

In the Preamble of the TEU it is written that the Union "resolved to continue the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity." The principle of subsidiarity, together with the principles of conferral, proportionality and proximity, governs the limits of the Union's competences. With competences it is meant the areas in which the Union and the member states can legislate. Competences can be exclusive, shared, coordinated and complementary. According to the principle of subsidiarity the European Union can intervene whether the aim could be better achieved at the European level, only if the EU does not have exclusive competence. This principle is included in the TEU, and the Treaty restates the residual clause, according to which "qualsiasi competenza non attribuita all'Unione dai Trattati, appartiene agli Stati Membri" it is also reaffirmed in art. 4 of the TEU, together with the principle of autonomy of States and the principle of sincere cooperation (Porchia, 2010, p. 633).

So, in the case that the member State cannot with its means achieve the aim or it is thought that the given aim can be better and completely achieved at the higher level, the EU can intervene. Generally, the EU intervention is requested whether there is the need of experts' opinions or of more powerful means that can be better find at the EU level. These principles, on which the actions of the EU are based, are fundamental for the well-functioning of the European machine. National parliaments are like the watchdogs of subsidiarity, in fact in the case in which someone appeal to the principle of subsidiarity, the EU's proposal has to be evaluated by the member state. These principles are fundamental in setting the limits to the EU's action in order to leave to member states the autonomy to legislate on sensitive issues regarding their internal situation. Since the Council of Nizza in 2000 and the subsequent Laeken Declaration of 2001, it has been put centre stage the need of "individuare le modalità per stabilire e mantenere una più precisa delimitazione delle competenze tra l'unione europea e gli Stati membri e che rispetti il principio di sussidarietà" (Porchia, 2010, p.631). It was then with the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, that systematically, competences have been put in both Treaties. Fundamental principles governing competences can be found in the TEU

(art.5), while the categories recognised as competences of the EU or of the Member States are included in the TFEU (art. 2-6). The choice of dividing dispositions on competences between the two Treaties, aim at avoiding any attempt to create a hierarchy between the two Treaties, and give to them the same legal power (Porchia, 2010, p. 632).

There are certain competences which are pursued only by the EU and vice versa, some are proper of member states only. Exclusive competences, coordinated by art. 3 of the TFEU, gather all the fields in which the EU has powers and can legislate upon. In this case Member States legislate only to implement EU legislation. For example, exclusive competences of the EU are related to custom unions, competition rules for internal market, monetary policy, conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy and common commercial policy, and in the broader sense, everything that is related to trade. In these cases, member states have no power, as they "delegated" their powers over these issues to the Union.

In other fields, the Union has more limited or almost no powers. For example, in the so called shared competences, coordinated by art. 4 of the TFEU, the EU set minimum standard competences and then it is up to each member state to legislate following the guidelines given by the EU. So, in the realm of international market, social policies, environment, transport, energy, public health matters, area of freedom, security and justice, the EU cannot legislate on all aspects, but it is member states' task to further implement the missing aspects where the EU did not enter. In this case States can add more restrictive protective measures.

There are also some fields in which the EU cannot intervene, except for giving some guidelines to member States, these are coordinated competences, listed in art. 5 of the TFEU. Generally, these competences deal with the internal policies of each member state. Consequently, each member state has the power to legislate on their internal economic situation, on the coordination of employment policies and in those fields that have to ensure coordination of member states' social policies. In these cases, the EU can only give some guidelines, in order to coordinate the overall European situation. These are sensitive issues, strictly related to the internal situation of each member state and to their sovereignty, so, the EU can only coordinate them from an external position.

Education policies fall into the realm of complementary competences, outlined in art. 6 of the TFEU. In this case the EU should intervene in order to support and coordinate States' actions. Its support is not delivered through legislative acts, which does not entail EU organization or harmonization of States' measures. Other complementary competencies are related to culture, tourism, industry, civil protection and administrative cooperation. "The term 'complementary competence' is not used in Article 2(5) TFEU. However, it appears to be the best way generically to refer to 'actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of Member States'" as Schütze (2015, p. 242) argues. Moreover, after the Lisbon reform, complementary competences cannot "entail harmonization of Member States' laws or regulations" (art. 2(5)-second indent), this guarantees "legislative space to the Member States", and avoid national legislation modifications by the Union legislation (Schütze 2015, p. 243).

1.5.1 EU competences and the knowledge economy framework

As said above the progressive internationalization of higher education pushed higher education institutions and more in general States, to cooperate, even with some difficulties. One of the main obstacles to cooperation is for sure the reluctance of States of letting the EU taking part of their influence over higher education. "Globalization redefines the place of the university in society from an instrument for political integration to part of the productive process, a driver of economic integration between nations" (Kwiek, 2007). As Wasserfallen formulated it in a more general way: "the thesis from the political economy, that economic and social policies cannot be strictly divided, has been confirmed" (Wasserfallen, 2008, p. 5). For example, Wasserfallen further explains this passage by providing a practical example. Equal payment between men and women has been seen through the lenses of economic reason, rather than being treated as a social issue. In fact, competition would be distorted as some states would have a comparative advantage in discriminating women by paying them less than men. So, economic and social policies have always been deeply intertwined for the progressive creation of a common market. After the adoption of the European Single act (1986) the Union has been able to deal with more social issues, even though "effective supranational social policies, beyond the necessity of the single market, are quite rare" (Wasserfallen, 2008, p. 4).

Furthermore, “the process of globalisation is associated with a restructuring of the nation state: through the deregulation of legal and financial controls, the opening of markets or quasi-markets (including in higher education), and the increasing primacy of notions of competition, efficiency and managerialism” (Enders, 2004). Globalization brings with it also an environment in which the powers of nation-states are challenged, and also in the higher education field they feel to have less power and space for manoeuvre in policies control. Moreover, this kind of state deregulation and increased competition, in combination with globalization and decreasing national funding for higher education, motivate higher education institutions to expand their activities beyond the borders of the state (Van der Wende et al., 1999).

In the 80s and 90s the progressive and fast changes faced by industrial economies, related to globalization of business and digitalization of production process, required for markets an increased flexibility and quick response (Moniz, 2011). In this race the EU was losing ground and it was late than others to invest in new digital infrastructure, new communication technologies and R&D, laying behind USA and Japan. Europe was facing major difficulties in keeping up with other superpowers. The Lisbon strategy then, was the starting point for a new European joint policy, in order to enhance European international competitiveness in the emerging knowledge economy and society. In 2000 then, in the framework of the Lisbon strategy, there was the aim of making the EU the most powerful and competitive knowledge economy, and it emphasised the importance of life-long learning and higher education in doing so. This EU development strategy defines a new direction for the coordination of national policies, and one of the reasons is to be find in the concept of knowledge economy, in this case knowledge means the inter-linkage of education and innovation (Moniz, 2011).

A European Commission document, on the new start of the Lisbon strategy, stated that “In advanced economies such as the EU, knowledge, meaning R&D, innovation and education, is a key driver of productivity growth. Knowledge is a critical factor with which Europe can ensure competitiveness in a global world where others compete with cheap labour or primary resources” (European Commission 2005, p. 21). In this sense knowledges, to which education is strictly connected as one of the major providers, is a key resource for European economic development. For this reason, “the education and training systems should be reformed in order to better cope with the

challenges of globalisation and the transition to a knowledge economy" (Rodrigues 2005). The common objectives gathered in this strategy had to be pursued at the supra-national level, using traditional tools such as directives, community programmes, but also new methods, such as "new modes of governance which included framework directives, soft-law, co-regulation, self-regulation, voluntary agreements and economic instruments" (Idema and Kelemen, 2006).

1.5.2 Parallel competences and the use of soft law measures

As Schütze (2015, p. 242) argues, "the contours of this competence type [Complementary competences] are largely unexplored by jurisprudence". It can be argued that the EU in some cases "entered" policy areas normally attributed to member states, as education or social policies. As the Union has not the legal basis for doing so, non-binding mechanisms of soft law have been used through the years in order to pursue at EU level some objectives belonging to member states' competences. States have been reluctant in entering this process, but some policies have been successfully implemented also by using these mechanisms, even though "Union legislation must not modify existing national legislation" (Schütze, 2015, p. 243).

It can be stated that, there is a sort of symmetry when the EU's and the member states' spheres of influence are not supposed to formally interfere with one another. In this case the Union's action can be labelled as "parallel" to that of Member States. These two actions have to be integrated on the basis of the need for coordination, in order to "not result in Member States being prevented from exercising their [actions]" (TFEU, art 4(4)). In other words, as specified by the TFEU "the Union shall have competence to carry out activities, in particular to define and implement programmes; however, the exercise of that competence shall not result in Member States being prevented from exercising theirs" (TFEU, art. 4(3)). "In tal caso, l'azione dell'Unione si prospetta come parallela a quella degli stati, dovendo le sue azioni soltanto integrarsi sulla base di un obbligo di coordinamento finalizzato a garantire la coerenza reciproca delle politiche nazionali e delle politiche dell'Unione" (Adam and Tizzano, 2017, p. 421). For example, article 180 TFEU[2], states that in the field of scientific and

[2] Article 180 TFEU: In pursuing these objectives, the Union shall carry out the following activities, complementing the activities carried out in the Member States:(a) implementation of

technological research, the two sphere of influence (the National and the European one) complete each other. Moreover, art. 181[3] TFEU, guarantees the reciprocal coherence of national and European policies. Subsequently, "un'iniziativa dell'Unione in materia di ricerca scientifica e tecnologica o di cooperazione allo sviluppo, ad esempio, non impedirà l'avvio di iniziative analoghe, ma di diverso contenuto da parte di uno o più Stati Membri" (Adam and Tizzano, 2017, p. 422). In other words, in some sectors, such as scientific development, cooperation and research, Union's actions do not interfere with States' actions coming into being, even if they deal with the same subject.

It is important to highlight this aspect, also for the purpose of this dissertation, because even though education has always been among member states' competences, gradually some aspects of education policies have been regulated also at EU level, without preventing Member States from dealing with the same issues. Soft law measures are the mechanisms through which the EU can in a certain way enter areas which are subjected to Member States' sphere of influence.

For example, in order to face the increase of unemployment rates, Member States had the need to restructure labour markets. The solution has been called European Social model. Many thought of a European-level solution, but its competences in the social field remained limited (Trubek and Mosher, 2003). In this framework a new model of governance was taken into consideration, in order to coordinate regional, national and transnational authorities. It consisted of a soft law governance mechanism that linked the supranational and the national level in policy fields where the EU did not enter before. But, many member states where still reluctant to transfer policy-making

---

research, technological development and demonstration programmes, by promoting cooperation with and between undertakings, research centres and universities;(b) promotion of cooperation in the field of Union research, technological development and demonstration with third countries and international organisations;(c) dissemination and optimisation of the results of activities in Union research, technological development and demonstration;(d) stimulation of the training and mobility of researchers in the Union.

[3] Article 181 TFEU: 1. The Union and the Member States shall coordinate their research and technological development activities so as to ensure that national policies and Union policy are mutually consistent. 2. In close cooperation with the Member State, the Commission may take any useful initiative to promote the coordination referred to in paragraph 1, in particular initiatives aiming at the establishment of guidelines and indicators, the organisation of exchange of best practice, and the preparation of the necessary elements for periodic monitoring and evaluation. The European Parliament shall be kept fully informed.

competence to the EU level, above all in sensitive issues such as social policies and employment, "social policy seems to be one of the last fields where the Nation State is still fully sovereign" (Wasserfallen, 2008, p. 2).

Soft law measures may seem harmless and not so useful, as they produce no binding acts and they have no legal values. But, as for example in the case of the Bologna Process, taken into consideration in the next chapter, what seemed just an informal and voluntary organization turned out to be more legally binding than what member states first thought. In this particular case a soft law measure brought many changes both at national and supranational level.

Here below are listed some examples of soft law measures and mechanisms adopted by the EU, through which the Union was able to enter policy areas that normally belong to member states.

The European Employment Strategy (EES)

The European Employment Strategy dates back to 1996, and it is an example of soft law mechanism, where the Commission develops general ideas and guidelines for member states to pursue. Member states improvement are then monitored by an employment committee, made of representatives both of the member states and of the Commission. It can be listed among the soft law mechanisms through which the EU widened its competences. It must be highlighted that these methods are not binding and do not create legal commitment for member states. If they do not comply with directives they cannot be legally pursued by the EU but they could encounter other possible, negative effect such as the "naming and shaming".

Moreover, "it could be said that the EES gives up the legal force of traditional regulation in order to allow the EU to deal with come core areas of social policy that were hitherto solely reserved to member states. "(Trubek and Mosher, 2003).

The open method of coordination (OMC)

In the framework of the Lisbon Strategy, set in 2000, it has been developed a method devised for easing the implementation of the main points highlighted by the Lisbon Strategy, which has exerted much more interest than the ambitious program of the Lisbon process itself (Dehousse, 2003). As a result of the Lisbon strategy, some policies

concerning areas protected by the subsidiarity principle, needed to be coordinated at the EU level, but Member States were no longer eager to accept the further expansion of the EU in the realm of their exclusive competences (Veiga and Amaral, 2012). In particular, "the Lisbon strategy aims at encouraging the development of information technologies and establishing a climate favourable for innovation, by speeding up the removal of obstacles to the freedom of service provision and the liberalisation of the transport and energy markets" (Dehousse, 2003, p. 3). So, in this particular climate, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) was formally adopted, even though it originated in the framework of the European Employment Strategy (EES). "The OMC employs non-binding objectives and guidelines to bring about change in social policy and other areas" (Trubek and Trubek, 2005, p.10). This tool involves: fixing guidelines to be achieved in a given period of time, setting benchmarks tailored to the needs of Member States, integrating guidelines into national policies and monitoring process through peer review and mutual learning process. "OMC avoids transferring power to the EC, thus avoiding agency loss […] The OMC is used in areas of national political sensitivity where, unlike the case of economic policy, convergence is not imperative" (Veiga and Amaral, 2012).

Even though some scholars (Idema and Kelemen, 2006, Trubek and Trubek, 2005) argue that OMC and other forms of soft law are innocuous exercise that entails no binding commitments which fail to provide concrete effects in the short run, on the other hand, Rodrigues (2005) points out that even if it does not produce immediate effects, this tool is useful for enhancing cooperation and dialogue among member states, that may begin legally binding initiatives in the long run. As Dehousse argues, "the desire to preserve member states' autonomy explain the preference given to this 'soft' approach" (Dehousse, 2003, p. 15).

1.5.3 European Court of Justice's cases

Throughout education policy history in Europe, an important phase has been initiated by some European Court of Justice judgements in the field of higher education and vocational training. They brought new attention to the importance of being able to study in another member state, for European citizens. The free movement of people, and so of students and workers, have been favourable to the progressive harmonization and

convergence of higher education systems, which brought with it the insurance of qualifications and comparability of qualifications between and within countries (Woldegiorgis, 2013).

This part of the chapter will take into consideration the role of the ECJ in the progressive widening of EU competences in the educational framework. Further and more practical examples will be then given by the analysis of some important Court's judgements, that helped the progressive harmonization and coordination of higher education systems and programmes in Europe, and that further the condition of exchange students.

There are divers views on the conduct of the ECJ. It can be argued that the Court played a major role in the advancement of social integration (Wasserfallen, 2008), and the judicial influence of its judgements has highly effected also national governments. Especially in social policy integration the role of the Court of Justice has been severe. According to some scholars, the growing power of the ECJ can be seen as a transfer of sovereignty from the nation-state to a supranational institution. They highlight two approaches on the evolution of Europe's legal system. The legal autonomy approach, where the ECJ has been able to forward its European integration agenda against the interests of some member states (Garret et el., 1998, Burley and Mattli, 1993; Carruba et al. 2012); and the political power approach, so, "where the ECJ has been activist, member governments have supported this" (Garret et al., 1998). "This perspective sees the ECJ as an independent political actor, who can enhance democracy by empowering individual citizens against a wide range of potential adversaries" (Leudtke, 2004, p. 1130).

The two approaches delineate on the one hand, a Court that is above member states and act against their interests, while countries can only accept its judgements; on the other hand, the Court and member states cooperate in a certain way, and member states are conscious of "losing" a part of their sovereignty in some fields. However, Carruba et al. (2012) "argue that ECJ rulings help facilitate integration because of government preferences, not in spite of them." Moreover, according to Leudtke (2004, p. 1129) "the ECJ seeks to maintain 'legitimacy' in the eyes of the member states, and thus tempers its activism to their preferences." But, this view has been challenged by

some scholars, such as Stone Sweet (2005, p. 159), who argued that the EU's legal system "operates not to comfort the legal positions of the member states, but to facilitate the expansion of transnational society and supranational authority to govern."

Anyway, Burley and Mattli (1993) argue that the Court and community law had a crucial role in the process of European integration, consequently community legal regulation penetrated, from just the narrowly economic domain into uncommon issues, such as social welfare and education. "National sovereignty in the social field eroded, because some legal authority, or *de jure* competences, shifted to the European level" (Wasserfallen, 2008, p.3).

For the aim of this dissertation, it is important to highlight the fact that the ECJ played a major role in the shifting from national to supranational level of some social and educational policies, normally attributed to member states (Wasserfallen, 2008, 2013). It has not occurred a shift concerning the competences of the EU and member states, but, supranational legal acts often took precedence over domestic law, even on sensitive issues such as social policy, and moreover, individuals invoke community law directly in domestic courts (Burley and Mattli, 1993).

The three cases that will be analysed for the purpose of this work are: Françoise Gravier v City of Liège (C 293/83), Vincent Blaizot v the University of Liège and others (C 24/86) and Rudy Grzelczyk v Centre public d'aide sociale d'Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve (C 184/99).

The first two cases deal with the non-discrimination principle and with the subsequent right to be enrolled in a University or to fulfil vocational training in another member state. The third case deals with the right of residence for students and the right of receiving a minimum subsistence allowance even in another member state. All three judgements have been important for the further integration of education policies throughout Europe. Moreover, "the ECJ has necessitated the restructuring of educational systems in several countries to ensure equal access (e.g. in term of fees) to foreign EU students" (Garben, 2008). For example, as the case C 147/03 *Commission v Austria* highlighted, the impact of the ECJ in the domestic educational system is evident. In this case the Commission intervene in order to punish the state that violated treaty's provisions, by not allowing students from other member states to enrol in higher

education institution in Austria, as they achieved their diploma in another state. The Court assessed that a diploma achieved in another member state has the same validity and this is seen as a discrimination on grounds of nationality. In its decision the Court took into consideration also EU jurisprudence and previous cases such as the Gravier and Blaizot cases. In this particular case the Commission directly entered the space of domestic education policy in order to guarantee the mutual recognition of diplomas.

The Gravier and Blaizot cases

The Gravier case has been an important case, concerning the principle of non-discrimination and the right to access vocational training in another member state.

The facts of the case are here briefly described (Case C293/83)

Françoise Gravier was a French student who obtained a student visa for studying in Belgium. She went abroad to study cartoon drawing. Since she did not pay an extra fee, solely addressed to non-national students, her enrolment and her student visa have been refused and her residence permit was then not extended. Firstly, she brought proceedings before the tribunal of first instance of the city of Liège, arguing that such obligations to pay extra fees constituted discrimination on grounds of nationality and so, the University conduct was against art. 7[4] of the Treaty[5]. Moreover, the defendant was also against art. 59[6] of the Treaty, which provides services to non-nationals. The tribunal of first instance found problems with the interpretation of community law. According to the defendant, asking for additional tax fees was just a way through which Belgian Higher Education institutions bore the costs of having so many foreign students

[4] Article 7: "Within the scope of application of this Treaty, and without prejudice to any special provisions contained therein, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited. The Council may, on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the Assembly [European Parliament], adopt, by a qualified majority, rules designed to prohibit such discrimination."

[5] Paragraphs 2, 5 and 6 of the judgement C293/83

[6] Article 59: "Within the framework of the provisions set out below, restrictions on freedom to provide services within the Community shall be progressively abolished during the transitional period in respect of nationals of Member States who are established in a State of the Community other than that of the person for whom the services are intended. The Council may, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, extend the provisions of this Chapter to nationals of a third country who provide services and who are established within the Community.

enrolled in their courses. In fact, foreign students coming from other member states are not supposed to pay fees in the host country.

The first question that the Court had to answer was, if vocational training fall within the scope of art. 7 of the Treaty[7], and the second one was, if the specific course in which Ms. Gravier was enrolled could be considered vocational training[8].

The applicable law

Regulation n° 1612/68[9] of the Council of October 1968 "*On freedom of movement for workers within the Community*"[10], provided workers, who are national of a member state, employed in another member state, with access to vocational training under the same right of national workers. Moreover, in the framework of art 128[11] of the Treaty, which lays down principles for the implementation of a common policy on vocational training, decision n° 63/266/EEC of April 1963 states that "the general principles must enable every person to receive adequate training, with due regard for freedom of choice of occupation, place of training and place of work"[12] (Council of the European Economic Community, 1963). Furthermore, in the context of art. 128, the common vocational training policy includes the free movement of workers and the improvement of living standards. So, vocational training is likely to promote both movement of people, and so of workers, and the raising and improvement of living standards for workers[13]. Then, discrimination on grounds of nationality is contrary to art. 7 of the Treaty[14]. Any form of education that prepares for a qualification or a particular career may be considered as vocational training. In this sense vocational training fall within the scope of the Treaty. For this reason, also the second question found its answer; as being the course in cartoon drawing a way to prepare people for a precise profession, it

[7] Paragraph 9(1) of the judgement C293/83
[8] Paragraphs 7 and 9(2) of the judgement C293/83
[9] Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 "On freedom of movement for workers within the Community"
[10] Paragraph 20 of the judgement C293/83
[11] Article 128: "The Council shall, acting on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, lay down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market."
[12] Paragraph 21 of the judgement C293/83
[13] Paragraph 23 of the judgement C293/83
[14] Paragraph 26 of the judgement C293/83

can be considered as a form of vocational training[15]. Then, discrimination on grounds of nationality is contrary to art. 7 of the Treaty.

Decision on the merits

The Court ruled that imposing extra tax fees to non-national students constituted discrimination on grounds of nationality and violates art. 7 of the Treaty[16]. Moreover, the course in which the plaintiff was enrolled could be considered a form of vocational training according to the decision of the Council n° 63/266/EEC[17].

The Gravier case has been a symbolic turning point politically and legally (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001). It widened the consideration of vocational training at EU level, and widened also European citizens' rights in the framework of vocational training and higher education. Even though the regulation of higher education *per se* was not regulated by the EU, the access to it was. This case has been then acknowledged as a precedent in European case law and used also in the Blaizot case.

The facts of the case are here briefly described (C24/86)

The President of the Tribunal of first instance referred to the Court, for a preliminary ruling, a question on the interpretation of rt. 7 of the Treaty, for facts related to the financial conditions of students studying in another member state. The question has been raised by Mr. Blaizot and other 16 plaintiffs against the University of Liège, the Catholic University of Louvain, the Free University of Brussels and the University Centre of Notre Dame de la Paix, Namur (the defendants)[18]. The plaintiffs were all French nationals and received a resident permit for studying veterinary in Belgium. The course of study involved three years leading to a preliminary diploma, and three further years for achieving a doctorate. But, they were required to pay extra fees as non-nationals[19].

---

[15] Paragraph 31 of the judgement C293/83
[16] Paragraphs 17 and 32 (1) of the judgement C24/86
[17] Paragraph 32 (2) of the judgement C24/86
[18] Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the judgement C24/86
[19] Paragraph 3 of the judgement C24/86

The applicable law

Art. 7 of the Treaty, against the discrimination on grounds of nationality[20] , and art. 128 of the EEC Treaty on vocational training, as also University can be considered a form of vocational training, above all in Belgium thank to its degree programme structure. Students then, appealed to the judgement in the Gravier case for being refunded of the fees they already payed before the 13th of February 1985[21].

Decision on the merits

University studies in veterinary could be considered "vocational training", so no extra fees should have been charged on non-national students, as it constituted discrimination on grounds of nationality, therefore against art. 7 of the Treaty. Enrolment fees could not be refunded except for those students who brought legal proceedings[22]. In this case refunds were possible only for students who fell within the circumstances reported in the Gravier case[23].

In this particular case, in Belgium the first three years (candidature) could not be considered as a professionalizing training, but the Court argued that in order to obtain the final diploma (fundamental for taking up a career) it is necessary having completed the first cycle of studies. For this reason, studies in veterinary medicine fell within the scope of vocational training. The fact that Higher Education system in Belgium was structured in a certain way, was not taken into account. Only the scope of the course of studies was taken into consideration, and validated as vocational training even though at national level it was not mentioned as such. "The Court of Justice re-interpreted article 128 of the EEC-Treaty on vocational training in a new and unexpected way. Formerly confined to laying down general principles at the European level, the scope of article 128 was enlarged" (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001, p.12).

The Blaizot case has been important in European jurisprudence because, beyond having proved discrimination on grounds of nationality, it also recognised higher education as a form of vocational training. In particular, the Court stated that in general

[20] Paragraph 4 of the Judgement C24/86
[21] Paragraph 6 of the Judgement C24/86
[22] Paragraph 36 (1) (2) of the Judgement C24/86
[23] Paragraph 6 of the judgement C24/86

University studies fulfil the criteria of providing students with the necessary and adequate amount of knowledges for taking up a career and pursuing a given profession.

The Grzelczyk case

The facts of the case are here briefly described

Rudy Grzelczyk was a French national, who was enrolled in a Belgian University since 1995 and, consequently, was resident in Belgium for reasons related to his studies. When he stopped working, he applied for receiving students grants in order to continue his studies. The State of Belgium refused his request as he was then an economically non-active citizen, and his student status prevented him from being considered a worker, and so enjoy social benefits of migrant workers[24].

Applicable law

The Court stated that union citizenship and the freedom of movement are constitutional rights and Directive 93/96/EEC[25] contradicted them. The directive states that students have to prove that "he or she has sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden on the social security system of the host Member State during his or her period of residence" (Council, 1993). In fact, one of the question raised, was the further interpretation by the Court of the directive. Eventually, according to the jurisprudence a student, resident in another member state has to demonstrate certain prerequisites, so, a certain degree of integration into the society of the hosting state, and that their financial problems are temporary. Moreover, the Court stated that "a student's financial position may change with the passage of time for reasons beyond his control. The truthfulness of a student's declaration is therefore to be assessed only as at the time when it is made"[26]. The Court in its sentence referred to art 12 and 17 of the EC Treaty, respectively addressing to the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality and to the Citizenship of the Union. Freedom of movement is one of the fundamental rights and it is strictly related to the right of being entitled to welfare benefits at the citizens' place of residence.

[24] Paragraphs 10, 11 and 12 of the Judgement C184/99
[25] Council Directive 93/96/EEC of the Council of 29 October 1993 on the right of residence for students. Repealed by: Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States
[26] Paragraph 45 of the Judgement C184/99

Directive 93/96 could withdraw residents' rights if citizens did not fulfil all the requirements. Then also articles 6[27], 8[28] and 8a[29] of the EC Treaty (now, after amendment, Articles 12 EC, 17 EC and 18 EC) and Council Directive 93/96/EEC of 29 October 1993[30] on the right of residence for students, have been take into consideration.

Decision on the merits

The Court granted social benefits to Mr. Grzelczyk as he proved that his financial problems were only temporary and he fulfilled the requirements falling within the scope of Regulation 1612/68 of the Council of 15th October 1968 on the freedom of movement of workers. Moreover, Articles 6 and 8 of the EC Treaty (now, after amendment, Articles 12 EC and 17 EC) preclude entitlement to a non-contributory social benefit, for nationals of other Member States legally resident in another Member State.

On the one hand judges almost forced Belgium to provide migrant students with social benefits. On the other hand, "the Court grants the right to obtain social assistance to students only, when they established a certain link to the society of their host state" (Wasserfallen, 2008, p.15). In other words, migrant students can be entitled of welfare

---

[27] Paragraph 3 of the Judgement C184/99. Art. 6 states that "Within the scope of application of this Treaty, and without prejudice to any special provisions contained therein, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited."

[28] Paragraph 4 of the Judgement C184/99. Art. 8 states that "(1) Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. (2) Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the rights conferred by this Treaty and shall be subject to the duties imposed thereby."

[29] Paragraph 5 of the Judgement C184/99. Art. 8a states that: "Every citizen of the Union shall have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States."

[30] Paragraph 7 of the Judgement C184/99. Directive 93/96 states that: "In order to lay down conditions to facilitate the exercise of the right of residence and with a view to guaranteeing access to vocational training in a non- discriminatory manner […] the Member States shall recognise the right of residence for any student who is a national of a Member State and who does not enjoy that right under other provisions of Community law; where the student assures the relevant national authority that he has sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State

benefits only if they can prove to fulfil certain characteristics, and not to be a burden for the host society. Even though, as Wasserfallen (2008, p.18) points out, "it is unclear, how a student should burden a social assistance system".

The Court tried to balance its judgement by taking into consideration both Union citizens' rights to move and to have social benefits in any member state, and the Member States' concern about granting social benefits to economically non-active citizens, which may become a burden for the social assistance system of the hosting State. "La Corte, in linea sia con la sua giurisprudenza più risalente in tema di interpretazione estensiva della libertà di circolazione delle persone, sia con quella più recente che definisce la cittadinanza europea come '*status* fondamentale' del cittadino comunitario, accoglie il ricorso della Commissione" (Di Martino, 2006).

As a consequence, to this judgement, Hailbronner (2005) argues that little steps have been made toward the harmonization of the social systems among member states. Moreover, "the introduction of Union citizenship is not a sufficient explanation for a fundamental reconstruction of social rights of Union citizens" (Hailbronner, 2005, p. 1266). The community still not have enough powers concerning legislation in the social field. Notwithstanding the relevant importance of this case, in a certain way it created new rights in the social assistance field which have almost no fundaments in European law.

This case highlights the progressive importance that the condition of exchange and migrant students have in the European Union's life. Furthermore, the case was important also from the point of view of Union citizenship and access to welfare benefits of economically non-active citizens.

1.6 Conclusion

As argued in this chapter, Education in Europe has always been more or less present in the EU agenda, even though its legal basis has not been clarified until 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty. In the Treaty of Rome, we could already find some provisions that would have then used in the future judgements of the ECJ, which gave then a major impulse to the development of a more European approach to education policies and to

the education field in general.

Member States were interested in cooperating in this field, initially, for reasons related to the common market. In fact, vocational training was already included in the treaty, as a tool for enhancing the progressive convergence towards a common market.

Many important step forward have been made toward the progressive Europeanization of Education policies. The EU through Directives, Regulations and soft law measures, has entered a realm which has always been conceived as integrated part of Member States' national policies. Education is grouped among the so called complementary competences, and the EU can intervene only to support and coordinate States' actions in this field. Furthermore, some competences related to development and cooperation can be listed among the so called parallel competences, in this case Union's actions do not prevent States from dealing with the same subject. Also ECJ's decisions have argued towards the recognition of education as an essential part of both European integration and of the boosting of the common market. Some cases, such as the Gravier case, have been a major turning point in this sense, by granting students the possibility of studying in another member states and seeing their qualification recognised also at home (and in all other member states) because according to the Court's judgement, Higher Education could be considered as a form of vocational training and as useful tool for providing students with the adequate knowledges for taking up a career. They also played an important role in the recognition of mobile students' rights, important for the further implementation of the Erasmus programme, and for the recognition of diplomas and qualifications throughout all Member States.

To sum up, education has gained an always more important place in the European agenda, as Member States saw the potential that more compatible education policies and a stricter cooperation in this field, may have for the progressive social integration and for their development in the global economy.

Chapter 2
Operationalization of Higher Education policies in Europe

The second chapter will deal with “how” the EU has further implemented a system of higher education throughout the continent and how thank to it, also the Erasmus programme found its way through, and became one of the most known and well-established exchange programme in Europe and worldwide, and which tools have been used by the Union for the progressive harmonization and internationalization of higher education in Europe.

Some tools taken into consideration in this work are the Bologna process, for the creation of a common European higher education area, that shares many of the points fostered by Erasmus; the ECTS system, a European grading systems for the convertibility of grades achieved in another member state, for example during a period of study abroad, and then a set of EU Directives that aimed at the full recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications.

2.1 The Bologna Process for a common European Higher Education area

The Bologna Declaration, in full, *Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education* has been signed on the 19th of June 1999. Before then Higher Education in Europe had already gain a supranational dimension. Even though, as stated before, education have always been among the competences of member States, the progressive rise of exchange programmes in the 1970s and the ever growing interest of the EU in the field of education, brought a new supranational vision on education to the fore.

So, from the perspective of Higher Education Institutions, the question of how these institutions could have been made comparable with other European institutions and then

suitable for welcoming Erasmus exchange students, became important (Huisman et al. 2012, p. 3). The progressive importance that exchange programmes acquired since 1970s started to be felt by Higher Education Institutions, as well as by national governments and students. Governments raised the issue of transparency and recognition of foreign programmes, degrees and qualifications, while students were more concern with how to fit their experience abroad in their curriculum at home, and how to have credits recognised. Moreover, "mobility, and internationalisation in the broader sense, previously driven largely by social and cultural objectives, became increasingly connected to broader economic imperatives" (Huisman et al. 2012, p. 3). A clear example is the British initiative of attracting fee-paying foreign students and treating education as a tradable commodity useful for making profits. Even throughout Europe education started to be conceived as a profit maximize tool and as a "key driver for further economic development and growth. The European idea of free movement of capital, goods, services and people gradually 'spilled over' to the domain of higher education" (De Wit and Verhoeven, 2001, p. 204).

In 1999 the representatives of 29 states (14 were not EU member states) met in Bologna as follow-up group of the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998. In fact, a year earlier, in the framework of the 800th anniversary celebrations of the Sorbonne University in Paris, higher education ministers of four European Countries (Italy, France, Germany and the UK) came up with a document whose main aim was the harmonization of Higher Education structures and systems. As Huisman et al. (2012) point out, the key for understanding this act has a political explanation, as the four ministers saw this initiative as a way to solve problems related to their education policy at home. Initially it was an idea of the French education minister Claude Allègre, and he intended to use this declaration as a lever for national reforms. "He hoped that by initiating European cooperation in HE as a 'bottom-up' initiative of national ministers responsible for HE, he could pre-empt similar ambitions of the European Commission and establish a cultural counterbalance to the dominance of economic motives in the European Union" (Witte, 2001, p. 125).

Pauline Ravinet (2005), gave a broader interpretation of the political process and negotiations that led to the Sorbonne Declaration before, and to the signature of the bologna Process then. She argues that there was not a shared clear vision among the

four countries who met for signing the Sorbonne Declaration. According to the author, the French minister invited the ministers from Germany, Italy and only after, Britain, through an informal way, without stating clearly the reason why they were meeting. The four countries agreed upon the invitation of the French Minister, but pushed by different reasons. France for example, wanted to solve the gap between Universities and Grandes écoles with the introduction of the two cycle structure, "because with this system, *grandes écoles* would be able to give the same type of 5 year qualifications than universities […] And the two cycle structure was not either a proposition for a common framework for all European countries but a solution to a French problem" (Ravinet, 2005, p. 8). In Germany, a reform of the framework law on higher education was in preparation for more than two years, since 1996, and its main concern was the lack of attractiveness of German Higher Education Institutions internationally and "the introduction of Bachelor Master programs would have increased Geraman's institutions attractiveness and would have made them recognisable at the international level (Ravinet, 2005, p. 15). Britain was the last country to be invited, and its interest was lower as its higher education structure was already very similar to the two cycle structure, "but not signing could have revealed to be costly in the longer term, because it would have meant to go without the possibility to keep an influence over the possible developments of the Sorbonne meeting and declaration" (Ravinet, 2005, p. 19). Then, Italy was the country with the most disastrous situation under the educational point of view. So, the Sorbonne Declaration seemed a possible starting point for a renewal of the Italian structures and policies in the realm of higher education, and most of all because "to be engaged in a European project would be a tremendous lever" (Ravinet, 2005, p. 17).

To sum up, the negotiations of the first draft have been conducted through e-mails in an informal way by a restricted number of people, "it was a moment of consensus" (Ravinet, 2005, p. 20). The author outlined the process that led to the subsequent Bologna Process by seeing the Sorbonne Declaration from another perspective. In fact, also according to the author little has been said about the reasons that pushed these four Countries to laid down the basis for the further cooperation in the education sector. According to Ravinet then the cooperation among those countries has arouse not by a common and shared view on how to solve a common problem, but it can be explained

by taking into consideration the interests of the single states. Indeed, "we have seen that the four ministers not only did not share a clear vision, but had different motives to sign the declaration" (Ravinet, 2005, p. 21). They for sure anticipated some benefits for their current national situation, the merely political feature of the declaration may have had a role to in pushing states to sign the Declaration, moreover, the quiet unusual proceedings surprised them in a way that they were enthusiastic and more incline to cooperate than to mistrust (Ravinet, 2005).

In the end, they agreed to commit themselves "to encouraging a common frame of reference, aimed at improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). Even though the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998 has been labelled as too vague and general (Terry, 2008) it already contained the main points of what was going to be the Bologna Declaration. It already paved the way for the two-cycle degree programme, the use of ECTS system and the semesters formula, encouraging student mobility and the curricula development. The Declaration then addressed to all other European countries and asked for their involvement in this process.

The Bologna Declaration was then signed the next year during the meeting in the Italian city. The meeting took place as a follow-up meeting to the Sorbonne Declaration, in order to discuss the main points previously taken into consideration. "The Bologna Declaration of 1999 called for the reforms primarily in order to increase the attractiveness of higher education in European countries for students from outside Europe as well as in order to facilitate intra-European student mobility" (Teichler, 2007). Huisman et al. stressed the need "to work collectively towards an internationally competitive European Higher Education Area that would promote mobility and employability of its citizens, and would aim at greater compatibility and comparability of the higher education systems". Moreover, the Declaration added some actions lines to those highlighted by the Sorbonne Declaration, in particular six main action lines were proposed:

- the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees (including the implementation of the Diploma Supplement);
- adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles: undergraduate and graduate (3-year Bachelor degree+ 2-year Master degree);

- establishment of a system of credits as a proper means of promoting mobility;
- promotion of student and staff mobility;
- promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance; and
- promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education (Bologna Declaration, 1999).

It can be argued that many of these points are also deeply related to exchange programmes such as the Erasmus programme. In fact, The Bologna process and the Erasmus programme can be both held responsible for the development and enhancement of a European area for Higher Education. The Bologna Declaration took into account several points fostered by the Erasmus programme, and tried to enhance them in order to build a stronger area for cooperation and support among Higher Education Institutions. By taking into consideration the main points of the Erasmus programme, the Bologna process set forth the importance that this programme has had on the evolution of Higher Education in the EU. The popularity acquired by the Erasmus programme in promoting short-term periods of study abroad, pushed member states first, and countries outside the EU after, to enhance lifelong learning, student-centred learning, quality assurance, transparency, mobility and recognition and international openness. In fact, being able to attract foreign students, teachers and other staff members helps Universities rising their status and consequently their competitiveness in the Higher education field, and can also be seen as an economic advantage. "A global market for higher education evolved with a pattern of certain countries exporting higher education and others importing it" (Huisman et al, 2004).

The Bologna Process is structured as a ministerial conference, and its participants meet every two or three years in order to assess the progresses that have been made and to state new goals to be achieved. After each conference ministers adopt a communiqué, in which they state and outline the decisions that have been taken and the future achievements that will be assessed in the next conference. The last conference has been held in Paris in 2018, and the next one will be held in Rome in 2020. Furthermore, the Bologna Process "constructed on an almost entirely non- binding basis, has drawn in 48 countries, 20 of them outside the European Union (EU)" (Corbett and Henkel, 2013, p. 1). The European Commission is a full member of the Process, while the Council of Europe is only a consultative member, so a non-voting member.

"The Bologna Process was designed at the intergovernmental level, being reconfigured as a EU policy driver when the European Commission, already empowered to intervene in research and innovation, acquired the status of full member" (Veiga et al., 2015, p. 85). This reinforced role of the Commission within the Process, made higher education a central issue in the Europe of knowledge agenda, and increased the sense of cooperation among member states by giving a more European dimension to the process (Veiga et al., 2015). The Commission acts as the representatives of all European Member States and, of course, must not take the part of a particular State.

2.1.1 The knowledge economy discourse in the framework of the Bologna Process

The rhetoric on knowledge economy as given to Higher Education a higher rank in the domain of international competitiveness of States (Ravinet, 2008; Nokkala, 2006) and has become the preferred way of the states to refer to themselves (Nokkala, 2006). Knowledge economy and society emphasizes the "shift to knowledge intensive high skills labour force, international circulation of brains, emphasis on lifelong learning, transferable skills and competences and knowledge management as a key individual and organizational capacity" (Nokkala, 2006). Knowledge and the learning process are gaining a higher rank in the markets place, as they are at the same level of sold and purchased commodities (Barnett, 1997).

The genesis of The Bologna Process is strictly related to the necessary adjustment that Higher Education had to experience in order to fit the new matrix of the knowledge economy (Nokkala, 2006; Ravinet, 2008), as the global markets for higher education is consistently growing (Huisman and Van der Wende, 2004; Teichler 2004). The progressive development of the Bologna Process has been supported also by signatory states themselves, who saw in this Process the possibility of taking advantage from it and reform their national systems (Ravinet, 2008). "Benefits can be in the form of European funding, access to cooperation partners, or prestige connected with participation in networks" (Vukasovic, 2013).

For this reason, Universities have become the central points around which the knowledge economy has developed, as Universities are seen as providers of high skilled labor force. Universities as providers of qualified labor force has become even more important after the introduction of the Lisbon strategy, or Lisbon Agenda, in 2000. Its

aim was to make the EU the most dynamic and competitive knowledge economy by 2010, it has then been succeeded by the Europe 2020 strategy.

Again the rhetoric of the importance of knowledge economy and society, push governments to be always up-to-date in the field of Higher Education. States define their competitiveness in knowledge economy, whether they have a reformed Higher Education system, able to be internationally effective, to be open to the world and able to endure and bear changes. The growing importance given to the knowledge economy and the sense of obligation, strengthen by the transition from a classic industrial economy to a new type of economy based on knowledge and competences, pushed signatory countries, first to be attracted by the Bologna Process and afterwards, to be almost "forced" to accept and implement obligations and actions suggested by the Process.

The developments and the achievements within the Bologna Process may be seen as in contrast with the traditional reluctance of member states to the harmonization of higher education systems and of the increased community competences. In fact, "for decades, Member States had praised the blessings of diversity, i.e. of system differences, across Europe. With Bologna, the paradigm seemed to change. Concerning certain key features of higher education, great comparability and compatibility of structures were to become the new paradigm" (Wächter, 2004, p. 268).

2.1.2 The Bologna Process: comparability and compatibility of education systems

Since the Bologna Process, member states have been trying to jointly adapt their higher education systems to the new paradigm of a more globalized world. But as Wächter argues, cooperation among member states in the field of education started before the Bologna Process, it starts already in the "mid-1980s with the early EU education and training programmes such as Erasmus or Comett" (Wächter, 2004, p. 268), by moving a great number of students, by creating jointly developed curricula they create a tighter network among education systems never seen before in Europe. "The Union education and training programmes chose to facilitate contact across systems through cooperation rather than harmonisation" (Wächter, 2004, p. 269). In fact, the Bologna Declaration had already replaced the word "harmonisation" by the milder formulation of

“compatibility” and “comparability”. It would be more appropriate to talk about convergence of Higher education systems in Europe, as

> aiming at ‘convergence’ is widely seen as compatible with the simultaneous upholding of ‘diversity’—an agreed value of European HE—while ‘harmonisation’ is perceived as threatening this diversity. The aim of convergence is thus semantically compatible with the maintenance of “diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and university autonomy” stressed in the Bologna declaration as a goal and value unto itself (Witte, 2006, p. 15)

Convergence according to Bennett, means moving from different positions towards common points, moreover, what happened in the Bologna Process may be seen as a process of convergence through harmonization. In fact, attempts to harmonize policies require a coherent group of transnational actors, common motivations and concerns, opportunities for interactions and an intergovernmental structure. “This meant a reduction, therefore, in the policy-making autonomy of individual states and a gradual convergence of public policy within different sectors” (Bennett, 1997). Harmonization then lead to the creation of international policy regimes, as Bleiklie points out, that policy regimes govern policy fields such as the higher education one. Policy regimes “are networks of actors, that may comprise any type of action that potentially bears on public policy, are driven by rule-oriented institutionalised behaviour and by communicative action” (Bleiklie, 2001). Consequently, these regimes enhance cooperation and provide incentives for the avoidance of discrepancies among states on given issues (Bennett, 1991).

The Bologna Process in this sense is a provider of harmonization in the higher education field, and provide also a network of actors, rule-oriented and eager to cooperate. Moreover, the similar environmental conditions to which EU member states are exposed will lead to a convergence of higher education policies, and at the institutional level (Rakic, 2001; Voegtle, 2001).

2.1.3 The use of soft law in the Bologna Process

It has already been pointed out in this work, that the competences of the EU in regard of education are limited. Throughout its history the EU has exerted a progressive expansion of its powers over this issue.

By using the so called "soft law" measures, the EU is capable of controlling some policies implementation through non-binding acts. Member States are subjected to these soft law initiatives, but they would not be sanctioned if they do not follow them and they would not be forced to comply with these initiatives or to implement policies. For example, soft law measures include "pilot projects, funding, benchmarks, and other EU initiatives, [moreover] the Socrates and Erasmus programs are among the oldest and most important examples of EU 'soft law' measures, and they have influenced the Bologna Process in numerous ways" (Terry, 2008). Furthermore, it can be argued that "due to the lack of official EU competence in education, alternative cooperation schemes have emerged in Europe, the most important of them being the intergovernmental Bologna Process" (Nokkala, 2006). The aim of the bologna Process may seem in contrast with the position held by member states towards education. But, the intergovernmental aspect of the Process, as Garben (2008) points out, transforms it in nothing more than a soft-law instrument which envisaged practically no involvement of the EU. This could be also interpreted as the ultimate way through which member states are trying to keep the EU out from certain policy fields; in fact, the declaration aims for structural comparability and content diversity (Vogel, 2007). In other words, by acting through an intergovernmental forum, member states are trying to keep the EU out from a too direct involvement on education policies, but, at the same time "the Bologna Process fundamentally reorganizes higher education systems of Member States, which is normally considered a national prerogative" (Garben, 2008).

But, how can the EU pretend to have States implementing its policies, even though they will not be sanctioned if they do not comply with the guidelines? In the specific case of the Bologna Process, states initially agreed to take part in this process as they thought it would be a "process of flexible intergovernmental cooperation [where] texts that made up the Bologna Process are nothing more than declarations of the intentions of the signatory States" (Ravinet, 2008) not legally binding. Moreover, States did not risk sanctions if they did not follow directives or they did not risk to be excluded

from the Process. According to Trubek and Trubek (2005), a way in which soft law may bring some changes, so may push States to follow non-binding acts, is through *shaming*. "In this account, Member States will seek to comply with the guidelines in order to avoid negative criticism in peer reviews and Council recommendations. The 'recommendations' issued by the Council are often in fact rather pointed observations about poor performance" (Trubek et al., 2005). Consequently, States will try to comply in order to avoid such a negative publicity, and for not being seen as "the bad pupil in the class" (Ravinet, 2008). So, even if the Bologna process started as a non-legal binding commitment, it anyway influenced States to comply with the guidelines set by the Declaration and to accept obligations due also to their commitment to the EU (Ravinet, 2008).

2.1.4 From an informal meeting to a binding responsibility

The Bologna Process itself is a clear example of how issues in the realm of states' competences relate to EU level policies. By doing so the Bologna Process uses some tools in order to define its structure and fulfil its aims. Tools to be used for monitoring states' efforts are for example, national reports, which started as something highly recommended to be done and became sort of imperative for States. Reports are documents where states have to produce before each ministerial conference and must show the steps forward they have done, where they are at and which are their future objectives, they need to follow a standardize form. Reports are then published on the official website, that is why "it is increasingly unwise for participating countries to produce wishful or false reports" (Ravinet, 2008).

The follow-up mechanism of the Bologna process then includes, besides the tools for producing and gathering information, such as the national reports, tools for exchanges, training, such as thematic seminars, external communications tools (e.g. official website), as well as internal management tools to coordinate actions among internal agencies (Ravinet, 2008). For example, the stocktaking report is used to summarize the results assessed by States. Stocktaking is not an imitation of the OMC method, as it developed independently from it. Through this process each member receives a coded color on the base of its improvements (dark green for 'excellent performance', light green for 'very good performance', yellow for 'good performance',

orange for 'some progress has been made' and red for 'little progress has been made yet'). "The use of color-coding is considered to be a 'soft' way of grading, as opposed to numerical indicators and thus more acceptable" (Bologna Stocktaking Report 2005). But "colors are based on national reports that in many cases are more of a marketing exercise than a critical analysis of progress" (Veiga & Amaral, 2009).

It has been created as a progress chart in which each country can control its progressive improvement or on the contrary its decreasing commitment, and, at the same time, also all other countries can verify the status of all other signatory members. This may play as an incentive for countries to do better in order to avoid being seen as the weak one.

On the one hand, the tools provided by the Bologna Process have improved since 1999 and they have become almost compulsory for member states. National reports, stocktaking procedure and scorecard strengthened the sense of obligation and of duty toward the Bologna Process. Since its birth the Bologna Process exerted at first, a sense of curiosity toward something that seemed highly informal and voluntary, "the participating states have at several occasions expressed the opinion that the voluntary character of the Bologna Process constitutes one of its most important advantages" (Garben, 2008). But then it became more and more binding as States themselves started to add tools and measure in order to monitor and assess the progresses of all member states. The standardization of national reports left less freedom to states when they compile theirs, moreover, being always watched by other member states all the step of the way make members feel ashamed if they are not able to fulfil a certain objective, in fact, their conduct is completely public. Also the structure of the Bologna Process gave to it more legitimacy, as it has a Board, a secretariat, a preparatory group. So, this initial lack of structure encouraged countries to take part in the Process, but the progressive institutionalization of the Process required a higher commitment from member states. Rules became more bounding and the structure less flexible, "it is no longer directed by a small group of self-nominated, motivated members, but by a rotating steering group that is obliged to represent all the members" (Ravinet, 2008). As Vukasovic (2013) points out, "the rules need to be seen as legitimate by relevant actors" in order to be taken seriously. In this case the signatory states started to see rules more binding and perceive the structure to be more legitimate. So, "flexible cooperation based on

voluntary participation of 1999 slowly evolved into a system of monitored coordination" (Ravinet, 2008).

On the other hand, "the implementation of higher education policies using soft law is successful in promoting change, but has difficulties in effective coordination" (Veiga and Amaral, 2012) as reports are general uncritical, positive, presenting results in a triumphal mode, while implementation difficulties are often left out of the report, as they could overshadow the overall positive image that states want to keep (Veiga and Amaral, 2012). In other words, national reports can be misleading, by showing only the positive side that national governments want to show. An effective coordination then is difficult as each state implement the objective using its national tools and possibilities, so, not all states can reach the objective in the same way and with the same level of effectiveness. This is an obstacle that can hardly be ignored, as different states implement objectives in different ways "unless the same aspects are addressed in the same way in each country, but there is poor evidence of that" (Musselin, 2009).

2.2 The Bologna Process and the introduction of the Bachelor-Master structure

Already in the Sorbonne Declaration there was the intention of member states to pursue a common structure in Higher Education, based on two main cycle: an undergraduate one and a post graduate one; "a system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognised for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge" (Sorbonne declaration, 1998). Moreover, "the Declaration intended to shape the 'system of easily understandable and comparable degrees' in a way that it supported two further goals: to improve labour market relevant qualifications and to improve the international competitiveness of the European higher education system" (Kehm and Teichler, 2006, p. 276).

As said before, the first idea of this structure, the framework of the Sorbonne Declaration, stemmed from the "French policy context, where HE was traditionally thought of in three 'cycles' (DEUG, maîtrise, DESS/DEA, and doctoral studies)" (Witte, 2006, p. 125). Then the two-cycle structure was preferred in order to solve the French problem of *grandes écoles* that would be then able to give the same type of 5

year qualifications than universities. For example, in England a system similar to this one was already in place, “as the British degree structure was already organized in two cycles, graduate and postgraduate” (Ravinet, 2005, p. 18).

The Sorbonne declaration also recommended the use of semesters to increase the flexibility of the HE system, and to foster student mobility programmes and give the possibility to students to study for an entire semester in another University abroad, this should have been also an incentive to spend at least one semester abroad. “This was another particular concern of French HE reform at the time, where the traditional structuring of courses and exams according to full academic years was seen to increase drop-out and impede student success and mobility” (Witte, 2006, p. 128). In fact, “one of the main strategic objectives of the Bologna Process is to increase the compatibility of European higher education systems in general and national degree structures in particular in order to make the European Higher Education Area a space in which student and graduate mobility will be increased” (Faber and Westerheijden, 2011, p. 11).

In the Bologna Declaration it was then stated that the access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies. “In addition, it was stated that the first cycle should last ‘a minimum of three years’. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as ‘an appropriate level of qualification” (Faber and Westerheijden, 2011, p. 12). This would have increase the number of graduated young people entering the job market after a shorter period of study, and it would have increase the number of people enrolling in University too (Witte, 2006). With the Berlin communiqué, that followed the ministerial conference held in Berlin in 2003, a third cycle was included, the doctoral degree.

The overall objective of the major change that occurred in the structure of higher education in Europe, was to easily adapt the system to the society’s changing needs (Terry, 2008), in particular the need for more flexibility in Universities structures for enhancing mobility, the need for decreasing employment by providing people with a shorter study degree “frequently interpreted as an attempt to reduce duration of studies” (Kehm and Teichler, 2006, p. 276), which provided qualification, and the need, as for example in Italy, to decrease the number of “fuori corso” and of drop-out.

Consequently, "the time to graduate seems to have become more regular and thus shorter in the reform process. More graduates of the new programmes graduated within the required period, as compared to those from pre-reform programmes" (Cammelli et al., 2011, p. 152).

Moreover, "before the Bologna Process, Italy was one of the few countries with neither a two-cycle structure of study programmes and degrees nor a two-type or multi-type system of higher education institutions, study programmes mostly lasted five or six years" (Cammelli et al., 2011, p. 143). The Italian education system has been strongly influenced by the Process, and as previously stated Italy was willing to use the Bologna Process innovations in order to modernize and develop its education system. As a result, the two-cycle reform took place already in the academic year 2001/2002. As Cammelli et al. (2011, p. 144) point out, "the '3+2' reform was also aimed at addressing traditional endemic weaknesses of the Italian university system: a low rate of graduates, a high rate of drop-outs from university, and a strong discrepancy between the officially required and the actual duration of studies." Italy has implemented the Bologna Process through two Ministerial Decrees, No. 509 of 1999, "*Regulation establishing rules on didactical autonomy of universities"* and Ministerial Decree No. 270 of 2004, "*Amendments to the regulation establishing rules on didactical autonomy of universities"*.

Even though the main aim of this reform was to create a more homogeneous degree system structure throughout Europe, "diversity is maintained at the level of years or ECTS. Among Member States, we found 3+2 in France and Italy, 3-or-4+1 (and variants) in The Netherlands, and 4+2 in Russia. Besides, there are different ways of handling exceptions (e.g. medicine is exempted from the two-cycle structures in 37 countries, though not in The Netherlands)" (Faber and Westerheijden, 2011, p. 24). According to the authors, this degree of diversity is given by the interaction between the will of following both the principles of the Bologna Process and personal interests of the actors in meeting the requirements. In this sense, signatory states of the Bologna Declaration "made a conscious choice to conform to the two-cycle structure to guarantee the international competitiveness of their national higher education system" (Faber and Westerheijden, 2011, p. 25).

As Kehm and Teichler point out, the main reasons why states complied with the Bologna guidelines and implemented the two-tiered structure, can be summed in four main points. Increase worldwide attractiveness and competitiveness among European Universities, ease student mobility within Europe, secure a flexible and transparent system of studies degrees of shorter duration (more attractive among students) and then, trigger curricular reform in order to promote "labour market relevant" qualifications in the design, above all, of the Bachelor programmes. In fact, "a graduate with a Bachelor degree is supposed to have acquired qualifications which enable him or her an entrance into the European labour market" (Kehm and Teichler, 2006, p. 276).

2.2.1 The heterogeneity in the implementation of the two-cycle degree programme in the signatory States

By 2005 almost all countries adapted their degree structure, essentially based on two main cycles, some countries had less difficulties than others. For example, "in the French, Italian and Dutch cases, there was a desire for national reform of their higher education system" and so, their adaptation towards the Bologna standards was seen as an additional support to changes whereby national compatibility "was in the individual interest of the national higher education systems" (Faber and Westerheijden, 2011, p. 24). "It should also be noted that in some Bologna signatory countries, such as the United Kingdom, institutions have the autonomy to make structural changes without needing to wait for governmental/legislative reforms" (Tauch, 2005, p. 12), while other academics argue against "too much reform in too little time" (Tauch, 2005, p. 12).

It can be argued, that the 3+2 model was not initially included in the Sorbonne Declaration and "the frequent assumption that the Sorbonne declaration formulated convergence to a 3/5/8-model (equivalent to 3+2-or-5) as a common aim can be traced back to the proximity of the Sorbonne declaration and France's idea of how to restructure French Higher Education into two cycles following a 3/5/8-structure (i.e. licence, followed either by a Masters or a doctoral phase)" (Witte, 2006, p.127). But, "the misconception that the Bologna process 'prescribed' in any way the 3+2-year structure is still widespread" (Tauch, 2005, p. 14). In fact, in some signatory countries, like Germany, Higher Education Institutions can choose between three or four years for

Bachelor degrees, according also to the field of study. Furthermore, in countries like Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Scotland and Turkey the standard length of Bachelor degrees is four years (Tauch, 2005).

Even though, by 2005 almost all countries already implemented the two-cycle system, it can be argued that some states experienced some difficulties. For example, "Estonia is in the peculiar situation of changing from one two-cycle system to another two-cycle system, namely from 4+2 to 3+2, with resulting problems of acceptance and confusion." (Tauch, 2005). Moreover, Higher Education Institutions in Denmark introduced a 3+2+3 structure in 1993 but are now rethinking the content of programs, restructuring the curricula in a process including stakeholder consultation and definition of learning outcomes.

The difficulty of adapting degree programs to the new structure, is given also by the fact that some disciplines are more flexible and have less problems to fit the new formula, while some others are less flexible and less suitable for this type of reform. Humanities disciplines for example, are among those who seemed to have experienced less difficulties, as for example, in Latvia, Finland and the Netherlands they are part of the academic Bachelor degree and then, more likely to be completed with a Master degree, while professional Bachelor degree are more practical in the programs they deliver to students. "In these countries the professional Bachelor can take four years, while the academic Bachelor takes only three years" (Tauch. 2005, p. 15). Moreover, some field such as medicine and related fields, are still excluded from the two-cycle system. According to Teichler (2012, p. 5) Bachelor-Master structure remained a minority in most medical fields: veterinary, dentistry, pharmacy, medicine, midwifery and nursing; and in other fields such as Architecture, law, teacher training and engineering. Moreover, those who got a Bachelor degree are more likely to head towards a Master degree instead of entering the labour market directly.

In 2010 the large majority of institutions have implemented the new Bologna degree structure, almost 95%. It is important to keep in mind that the Bologna Declaration and its principles and guidelines are not binding, so states are not obliged to follow the Declaration as there will be no sanctions if they do not comply with the principles. In some cases, however, the change has not led to meaningful curricular

renewal, but rather to compressed Bachelor degrees that leave little flexibility for students (Faber and Westerheijden, 2011, p. 18). “For example, some student unions reported that the old curriculum had simply been ‘cut’ into two to form the bachelor and master’s degrees” (Terry, 2008, p. 206).

The main criticisms addressed to these new structure that the European Higher Education was heading towards, are related to the length of the Bachelor degree. In fact, “it is frequently feared that graduates of university programmes with a duration of 3 years have not achieved a level of qualification and competences that sufficiently prepares them for highly qualified jobs” (Kehm and Teichler, 2006, p. 280). “In many universities, professors and, to a lesser degree, deans and sometimes the institutional leadership, still express profound doubts regarding the possibility to offer a degree after only three years that is both academically valid and relevant to the labour market” (Tauch, 2005, p.14). Then it is commonly argued that in some cases Universities have only tried to squeeze in three years what was once taught in a four or five-year programme.

“The learning processes are often viewed as over-regulated in the short Bachelor programmes strongly shaped by frequent examinations, as programmes are squeezed into a new framework based on semesters and not on annual courses” (Teichler, 2011, p. 6). Semesters became essential for boosting student mobility, as the length of their stay abroad was measured through semesters. Subsequently “replacing the academic year as the reference unit” (Tauch, 2005, p. 18). Universities and its central administration often complained about the additional workload caused by the needed adjustments of programmes, in order to avoid the risk of simply having old programmes cut and squeezed into fewer semesters (Teichler, 2011; Tauch, 2005).

2.3 The ECTS system

The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) was initially created in order to recognise courses and exams that Erasmus students did, while abroad. The system was a pilot programme introduced in 1989 in order to facilitate Erasmus students, and consequently having their period abroad recognised in their home country. “Credits for qualifications are the currency of the emerging borderless higher education market place, and credit

transfer systems like ECTS define the rate of exchange" (Karran, 2004). What started as a pilot programme addressed only to mobile students in the framework of the Erasmus programme, ended up in being used by the majority of higher education institutions in Europe, extending the system also to non-mobile students.

"ECTS is based on the principle that sixty credits measure a workload of a full time student during one academic year" (Gürüz, 2011). So, one credit corresponds to an amount of working hours. According to the type of course, the subject taken into consideration and also the way in which the course is held, the amount of working hour changes. The more credits a course has the more demanding the course is.

But, the amount of working hours per credit is not standard, but it varies from country to country. So, for example in Italy, Austria and Spain 1 ECTS equates 25 hours of work, in this case of study, while in Finland 1 ECTS equates 27 hours of study, in The Netherlands and Portugal 1 ECTS equates 28 hours of study and Germany, Belgium, Romania and Hungary 1 ECTS equates 30 study hours. Of course, these working hours are estimated and do not correspond to the actual amount of hours that students use to study for that particular course. Institutions estimate that for a particular course, given the difficulty and the amount of work needed to pass the final exam, a student is supposed to dedicate a certain amount of hours, in order to pass the exam successfully. But, sometimes attending a course in a foreign country, held in a foreign language, can raise the amount of hours used for studying that particular course, and raise also the effort that a mobile student has to put in order to pass the exam.

Consequently, the course attended abroad may not coincide with the same course attended at home. As, not just assessing methods but also lessons and teaching methods can vary from country to country. For example, there are several differences between lessons in Italian Universities and lessons in UK or in the Netherlands. In Italy the approach is much more teacher-centred, while in UK or in The Netherlands, lessons are much more student-driven, much more active and there is more student's participation. Therefore, also assessment methods should take into consideration those aspects.

The ECTS system, in the framework of the Bologna Process, regarding the creation and the development of a European Higher Education Area, has led to the creation of the Three-cycle system. The 1st cycle Bachelor's degree, 180 ECTS, the 2nd

cycle Master's degree, 120 ECTS and the 3rd cycle, the PhD, where a standard sum of credits is not prescribed. The credit system started as a pilot programme in order to provide Erasmus students with suitable assessment methods that could validate their achievements also at home, and then ended up being at the base European Higher Education system. "ERASMUS has become the key motor for internationalization of higher education in the European Union" (De Wit, 1996).

Once the student returns home, his/her results need to be translated into his/her curriculum. "ECTS helps in the design, description and delivery of programmes, makes it possible to integrate different types of learning in a lifelong learning perspective, and facilitates the mobility of students by easing the process of recognising qualifications and periods of study" (European Commission, 2015). Beyond the recognition of credits, there is also the need to recognise the grade achieved. Getting a high or a low grade in a given exam is very important for students, who may need a certain grade point average in order to obtain a higher final grades for enrolling in a Master's degree or getting a PhD. So, for students having their achievements rightfully recognised during their period abroad is essential. But, interpreting grades of different institutions is not so easy and immediate, as each University has its own method of assessing grades. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was developed by the European Commission to enable the recognition of study periods abroad, funded under the Erasmus programme (Karran, 2004). The ECTS system can be explained as a tool for translating grades and evaluation from an assessment method to another. Universities need to develop a system of grades' conversion from an assessment method to another, as their attractiveness toward foreign students depend also on this. "If universities do not offer units with widely accepted credit values, they will be unable to attract students from both home and overseas markets" (Karran, 2004). Otherwise, the inability of Universities to guarantee credits' recognition through an adequate system of assessment, will limit the possibilities of that University to find its place in the framework of European Higher Education cooperation; not just among Universities, but also with major knowledge centred corporate players. So, Universities agreed with this system, and, it has then been applied also to non-Erasmus exchanges.

As Dahl et al say, "the ECTS-grade is not meant to replace but to explain the original grade and it has no legal value of its own." In fact, the students' achievements

are awarded within the ECTS system in accordance with the evaluation received in the foreign country, that grade is then translated into the home country assessment method.

This system has helped the Erasmus programme prospering, it facilitated the passage from an assessment method to another, assuring students that their efforts would have been recognised at home. Its utility can be confirmed also by the fact that it expanded from being just a tool for mobile students, in being deeply incorporated in almost all European Higher Institutions. Notwithstanding the enormous development that this system gave to higher Education and to quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and periods abroad, some scholars still have some doubts on the equivalence assessed by ECTS system.

In fact, some European higher education assessment systems have very few grade points, and it is difficult to calculate the exact correspondence between two different assessment systems. Moreover, not all assessment systems are numeric, as the Italian one, for example, which goes from the lowest grade that is 18 to the highest one 30 con lode; or, for example, as in the case of Sweden where students are allocated three non-numeric grades: Rest (Conditional Pass), Godkänd (Pass), or Väl Godkänd, (Pass with distinction). In this case it is essential to try and match the verbal descriptions used within the ECTS grading system against the national grading descriptors (Karran, 2004). Different assessment methods come from different cultural and academic traditions. Sometimes those methods are different also in the same country. Different countries have developed different approaches to grading which are deeply rooted in their pedagogical and cultural traditions. It is to be pointed out, moreover, that not only do they have different grading scales, but they also use them differently in the various institutions and subject areas (Lieponiene and Kulvietiene, 2011).

To sum up, the ECTS system has been a tool for the implementation of internationalization and Europeanization of Higher Education in Europe, by giving the opportunity to mobile students to see their academic efforts recognised also at home. The Erasmus programme has led this major change in how students experience higher education, and boost the cooperation between Higher Education system in Europe. With the progressive enlargements in the EU the grading system has become much more

multifaceted, and in some cases it gives an artificial result, not a criterion referenced result.

On the other hand, the ECTS system is one of the most concrete examples of the influence of the Erasmus programme in the national and supranational policy making. It is also one of the tools through which the higher education system in Europe could prosper; this prosperity can be seen as supranational solution to the progressive internationalization and Europeanization of higher education. It enhanced the role of the Union in higher education, by becoming together with member states, a major actor in this sector.

With the ECTS system, the EU satisfied the need of European students, but also of students from third countries, of study and train in another country and then seeing their results recognized at home, or vice versa. But also the need of Universities to attract foreign students from abroad and internationalize their system.

2.4 The Diploma supplement

The Diploma Supplement is one of the main points pursued by the Bologna Process. Its aim is the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, but only a small percentage of Universities have implemented the Diploma Supplement, although it is explicitly required by the Process (Garben, 2008).

The Diploma supplement is a document, attached to a higher education diploma, its aim is of enhancing the transparency among higher education diplomas from different higher education institutions, and facilitate the recognition of diplomas and of qualifications. It provides information on the institution who released the diploma, on the content of subject studied, on the level acquired, on the successfulness of the studies and of course, on the participation in exchange programmes. The free distribution of DS was one of the priorities set by the Bologna Process in 2003. It is a useful tool for the easy and rapid recognition of academic and professional qualifications in order to facilitate mobility, employability and recognition. It is a valid response to the internationalization of both higher education and labor market (Garben, 2008).

In 2007 as Terry points out in its survey, still many countries did not systematically provide graduated students with their Diploma Supplement. Even though, ministers

"agreed that by 2005 every graduate should be supplied with a Diploma supplement free of charge" (Witte, 2006). Then, in 2015 only 31 out of 38 countries had already implemented legislation regarding the DS, 27 out of 38 provided students automatically with the DS and in 8 countries delivered it only on request. Moreover, the DS was not delivered for free in all countries.

Some argue that the Diploma Supplement is too long and not so immediate to be understood and not so easy to be consulted. Moreover, this possibility given to students and higher education institutions in general, in not so known among those who should benefit from it. In fact, often students do not even know about it until their graduation or even after that.

Voegtle (2001), argues that some points fostered by the Bologna Process, such as the 3 + 2 format (3-year Bachelors and 2-year Masters) have been exported also in countries that are not part of the Bologna Process. While the Diploma Supplement seems to be a unique European policy that has not yet diffused beyond the European borders.

Before 2000 not a country introduced the DS, while after 2004 some countries started to provide DS to their students. For example, in Italy the Diploma Supplement has been implemented in 2005 through a Ministerial Decision. But, Universities, like the University of Padova, are delivering DS automatically to all graduated students and for free, only from 2018. All other students who graduated in the previous years can apply for it.

2.5 The recognition of professional qualifications

The further abolition of obstacles to the right of free movement of people contained in the Lisbon Treaty, gave an impulse to the need of having a solid system of recognition of professional qualifications and of diplomas. In fact, the free movement of people is strictly connected to the free movement of workers. EU citizens are able to move throughout Europe and decide to live in another member states. Consequently, EU citizens can work in another member state. The mutual recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications, find its legal basis in art. 26 and in art. 53 of the TFEU. Art. 23 argues the importance of having no barriers for the smooth development of the

internal market, so, free movement of goods, people, services and capital. While art. 53 lays down the basis for the recognition "of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications, concerning the taking-up and pursuit of activities as self-employed persons".

In the framework of the Lisbon strategy, Europe was seen as an ever growing provider of knowledge and was up to become one of the strongest knowledge economy in the world. But, "if Europe was to sustain itself as a high-skill, high-wage society, its citizens would have to be educated and trained to the appropriate level" (Davies, 2017). This also meant that notwithstanding the importance of maintain high level standards in higher education, diplomas and qualifications need then to be recognize, in order to cancel further obstacles to the free movement of professionals (Garben, 2008).

Council Directive 89/48/EEC of 1988 "on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years' duration", and Council Directive 92/51/EEC of 1992 "on a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training to supplement Directive 89/48/EEC", set the basis for the mechanism of diplomas' recognition throughout all member states. The Directives took into consideration also diploma achieved in non-EU member states by Community nationals. The Directive provides a recognition procedure by the host Member states that can recognise the diploma after compensation, in the form of an adaptation period, an aptitude test or after further professional experience. In this cases the host member state may require compensation steps, because there are substantial practical and/or theoretical differences between the training undergone and that required by the host member state. Moreover, "the Directive applies to all the professions for which higher education is required and which are not covered by specific Directives governing recognition." These Directives have been amended by Directive 2001/19/EC, which tried to introduce an easier way for recognising diplomas, and avoiding the systematic use of compensation steps.

Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, tried to simplify and modernize all the existent directives on this issue. In fact, the previous directives quoted above have been then repealed and replaced by this one. It also brought together all the recognised professions, such as doctor, midwife, veterinary

surgeon, architect etc. and listed all the ways in which host member states should recognise these professions, as they were previously regulated by different directives. These professional qualifications have been taken into consideration in a different way, because professional requirements and training courses did not vary much from one member states to another. So, the first step toward mutual recognition was made in those professional qualifications that could be harmonized more easily, and then it has been possible also in all other qualifications, not strictly connected with the recognised professions.

With this directive, member states could not refuse to recognise qualifications gained in another member states, however, in the cases where applicants have had a shorter period of training than that required in the host member states, it can require an implementation in the length of professional training or may require an adaptation test or an adaptation period. This Directive has been amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of 20 November 2013. The biggest amendment was given by the insertion of article 4 concerning the European Professional Card. This electronic certificate should make the recognition of professionals easier, and should help those who want to work permanently or temporarily in another EU country. At the moment only six professions can enjoy this service: general care nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, real estate agents and mountain guides.

These Directives have had a major impact on educational systems, as, concerning the mutual recognition of qualifications, they led to the progressive "harmonization of curricula of the regulated professions" (Garben, 2008). For example, in the case of activities in the field of Pharmacy, Directive 85/432/EEC, then repealed by Directive 2005/36/EC, "coordinated minimum range of activities' to be covered in pharmacy training, prescribing a minimum of five years full-time training" (Davies, 2017), member states can go beyond the minimum and they can require additional training or competences, but the core of the system must be respected.

2.5.1 Legal practice in the EU

One of the profession more regulated at the EU level is that of lawyer. In fact, the first Directive that regulated lawyers' qualification dates from 1977. And since then other three Directives have been made on the regulation of legal practice in Europe.

“Although the first three EU directives and the European Court of Justice mobility cases are limited to those EU lawyers who cross borders, EU law has had a strong influence on the EU Member States’ domestic regulation of their own lawyers” (Terry, 2008). Member states have been more stimulated in changing its national rules concerning lawyers, also because this profession enjoyed a great attention also from the ECJ. There are many ECJ’s judgements governing the profession of lawyers, such for example, Case 107/83 *Ordre des avocats au Barreau de Paris v Onno Klopp.* In this case a German lawyer wanted to take the oath as an *avocat* and wanted to be registered at the Paris bar, while being registered also at the Dusseldorf bar, and maintaining his residence and chamber in Germany. In this case the Paris bar did not want to concede to Mr. Klopp to work in France if he still had his residence in Germany. But this restriction was incompatible with the freedom of establishment guaranteed by art. 52 of the Treaty. In the end the Court with its judgement, prevented a member state from denying to citizens of other member states to exercise legal profession on their ground.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has been dedicated to “how” the EU and Member States tried enhance their cooperation for the creation of a European Area for Higher education. the Bologna Process in this sense, can be considered a major step forward toward the comparability and compatibility of higher education systems throughout Europe. Its main goals were enhancing students’ and teaching staff’s mobility by providing students and teachers with the suitable tools for improving their period abroad, and the subsequent recognition of it at home. For example, the Bologna Process, that take into consideration several pints already present in the Erasmus programme, fostered the use of the ECTS system, the Diploma Supplement and the Bachelor-Master degree structure. This structure played an important role in almost reshaping the structure of higher education institutions all over Europe. In fact, during the Sorbonne Declaration, which precede the Bologna Process, signatory states had already came up with the idea of reformulating the structure of University in Europe. Al the first four signatory States initially agreed with this project for their own personal interests. For example, Italy saw the opportunity of developing its education system which was facing a crisis. As seen throughout the chapter many countries soon after the Bologna Process adopted this structure,

encountering some barriers, but at the same time enjoying also the befits that derived from this change.

Furthermore, strictly related to the importance of the Bologna Process is also the progressive importance that the knowledge economy played in the field of Higher education, as the progressive globalization and the consequent marketization of Higher education, entitled Universities as the main providers of knowledges. Moreover, knowledges became tradable commodities and Higher Education Institutions tried to cope with the progressive globalization and internationalization, also by attracting foreign students and researchers.

The peculiarity of the Bologna Process lays also in its structure and in its way of acting. In other words, the Process has been an innovation in education policies not just for its contents, but also for how its aims have been pursued and for how signatory states cooperate among them. In fact, it is an intergovernmental institution, which was born outside the direct influence of the European Union, as a matter of fact the European Commission is “just” a member of the Process. The process uses a system of soft law measures, in order to make States implement acts which are not binding, and if not implemented, they would not lead to sanctions. Its peculiar methods of soft law measures, stocktaking reports, follow-up commissions, ministerial meetings every two years, etc. pushed the Bologna Process to become an always more binding responsibility for states.

Chapter 3
The Erasmus impact on Higher Education in the EU

In this third chapter the focus will be on the impact that the Erasmus programme had on Higher education in Europe, and on how individuals and Higher Education Institutions adapted to the progressive importance that this programme acquired in the European scene In order to be able to sustain inflows and outflows of students and staff members going abroad, Higher Education institutions had to adapt to these needs, from the impact on the administrative structure, with the insertion of international offices, to the addition of new degree courses completely taught in a foreign language. Moreover, the impact has been perceived also by teaching staff and researchers, and by non-mobile students, who experienced a change in the academic environment. Then, also the linguistic issue played a major role in Universities' life since the progressive intensification of exchange programmes and incoming flows of foreign students. In fact, the new environment requires a linguistic diversity in order to be able to attract more foreign students and researchers, also for economic reasons.

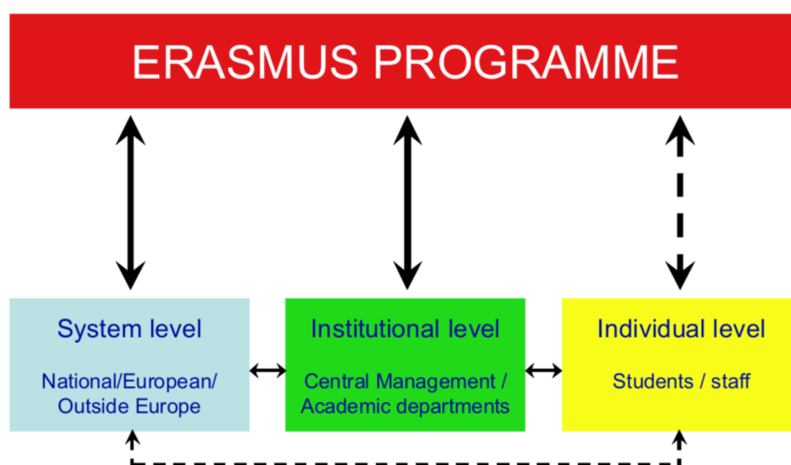
3.1 The impact of Erasmus at system, institutional and individual level

Since its birth in 1987 it has changed the structure of Higher Education in Europe, and it "represents a significant Union-level intervention into European Higher education system" (Wilson, 2011). In fact, since the EU and Member states tried to enhance students' mobility (it was one of the main aim of the Bologna Process) the whole academic system had to keep up with the change. Surely, one of the major changes was given by the fact that Institutions who take part in student mobility, so overall Universities, had to change their system in order to be able to receive and welcome foreign students, and prepare their students for a period abroad. So, provide them with adequate courses and lessons, such as lessons taught in a foreign language (most of the times in English) but also on more practical things such as helping providing

accommodations, even though not all Universities offer this kind of service and in the majority of cases students need to find an accommodation by their own. In this case administrative support have been increased and shaped according to students' needs, with a discrete success. Further examples will be given later on in this chapter.

Therefore, it can be said that student mobility and in particular the Erasmus programme, considered one of the best example of student mobility, is responsible for affecting higher education on different levels. As Figure 1[31] shows, the Erasmus programme can be held responsible for influencing higher education on different levels.

Figure 1: Impact levels of the Erasmus programme



First of all, it affects individuals who take part in the project, so, students, teachers, staff. It is the primary source through which the programme can influence our society. In fact, people taking part in the programme are directly and almost immediately affected by the programme and by what the programme offers to them, be it in a positive or negative way. They can be influenced also in an indirect way, as their experience and, therefore, the competencies and skills acquired by taking part in the programme will be spent by individuals in the job market and, those competencies and

[31] Figure 1 is taken from the final report of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture "*The Impact of ERASMUS on European Higher Education: Quality, Openness and Internationalisation*", December 2008, page 29.

skills may become an important mean for finding a job outside their home country. The competencies acquired may be referred to the improvement of foreign languages, enhancement of soft skills, development of independency, etc. These acquired competences may also just enhance the personal growth of people.

Secondly, the institutional level is another macro area where Erasmus' influences can be perceived. For example, it is perceived in the improvement of the integration "of mobile students into the academic and social life at the host institution and in the host country [through] mentoring system, Welcome Events, more student accommodations, successful administrative support and language courses" (Bracht et al., 2006). Even though with different results, each country carries on its own student support services. These are just few examples of more complex adjustments that higher education institutions faced and are still facing in order to adapt to internationalisation and modernisation of higher education.

Moreover, in this macro area, two sub-levels can be found, as shown in Figure 1. With central management it is meant all those adjustments involving structure and policies, for example, supporting new curriculum and intensifying programmes. In this case it has been evaluated to what extent student mobility, in particular the Erasmus programme, helped higher education institutions coping with internationalisation, institutional development and cooperation with foreign institutions. In other words, how higher education institutions became more modern thank to the Erasmus programme. Consequently, academic departments are affected too. It is important to analyse to what extent Erasmus triggered faculties and departments, and how academic departments developed thank to it. So, how faculties adjusted their programmes, and if they have been able to provide courses entirely taught in a foreign language, etc.

At last, Erasmus programme has affected also institutions at the national and supranational level, by help building a cooperation network among Higher Education institutions. Consequently, governments are always more interested in promoting internationalisation and modernisation, through cooperation and mobility (Huisman, 2004). It could be argued that Erasmus has contributed to some changes at this level, through degree recognition, management of grants and funding of Higher education institutions, development of internationalisation and cooperation and as leverage to the

Bologna Process. As internationalisation and modernisation become more important and always more present in higher education institutions' agenda, it has been essential to create an environment in which mobility and then cooperation among institutions are encouraged and facilitated, both at national and supranational level. Consequently, if intra-European cooperation, internationalisation, modernisation, attraction of foreign students, etc., become more important, member states are looking for policies aiming at harmonizing higher education throughout Europe.

Education has always been regulated by member states, in fact, education is a complementary competence. "Since the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, education has become much more strictly the province of Member States (MSs); the capacity of action of the EU institutions is now that of a 'complementary competence', undertaking at EU level that which cannot be achieved by MSs acting independently" (Davies, 2017). Education has always been seen as something regulated by each member state, but since the birth of student mobility programmes, this concept experienced a severe change. The will of creating a common European area for higher education, pushed nation states to harmonize their education policies with those of other member states. In the framework of student mobility, this can be seen as a conquest, as students who undertake this experience should be assured to find an equal educational level in the host country. In this sense the Bologna Declaration of 1999 has played a major role in enhancing and supporting the creation of a European Higher Education Area.

Figure 1 shows that the impact of the Erasmus programme is not unidirectional and it is influenced too by the impact of different levels. For example, Universities and higher education institutions in general are influenced by the Erasmus programme, as it broadens their internationalization and cooperation with foreign institutions, but institutions itself use their international concern gained also through mobility programmes, for enhancing their competitiveness in higher education field and their prestige. "In some countries, international students have become an important revenue source for universities and internationalisation is sometimes necessary for survival of a faculty or programme" (European Commission, 2008).

In sum, the Erasmus project since its birth, has influenced not just people taking part in the programme, but also the overarching structure of Higher Education in

Europe. It set standards regarding student mobility and internationalization of Higher Education. It is also true that this harmonization, or homogenization, in the realm of Higher Education uncovered the weaknesses of some countries' educational policies, and revealed a still too low commitment in the enhancing and boosting of a strong European Area for Higher Education. The next paragraphs will analyse more in depth the substantial changes that followed the Erasmus programme progress.

3.2 The effects of the Erasmus programme at the Institutional level

The Erasmus programme has been the trigger for further development of institutional internationalisation, for international visibility and attractiveness, internationalisation of teaching and learning, etc. In short it has, from some point of view, changed Higher Education structure and the way people perceive it.

In order to host incoming students, teachers and staff members, of hosting Universities had to adjust their structure for incoming students and therefore they experienced some changes. Sensible changes can be found at the academic and also at the management level of Higher education institutions. "At the national level, ERASMUS was in principle seen as helpful for higher education institutions to face the challenges of globalisation" (Huisman and Van der Wende, 2005). Then, in order to face, the progressive globalization and internationalization of Higher education, Universities had to manage some changes at the institutional level.

3.2.1 Administrative support and services

Changes that can be noticed inside Universities concerned also the need of creating administrative departments dedicated to incoming and outgoing students and staff members, and, therefore, the need of hiring people who have to deal with the welcoming and tutoring of incoming students, and with the bureaucratic and administrative issue of future Erasmus students. "With the inauguration of ERASMUS in 1987, student mobility was no longer seen as an exception but as a normal option; most universities enlarged international offices and made international activities a strategic priority area" (Teichler, 2007). Consequently, each University has an office

entirely dedicated to International Relations and an Erasmus office that deals with mobile students and staff, helping them going through their paperwork and giving assistance also during their period abroad.

In fact, many institutions created new positions inside their administration offices, in order to manage better the increasing European and international activities (Barblan et al., 2000). For example, there has been an increase in the responsibilities of academics and institutions at the department level for European and international activities, and new departments in charge of these activities or specifically for Erasmus have been created (Maiworm, 2001). The main activities related to European and international are the selection of students' applications, recognition of credits, providing students with the suitable preparation, supporting students upon their arrival in the host country. The Erasmus programme is also a key tool for cooperation among institutions, also concerning students' assistance and preparation, before and during their stay abroad. This means also assistance for incoming students, in order to guarantee the success of the exchange programme. For example, Cà Foscari University in Venice has a "Welcome" session in its web site where students and staff members can choose a service, such as services related to international mobility, visa release and renewal, language assistance, and then book an appointment and go to the office for receiving the information needed. Administrative staff provide assistance both in Italian and in English. Moreover, often Cà Foscari University organizes special events in which Erasmus students, and not, are welcome to join in order to get acquainted with the new cultural and social environment. In these occasions mobile and non-mobile students have the possibility to get to know each other outside the University environment.

In Maiworm's overview of the main findings on Erasmus' evolution study (Teichler, Gordon and Maiworm, 2001), students' responses about their satisfaction in regard to assistance and guidance in their home institutions were almost all negative, but they were satisfied with the information about exchange and recognition matters (Maiworm, 2001).

3.2.2 The impact of the Erasmus programme on the Institutional level: barriers and developments

It can be said that the progressive popularity that the Erasmus programme gained through the years, lead to the gradual adjustment of HEIs. Some universities undertook several changes in order to respond to internationalisation for the purpose of achieving their own goals, such as for achieving "the status of a global player or a "world class" university" (European Commission, 2008). For other universities mobile students have become an important source of revenue or a paramount feature for the survival of faculties and academic programmes. "With the growing relevance of the market perspective and increasing financial austerity for all public services, strengthened by globalization and internationalization processes, European higher education institutions are expected to be responding to changing financial settings basically by revenue-side solutions: seeking new sources of income, largely non-state, non-core, and non-traditional to most systems" (Kwiek, 2009, p.108). So, "many universities are located in countries where governments cut public funding and encouraged international ventures, such as the United Kingdom" (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p. 292). Some initiatives supported are focused on developing Higher education institutions' income, like branch campuses, franchised degree programs, and partnerships with local institutions. So, many countries recruit international students to earn profits by charging high fees including the United Kingdom. "International graduate students also provide research and teaching services for modest compensation" (Altbach and Knight, 2007, p. 292).

Notwithstanding the changes that the Erasmus programme brought in the realm of higher education in Europe, it has to be highlighted that mismatches between European objectives and national policies, have in many cases lead to the perception of weak changes at the institutional level. In other words, as Jeroen Huisman points out, when national policies are more oriented towards internationalization of higher education, mainly for improving education and research quality, EU and national aims may match very well. On the contrary, when national policies are more oriented to economic competitiveness and conceive higher education as a source of income or as a tradeable commodity, national and supranational aims may be seen as in contrast with the general objectives of cooperation and mutual support for mobility, of the Erasmus programme (Huisman, 2004, 2012; Huisman and Van der Wende, 2004). Moreover, the debate has

seen international Higher Education transactions as the exchange of tradable commodities for profit maximize reasons, and this is in opposition to the promotion of an international advance of scholarship and culture. In this sense the marketization of knowledges and consequently the use that Higher Education Institutions make of their capability of provide those knowledges, may be seen in contrast with the general aim of cooperation for the public good. As Knight (2002, p. 2) argues that "liberalisation may compromise important elements of quality assurance and permit private and foreign providers to monopolise the best students and most lucrative programmes." Universities may act pushed by lucrative and profit maximize reasons and not for the basic reason of providing education. While, education system need to "retain its traditional attractiveness as a workplace and an opportunity for a professional academic career" (Kwiek, 2009, p. 109).

Furthermore, still according to Huisman, temporary mobility leading to long-term mobility, consequently steering at "shortages in manpower", may be one of the reasons why the Erasmus programme did not lead to an easy acceptance of the innovations brought by the programme, at national level. Moreover, increasing mobility may be also considered as a tool for enhancing the use of much-spoken languages, to the detriment of national languages. Third, the Erasmus programme, focusing mainly on intra-European mobility may preclude states from focusing on cooperation with other regions outside Europe. In this case it could be argued that nowadays the Erasmus programme covers also many non-European countries, through the Erasmus + extended programme.

Moreover, Maiworm addresses this issue by stating that the number of mobile students is lower than expected. Furthermore, according to the authors also the low level of action and the fact that the programme concerns first of all individuals did not help academic involvement. "It can be added that students' satisfaction, as shown by various evaluations on Erasmus programme, and the emphasis on the personal dimension of mobility alongside the small number of mobile students, has provided the ideal excuse for limited system-level change" (Papatsiba, 2006).

It can also be argued, that the perception of the weak impact on Higher education systems across Europe cannot be considered a total failure (Maiworm, Papatsiba, 2006; Van der Wende, 2001) as the main aim of the programme was not having an impact

primarily on higher education national systems, but on students' and staff mobility, on cooperation among higher education institutions and on fostering education and research quality. It could be seen as an initiative aiming at "the foundation of a system of higher education institutions at the European level" (Papatsiba, 2006). As Teichler (2007) points out, "Erasmus was extremely successful in contributing to a breakthrough in the public awareness of the value and relevance of temporary study in another country."

Even though the higher education literature (Van der Wende, Papatsiba, Huisman, Field among all) suggest a very modest impact of the programme at the institutional level of Higher education institutions, the range of the impact may change according to the country and to several national aspects, related to mismatches between national and supranational objectives, or related to economic, cultural and social situation in that particular country.

Notwithstanding all the possible features that brought to the perceived weak impact of Erasmus programme on the institutional structure, it can be also argued that long-term indirect impacts have been witnessed by States taking part in the programme. As already stressed the increasing internationalization and the subsequent increasing openness of Universities and other institutions in general, brought them to develop a series of ad hoc policies that lead to some changes in their structure. Most of the times these changes in the long run bring to a progressive comparability of degree programmes, to the creation of new and improved curricula, to the increase in the number of courses delivered in a foreign language and to the adaptation to the credit transfer system.

In sum, it can be argued that there may not have been an immediate effect on higher education systems, even because the main effects were expected on the individual level and then indirectly on the institutional level (Papatsiba, 2006). The international dimension has gained an important role, and still plays an important part in education policies nowadays, as the society and the economy are always evolving and new highly skilled workers are more often required. So, "the need for more transparency and convergence between systems and the furthering of mobility and recognition of degrees has been adopted in all signatory countries" (Van der Wende,

2001).

On the other hand, it surely gave a major and new impact to student mobility and new awareness to member states of having different education systems (Papatsiba, 2006; Maiworm, 2001) but common goals in making students' and staff mobility a normal option and in triggering institutional development and cooperation (Barblan et al., 2000).

3.2.3 The enhancement of cooperation at the Institutional level

"Cooperation between Higher education institutions in Europe has grown substantially in the 1980s and 1990s" (Barblan et al., 2000); internationalization and so cooperation have been put centre stage by member states. When the Erasmus programme was launched in 1987 the EU Commission entailed institutional contracts with the participating institutions, enhancing bilateral cooperation among institutions and consequently shifting to institutional-decision making, even though the path toward a smooth cooperation at institutional level was not an easy one (Huisman, 2004) as homogenization and harmonization among national systems have always been highly debated. National systems characteristics in some cases hindered institutionalization of new curricula or of new types of degrees that still were a prerogative of national institutions; however the progressive importance that the Erasmus programme acquired fostered awareness of national system's barriers and the will to enhance cooperation (Huisman and Van der Wende, 2004; Huisman, 2004). Furthermore, "conceptually, internationalisation was for a long time mainly seen as concentrating on the cross-border mobility of individual students and scholars and not as a strategy that affected higher education institutions or systems" (Van der Wende, 2001).

Moreover, as Corbett (2003) highlights, "the Erasmus programme had signified that the EC had been able to devise a distinctive cooperation policy unlike anything in the international scene." Even though it did not produce concrete immediate changes in the aftermath of its birth, the Erasmus programme started a process for the progressive development of a European education system and common area

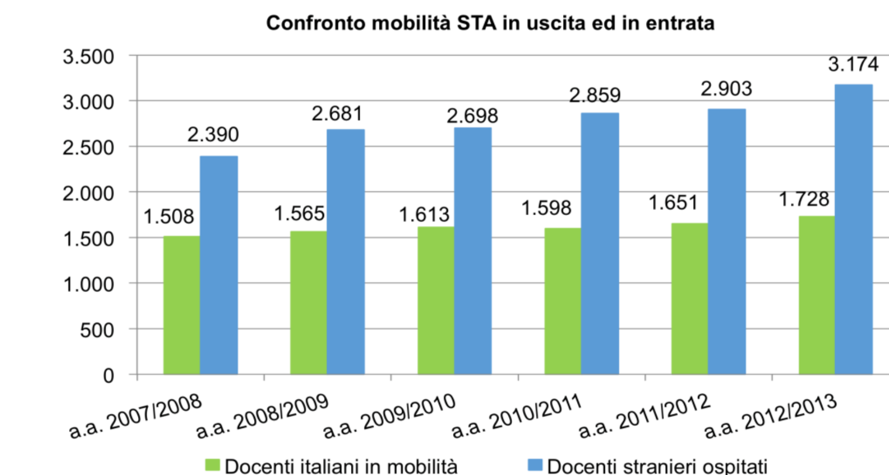
3.3 The internationalization of Higher Education: Erasmus impact on teaching staff mobility

Universities in the last decades have been more keen on internationalizing their staff, structures and curricula addressed to students.

Internationalization can be described as, "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Wilkinson and Walsh, 2008). This interest in internationalizing programmes and structures involved both academic staff and students. "Since 1997, university teachers have had the possibility to go abroad for a teaching assignment within the framework of the Erasmus programme. Nearly 8,000 teachers took this opportunity in the first year" (Engel, 2010, p. 2). The need to provide international students with curricula entirely taught in a different language, i.e. in English, increased the demand for teachers with high competences in foreign languages and for mobile teachers, coming from other countries. Internationalization is strictly connected to introduction of English-medium HE teaching, as Coleman (2006) and Maiworm & Wächter (2002) argue, in exploring reasons for moving to English-taught courses, the initial impetus typically emerges as participation in higher education exchange programmes. Consequently, in countries where national language(s) are not broadly spoken elsewhere, bilateral exchanges and communications, related to the exchange, are only possible if courses are delivered in an international language, generally understood almost by everyone: most frequently English.

For example, in Italy this progressive internationalization can be noticed by the increase in the last years, of the number of incoming and outgoing teachers. So, the number of Italian teachers and researchers that decide to go abroad for a given period. In fact, in Italian Universities there are always more foreign teachers that come from other European (and non-European) countries in order to teach even for just a semester

Table 1 Teaching staff mobility incoming and outgoing flows[32]



As table 1 shows since the academic year 2007/2008 there has been a substantial increase in the number of Italian teachers that went abroad and in the number of foreign professors that came to Italy for teaching even for a short period. In some cases, foreign professors may stay for more than a semester and become part of the teaching staff of that University. Often Universities start a bilateral agreement and may start also a collaboration in the research field, or they start an exchange in teaching staff. From graph 1 it can be noticed that the inflow of teaching staff is higher than the outgoing flow. It means that there are more foreign professors coming to work in Italian Universities, than Italian professors going abroad.

3.3.1 Teaching staff skills in a foreign academic environment and the improvement of teaching methods

As said above one of the main obstacles that Higher Education Institutions find in inserting in their sturdy programmes framework, more internationalized courses and more programmes thought in another language, is the lack of trained teachers who can deliver lessons in a different language than their mother tongue language, as required by the more frequent presence of international students in class. So, linguistic diversity is partly due to increased transnational mobility manifested in terms like "exchange students" (Dimova et al., 2015).

---

[32] table 1 is taken from PERITORE, C. and SILVESTRI, L. (Eds) Rapporto Annuale Erasmus a.a. 2012/2013, published on December 2014, Firenze.

So, one of the major concern for teachers and students, is the need of having lessons fully held in a foreign language. As said before, in the majority of cases these courses are held in English.

The problem with English taught courses (but also with every course not delivered in the home country language) is the fact that in the majority of cases, teachers are English non-native speakers and they may lack of a vast vocabulary in academic English. In addition, lecturers feel that correcting students' mistakes related to language use is neither their concern nor their responsibility, moreover, often they do not have sufficient expertise to do so (Dafouz, 2014). The main focus is not the language and its grammar, but the contents which vary in accordance to the subject thought. Learning a subject in a foreign language may overload both students' and teachers' workload. Above all if teachers are not native speakers. So, there are risks of decrease in teaching quality and consequently a decrease in students' learning and productivity, and an increase of teaching/study load (Sercu, 2005). As a consequence, some programmes are not so easily adaptable in being thought in another language, such as medicine and law (Coleman, 2006).

In sum, it can be argued that students involved in exchange programmes, with Erasmus at the forefront, brought in higher education a wave of internationalization, and in particular, a new conception related to teaching methods and course delivery.

English has become a Lingua Franca also in higher education and this allowed the creation of courses completely taught in English, consequently it has led European universities to implement the use of this language as a medium of instruction (Morell et al., 2014). These courses gave the possibility to mobile students to ease their acknowledgement of courses and lessons in a foreign country. Moreover, it has been an opportunity also for non-mobile students to improve their language skills and to internationalize their curriculum. On the other hand, teachers had the opportunity to enhance their language skills too, to improve their teaching methods and widen their cultural knowledges on the host country, while abroad.

Notwithstanding the overall beneficial experience of teaching staff mobility, teachers have to face also many challenges. Besides being most of the times, both involved in activities at home and abroad, non-native English speakers, need to face a

language gap. In fact, "a good command of the language of the host country was important for the decision to teach abroad" (Bracht et al., 2006).

In addition, among teachers taking part to the Erasmus programme, many of them were not satisfied with the administrative and financial support during their period abroad. Kreitz and Teichler, beside the problems related to financial and administrative support, outlined also other problematics encountered by teachers while abroad. For example, often the actual academic level of students turned out to be different from the one expected, administrative and bureaucratic barriers and the need to find an accommodation made the stay in the host country more difficult, moreover, the late arrival of financial support negatively influenced the visit abroad. Moreover, their regular activities at home have to coexist with their Erasmus supported teaching activities. This did not permit them to fully complete their duties neither at home nor in the host University (Bracht et al., 2006). Engel (2012) reports that teachers feel that their teaching mobility seemed to an individual activity resulting in extra work without any compensation. Furthermore, only 3% of the respondents of the Bracht et al. survey on "Professional value of Erasmus mobility", stated that the Erasmus teaching period abroad made their income increase, even though the percentage of those who stated that their opportunity to teach abroad through Erasmus improved their career perspective, is substantially high. No career advancement may come from the fact that as Engel pointed out, often those teachers who take part in exchange programmes like Erasmus, are already at a high stage of their career.

Moreover, according to Wächter and Maiworm (2014), academic staff teaching in culturally and linguistic heterogeneous classes, do not just need to command English, but they also need to be able to handle students coming from different academic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, teachers need to be trained not just from the linguistic point of view, but also from the point of view of the teaching method.

The presence of foreign students on campus brings different perspective on teaching practices. In Italy, for example, often teachers from foreign Universities have a more learner-centred approach in their lessons. Constructivist theory of learning, places the individual at the centre of the learning process. "Rather than behaviours or skills as the goal of instruction, *cognitive development* and *deep understanding* are the foci. Rather than viewing learning as a linear process, it is understood to be *complex* and

fundamentally *nonlinear* in nature" (Fosnot and Perry, 1996, p. 11). Moreover, the basis for constructivism is "schema" theory which describes how learners' mental structures are used to organize knowledge (Carrol et al., 2005). According to this theory different cultural environments and experiences will change these "schemas" as they will be influence by different cultural aspects, and in this particular academic context, by the different teaching methods encountered; as "constructivist theory focus on the active character of the learner, and learning is the resulting construction and qualitative reorganization of knowledge structures" (Packer and Goicoechea, 2000, p. 228).

Student-centred approach is more likely to be used in "soft" disciplines (such as social sciences and humanities) where teachers, "whose approach to teaching is categorised as student-centred in a particular context, see teaching as facilitating students' learning or students' knowledge – construction process or as supporting students' conceptual change" (Lindblom et al., 2006).

In Italy, lessons' structure is more teacher centred, and it is seen merely as a transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student. Also the Bologna process took into consideration the importance of developing a more student-centred approach also in Higher Education. "This approach has many implications for the design and flexibility of curriculum, course content and interactivity of the learning process" (Lindblom et al., 2006). In some cases, changing from a teacher-centred approach to a more student-centred one, means also changing courses' contents, making them more likely to be used for debates in class, face-to-face lessons and also the need for more tools such as computers, projectors, bigger rooms, in order to enhance interactivity. Consequently, this method enhances mobile and non-mobile students' knowledges, and improve also teaching methods of teachers. In fact, teachers get to know new teaching methods abroad and they can confront with colleagues at the host institution (Bracht et al., 2006).

3.3.2 The impact of Erasmus on non-mobile students

Non-mobile students, are those students that in a given time are not involved in an exchange programme. On the contrary mobile students are those students that in a given period of time during their course of study undertake an experience abroad using for example, the Erasmus programme as an opportunity.

Sometimes being non-mobile students is not a decision that depends entirely on students, there can be also other external factors that act as barriers and prevent students from undertaking such experience. In the majority of cases the main barrier for students is represented by the economic aspect of undertaking the path of a study experience abroad.

In fact, "the participation in student exchange programmes depends significantly on the socio-economic background of students" (Souto-Otero, 2008). Students are reticent in spending a period abroad even if it is for studying, because expenditures in the host country are expected to be very high. Notwithstanding University fees, students need to pay for their accommodation and other things related to their period of study abroad, such as textbooks, eating at the canteen, possible University trip, etc. Moreover, among the expected expenditures that students who decide to leave for a period abroad, even if it is short, need to take into account are accommodation expenditures, food, beverage, transportation, also expenditures related to students' free time need to be taken into account as they are part of the whole experience, such as museum visits, cinemas, trips in other part of the country, etc.

But, non-mobile students can benefit from the Erasmus programme in a sort of indirect way. In other words, even if students do not undertake directly the Erasmus experience they can take advantage of some effects of the programme in their home institutions. Consequently, even non-mobile students can experience a course entirely taught in a foreign language and attend lessons where other students do not share their nationality, and maybe even comes from a non-European country. Non-mobile students can benefit from this opportunity, with all its annexed pros and cons. "Obviously, the presence of international students in the campus provides all home students with opportunities to gain intercultural experience, not only those who travel abroad" (Fernandez Agüero, 2017).

Moreover, as Bracht et al. (2006) show in their survey, that mobile teachers, once they return back home, notice a positive impact on their home country University. In particular, on the range of foreign language teaching, on the development of new study and contents, on the development of new teaching methods as a result of the new acknowledgments on the host country.

So, in other words, non-mobile students can benefit both from foreign professors who come and teach in their University, and from professors who have already been involved in the Erasmus programme for teaching staff mobility.

It must be underlined that even though Universities are putting internationalization of their faculties on the top of their agenda, still it is commonly acknowledged that Erasmus students have a stronger identification with Europe and a wider European awareness than sedentary or non-mobile students, as this is a peculiar feature of Erasmus students (Fernandez Agüero, 2017). Consequently, this awareness cannot be easily instilled in non-mobile students as it is an acquired feature of mobile students and teachers.

3.3.3 The impact of mobile teaching staff on research programmes

Besides their work as lecturers, teachers in higher education framework, work also as researchers. They may decide to improve their research studies by moving for a given period of time in another University in a foreign country, where there are more available resources or teams of researchers dealing with the same issues. In fact, the "relationship with different institutions is reinforced by the implementation of joint programs in the field of research and science" (Gvelesiani, 2012). But the improvements in research activities may also be connected to teaching periods abroad, when teachers get to widen their academic contacts (Bracht et al., 2006). "In a knowledge economy, these programmes are extremely important for the completion of the research and academic mission of a university" (Dobrowolska, 2016). In fact, teachers state that their period abroad enhanced intercultural understanding, intensified use of scientific foreign language publications, broadened specialist knowledges and improved research contacts and cooperation with partners at the host institutions. (Engel, 2012). New academic contacts usually end up in bilateral agreements between two Higher Education Institutions, which may then start a collaboration in a particular academic field. Moreover, "contacts, publications and collaboration in new projects are produced as a result of ERASMUS periods abroad undertaken by staff" (European Commission, 2008).

Most of the times teachers who undertake a period abroad through the Erasmus programme, are teachers who already had experiences abroad and are already in

advanced stages of their career and they are between 35 and 55 years old. (Engel, 2012). They decided to undertake this period abroad thank to the Erasmus programme in order to enhance their competences and to deepen their research topic. “Researchers qualifications can be improved thanks to participation in programmes supporting the mobility of scientists” (Dobrowolska, 2016).

It can be noticed that the flows of teaching staff mobility go from Central and Eastern Europe to Western Europe. Moreover, teachers from Central and Eastern Europe value more positively the benefits from their period abroad (Engel, 2012). It can be argued that after European enlargements toward Eastern countries, these countries tried to keep up the pace with Western Countries’ Higher Education Institutions.

In the framework of the ERA (European Research Area) the aim is to create a space for free movement of knowledges, researchers and technology in order to increase cooperation and stimulate competition among research institutions, in which also higher education institutions are contemplate. In order to create this area, barriers to mobility need to be abolished and mobility of researchers should be enhanced. Barriers such as taxation, failing in recognition of qualifications need to be erased, in order to facilitate the free movement of knowledges and researchers (Morano-Foadi, 2005).

3.4 Language policy in the European Higher Education Area

The progressive internationalization of Higher Education and the opening of its borders to mobility flows, has increased the need for language policies. Above all it increased the need for a common language to use in international exchanges, in order to communicate more easily. “English, due to its role in globalization, and to the role of the EU in promoting multilinguism in education has gained a place of honour in the hierarchy of languages” (Phillipson, 2002).

Since 1980s schoolchildren of primary schools in Europe had to learn two foreign languages, as recommended by the Council of Europe (Phillipson, 2002), and became then a policy in the 1990s. In the field of Higher Education, the Bologna Process played a major role in the boosting of language policies and multilinguism (Phillipson, 2002; Wilkinson and Walsh, 2008). Moreover, the ever-growing permeation of globalization

in almost all sectors of people' life, from the economic to the cultural one, has required the need for a common language for communicative purposes, moreover, "the economy is increasingly to be based on intellectual rather than material products, significantly increasing the importance of linguistic competence" (Phillipson, 2006). Consequently, also Higher Education had to cope with this urgency, by providing its students with adequate language skills and courses taught in a different language, in fact, "English-language-taught degree programmes can attract more international or foreign students and prepare domestic students for global markets" (Baroncelli, 2014). Furthermore, the progressive internationalization of Higher Education needs to face also market's needs, as education is treated as a tradeable commodity and a service that can be traded, and attracting foreign students may be economically favourable and increase Universities' prestige (Phillipson, 2006), in other words, "there is thus a commercial rationale behind English-medium higher education, as well as cultural and political dimensions" (Phillipson, 2002).

Moreover, in the academic and research field, English is the most used language, and degree and research programmes do attract also foreign researcher and academics, helping raising the attractiveness and the image of the institutions (Baroncelli, 2014).

This argument raises another issue, related to the widespread use of English as a lingua franca in the academic fields: language diversity and its preservation. Article 22 of The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which includes fundamental principles that all member states ought to respect, states that the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. European institutions promulgate legislation in all the recognised languages of the EU, but generally the official languages are English and French, as for example, also in the Council of Europe. Anyway, English is the main language in which documents are discussed and meetings are held. But, the threat of English as the sole language in Europe may be unfounded; as language policies in Europe are voted to maintain its multilinguistic aspect and this presupposes proficiency in several languages, as Phillipson (2006) argues. For example, in Norther countries more than in their Southern counterparts, multilinguism is a serious issue, and the "role of English in higher education, especially in northern Europe is of great relevance" (Phillipson, 2002, 2006; Wilkinson 2004; Wilson, 2002). While in Southern countries, very often, the level of proficiency in

foreign languages is lower and teachers of foreign languages are often under-qualified (Phillipson, 2002).

Europe tries to promote and defend multilinguism throughout the continent, this was the objective of the Action-Plan for the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity of 2003. This document addresses the importance of knowing more than just one lingua franca, and attacks the hegemony of English in many fields. Moreover, it claims the necessity of a European language policy. But, as Phillipson (2006) argues, there are several obstacles to the formation of a linguistic policy at the European level. First of all because language policy is jealousy safeguarded by national governments, moreover, poor national and supranational infrastructures and impressive translation and interpretation services at supranational level, make language policy seem unnecessary and too demanding.

In sum, English as a lingua franca should improve, as a necessary tool in nowadays knowledge economy; and local language should be preserved, safeguarded by strong national language policies. Furthermore, as Phillipson suggests, "the education system must evolve strategies for students and staff to become effectively trilingual (at least) in a diverse range of languages".

3.4.1 English taught courses in Europe: North-South divide

European countries have been triggered by the Erasmus programme to enhance the internationalization of their academic life. Consequently, Universities needed to face this new need for Bachelor's and Master's degree programme completely (or partly) taught in a foreign language.

Often Universities face many difficulties in providing ETPs (English taught programmes). Most of the time the main problem is related to the language proficiency. So, "low levels of proficiency in English among teaching staff, low-level of English skills amongst domestic students" make the introduction of ETPs very difficult, above all scarce English skills among teaching staff are quite frequently mentioned "as the major reason for not introducing ETPs. Institutional Coordinators mentioned poor language skills of teaching staff, and, understandably, a resulting reluctance to teach in English" (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014).

Even though the use of a foreign language in teaching is a highly widespread practice in European higher education, it is unequally spread throughout Europe. This situation can be validated by a study conducted by ACA (Academic Cooperation Association) in 2014, that took into consideration the amount of entirely English-taught study programmes present in European countries and the number of students enrolled in them. According to this study there is a North-South divide, as Northern countries are at the top (starting from Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden) with the highest rate of study programmes completely taught in English, on the contrary the countries with the lowest rate are situated in South Europe (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). Dimova et al (2015), moreover, underlined that the proportion of non-Nordic students at Nordic Universities is around 15 %, so there is also a high presence of foreign students that decided to study in Northern European countries (Dimova et al., 2015).

So, it can be said that Universities in Northern European countries have a more well established tradition in providing its students with study programmes entirely taught in another language.

The Netherland's proposal in English taught courses is the highest in Europe, and the number of Master's degree courses entirely delivered in English have increased. In fact, in 2007 Master's degree taught in English were 387, while in 2016 they are 1220. Germany is another country that has a wide offer of English courses taught in English. German Universities increased the number of their courses delivered in English, going from 88 courses in 2007 to 1113 in 2016. In Northern countries there is a long tradition in the use of foreign language as medium for teaching in schools. For example, the University of Maastricht delivers courses taught in a foreign language since 1987.

While, the situation in south Europe is slightly different. Even though the situation is rapidly evolving, as Southern countries are increasing the number of courses entirely delivered in a foreign language, in particular in English. Dafouz, Camacho and Urquia (2014) took into consideration the Spanish example. They argued that, notwithstanding the programmes launched by the European Commission in order to enhance internationalisation of higher education, southern European countries are slower in keeping up with this progressive internationalization of Higher Education. Furthermore, they argue that southern countries suffer the most this comparison with northern

countries, because of their lower level of English. For example, according to Eurostat, the percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece is respectively 28%, 25%, 6% and 1% (Eurostat 2016). Sometimes it happened that some countries are a bit sceptical and reticent in changing the language used for teaching and not using their mother tongue. This is the case of Spain where some Universities are bilingual because courses are thought in Spanish and Catalan. Even though all these problematic that Spain had in harmonizing its Universities with the progressive internationalization, it remains one of the more active countries in the Erasmus programme framework. In fact, 38 445 Spanish students went abroad for studying with the Erasmus programme in the academic year 2015/2016. Moreover, in the same year 44 596 students from other countries chose Spain as host country for studying. Despite its lower presence of foreign language as medium for teaching, the country is dealing good with internationalization of its Universities and the attitude also of the most reluctant Spanish Universities, such as the University of Alicante, seems very positive. (Morell et al., 2014).

In sum, there still is an evident discrepancy between North and South Europe concerning the internationalization of higher education, but, in recent years this gap is becoming smaller also thank to high rate of involvement of Southern European countries in the Erasmus exchange programme, both of students and of teaching staff. Notwithstanding the progress made by Southern countries the gap in English and other foreign language level is still very low, and nowadays being able to provide students with more internationalized curricula has become essential, also as a result of the progressive interconnection among European Higher Education Institutions.

3.4.2 English Taught Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Europe

English-taught Bachelors and English taught Maters degree programmes are an increasing phenomenon throughout Europe. Universities started developing a wider offer in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, in order to face the increasing demand.

In fact, the introduction of English-taught degrees has been part of a larger internationalisation trend that took place after the completion of the Bologna Process. This progressive development started at the Master's degree level. In 2001a studies

identified 725 ETMs in Europe, this number rose substantially reaching 2389 ETMs programmes in 2007 and 8089 in 2014. The countries with the highest number of Universities that offer ETBs and ETMs are Germany, the Netherlands, France and Poland, while those with the lowest are Romania, Latvia and Cyprus (Sandström and Neghina, 2017).

But the distribution of ETBs and ETMs differ according to the discipline. In fact, there is a different demand according to the field of study.

Table 2 Distribution of ETBs and ETMs by discipline in Europe[33]

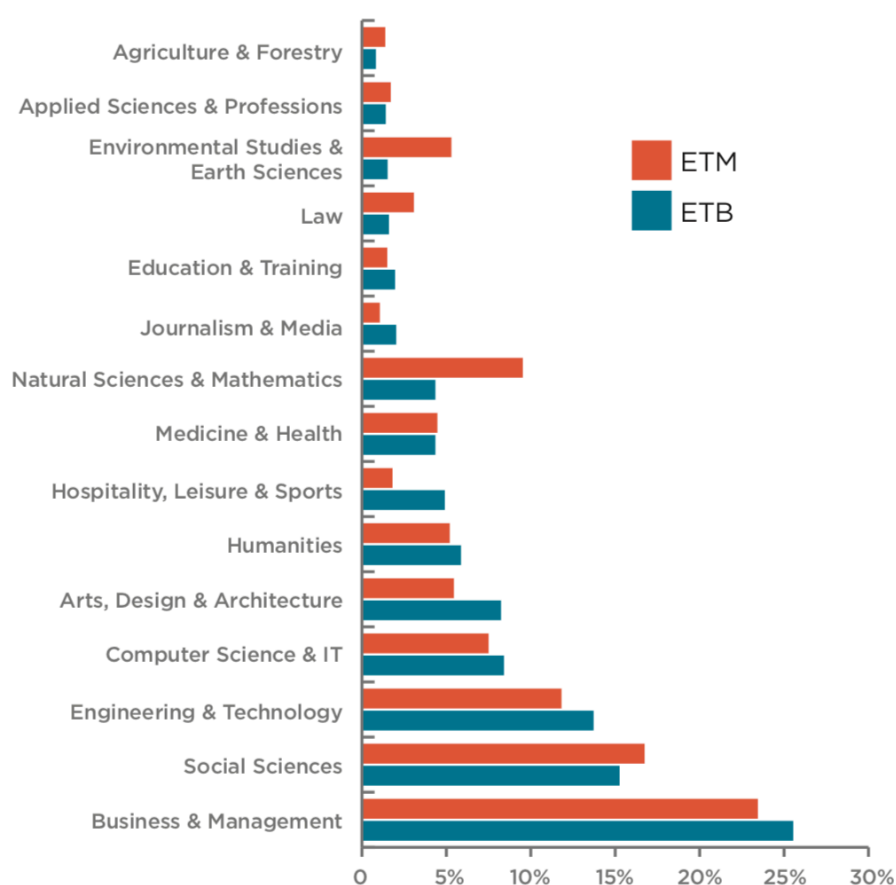


Table 2 shows the partition of ETBs and ETMs in Europe according to their field of study. The graph shows that the majority of English-taught programmes are in the Business and Management field, followed by Social sciences and Engineering and

[33] table 2 is taken from SANDSTRÖM, A. and NEGHINA, C. English-taught Bachelor's programmes, *European association for International Education,* 2017

technology. While the fields in which there are the lowest percentage of ETBs and ETMs are Agricultural and forestry, journalism and media, applied sciences and professions and education and training. The ETB discipline distribution follows the patterns of ETM programmes. It can be argued that both at the bachelor's and master's degree level the demand of having English-taught courses in certain discipline is equivalent. Only in the field of natural sciences and mathematics there is an imbalance between the number of ETBs and ETMs.

The presence of more English-taught courses in certain fields and not in others, may depend also from the greater presence of international students enrolled in certain courses of study. In other words, if a course of study, both at the Bachelor's and Master's degree level, has a high presence of international students enrolled, there will then be a greater demand of English taught courses in that particular field of study. It must be also said that some disciplines are much more keen on being taught in another language.

Here below there is a table that shows how Erasmus students are distributed according to the field of study they are enrolled in.

Table 3[34] Distribution of Erasmus students by discipline

Area disciplinare di appartenenza	N. Studenti Erasmus
Studi ad indirizzo Economico, Management (04)	32.437
Lingue e Filologia (09)	23.800
Scienze Sociali (14)	18.800
Ingegneria, Tecnologia (06)	17.210
Diritto (10)	10.476
Scienze mediche (12)	9.106
Arti e Design (03)	7.562
Architettura, Pianificazione Urbana e Regionale (02)	5.710
Scienze Naturali (13)	5.694
Scienze Umanistiche (08)	5.681
Matematica , Informatica (11)	5.290
Istruzione, Formazione degli Insegnanti (05)	5.024
Scienze della Comunicazione e dell'Informazione (15)	4.767
Scienze Agrarie (01)	2.960
Geografia, Geologia (07)	2.912
Altro (16)	1.895
Totale	159.324

[34] Table 3 is taken from: Mobilità Erasmus, Rapporto Annuale a.a. 2006/2007, Lifelong Learning programme Italia

By comparing the data from the graph 2 and table 3 it can be noticed that the top 3 disciplines in the graph (Business and management, social sciences and engineering and technology) are respectively the first, the third and the fourth field of study in table 3. In other words, there is a sort of connection between the field of study of Erasmus students and the number of ETBs ETMs degrees programmes offered by Universities.

3.5 Conclusion

The growing importance and success that exchange programmes are acquiring in Higher Education, reverberated also in the structure and services provided by Higher Education Institutions. As, in order to be able to firstly attract international students also for economic purposes, and then to be able to prepare outgoing students, Institutions had to update their system. So, not just modifying their structure in accordance to the three-cycle degree structure, but also with more practical and immediate actions, such as providing course or degree programmes entirely taught in English or through administrative support.

Teaching and learning in a different language may also increase the work load of both teachers and students. In fact, they could be distracted from understanding the core knowledges of the course, by the difficulty in approaching a foreign language.

So, on the one hand English taught courses are positive for Universities, which can more easily attract and welcome foreign students and teacher, while, on the other hand it may be a sort of barrier toward the full understanding of the course. English proficiency then is generally higher in Northern European countries, which are also the countries with the highest rate of study programmes taught in English. While Southern countries are slower in keeping up with this trend.

Of course there are some fields of study in which English taught courses are more usual. It is the case of Business and Management, social science and engineering and technology courses. These are also the courses in which the presence of Erasmus students is higher.

In sum, the Erasmus Programme had and still has an impact on the way University

works nowadays, also from the point of view of courses' structure and of mobile students' management by home and host institutions. Moreover, Universities need to adapt and change their structures and services, in order to be able to both welcome foreign students, and bare the consequences of the progressive internationalization of Higher Education.

Chapter 4

The impact of Erasmus on individuals

This chapter will focus on the impact of the Erasmus programme on individuals, so mainly on students, but also on teaching staff. Taking part in the Erasmus programme, and in particular on the main characteristics that are proper of exchange students joining the Erasmus programme. Therefore, the socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of students and of their families will be taken into consideration in order to outline the profile of the typical Erasmus student. Moreover, also barriers and obstacles encountered by students will be analyse, in order to show which problems exchange students need to face before leaving, so, when they have to decide to undertake this experience or not and then during they stay abroad in the host country. In addition, students experience also some changes in their personal and academic life, after this period abroad when they return in their home country.

4.1 The socioeconomic background of Erasmus students

The Erasmus programme tries also to promote cohesiveness among people from different member states, to raise European awareness, to help building a socio cultural area and to instil a sense of common European identity. But, do all participants have the same possibilities? Or better, are everyone likely to become Erasmus students?

Some scholars and researchers argue that students do not have the same possibilities in choosing whether to undertake this experience or not. Some of them just do not have the economic or social possibilities to afford to be part of this project. In other words, "Several studies show that Erasmus students typically have privileged backgrounds" (Anheier and Falkenhain, 2012). With "privileged backgrounds" it is meant the socioeconomic family situation of students, so parents' education and

profession, family composition, cultural backgrounds. In fact, Franzini and Raitano (2009) in their research on the persistence of economic inequalities in families in Europe, point out that educational attainments are strictly related to family backgrounds, in particular to "family composition (whether someone lived with both parents or not), the number of offspring, the educational attainments of both parents, their activity status and occupations and a qualitative ordered variable regarding the presence of financial problems in the household". These variables can in different ways influence the academic success of children and therefore, affect future working plans of young people. Related to family composition, in accordance with Anna Cristina d'Addio (2007) reviewed studies, living with both parents increases educational level, while the number of offspring decreases it. It is related to the fact that the same amount of financial endowments need to be divided if there is more than one child in the family, and living with both parents increases the amount of family earning and so the possibility for students of being economically and psychologically supported.

In addition, Franzini and Raitano, in their research focus also on the geographical background of students, by stating "that in Mediterranean countries the average educational attainments are significantly lower than in the three other areas" (Anglo-Saxon, Nordic and Continental areas) and moreover, the financial distress does negatively influence more families in Mediterranean countries than for example in Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries. In other words, according to their study, families from Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries are less subjected to financial distress than families in Mediterranean countries. Moreover, the probability that children will obtain a tertiary education is much more feasible in Nordic countries than in Southern ones. In fact, for example, among Erasmus students surveyed by Souto-Otero and McCoshan (2006) in their "Survey of the socio-economic background of Erasmus students", the highest percentages (above 60%) of parents with a higher education degree have been found in Denmark (66,9% of males, 73% of females), Netherlands (65,7% of males), Norway (73,3% of males, 68% of females), United Kingdom (60,1% of males) and Sweden (62,4% of females). While Mediterranean countries do not even reach 50% neither among males nor among females. So, according to these data, students in Nordic countries are more likely to have at least one parent who has completed his/her tertiary education that students from Mediterranean countries.

Table 4[35] Predicted probabilities of attaining a tertiary degree by family background and geographical area.

				Countries			
				Anglo-Saxon (%)	Mediterranean (%)	Continental (%)	Nordic (%)
Parents' educational attainment[b]	Tertiary	Financial distress	No	78.9	55.3	74.3	62.6
			Yes	74.2	49.2	69.1	56.6
			Change	−6.0	−11.0	−7.0	−9.5
	Upper secondary	Financial distress	No	55.1	29.4	49.1	36.2
			Yes	49.0	24.4	43.0	30.6
			Change	−11.1	−17.2	−12.4	−15.4
	Lower secondary	Financial distress	No	43.6	20.4	37.8	26.1
			Yes	37.7	16.3	32.1	21.3
			Change	−13.6	−19.9	−15.0	−18.1
	Primary	Financial distress	No	29.7	11.4	24.7	15.5
			Yes	24.6	8.7	20.1	12.1
			Change	−17.1	−23.5	−18.5	−21.8

This table represents in percentage the probabilities of young people of attaining a tertiary degree, according to their parents' education and financial situation and to their geographical background. Continental countries are: Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and the Netherlands; Nordic countries are: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden; Anglo-Saxon are the UK and Ireland; and Mediterranean countries are Italy and Spain.

As it can be noticed the overall chances of young people from Mediterranean countries to achieve a tertiary education is slightly lower than in all other geographical regions considered. This may be due to the persistent economic inequality between North and South Europe, in fact, Southern countries experience higher levels of unemployment and lower income levels, compared to those in Northern countries (COPE, Centre for Opportunity and Equality, 2017). Therefore, in southern countries the financial distress affects more in Mediterranean countries than in other regions. In other words, as also shown by Table1, the socioeconomic situation of a family is also given by the country where the family lives, so, the income levels that a worker may aspire to, tax levels, unemployment rates, living expectations, welfare systems, etc.

[35] Table 4 is taken from: Franzini M. and Raitano M. (2009) Persistence of inequality in Europe: the role of family economic conditions, in *International Review of Applied Economics*, 23:3.

Then the educational and economic achievements of individuals may depend on a large number of background factors of which family income is only one; genetic, social, geographical and cultural aspects may also be added to the equation (Franzini and Raitano, 2009; d'Addio, 2007).

Many studies have been made on the correlation between the socioeconomic family situation and the possibility to take part in an exchange programme, the Erasmus programme in this specific case. One of the main prolific scholar who dealt with this issue is Manuel Souto-Otero. He took into consideration the role that family economic situation and their socio cultural background play in the choice of young people of undertaking the Erasmus experience. His main argument is that students coming from wealthy families are more likely to participate in Erasmus, in fact, "results indicate that Erasmus students are more likely to come from households with parents in high-level occupations […]. Therefore, Erasmus students come largely from privileged socio-economic backgrounds." (Souto-Otero, 2008). Consequently, some scholars share the same point of view, so, that students coming from a higher socio economic background or from richer countries, are more likely to join an exchange programme and spend a period abroad as their families can provide them with the appropriate endowments, both in the economic and academic field. (Souto-Otero, 2008; Messer and Wolter, 2007; van Mol and Timmerman, 2013). In fact, as the economic aspect is one of the main barrier to the Erasmus programme and "given the financial cost often associated with mobility, we hypothesise mobile students to originate from higher social strata" (van Mol and Timmerman, 2013).

Moreover, the family environment in which people are raised can play an important role in the decision of spending time abroad for studying. For example, in families where parents or other members of the family have already had an experience abroad, young people would be more encouraged to go abroad for a given period of time. But, on the other hand, they can also be negatively influenced by strong familial attachment, and people may not agree with leaving family and friends, even if for a short period of time, for moving abroad to study (Souto-Otero et al., 2012). "Therefore, we expect mobile students to be raised in a family open to international experience through relatives' personal experience(s) abroad and/or positive attitudes towards a stay abroad" (van Mol and Timmerman, 2013). This positive attitude to exchange

programme is given also by the fact that often, in Erasmus students' families, parents have completed their tertiary education, in fact, "a second indicator of socio-economic background for which information was captured in the survey was parental education. Overall, around 58% of students had at least one parent who had experienced Higher Education" (Souto-Otero, 2008). In addition, according to transgenerational mobility of occupations and education, due to family characteristics such as sociocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, family composition, language spoken at home, etc. occupations and educational attainments tend to persist across generations. According to D'addio (2007) and De Nardi (2004), educational attainment persists across generations because this persistence is a combination of parents' education attainments and other characteristics of the parents, such as occupation and culture. In contrast to this point of view there is the argument raised by other scholars like De Graaf and Kalmijn (2001). They state that young people are always less eager in following their parents' educational and/or professional experiences, as transgenerational transmission of educational attainments and of professions is becoming obsolete. Moreover, the influence of parents over occupational choices of their children have weakened.

To sum up, Erasmus students generally come from wealthy families, where parents often concluded tertiary education, and in many cases have already been in contact with exchange programme and are more open to international experiences. Students from Nordic countries are more likely to have parents who attained a higher education degree. On the other hand, there are lower chances for students coming from lower social strata, to be able to undertake such experience. As their family background cannot provide them with the adequate sum of academic and economic endowments. Consequently, students from southern Europe are less likely to have a family member who completed their tertiary education, and therefore, less familiar with these type of experience. Moreover, this lack of sufficient endowments is likely to persist throughout following generations.

4.2 Barriers to the Erasmus programme

There are many barriers that students may encounter before, during and after their

period abroad. First of all, as argued in the previous chapter, the socioeconomic barrier is the first obstacle for students who want to take part in the Erasmus programme. This obstacle may be very difficult to overcome as it is deeply eradicated in the family background. Other barriers and obstacle may be related to the fear of facing another culture, lessons taught in another language, the cultural shock of living in another country, not having the direct support of families and friends, fear of losing time and not being able to graduate in time, etc. Also in this instance, a detailed overview on the main obstacles encountered by Erasmus students, has been provided by Souto-Otero together with other researchers. Souto-Otero et al. (2012) showed that barriers to these exchange programmes are highly shared by students all over Europe.

For example, the majority of students are used to live with their parents in their home country (40% of students lived with their parents while studying in their home institution) so, they often find several difficulties in relation to accommodation and general expenses associated with it and financial and administrative matters (Souto-Otero et al., 2012). Moreover, 55% of students considered Erasmus grant insufficient, considering also the fact that the majority of students depends on their parents' contribution, as they are not able to continue paid work during their period abroad. For example, "over 60% of ERASMUS students going to Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway and the UK reported that the ERASMUS grant was insufficient" (Souto-Otero and McCoshan, 2006). In fact, the cost of living varies according to the host country. Economic difficulties to be encounter abroad sometimes persuade students from undertaking this experience. More than the half of students surveyed in Souto-Otero and McCoshan work, stated that they know someone who did not participate for economic reasons.

Furthermore, beside economically related obstacles, often young people have difficulties related to the anxiety of living, even if for a short period, in a different country without the direct support of family and friends. The cultural gap that they might encounter can discourage people from undertaking this path. The main problematics related to the cultural gap may be lessons taught in a different language, where in some cases it is a language in which students do not have a suitable level, different teaching methods or too-high academic level encountered abroad. These barriers, together with the socioeconomic barrier, bring students to change their mind in

the making and refuse to leave eventually. Economic barriers together with personal backgrounds can influence the choice of leaving or even the choice of not even applying for taking part in the programme. In many cases, as said above, the fear of finding a completely different cultural reality can stop people from living this experience. This can be associated with the lack of information on the host country, the lack of confidence in personal academic skills (such as knowing at least one foreign language) and also the fear of not recognition of credits and of losing time and so having to postpone graduation, in fact, over a quarter of Erasmus students surveyed in Souto-Otero and McCoshan work, states that their degree would take longer due to the time lost during their period abroad and then problems related to credits recognition. “The resulting prolongation of the study period was a deterrent to many students who might otherwise have participated in an exchange program” (Messer and Wolter, 2006). The majority of people who did not even take into consideration taking part in the Erasmus programme, feared the loss of family and interpersonal relationships, too low grant levels, uncertainty about education and quality of system abroad and lack of language skills. It can be said, that these barriers are related to the anxiety of living in another country, so dealing with a different socio cultural reality. Erasing this kind of barriers is one of the main aim of the programme.

Table 2 shows the percentages of respondents who reported the barriers listed as being important or very important, in their own experience. The results are divided in three columns. The first one takes into consideration the students who effectively took part in the programme and so the barriers they encountered; the second one reports the answers of those who considered taking part in the programme but then found some obstacles and did not fulfil the experience, and the last column considers those who did not even take into consideration the idea of leaving because of perceived obstacles.

As we can see from the table below, the main barriers for people who took part in the programme were the fear of not having credits recognised, lack of integration between studies at home and abroad and above all the insufficient economic support.

Table 5[36] Students' identified barriers to participation in the Erasmus programme

Barrier	Erasmus Participants	Considered Erasmus Participation	Did Not Consider Erasmus Participation
Awareness/information			
Lack of information about the program	16	30	27
Difficulty to find appropriate institution/program	18	26	32
Uncertainty about quality education abroad	24	25	33
Uncertainty about education system abroad	37	30	39
Personal background			
Lack language skills	19	29	42
Plan to study abroad full qualification in the future	19	10	6
Family and personal relationships	14	28	47
Work responsibilities	9	16	23
Financial barriers			
Uncertainty about Erasmus benefits	11	24	34
Erasmus grant levels too low	56	44	39
Erasmus conditions			
Difficulties administration of the program	36	22	15
High competition Erasmus grants	19	32	23
Not possible to choose institution abroad myself	32	17	17
Erasmus period too long	3	11	15
Erasmus period too short	28	10	4
Lack of student services abroad	33	24	25
Higher education system comparability			
Incompatibility academic calendar	22	20	18
Lack integration studies home/abroad	36	32	31
Expected difficulties credit recognition	38	38	32
Lack of study programs in English	19	28	20
Other	21	22	35

In fact, the majority of students do not receive a full cover grant, but receive an amount of money that in many cases is sufficient only for paying accommodation expenses.

Moreover, students have to face other expenses related to the cost of living, so for example food, then transport costs, books, academic fees at home, etc. "Overall, individuals from middle to low GDP countries were those who suffered a greater 'net cost' for their Erasmus periods" (Souto-Otero, 2008).

It can be seen also from the table, that people who did not even consider to take part in the programme, fear the fact of being abroad without the support of family and friends, the cultural gap given by the lack of language skills and the uncertainties related

[36] Table 5 taken from: Souto-Otero et al., *Barriers to International Student Mobility: Evidence from the Erasmus Program,* EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER, 42:70, 2013, page 74. The table summarizes the results of a web survey that took into consideration the responses of 17,845 students, including 11,517 Erasmus students, 4,974 students who consider participation in Erasmus but did not take part, and 1,354 students who did not consider participation in the program. The survey has been commissioned by the European Parliament and carried out in 2010 in seven countries.

to education system abroad. This could be the result of a lack of information on the host country and an imbalance between different member states' education systems. In fact, those who participate in the programme had some difficulties interacting with a different education system, and feared of not having credits recognised, as for example, sometimes the assessment method abroad is not compatible or in accordance with the assessment method that students are used to in their home country. This can be also seen as part of the game, as when a student takes part in the programme some educational or cultural gap need to be expected, but at the same time, students who go abroad to study need to have the suitable skills to face and to succeed in a different educational and cultural environment. Moreover, also students who firstly considered joining this programme, have been discouraged by the economic obstacle and the fear of not receiving enough grants from their University, or enough economic support from their families.

To sum up, all the three groups considered argued that the main obstacle is that Erasmus grants are too low and students face economic problems during their period abroad. In addition, this discourage also students at home. Personal backgrounds and family's and friends' support are the major obstacles that prevent students from even considering entering the programme.

4.3 Building cross-cultural relationships

Friends and family can be one of the reasons why students are not so comfortable with the idea of moving to another country for studying.

On the contrary, these same reasons can be push factors in the decision making of undertaking this path. In fact, the majority of students who went abroad easily built a new network of friends, not just with students from their same country but also with foreign students. "The students said that they met friends from different parts of the world and built friendships that would last forever" (Mutlu, 2011), in fact, it is very common that students who met during their Erasmus period, still keep in touch after that period ended and sometimes they also travel back in order to pay them a visit. "It is evident that the discovery of different places and cultures continues with friend visits after Erasmus. These kinds of visits support being 'A European' and 'European

Consciousness' after Erasmus" (Mutlu, 2011). So, it can be said, that the amount of knowledges that a student takes back home after his/her period abroad, do not come entirely from their academic experiences but also from the fact of meeting new people and making new friends. Students build strong bonds also with other Erasmus students as they share the same experience, not necessarily from their same home country. Also these type of bonds are important for the programme to be successful, "as the dialogue between many visiting students ensures cross-cultural interaction and thus contributes to the development of European consciousness and forms integration" (Mutlu, 2011).

Generally, students make friends with three types of groups, students from the host country, fellow countrymen and people from other countries who are also in exchange (de Federico, 2008). Students have the possibility to meet other students from the host country above all in an academic environment, as Erasmus students gain an equal status as that of host students. So, they enrol in the same courses, attend the same lessons, have the chance to study together, meet at the University cafeteria, etc. They have many chances to become friends and even partners, as frequently happened during these periods. Moreover, often students feel the need of having friends from their same home country. It usually happens because Erasmus students live in campus with other foreign students and it feels natural to become acquainted with other fellow countrymen students.

"However, if most friends come from the home country, the exchange could be considered a failure in terms of intercultural contact" (de Federico, 2008). In fact, one of the main aim of the programme, is giving the chance to students to interact with people from different cultures in a different academic environment. Moreover, often students are attracted from students who are from other countries, so neither from the host country nor from their home country. With them they share a common feeling of being in a foreign country and of being part of an exchange programme. This relationship "links the student to a multicultural community where norms are in constant negotiation and adjustment, and where multilateral learning is possible" (de Federico, 2008). "Therefore, we may say that young people are successful in establishing a cross-cultural dialogue" (Mutlu, 2011).

Often, students find also time for building a romantic relationship with a fellow

student from another country or with someone from the host country, not necessarily met inside the academic network of friends. This is generally seen as an "Erasmus cliché", as often students who leave for undertaking this exchange programme, end up in building a brand new network of interpersonal relations in the host country. For the majority of young people, this is the first time abroad alone. All of them said they felt a feel of freedom and independency (European Commission, 2014). This feel of freedom and of being able to get to know anyone or anything they want, push students to interact more frequently and be more open than what they would have been at home. People in Erasmus feel much more free also regarding their interpersonal relationships, therefore they would be more incline in finding also a romantic relation during their stay abroad.

> Former Erasmus students are also more likely to have transnational relationships: 33% of former Erasmus students have a partner of a different nationality, compared with 13% of those who stay home during their studies; 27% of Erasmus students meet their long-term partner while on Erasmus. On this basis, the Commission estimates that around one million babies are likely to have been born to Erasmus couples since 1987 [37] (European Commission, 2014)

Consequently, many students decided to return in the host country even after the exchange ended. 40% of former Erasmus students move to another country after graduation, and the 93% of them easily imagine their life in another country. The Erasmus project wants to make people feel free of moving across Europe and feeling as they do not belong to one country in particular. The project addresses especially to young people as they are more receptive to cross-cultural inputs, and are more likely to adapt faster to new cultures, places and people.

In sum, students who decide to take part in an exchange programme are more likely to have particular family background, such as a higher socio economic status and a more open-minded family approach. Moreover, students are also influence in their decision of doing this experience or not by their socio cultural background. Even

[37] European Commission Press Release. 22.09.2014 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1025_en.htm

though some students may be a bit sceptical or may be afraid of leaving their home, family and friends for a given period, they almost all agree that their experience have been positive under many aspects. Making new long-lasting friendships, engage in a romantic relationship, get to know a new culture, language and feel more free and independent are only some of the positive sides enlisted by students who keep enlarging the "Erasmus family" every year.

4.4 The Erasmus programme and the shaping of a European awareness and identity

4.4.1 European identity

But what do we intend with European identity? For example, Delanty (2003) and Rumford (2010) answer that, "a collective identity[38] is not simply the aggregation of individual identities, but the self-understanding of a particular group […] and can exist without a direct relation to personal identities." So, identity can be the invisible glue that keep people with similar characteristics together, and those characteristics push those individuals to pursue and achieve the same goals. Moreover, the "transactionalist thesis", fostered also by Fliegstein (2008) focuses on the "idea that increased contacts between citizens from different countries would foster the development of collective identities" (Van Mol, 2018). Consequently, the contacts established through exchange programmes has the potential to enhance the development of a sense of European identity among participants. One of the main obstacle of this concept is how an abstract concept like European identity can be measured, and so, to what extent an exchange student can be considered more European like in his/her way of thinking, than non-mobile students.

As the sociologist Anthony Smith asks himself, "what are those characteristics and qualities that distinguish Europe from anything or anyone else? Can we find in the history and cultures of this continent some thing or things that are not replicated

[38] "Collective identity" refers to the actions of the group the individual is a part of. The individuals find similarities with other group's members, and those similarities create a sense of solidarity among members. Individuals may have different social, economic and political backgrounds, but still have that sameness that put them together as a solid group.

elsewhere, and that shaped what might be called specifically 'European experiences?'"[39] (Smith, 1992). The answers that he gives are multiple. According to him there are various characteristics that the Europeans share. Supporting the idea that Europe is not just a fragmentary entity, that happened to gather together people just for their geographical proximity. Smith argues that some characteristics that can be taken into consideration in order to support what all Europeans have in common, are to be searched among the linguistic and religious framework, territorial symbolism and what he called the "sense of the outsider". So, defining something by what it is not.

It is important to distinguish between common features involving the cultural and historical sphere, and those involving the institutional sphere. The latter can be seen just as a construction in order to legitimize the very sense of the Union. While the former is considered the product of "particular historical circumstances, often unanticipated and unintentional" (Smith, 1992). Those attempts to unify Europe under the point of view of a common cultural heritage are much more effective now than in the past, thanks to the mass-media and new communication technologies. As Cris Shore (2000, p.16) argues, "given the nature of mass communications today the opportunities for superseding the nation-state and creating cultural pan-nationalism in Europe are immeasurably greater than in the past." In fact, according to Shore, in "Building Europe" (2000), most previous pan national movements at the European level failed because of the poor status of their communications. Nowadays projects and programmes boosting a common sense of European belonging are more likely to succeed and to find the right support from institutions as well as from citizens of all member states.

The efficiency of the European identity building can be based on the "output of the EU's political system". In other words, a sense of belonging to the EU could derive from good politics and policies (Shore, 2000). So, the features involving the institutional sphere are not just a construction for justify Union's legitimacy. Good and effective policies give the chance to people to trust more the EU and to be more aware of what the EU is doing for them.

[39] Anthony D. Smith, *National identity and the idea of European unity* in International Affairs, Vol. 68, n° 1, 1992

4.4.2 Are Erasmus students more pro-European after taking part in the programme?

The Erasmus programme have been depicted from several scholars of being a useful tool to enhance a sense of Europeanness and of European identity among young people who undertake this experience (Oborune, 2013; Teichler; Mutlu, 2011; Fligstein, 2008). On the contrary some scholars also showed that Erasmus students are not more likely to feel Europeans or to imagine themselves living or working abroad because of their experience as Erasmus students (Sigalas, 2009; Wilson, 2011; Van Mol, 2010).

As Sigalas and Wilson point out in their works, that it is true that after Erasmus students fell much more pro-European, but the exchange programme may not be the only responsible for this. It may be the case that possibly "Erasmus students are more pro-European simply because more pro-European students choose to take part" (Wilson, 2011). For example, according to Sigalas, who lead a longitudinal survey measuring some aspects in people at the beginning and at the end of the academic year 2003/2004, even though Erasmus "enables students to improve their foreign language skills and learn more about other Europeans countries, it does not foster a European self-identity or a sense of European pride". In fact, he argues that according to the findings, students who participate in the programme are more likely to have a deeper European consciousness and identity, but not because of the mobility programme itself. Furthermore, a study led by the EIS (Erasmus Impact Study) "shows that mobile students are fundamentally different from non-mobile students even before going abroad" (Brandenburg et al., 2015). Consequently, some students are already more apt to take the chance to improve their skills or to be more open to a European consciousness.

Moreover, Sigalas (2009) states that students who went in England, felt less proud to be Europeans when they return back in their home country, probably due to the deeper sense of Euroscepticism in the country.

In sum, the author does not think that Erasmus is not useful at all in providing a sense of common belonging to the European socio cultural area and a sense of European pride, but he just thinks that Erasmus is not to be seen as "the secret weapon" for turning people in prideful and conscious Europeans. Notwithstanding the author's point

of view, he argues that “what is needed is to strengthen mobility to and from those countries where the inter-cultural sojourn is most likely to have a positive impact on students’ European identity” (Sigalas, 2009). Moreover, according to both Sigalas and Van Mol, Erasmus students already have that European identity feeling before participating in the programme.

On the other hand, there are much more scholars who argue that the Erasmus programme is a useful tool for enhancing young people attraction and awareness towards Europe and its identity. In fact, as Oborune says, “nevertheless, the programme plays an important role in promoting the idea that we, Europeans, are all alike and foster trust and feel closer to Europeans.” Moreover, the author talking about her findings argue that mobile students identify themselves more easily with European identity than future mobile students and as a consequence the programme has effects on European identity, which could be the result of communication with other Europeans during the exchange.

Furthermore, according to Fligstein (2008), there is a deep relation between the socio economic status of people and their degree of interconnection with different cultures and therefore, also with their identification with the EU. In other words, people with a higher economic and social status are more likely to interact with other Europeans realities and consequently are also more likely to develop a deeper sense of belonging to the European identity and socio cultural area. Whereas those who have less economic possibilities or that have a lower degree of education, are less likely to interact with other sociocultural identities outside their country and are more likely to experience a sense of detachment from the European reality. The same principle has been used by some scholars in order to highlight the disparities between those who have the means to take part in exchange programmes and those who have not.

Figure 2 Fligstein’s model

Therefore, those who comes from a higher socioeconomic status, so that have higher education and more economic support also from their families, are likely to have more chances to succeed also at transnational level. As people with higher incomes will travel more and participate more in the cultural life across Europe (Fligstein et al., 2012). Moreover, Fligstein states that young people better than older people are also more likely to have a stronger European identity, given also by the fact that they travel more across border for schooling, tourism and jobs. On the other hand, those less educated and unskilled are more likely to develop Euro-sceptic tendencies and a feeling of mistrust towards the institutions, as they lack the opportunity or the interest to interact with other Europeans.

4.5 Erasmus students' profile and the Erasmus Impact Study

As said before, it can be noticed a substantial difference in the socio-economic status of mobile and non-mobile students. mobile students tend to live in a more open and intercultural environment, also thank to their parents' past experiences, and they are expected to have a more favourable economic support in order to face mobility programmes' expenditures. On the other, hand non-mobile students are less keen on undertaking this experience, as they are characterized by a less strong feeling of adaptability and openness, and moreover, they often do not have the suitable economic support for facing mobility expenditures.

The Erasmus programme is o of the biggest mobility programme in the world. Brandenburg et al. (2015) argue that mobility in general and therefore probably Erasmus in particular, might be a solution for the mismatch between employers' expectations and employees' competences. The Erasmus programme may be a possible solution for enabling graduates to find a job in an easier way, as their past experience abroad permitted them to gain and strengthen transversal skills. But, even this may be a possible solution it is not possible thinking that every single student enrolled in a Higher Education Institution may be able to benefit from a period of study or of training abroad. "Erasmus exchanges are engaged in by less than five per cent of the European student population, at a cost of almost half a billion Euros to European taxpayers" (Cairns, 2014). So, it is unthinkable for the Erasmus programme to become a

widespread phenomenon and involve all higher education students, or not even just half of them; the cost of the programme would be too much to sustain for the EU and for national governments.

So, as underlined in previous chapters, mobile students share certain characteristics. But, studies have mainly focus on the socio economic aspects of students participating, and did not take into consideration more deeply also some traits of students' personality. Among non-mobile students, there are not only students from a lower socio-economic status, but there are also some students who do not value this experience as important enough for them. Souto-Otero et al., argue that students firstly take into consideration the personal aspects of the experience, so the fact that they should leave family and friends at home for a given period, uncertainty about finding friends' support abroad, lack of language skills, etc. and only later they consider other more practical aspects such as financial aspects and system compatibility. So, there is a substantial difference between those aspects taken into consideration by students who considered participating in the programme and those who did not considered it at all (Souto-Otero et al., 2013).

The Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) represents an innovative approach in linking the aspects of "social selectivity, mobility and impact on employability with relevant personality traits" (Brandenburg et al., 2015). This can be seen as a different way to assess the impact of Erasmus programme on students, taking into consideration not just how their skills and knowledges may improve or not, but also how much their personality traits experience a change.

The MEMO (Monitoring Exchange Mobility Outcome) tool is used in order to assess the changes that mobility programmes (Erasmus programme) brought to the personality traits of participants. It analyses students' personality traits and perceptions in the pre and post-stay, in order to understand how international experiences influenced students' personality and how this may be related to the services provided by host and home institutions. Consequently, it can assess how higher education institutions may improve in order to provide students with better services.

By taking into consideration different psychological aspects of students before taking part in the exchange programme, MEMO tool gives the opportunity to

understand also the personality's characteristics of mobile and non-mobile students. In fact, "EIS shows that mobile students are fundamentally different from non-mobile students even before going abroad" (Brandenburg et al., 2015). In other words, students who eventually take part in the programme have a different perspective on going abroad than those who decide not to take part in the exchange programme. In this particular case non-mobile students are also those students that, even if they have the economic possibilities required, they do not take part in the programme for other reasons, such as interpersonal reasons, or reasons connected to family, lack of interest or because they want to make an experience abroad after finishing their studies.

Memo introduces 10 descriptors describing students' personality traits. In students have "high values on this factor indicate that a person is not only open to new experiences but seeks them actively. This also applies to new academic challenges. Low values hint at an altogether more reluctant attitude towards new experiences and a greater appreciation of what is familiar" (CHE consult website)[40]. In other words, if students highly value these descriptors provided by the Memo tool, they are more keen on becoming mobile students. The descriptors used are: curiosity, confidence, adaptability, sociability, tolerance, decisiveness, self-awareness, problem solving, self-assessment and position-defending.

Mobile students, so students taking part in the Erasmus programme, are not just coming from a higher socio-cultural level, but are also those who are more adaptable, curious and confident of their capabilities.

If an Erasmus students' profile has to be outlined, it must be underlined the fact that the 61% of people taking part in the Erasmus programme were women, while men were the 39%, and the average age is 24.5 years. An average Erasmus student stays abroad for 5.2 months. The majority of students comes from France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Poland (European Commission, 2017). Almost the half of students are

[40] CHE Consult is a leading- edge company in the field of internationalisation management and measuring student mobility impact. Memo tool has been designed in order to help Universities to understand better their students' needs and capabilities and to enhance their employability.

enrolled in a Bachelor's degree programme, "which is the main target of the programme" (Souto-Otero et al., 2015). Students usually are enrolled in one of the traditional "Erasmus popular" areas, which are: business and management, engineering and technology, language studies, social sciences and humanities.

It can be said, that the chances of being involved in the Erasmus programme depend on where you live and what you study (Cairns, 2014). It depends on where a person lives because western Europeans countries are much more likely to give the chance to a higher number of students to participate in the programme, than Eastern Countries. As, the programme is also financed by national governments, so in some countries, the Erasmus programme is much more vulnerable to cuts.

4.6 Conclusion

It can be argued that taking part in the Erasmus programme, may not be possible for everyone who want it. As many studies on the socioeconomic backgrounds of students, showed; people with a certain family composition and economic situation are more likely to become Erasmus students. In other words, students who undertake the Erasmus programme, are more likely to come from a family in which both parents are graduated and already had an experience abroad, and with a medium-high wage level. Also family composition is often taken into consideration, so number of children per family. Moreover, the family environment highly influences students' decision. But, there are also other factors, other from the economic situation of families, such as the fear of staying away from home, uncertainty about the hosting country, fear of not being able to graduate in time, etc. Notwithstanding all these factors, the economic one is seen as the main obstacle.

Those who decide take part in the programme, and are able to afford it, in the end admit that they are satisfied with their experience, and say that they met new friends from all over the world, improved their language skills and other soft skills, and they feel more aware of what Europe and "being Europeans" mean, and helped them being more open-minded.

To sum up, family backgrounds and family composition are very important in giving to students the first input in deciding to take part in the programme. Even though there are many reasons that can prevent students from undertaking this experience, the economic barrier is the most determinant and for these reasons not all students are likely to become Erasmus students.

Conclusion

It can be argued that eEducation in Europe has acquired an important place in the European agenda throughout the years. Member States decided to cooperate in this field in order to face the needs of a globalizing society, in which interdependence and cohesiveness in all sectors are an ever-growing phenomenon. People around Europe are more linked with one another and also Education policies need to keep up with the increase of cross-border activities as physical mobility, academic cooperation and knowledge transfer. In fact, education and knowledges are now seen as tradeable commodities that can be then spent in the labour market. The marketization of knowledges and skills pushed Higher Education Institutions to cooperate with other transnational Institutions in order to broaden their chances to attract foreign students and raise their prestige and quality. In this framework Universities become the main providers of knowledges and of high skilled labour forces. National borders in a globalized society become more blurred and tend to disappear, pushing people to experience cross-border activities, be them for work or for studies purposes. Consequently, the education sector experiences the need for mutual recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications, in order to enable people to study and then work in any member state. Even though the recognition of diplomas and then professional qualifications, experienced a long path, thank also to exchange programmes and their systems of credits recognition, it is now easier to have diplomas recognised throughout Europe.

In the framework of the Erasmus programme, Higher Education sector experienced several changes, and in order to cope with incoming and outgoing students and staff, Universities had to change their structures and administrative activities. Universities increased the number of foreign students enrolled in their courses and teachers need to change their approach to teaching in order to face the needs of international students, first of all the need of holding courses in a foreign language and of changing teaching methods, most of the time toward a more Anglo-Saxon student centred approach.

For this reasons, the Bologna Process has been a major engine for growth and change in the Higher Education system in Europe. Born as an intergovernmental and non-binding process, it ended up in setting principles and objectives that signatory states are eager to follow even though they will not face sanctions if they do not comply with them. The main aim of the Process as Teichler (2012, p.1) points out, are increasing attractiveness for students from other parts of the world and facilitate intra-European mobility, by creating a more comparable and compatible higher education system in Europe. Consequently, promoting a similar cycle-structure of degree programmes seemed a right compromise. Three-year Bachelor degree and the subsequent two-year Master degree, became the rule throughout Higher Education Institutions in Europe. Shorter degree programmes were argued to be more attractive, as students could gain an academic qualification, spendable in the labour market, in a shorter period of time. But, shorter degree programmes mean also less time to improve and develop knowledges that once were acquired in five or six years. "Bachelors turning to the labour market will be handicapped because their degree will be similar to an interim certificate like the French 'DEUG' or the German 'Vor-Diplom' in the past; it also shows the awareness that the employers might have to reconsider their recruitment strategies for accommodating the university Bachelor graduates" (Teichler, 2012, p. 4). In this sense the Bachelor degree seem to function as a fundamental stage towards a Master degree. As previously stated, in some cases shortening degree programmes only resulted in a squeezed degree programmes, in which the same amount of knowledges need to be reach in a shorter period of time. As a consequence, courses, in the majority of cases are not annual but they are held in a semester. This new structure needed also a restructuring in the amount of credits per course, as the amount of work needed to be re-adapted (Kehm and Teichler, 2006). "As a result, students are unable to study the programmes in the foreseen time span and professors see themselves confirmed in their conviction that nothing academically viable can be achieved after three years" (Tauch, 2005, p. 14). Anyway, Bachelor degree programmes are not supposed to the same level of knowledge as a five-year degree programme, but it will provide other type of knowledges and will deliver them in a different way (Tauch, 2005; Kwiek, 2009). In fact, Kwiek (2009) argues that, this cycle structure is much more similar to the Anglo-Saxon one and the will of HEIs to increase their attractiveness, combined with the

progressive internationalization of Higher Education, brings a more teaching-oriented and student-centred method. Moreover, the London Communiqué of 2007, assumes "a move towards student-centred higher education and away from teacher driven provision" (2007, p. 2). Still Kwiek (2009, p.111) argues that "Universities under conditions of massification will be increasingly expected to be meeting not only the changing needs of the state but also changing needs of students, employers, labour market and the industry". Also for these reasons the Universities structure needed to change, in order to cope with the progressive change in the need of those who benefit from Universities' services. In this sense the need for structuring courses through semesters could be seen as a way for enhancing the growing importance that student mobility was experiencing in Higher Education. In fact, this structural changes may be seen also as "political drive to raise quality, to make universities more responsive to the demands of society (employability, the social dimension) and national systems better fitted to a global knowledge economy" (Corbett and Henkel, 2013, p.1). in this case the response that Universities had to give was related to the enhancement of student mobility, the Intra-European one and also outside Europe. The semester structure, was introduced also for fostering incoming and outgoing flows of students. In fact, this solution gave the possibility to foreign students to be enrolled in a course that has the same length and the same amount of credits, as in their home University. It makes the passage from an institution to another easier and smoother. Structural changes derived from the Bologna Process helped Universities to keep up with the changes in societies and in the knowledge economy. But on the other hand also created some confusions in Higher Education Institutions that had to provide these structural changes in a short period of time (Tauch, 2005). Anyway, it can be argued that student mobility in general, and the Erasmus programme in particular played a major role in shaping Universities' life and structure.

Moreover, Erasmus does not only impact individuals who actively take part in the programme, by enhancing their soft skills and language competences, but it has an impact also on non-mobile students who experience a change in their environment. In fact, the presence of exchange students in classes can change the approach that teachers have towards students and also the behaviour of non-mobile students toward foreign students, helping them enhancing for example, their language skills. Non-mobile

students may be those who did not have the chance to take part in the programme, above all for economic reasons. Indeed, it can be stated that not all students are likely to become mobile student and take part in the Erasmus programme. Notwithstanding the fact that mobile students tend to come from privileged families, some of those non-mobile students decide not to take part in the programme for other reasons. These reasons may be related to the insecurity of staying away from home, family and friends, or to the fear of losing time and having to postpone graduation. But, in the majority of the cases students are prevented from taking part in the programme for economic reasons, also related to the socio-economic situation of their families.

In this sense, exchange programmes, above all the Erasmus programme played a major role in boosting a common European Area for Higher Education. This may be seen as a huge step forward in reaching a new Higher Education area in the European Union, but on the other hand it is a sort of loss for Member States, whose sovereignty in the Education field has been in some cases diminished, and always more often they have to face European intervention and interference in the Education sector, above all in the Higher Education sector. As previously argued, the progressive Europeanization of higher education already started with the Treaty of Rome, that set the legal basis initially for vocational training and then, with the Maastricht Treaty also for Higher Education. But the will of member states to cooperate in this field was already present. Moreover, European Court of Justice' cases, the popularity reached by exchange programmes, the Bologna Process, gave major impulses to the increasing Europeanization of higher education. Notwithstanding the widening role of the EU in the education sector, education is still a competence of the member states.

In sum, Higher Education has experienced and is still experiencing a change in its structure and mission given by its progressive internationalization, and by the increasing cooperation among Institutions and the increasing role of the European Union as an actor in this process. The Erasmus programme plays an important role in reshaping Higher Education in a globalized society.

REFERENCES

ADAM, R. and TIZZANO, A. (2017). *Manuale di diritto dell'Unione Europea,* 2 ed., Torino Giappichelli

AMARAL, A. and MAGALHAES, A. (2002). The emergent role of external stakeholders in European Higher Education governance, in AMARAL, A., JONES, G.A., KARSETH, B. (Eds.) *Governing Higher Education: national perspective on institutional governance,* Springer science + business media, p. 1-2.

ANHEIER, H. K. and FALKENHAIN, M. (2012). Europe's stratified social space: diagnosis and remedies, *Global Policy,* Vol 3, supplement 1.

BARBLAN, A., REICHERT, S., SCHOTTE-KMOCH, M. and TEICHLER, U. (Eds) (2000) Implementing European Policies in Higher Education Institutions in *Kassel, Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung der Universität Gesamthochschule Kassel*, Werkstattberichte; 57).

BARKER, C. (2008) Some Reflections on Student Movements of the 1960s and Early 1970s, in *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais, 81, Junho 2008: 43-91*

BARONCELLI, S. (2014). Linguistic Pluralism in European Studies, in *Teaching and Learning the European Union: Traditional and Innovative Methods,* chapter 9

BENNETT, C. (1991). Review article: What is policy convergence and what causes it?, in *British Journal of Political Science*, 21, 215–233.

BLEIKLIE, I. (2001). Towards European Convergence of Higher Education Policy?, in *Journal of the Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education,* Vol. 13, n° 3.

BRACHT, O., ENGEL, C., JANSON, K., OVER, A., SCHOMBURG, H., and TEICHLER, U., (2006). The professional value of ERASMUS Mobility, *International centre for Higher Education Research.*

BRANDENBURG, U. and DE WIT, H. (2011). The end of internationalization, in *International Higher Education,* N° 62.

BRANDENBURG, U., TABOADELA, O. and VANLEA, M. (2015). Mobility Matters: the ERASMUS Impact Study in *International Higher Education,* N° 82, Fall: 2015.

BURLEY, A-M. and MATTLI, W. (1993). Europe before the Court: A Political Theory of Legal integration *in international organization,* n° 47, 1.

CAIRNS, D. (2014). The Erasmus phenomenon. Symbol of a new European generation?, *Sociologia, problemas e praticas,* n°76, pp 149-150.

CARROL, J. and RYAN, J. (2005). Teaching International students – Improving learning for all, ROUTLEDGE, LONDON AND NEW YORK.

CLOTS-FIGUERAS, I. and MASELLA, P. (2013). Education, language and identity. *Economic Journal,* 123 (570).

COLEMAN, J. A. (2006). English-medium teaching in European Higher Education, *Language teaching,* 39(1) pp. 1-14.

COPE, Centre for Opportunity and Equality (2017). Understanding the Socio-economic divide in Europe,

CORBETT, A. (2003). Ideas, Institutions and Policy Entrepreneurs: towards a new history of higher education in the European Community, in *European Journal of Education,* Vol. 38, n° 3.

CORBETT, A. (2004) The forces for the creation of international relationships between universities. Europeanization and the Bologna process, paper presented at the *First International Euredocs Conference*, Paris, 24–26 June. Available at http://euredocs.sciences-po.fr/en/conference/2004/anne_corbett.pdf CORBETT, A. (2005). Universities and the Europe of knowledge: Ideas, Institutions and Policy Entrepreneurship in European Union Higher Education Policy, *Palgrave Mcmillan.*

CORBETT, A. and HENKEL, M. (2013). The bologna dynamic: strengths and weaknesses of the europeanisation of higher education, in *European Political Science,* online publication 3 May 2013

CORRADI, S. (2015). Student Mobility in Higher Education Erasmus and Erasmus plus, Laboratory of lifelong learning ate the University of “Roma Tre”, Rome

DAFOUZ, E. (2014) Integrating content and language in European higher education: An overview of recurrent research concerns and pending issues in PSALTOU-JOYCEY, E., AGATHOPOULOU and MATTHEOUDAKIS, M. (Eds) *Cross-Curricular Approaches to Language Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars. Pp. 289-304.

DAHL, B., LIEN, E. and LINDBERG-SAND, A. (2008). Changing grading-scales in higher education as a part of the Bologna Process. The case of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Paper presented at NERA’s (Nordic Educational Research Association) 36th conference, Copenhagen.

DAVIES, H. (2017). Competence-based curricula in the context of Bologna and EU Higher Education Policy, *Journal of Pharmacy Education and Practice,* 5(2): 17.

DE RUDDER, H. (2000). On the Europeanization of higher Education, in *International Higher Education,* N° 19, Spring.

DE WIT, H. (1996) European Internationalization Programs in *International Higher Education,* N° 4, SPRING:1996.

DE WIT, K. and J. C. VERHOEVEN (2001) The Higher Education Policy of the European Union. With or against the Member States? in: HUISMAN, J., P. MAASSEN and G. NEAVE (Eds) *Higher education and the nation state*. Oxford: Pergamon Press pp. 194-250.

DEHOUSSE, R. (2003). The Open Method of Coordination: a New Policy Paradigm?, in *Les Cahiers européens de Sciences Po,* N° 3, Paris: Centre d'études européennes at Sciences Po.

DI MARTINO, A. (2006). "Diritto di cittadinanza dell'Unione europea e interpretazione estensiva del diritto di circolazione e soggiorno" in *Associazione Italiana dei Costituzionalisti*, https://bit.ly/2V4UoGk

DIMOVA, S., HULTGREN, A. K., and JENSEN, C. (EDS.) (2015). *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education. in Language and Social Life*, 4. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

DE GRAAF, P.M. and M., KALMIJN (2001), Trends in the Intergenerational Transmission of Cultural and Economic Status, in *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 44, p. 51-66.

DE NARDI, M.C. (2004), Wealth Inequality and Intergenerational Links, in *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 71(3), pp. 743-768.

DOBROWOLSKA, E. (2016). The mobility of researchers as a manifestation of academic entrepreneurship based on the example of the University of Gdansk, in *Management,* Vol 20, n° 1, pp 184-196, DOI: 10.1515/manment-2015-0033

ENDERS, J. (2004). Higher education, internationalisation and the nation-state: recent developments and challenges to governance theory, in *Higher Education* 47: 361-382.

ENGEL, C. (2012). The impact of Erasmus mobility on the professional career: Empirical results of international studies on temporary student and teaching staff mobility in *International student mobility and migration in Europe, Belgeo: Revue belge de géographie,* n°4.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2009). The EU contribution to the Bologna Process.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2008). The impact of ERASMUS on European Higher Education: Quality, openness and Internationalisation, in *Directorate-General for education and culture. Final report*, December 2008.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015). ECTS Users' Guide, available at: https://bit.ly/2FX97zB

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2017). Standard Eurobarometer 88, Autumn 2017.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2017) Annual report on intra-EU labour mobility.

FERNANDEZ AGÜERO, M. (2017). Erasmus mobility and the education of interculturally competent European teachers in *Journal of transnational policies of education,* Extraordinario 2017, pp 142-158.

FLIGSTEIN N. (2008). Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe, Oxford University Press.

FLIGSTEIN N., POLYAKOVA A. and SANDHOLTZ W. (2012). European integration, nationalism and European identity in *Journal of Common Market studies,* Vol 50, n°1, pp 106-122.

FOSNOT, T.C. and PERRY, R.S. (1996). Constructivism: a psychological theory of learning, in FOSNOT, T.C. (ed.) Constructivism: theory, perspectives and practice, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York and London.

FRANZINI M. and RAITANO M. (2009) Persistence of inequality in Europe: the role of family economic conditions, in *International Review of Applied Economics*, 23:3

GARBEN, S. (2008). The Bologna Process From a European Law perspective, European University Institute, Department of law.

GARRETT, G., KELEMEN, D.R. and SHULZ, H. (1998). The European Court of Justice, National Governments, and Legal Integration in *the European Union. International Organization* 52(1):149-176.

GÜRÜZ, K. (2011). Higher Education and International Student Mobility in the global knowledge economy, *State University of New York Press,* 2nd Edition, Albany.

GVELESIANI, I. and TVALTVADZE, D. (2012). Globalization and its impact on the European Higher Education in *Proceedings of the international scientifical conference,* Volume II: Social and Special pedagogy; Health and Sport; Overviews. Vol. 2, pp 371-377.

HAILBRONNER, K. (2005). Union citizenship and access to social benefits *in Common Marker Law review,* n°42, pp 1245-1267.

HAUG, G. (1997). Capturing the Message Conveyed by Grades. Interpreting Foreign Grades, in *World Education News and Reviews*, 10(2), pp 5–22.

HELD, D., and MCGREW, A. (2000). The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate. Cambridge: Polity Press.

HUISMAN, J. (2004). Responses to European policies. The impact of the Erasmus programme on national policy making. *Paper to be presented at the annual NIG (Netherlands Institute of Government), Rotterdam.*

HUISMAN, J., ADELMAN, C., HSIEH, C.C., SHAMS, F., and WILKINS, S. (2012). Europe's Bologna process and its impact on global higher education. In DEARDORFF, D.K., DE WIT, H., HEYL, J.D., and ADAMS, T. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, pp. 81-100. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

HUISMAN, J., and VAN DER WENDE, M. (Eds.) (2004). On Cooperation and competition. National and European policies for the internationalisation of Higher Education, *ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education,* Lemmens.

IDEMA, T. and KELEMEN, R. D. (2006). New Modes of Governance, the Open Method of Co-ordination and Other Fashionable Red Herring, in *Perspectives on European Politics and Society,* Vol. 7, n° 1, pp. 108-123.

KARRAN, T. (2004). Achieving Bologna Convergence: Is ECTS failing to make the grade?, electronic version of the article published in *Higher Education in Europe,* Vol 29, n° 3.

KEHM, B.M. and TEICHLER, U. (2006). Which direction for bachelor and master programmes? A stocktaking of the Bologna process, in *Tertiary Education & Management*, 12:4, 269-282

KNIGHT, J. (1999). Internationalisation of Higher Education, in *Quality and Internationalisation of Higher Education.* OECD, Paris

KNIGHT, J. (2002). Trade in Higher Education Services, The Implications of GATS, in *The Observatory of Borderless Higher Education Report*

KNIGHT, J. (2008). Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers

KOLSTER, R. (2014). Academic attractiveness of countries, a possible benchmark strategy applied to the Netherlands, *European journal of Higher Education,* Vol 4, n° 2, 118-134.

KREITZ, R. and TEICHLER, U. (1997). ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility, *Werkstattberichte-BAND 53,* Kassel.

KWIEK, M. (2007). Higher education and the nation-state: Global pressures and education institutions, in *Center for Public Policy Studies "Research Paper",* Vol. 4.

LUEDTKE, A. (2004). Review section: Law, Politics and the European Court of Justice: Broadening the Debate, in *Journal of European Public Policy* 11:6, 1128-1137

LIEPONIENE, J and KULVIETIENE, R. (2011). The gardes from one grading scale to other algorithmization, in *Informatics in Education,* Vol 10, n° 2, pp 233-244.

LINDBLOM-YLÄNNES, S., TRIGWELL, K., NEVGI, A. and ASHWIN, P. (2006). How approaches to teaching are affected by discipline and teaching context in *Studies in Higher Education,* Vol. 31, n° 3, pp 258-298.

MESSER, D. and WOLTER, S. (2006). Are student exchange programs worth it? In *Higher education,* 54: 647-663.

MONIZ, A.B. (2011). From the Lisbpn strategy to EU2020: Illusion or progress for European Economies?, in *IET Working Papers Series n° WPS01/2011*

MORANO-FOADI, S. (2005). Scientific Mobility, Career Progression, and Excellence in the European Research Area, in *International Migration* Vol. 43 (5).

MORELL, T., ALESON, M., BELL, D., ESCABIAS, P., PALAZON, M., MARTINEZ, R., (2014). English as a medium of instruction: a response to internationalization. University of Alicante. https://web.ua.es/va/ice/jornadas-redes-2014/documentos/comunicacions-posters/tema-5/392287.pdf

MOTARREALE, D. (2017). L'Erasmus nel processo di internazionalizzazione dell'istruzione superior italiana, in *Journal of supranational policies of education,* Extraordinario, pp. 159-173.

MUTLU, S. (2011). Development of European consciousness in Erasmus students, *Journal of Education Culture and Society,* n°2.

NAVRACSICS, T. (2018). Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport at the Ministerial Conference of the EHEA in Paris, May.

OBORUNE, K. (2013). Becoming more European after Erasmus? The impact of the Erasmus programme on political and cultural identity, *Epiphany, Journal of transdisciplinary studies,* Vol 6, n° 1.

ORPHANIDES, A. G. (2012). Challenges in European Higher Education in *Higher Learning Research Communications,* Vol. 2, n° 2.

PACKER, M.J. and GOICOECHEA, J. (2000). Sociocultural and constructivist theories of learning: ontology not just epistemology, in *Educational psycologist*, 35(4), 227-241, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

PAPADAKIS, N. and TSANIKA, T. (2006). The EU Higher Education Policy and the Stake of Regionalization, in *The European Legacy,* Vol 11, n°3, pp 289-297.

PAPATSIBA, V. (2005). Political and individual rationales of student mobility: a case study of ERASMUS and a French regional scheme for studies abroad, in *European Journal of Education*, 40(2), 173–188.

PAPATSIBA, V. (2006). Making higher education more European through student mobility? Revisiting EU initiatives in the context of the Bologna Process, in *Comparative Education*, 42:1, 93-111.

PERITORE, C. and SILVESTRI, L. (Eds) (2014). Rapporto annuale Erasmus a.a. 2012/2013, published in December, Firenze.

PHILLIPSON, R. (2002). Language policy and education in the European, in *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, Vol. 1, no. 2.

PHILLIPSON, R. (2006) English, a cuckoo in the European higher education nest of languages? in *European Journal of English Studies*, 10:01, 13-32.

PIONEUR Research group (2006). Pioneers of European integration 'from below': mobility and the emergence of European identity among national and foreign citizens *in the EU 5th Framework Program – European Commission*.

PUCHKOV E., VOROBYEV V., BALZHINIMAEVA V., ENGURAZOVA S., (2018) International Student Mobility: European and Russian Practices, in *Białostockie Studia Prawnicze*, vol. 23 n°2.

RAKIC, V. (2001). Converge or not converge: the European Union and higher education policies in the Netherlands Belgium/Flanders and Germany, in *Higher Education Policy 14 (2001) 225–240*

RAVINET, P. (2005). The Sorbonne meeting and declaration. Actors, shared vision and Europeanisation, in *Euredocs International Conference, Bergen.*

RAVINET, P. (2008). From Voluntary Participation to Monitored Coordination: why European countries feel increasingly bound by their commitment to the Bologna Process, in *European journal of education* 43, no. 3, 353-367.

REUTER-KUMPMANN, H. (2004). From divergence to convergence: a history of vocational education and training in Europe, in *European Journal, Vocational Training n° 32 May-August.*

RODRIGUES, M.J. (2005). The debate over Europe and the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, University institute, Lisbon.

SANDSTRÖM, A. and NEGHINA, C. (2017). English-taught Bachelor's programmes, *European association for International Education*

SCHMIDT, V. (2016). Reinterpreting the rules 'by stealth' in times of crisis: a discursive institutionalist analysis of the European central bank and the European Commission, in *West European Politics. vol. 39, no. 5*

SCHÜTZE, R. (2015). *European Union Law*, Cambridge University Press.

SERCU, L. (2005). Foreign language teachers and Intercultural Competence. An international investigation, Multilingual matters LTD, Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto.

SHORE, C. (2000). Building Europe: The cultural politics of European Integration, Routledge, London and New York

SIGALAS E. (2009). Does ERASMUS Student Mobility Promote a European Identity? In *Institute for European Integration Research*, Vienna, n°2.

SMITH A. D. (1992). National identity and the idea of European unity in *International Affairs*, Vol. 68, n° 1.

SOUTO-OTERO, M. (2008). The socio-economic background of Erasmus students: a trend toward wider inclusion? in *International review of Education*, 54:135-154.

SOUTO-OTERO M. and McCOSHAN A. (2006). Survey of the socio-economic background of Erasmus students, Final report, ECOTEC.

SOUTO-OTERO, M., HUISMAN, J., BEERKENS, M., DE WIT, H. and VUJIC, S., (2013). Barriers to international student mobility: evidence from the Erasmus program, Educational Researcher, 42:70. Online version: http://edr.sagepub.com/content/42/2/70

SPYBEY, T. (1996). Globalization and World Society, Cambridge Polity Press.

STONE SWEET, A. (2000) Governing with Judges: Constitutional Politics in Europe, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 153-193.

TAUCH, C. (2005). Trends IV: European Universities implementing Bologna, EUA Publications

TEICHLER, U. (2002). ERASMUS in the SOCRATES programme. Findings of an evaluation study, *ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education,* Lemmens.

TEICHLER, U. (2007). The changing role of student mobility in *UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge,* Paris.

TEICHLER, U. (2012). International Student Mobility in Europe in the Context of the Bologna Process, in *Journal of International Education and Leadership,* Volume 2, Issue 1

TERRY, L. S. (2008). The Bologna Process and its Impact in Europe: It's so much more than Degree Changes in *Vanderbilt journal of transnational law,* Vol. 41: 107.

TRUBEK, D. M. and MOSHER, J.S. (2003) New Governance, employment policy and the European Social Model, in ZEITLIN, J and TRUBEK, D. M. (Eds) *Governing work and welfare in a new economy: European and American experiment,* pp 33-58.

TRUBEK, D.M. and TRUBEK, L.G. (2005). Hard and Soft Law in the Construction of Social Europe: The Role of the Open Method of Co-ordination, in *European Law Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3, May 2005, pp. 343–364.

VAN MOL C. (2010) The influence of European Student Mobility on Migration Aspiration in *British Educational Research Association Conference.*

VAN MOL C. and TIMMERMAN C., (2013) Should I Stay or Should I Go? An Analysis of the Determinants of Intra-European Student Mobility*,* in *Population, Space and Place*, Wiley Online Library.

VAN MOL C. (2018). Becoming Europeans: the relationship between student exchanges in higher education, European citizenship and a sense of European identity In *The European Journal of Social Science Research*

Journal homepage http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ciej20

VAN RIEMSDIJIK, M. (2013). Obstacles to the Free Movement of Professionals: Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications in the European Union in *European Journal of Migration and Law*, Vol 15, Issue1.

VEIGA, A. and AMARAL, A. (2012). Soft law and the implementation problems of the Bologna Process, in *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas, nº 36, 2012, 121-140*

VEIGA, A., MAGALHÃES, A. and AMARAL, A. (2015). Differentiated Integration and the Bologna Process, in *Journal of Contemporary European Research*. 11 (1), pp. 84-102.

VLĂSCEANU, L., GRÜNBERG, L. and PÂRLEA, D. (2007). Quality Assurance and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions, UNESCO, Bucharest.

VOEGTLE, E. M., KNILI, C. and DOBBINS, M. (2010). To what extent does transnational communication drive cross-national policy convergence? The impact of the Bologna Process on domestic higher education policies, in *Higher Education 61: 77-94.*

VUKASOVIC, M. (2013). Change of higher education in response to European pressures: conceptualization and operationalization of Europeanization of higher education, in *Higher Education, 66: 311-324.*

WÄCHTER, B. (2004). The Bologna Process: developments and prospects, in *European Journal of Education,* Vol. 39 n°3

WÄCHTER, B. and MAIWORM, F. (Eds) (2014). English-taught programmes, *ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education,* Lemmens.

WASSERFALLEN, F. (2010) The judiciary as legislator? How the European Court of Justice shapes policy-making in the European Union, in *Journal of European Public Policy* 17, no. 8: 1128-1146.

WASSERFALLEN, F (2013). Political and Economic Integration in the EU: The Case of Failed Tax Harmonization, in *Journal of common market studies,* pp 1-16.

WESSEL, R. (2008). Integration by Stealth: On the Exclusivity of Community Competence, in *Interface between EU law and national law*

WILKINSON, R. and WALSH, M. L. (Eds) (2008). Realizing content and Language Integration in Higher Education, Maastricht: Maastricht University.

WILSON, I. (2011), What Should we Expect of 'Erasmus Generations'? JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, vol. 49, no. 5, pp. 1113-1140

WITTE, J.K. (2006). Change of degrees and degrees of change, comparing adaptations of European higher education systems in the context of the Bologna Process

WOLDEGIORGIS, E. T. (2013). Conceptualizing Harmonization of Higher Education Systems: The Application of Regional Integration Theories on Higher Education Studies *in Higher Education Studies,* Vol. 3, No 2.

JURISDICTIONAL SOURCES

Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union https://bit.ly/2tvq9eI

Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union https://bit.ly/2HL4fLo

Council Directive 85/432/EEC, *concerning the coordination of provisions laid down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in respect of certain activities in the field of pharmacy*, 16th September 1985

Council Directive 89/48/EEC, *on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years' duration*, 21st December 1988

Council Directive 92/51/EEC, *on a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training to supplement Directive 89/48/EEC*, 18th June 1992

Directive 2001/19/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, amending Council Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC *on the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications*, 14th May 2001

Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, *on the recognition of professional qualifications*, 7th September 2005

EU Court of Justice, 13th February 1985, case C-293/83, *Françoise Gravier v City of Liège*

EU Court of Justice, 2nd February 1988, case C-24/86, *Blaizot v Université de Liège and Others.*

EU Court of Justice, 20th September 2001, case C-184/99, *Rudy Grzelczyk v Centre public d'aide sociale d'Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve.*

LEGGE 11 dicembre 1969, n. 910 *Provvedimenti urgenti per l'Università* http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/gu/1969/12/13/314/sg/pdf

The Treaty of Rome (EEC) (1957) https://bit.ly/2xPs8Of

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) https://bit.ly/1qqp25c

The Treaty of Maastricht on European Union (1992) https://bit.ly/2zh1sWr

INTERNET SOURCES

- ACA (Academic Cooperation Association): http://www.aca-secretariat.be/ (accessed 27/11/2018).
- Ca' Foscari library https://www.unive.it/pag/9756/
- CHEConsult https://www.checonsult.de/fileadmin/pdf/memo_tool_presentation.pdf (accessed 2/12/2018).
- Corte di Giustizia dell'Unione Europea https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/j_6/it/
- EHEA website http://www.ehea.info/pid34135/accueil.html (accessed 2/2/2019)
- ENQA's official website (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education): www.enqa.eu
- EUR-Lex Access to European Union law https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html (accessed 02/01/2019)
- European Higher Education Area http://www.ehea.info/pid34135/accueil.html (accessed 25/11/2018).
- European Union: http://europa.eu (accessed 1/12/2018).
- The Council of Europe website https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home