Corso di Laurea magistrale (*ordinamento ex D.M. 270/2004*)
in Relazioni Internazionali Comparate

Tesi di Laurea

Education and the process of Internationalisation

From a European perspective to the reality of Ca' Foscari University of Venice

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"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

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ESTRATTO / Abstract

Il tema sviluppato nel mio lavoro è un argomento piuttosto recente, ho cercato infatti di analizzare il fenomeno dell'internazionalizzazione del sistema universitario e dell'istruzione superiore, che sta diventando al giorno d'oggi sempre più fondamentale nelle strategie attuate dalle istituzioni per aumentare il loro prestigio e la loro visibilità.

L'idea di indagare e condurre delle ricerche su questo tema è nata durante lo stage che ho svolto a Nottingham nel 2012. Grazie al progetto *Erasmus* Placement ho avuto la possibilità di lavorare come *intern* in un ufficio che si occupava dell'organizzazione di stage in Europa per studenti inglesi. Allo stesso tempo l'ufficio stava cercando di creare un programma che permettesse agli studenti inglesi di svolgere i loro studi in un'università europea. I costi delle tasse universitarie nel Regno Unito sono aumentati incredibilmente, per cui l'idea era quella di favorire una mobilità verso l'Europa, non solo per periodi limitati come quella dei programmi del *Lifelong Learning,* ma per il completamento di interi corsi di laurea. Si intendeva quindi favorire l'iscrizione di questi studenti nelle università che offrissero corsi di studio interamente impartiti in inglese.

Ho iniziato così a cercare informazioni a riguardo per provare a capire se le istituzioni europee, ed in particolare italiane, fossero abbastanza internazionalizzate e se le loro offerte potessero soddisfare i bisogni di uno studente straniero.

La maggior parte del materiale a cui ho fatto riferimento per il mio lavoro di ricerca si trova online, molto utile è infatti risultato ad esempio il sito della Commissione Europea, ricco di informazioni e dati statistici aggiornati. Il problema delle fonti cartacee era infatti la loro poca attualità, spesso le informazioni reperibili erano datate a 7 o 8 anni fa e risultavano quindi poco interessanti ed utili per il lavoro che stavo sviluppando.

Ho deciso di strutturare la mia tesi analizzando l'argomento procedendo da un punto di vista generale e focalizzando poi sul livello europeo, per finire con una ricerca orientata ad una realtà a me molto vicina, ossia quella dell'università in cui ho deciso di conseguire la mia laurea magistrale, l'Università *Ca' Foscari* di Venezia.

Il primo capitolo della mia tesi inizia quindi con una digressione generale sul tema dell'internazionalizzazione dell'istruzione superiore e del sistema universitario e sul tema della mobilità a livello mondiale.

Ho ritenuto opportuno iniziare dando una definizione del termine internazionalizzazione, per il quale ho fatto prima riferimento all'ampio aspetto della globalizzazione, che in qualche modo sviluppa e influisce sull'internazionalizzazione stessa. Il processo di internazionalizzazione è uno dei modi con cui un paese decide di rispondere alla globalizzazione, che permette di supportare l'idea che studi e ricerche non siano più limitati da confini nazionali, i quali risultano ormai superati. Lo sviluppo dell'internazionalizzazione consiste, secondo le definizioni di importanti figure che hanno indagato l'argomento come Jane Knight, "nell'integrazione delle dimensioni internazionali, interculturali e globali nell'insegnamento, nei servizi e nella diffusione della conoscenza"[1].

Dopo aver mostrato quali sono le ragioni dell'internazionalizzazione e aver affermato che gli aspetti che ne spingono lo sviluppo possono essere economici, politici, culturali-sociali e accademici, ho descritto come i metodi per migliorare la propria strategia di internazionalizzazione siano molteplici: il miglioramento degli standard di un'istituzione può avvenire con l'introduzione di corsi di studio interamente svolti in lingua inglese, con l'applicazione di *curricula* internazionali e dando agli studenti la possibilità di iscriversi a corsi di laurea svolti in collaborazione con altre università europee, come nel caso dei "Double/Joint Degrees".

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[1] Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

L'impegno delle università è rivolto verso l'aumento dei numeri della propria mobilità, ma anche attraverso l'arricchimento delle competenze del proprio staff, che tende ad essere sempre più internazionale. I periodi di mobilità aperti anche al settore amministrativo ed educativo permettono a docenti e responsabili dei vari uffici di acquisire esperienze europee che risultano molto utili poi quando messi in pratica all'interno della propria università di appartenenza.

Per quanto riguarda il tipo di internazionalizzazione maggiormente conosciuto, si deve far riferimento al "processo di 'regionalizzazione', in particolare tra le più diffuse vi è la cooperazione con l'Europa. A conferma di ciò è sufficiente pensare ad uno dei fenomeni maggiormente conosciuti ossia quello del *Lifelong Learning* e degli sviluppi ottenuti in particolar modo grazie al progetto Erasmus"[2], che ha festeggiato nel 2012 i suoi 25 anni di successo. Grazie alle iniziative e azioni per l'incremento dei numeri della mobilità, alle strategie applicate per migliorare l'offerta internazionale delle università, unite allo slancio dato dall'introduzione di tecnologie e metodi di comunicazione innovativi, sembra quasi che tempo e distanza non rappresentino più delle barriere.

Dopo aver definito gli aspetti principali e basilari del fenomeno di internazionalizzazione, il mio studio procede con un'analisi del processo su base storica, ho cercato di seguire gli eventi che ne hanno caratterizzato lo sviluppo partendo dalle prime dichiarazioni che ne hanno sancito l'avvio. La ricostruzione storica inizia dalle "dichiarazioni di Sorbona e di Bologna avvenute nel 1998 e 1999, passando poi alla descrizione del processo di Bologna, iniziato con la firma di Francia, Italia, Germania e Regno Unito, che hanno diffuso una tendenza che nel 2001 è arrivata a coinvolgere ben 33 paesi dell'Unione Europea"[3]. L'obiettivo era quello di creare la cosiddetta "European Higher Education Area", ossia una zona europea per l'istruzione superiore, in modo da raggiungere poi anche uno degli scopi più importanti, meglio definito successivamente con le dichiarazioni di

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[2] Knight, Jane. Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

[3] Sorbonne Joint Declaration Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system (1998). Paris. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne_declaration.pdf

Lisbona del 2000, ossia il dare all'Europa un'economia dinamica, sviluppata sulla conoscenza, capace di una crescita economica sostenibile, con lavori migliori e una maggiore coesione sociale.

Il primo capitolo descrive le varie fasi del processo analizzando i vari incontri ai quali i Ministri dell'Educazione di ogni stato membro hanno partecipato ogni due anni, durante queste riunioni discutevano sui risultati ottenuti e su quante sfide e obiettivi restassero ancora da raggiungere.

Dopo l'elencazione dei vari membri che costituiscono il processo, l'analisi cerca di dare indicazioni su quelle che sono state le più diffuse misure per favorire l'internazionalizzazione, esempi ne sono il sistema di trasferimento dei crediti a livello europeo per facilitare il riconoscimento dei periodi di studio all'estero, il *Diploma Supplement* che permette di includere le esperienze svolte all'estero all'interno del proprio curriculum e l'introduzione dei due cicli di laurea, la laurea triennale e quella magistrale e così via: tutte iniziative rivolte al miglioramento della mobilità.

Nel 2000, come preannunciato, venne implementata la Strategia di Lisbona, le successive decisioni portarono poi alla creazione dell' "European Strategic Framework for Education and Training", che dopo la prima scadenza del 2010 è stato prolungato e rinnovato con nuovi obiettivi da attuare entro il 2020 (ET 2020). Ho cercato così di analizzare gli aspetti principali definiti all'interno di questo *framework* procedendo poi con la descrizione dei principali punti della Carta Europea per la Qualità della Mobilità, documento che andava a completare le *recommendations* incluse nel *framework*.

Basandomi principalmente sui dati statistici forniti dall'UNESCO, in questa parte del mio lavoro ho cercato di analizzare diverse prospettive della mobilità, tendendo conto di numeri e grafici reperiti, descrivendo l'evoluzione del fenomeno nei diversi paesi, includendo anche argomenti come i costi e la politica d'immigrazione ed altri aspetti.

Il secondo capitolo, invece, cerca di analizzare in maniera più dettagliata l'interessante programma del *Lifelong Learning*, successore delle precedenti iniziative create con i programmi "Socrates" e "Socrates II". In questo capitolo, la maggior parte dell'analisi si concentra quindi sulla regione europea e sui programmi del *Lifelong Learning* che coprono l'area dell'istruzione superiore. Le statistiche e i dati utilizzati in questa sessione del mio lavoro fanno riferimento alle pubblicazioni fornite dalla Commissione Europea, che mi hanno permesso di descrivere in maniera più dettagliata ed aggiornata le conquiste del programma di apprendimento permanente.

Dopo la definizione del concetto di *Lifelong Learning* come "la possibilità di ricevere un'istruzione dall'infanzia fino all'età adulta in ogni singolo momento della propria vita"[4], come suggerisce la stessa Commissione Europea, ho cercato di dare un'idea di quelle che sono le parti essenziali del programma parlando dei 4 progetti principali e delle relative azioni trasversali che lo costituiscono.

Il programma del *Lifelong Learning* ha i suoi pilastri nel progetto *Comenius* per la prima istruzione, nel progetto *Erasmus* e *Leonardo da Vinci* per quella superiore e nel progetto *Grundtvig* per quanto riguarda l'istruzione della popolazione adulta. Le attività principali legate al programma fanno riferimento "ad una politica di collaborazione ed innovazione, ai diversi linguaggi, alle tecniche di informazione e comunicazione e alla disseminazione dei risultati ottenuti"[5].

Comenius è rivolto ai giovani durante la prima fase della loro istruzione, offre ai ragazzi la possibilità si trascorrere parte dell'anno scolastico presso un'istituzione europea e come ospiti di una famiglia scelta per aiutarli nell'integrazione e nell'adattamento al nuovo ambiente. Oltre che ad entrare in contatto con una realtà diversa, i candidati hanno la possibilità di migliorare le proprie conoscenze linguistiche e culturali relative al paese ospitante.

Comenius, come la maggior parte delle iniziative LLP, non è rivolto solo agli studenti ma prevede forme di mobilità anche per docenti e futuri insegnanti.

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[4] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. Last visit on 2nd April 2012 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/
[5] European Commission. About Lifelong Learning Programme. Last visit on 5thApril 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about_llp/about_llp_en.php

Tali esperienze permettono di arricchire il bagaglio personale e professionale di insegnanti che potranno poi utilizzare le nuove conoscenze e i nuovi metodi di insegnamento acquisiti all'estero nelle istituzioni italiane in cui lavorano quotidianamente.

Il programma *Comenius* ha anche permesso la creazione di un'innovativa piattaforma online chiamata "eTwinning" dove i docenti hanno la possibilità di incontrarsi, comunicare o sviluppare progetti congiunti con altri membri aderenti di diverse città europee.

Come già detto poi, vi è il progetto *Erasmus*, giunto al suo venticinquesimo anniversario, "programma che dà la possibilità ogni anno a più di 200 000 studenti di vivere un'esperienza europea sia per studiare che per partecipare ad uno stage"[6], beneficiando di una borsa di studio. Importante è ricordare che i risultati ottenuti durante il periodo di studio all'estero, grazie alle decisioni in merito all'internazionalizzazione e a sistemi come quello del trasferimento dei crediti, vengono poi anche ufficialmente riconosciuti nelle università di provenienza. Anche docenti e staff amministrativo possono partecipare a periodi di mobilità grazie al progetto Erasmus, permettendo loro una crescita personale e professionale.

Attualmente fanno parte del progetto 33 stati europei e le maggiori destinazioni scelte sono costituite da Spagna, Francia, Germania e Regno Unito. Lo sviluppo dell'analisi è basato su dati forniti dalla Commissione Europea reperibili online, l'indagine tiene conto sia della mobilità in entrata che di quella in uscita per progetti di studio o di *placement*. Un piccolo specchietto è dedicato anche alla mobilità dello staff.

Un'altra possibilità offerta dal LLP per quanto riguarda la mobilità internazionale è inclusa nel progetto "Leonardo da Vinci" che permette a laureati di primo o secondo livello di lavorare come stagisti presso un'azienda di uno degli stati che aderiscono al progetto.

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[6] European Commission. Education and Training. The Erasmus Programme. Studying in Europe and more. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm

"Dal 1995 il progetto Leonardo ha permesso a 860 000 persone di viaggiare all'estero"[7] per questo tipo di esperienze lavorative usufruendo di un aiuto economico garantito dalla Commissione Europea, per coprire almeno le spese basiche della trasferta. Interessante è anche la rete di collegamento che si crea così tra università ed aziende private, che permette di ampliare ulteriormente il livello di internazionalizzazione delle istituzioni coinvolte.

L'ultimo pilastro del LLP rivolge la sua attenzione all'educazione adulta, si tratta del progetto *Grundvtig*. Tale programma è rivolto a quelle persone che hanno dovuto abbandonare presto gli studi, che non hanno mai avuto la possibilità di ricevere un'istruzione o che desiderano intraprendere un percorso formativo in età avanzata. Dal punto di vista sociale, un progetto di questo tipo aiuta a livellare quelle che sono le differenze culturali all'interno della società garantendo una maggiore integrazione di quelle persone che grazie a *Grundtvig* riescono ad ottenere un titolo di studio che gli permette di avere maggiore confidenza e di inserirsi maggiormente nella comunità.

Lo studio fa poi una breve considerazione su altri due programmi che comprendono anche aree esterne all'Europa e permettono di allargare maggiormente il raggio d'azione della mobilità e dell'internazionalizzazione stessa come il progetto *Tempus* ed *Erasmus Mundus*.

Il terzo capitolo della mia tesi è quello probabilmente meno teorico in quanto ho deciso di dare alla ricerca un taglio più critico inserendo dati, risultati di questionari e interviste che ho raccolto personalmente. Per ottenere informazioni abbastanza dettagliate ho deciso di svolgere un'indagine sul livello di internazionalizzazione dell'Università presso la quale ho deciso di studiare per la mia laurea magistrale in Relazioni Internazionali, ossia l'Università *Ca' Foscari* di Venezia.

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[7] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf

Dopo una breve e generale presentazione dell'Università, nata come primo istituto italiano ad offrire una formazione in materia economica, ho cercato di capire a che punto fosse l'internazionalizzazione dell'ateneo e quanto ricca fosse l'offerta formativa internazionale.

La prima parte del capitolo cerca di prendere spunto dal "Documento di Internazionalizzazione dell'Ateneo" per definire le linee guida del processo presso l'Università, in esso sono inclusi i principali obiettivi della strategia e le attività orientate allo sviluppo della mobilità dell'ateneo stesso.

L'attenzione non è rivolta solo agli studenti di *Ca' Foscari* e alle possibilità loro offerte per una formazione all'estero, ma tiene in considerazione anche la necessità per l'ateneo di attrarre studenti internazionali sia per limitati periodi di studio che per la loro immatricolazione ad interi corsi di laurea. La strategia di internazionalizzazione dell'Università intende migliorare la sua offerta accademica con l'introduzione di corsi di studio tenuti in lingua inglese ed aumentare i numeri della mobilità in uscita e in entrata grazie ai numerosi accordi stabiliti con altre istituzioni europee.

Questi aspetti rappresentano un'importante realtà non solo per gli studenti, ma anche per docenti e ricercatori, l'aumento delle collaborazioni con università in tutto il mondo è indispensabile per migliorare il proprio aspetto internazionale.

In ogni caso, *Ca' Foscari* non offre solo la possibilità di iscriversi a corsi di laurea interamente in lingua inglese, ma ha istituito anche titoli congiunti detti *double* e *joint degree* che permettono agli iscritti di seguire le lezioni ed ottenere il proprio diploma di laurea studiando in almeno due diverse università che aderiscono al progetto.

Iniziative internazionali sia per studenti stranieri che per studenti di *Ca' Foscari* sono poi offerte dalla *Summer School* e dalla *Venice International University* (VIU), che organizzano corsi, *workshop* ed altre attività sia durante i semestri invernali che per il periodo estivo, nel caso della *Summer School* appunto.

I docenti coinvolti in queste organizzazioni sono spesso provenienti da prestigiose università internazionali e gli studenti che aderiscono a tali progetti possono venire selezionati per dei periodi di stage presso alcuni enti collegati ai progetti.

Questo tipo di progetti aiutano la creazione di una vera e propria comunità sia per gli studenti che per i professori e permettono di fare allo stesso tempo un'esperienza completa anche della città in quanto grazie ad essi sono spesso organizzate visite e tour guidati dell'entroterra veneto.

Dal 1987 *Ca' Foscari* fa parte del progetto LLP ed è membro attivo per quanto riguarda la mobilità Erasmus per lo studio ed il *placement*. Questo tipo di mobilità rappresenta una parte fondamentale nella strategia di internazionalizzazione dell'ateneo, dal momento che permette ad un alto numero di studenti di fare un'esperienza all'estero presso uno dei molti paesi con cui *Ca' Foscari* continua ad instaurare accordi bilaterali per gli scambi Erasmus. "Per l'anno accademico 2012/2013 *Ca' Foscari* ha siglato 491 accordi con università europee, ma l'ateneo veneziano ha in essere anche 106 accordi internazionali extra UE con università di tutto il mondo."[8].

Un interesse particolare viene mosso poi dall'Università nei confronti della zona del Mediterraneo, che ha portato l'ateneo a diventare parte del progetto Eu-MeS, il quale dà agli studenti che vi aderiscono la possibilità di sperimentare un innovativo sistema di studio "virtuale".

Il progetto Eu-Mes sfrutta infatti una piattaforma online per far in modo che i candidati del progetto seguano dei corsi che vengono poi riconosciuti come crediti nel loro normale piano di studi. Questi corsi sono gestiti in collaborazione con altre università europee, in particolare gli atenei di Londra, Parigi e Barcellona, istituzioni presso le quali gli studenti hanno poi la possibilità di svolgere degli stage. Collegate a tale progetto sono anche delle università della riva sud del Mediterraneo ed in particolare presso l'Università di Meknes si è svolto quest'anno il *workshop* relativo al progetto "Eu-Mes", durante il quale venivano approfonditi gli argomenti di studio dei corsi online.

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[8] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Infoscari. Boom di partenze e arrivi Erasmus a Ca' Foscari: quest'anno domande in crescita del 18 percento. Last visit 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=125343

Per quanto riguarda il progetto ho condotto un breve sondaggio tra le 6 studentesse che hanno partecipato al progetto durante l'anno 2013.

Nonostante la validità del programma a livello accademico, grazie ai risultati del sondaggio sono state riscontrate diverse lacune organizzative, dovute probabilmente anche alla breve esperienza del progetto che è attivo da soli due anni. In ogni caso le candidate sono rimaste soddisfatte degli insegnamenti svolti e dell'esperienza europea vissuta e sceglierebbero ancora il progetto.

Una prospettiva più ampia è comunque inclusa nell'offerta dell'ateneo, grazie al programma *Erasmus Mundus* che coinvolge anche "l'area geografica che include Georgia, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ucraina e Bielorussia"[9].

Grazie agli accordi con un buon numero di università ed istituzioni, *Ca' Foscari* permette ai propri studenti ed a studenti internazionali di trascorrere periodi di mobilità come "visiting students" o tramite la modalità degli scambi internazionali che possono avvenire anche con paesi extra-Europei. Queste iniziative, sia per studio che per ricerca, vengono poi ufficialmente riconosciute dalle relative università di provenienza. Valide alternative per quanto riguarda la mobilità per stage erano comprese nell'offerta di *Ca' Foscari* con il progetto *Leonardo da Vinci* e i tirocini svolti in collaborazione con il Ministero degli Affari Esteri e la Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane. A causa del periodo di crisi e dell'assenza di fondi per supportare tali progetti, le iniziative ad essi riferite sono momentaneamente sospese.

Per quanto riguarda poi la mobilità extra-europea, importanti sono gli accordi mantenuti per il programma Co.As.It. che permette agli studenti di svolgere degli stage che possono durare fino a 6 mesi presso Melbourne. Durante tale periodo, gli studenti sono impegnati nell'insegnamento della lingua italiana presso alcune istituzioni dello stato di Victoria, in collaborazione con il Comitato di Assistenza degli Italiani.

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9   Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia. Progetto Erasmus Mundus WEBB Whole Europe Beyond Borders. Consultato il 02/05/2013 all'indirizzo http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=144092

Una simile offerta è quella proposta dalla *Colgate University* nello stato di New York, dove il periodo all'estero dura un intero anno accademico e gli studenti affiancano i docenti per la creazione di attività legate all'insegnamento della lingua italiana.

Nell'ultima parte del mio lavoro ho deciso di focalizzare la mia analisi sulla mobilità in entrata a *Ca' Foscari* ed ho così condotto un'indagine tra gli studenti stranieri che hanno scelto Venezia e l'Università *Ca' Foscari* come meta per il loro periodo di studi all'estero. L'intenzione era quella di indagare da un punto di vista esterno, fornito dai principali protagonisti di queste esperienze, che possiedono un metro di valutazione oggettivo in quanto ospiti dell'istituzione. Il sondaggio ha dato interessanti risultati e mi ha permesso di capire in cosa l'Università fornisce buoni servizi e in cosa deve invece migliorare ulteriormente.

Un'importante osservazione nasce dal fatto che la maggioranza degli studenti sceglie *Ca' Foscari* per il grande interesse nei confronti della città stessa, motivo che dovrebbe spingere l'Università a "sfruttare" al meglio questa incredibile risorsa offerta dalla terra che la ospita.

Il questionario parte da domande abbastanza generali sulle ragioni che hanno spinto gli studenti a scegliere il programma *Erasmus*, passando poi alla valutazione di servizi e corsi offerti dall'Università, cercando di indagare sul livello di internazionalizzazione dell'ateneo e sui vantaggi e svantaggi di tale scelta. Agli studenti è stato poi chiesto se sceglierebbero di nuovo l'esperienza dell'Erasmus e la quasi totalità degli intervistati ha affermato in maniera decisa che approfitterebbe ancora di tale possibilità, tanto da raccomandarlo agli amici.

Nella parte finale del mio lavoro ho così cercato di trarre delle conclusioni sulle varie ricerche svolte, tenendo in considerazione lo sviluppo del fenomeno di internazionalizzazione focalizzando con una particolare attenzione su quanto tale processo abbia influenzato la strategia dell'Università *Ca' Foscari* di Venezia.

Introduction

For my dissertation I decided to analyse an almost recent phenomenon, the process of Internationalisation of the Higher Education sector, which is becoming nowadays even more important for institutions and universities and it represents a fundamental aspect of their strategy.

I developed the idea of doing a research on the issue of internationalisation of higher education during my internship in Nottingham organised by the *Erasmus* Placement programme in 2012. The office in which I experienced my training was in charge for the organisation of internships for British students who intended to live a working experience abroad. The office was also creating a programme which would allow British students to enrol for an entire degree course at University abroad, since tuition fees in the United Kingdom are rising enormously and increasing therefore the outgoing mobility of the country.

I started to look for information in order to understand if Universities were enough internationalised and if their didactic offer could satisfy the needs of a foreign student.

The major part of the material I referred to and discussed was online, in fact the most recent data on mobility or internationalisation were available on websites and publications trackable on the web. Books and printed publications were in most of the cases dated back to 7 or 8 years ago and they were not useful for the kind of research I was going to develop.

The first chapter of my dissertation starts, therefore, with a general overview on the topic of internationalisation of higher education and mobility throughout the world. After giving an explanation of the concept of internationalisation defining it as a way of a country to respond to globalisation which supports the idea that studies and researches are no longer limited within national boundaries, I started to investigate the rationales and the strategies applied in order to make an University more internationalised.

The dynamic process of internationalisation consists in the integration of "international, intercultural and global dimensions into the teaching, research and delivery of knowledge"[10].

After having shown that the reasons why an institution decides to become more international are at the same time politic, economic, socio-cultural and academic, and all of them in some way lead to the improvement of the quality of the institutions' standards, the analysis explains that there are different methods to implement an internationalisation's strategy.

Universities create exchange programmes, they offer courses entirely taught in English, institutions establish international curricula and give students the possibility to enrol in double or joint degrees. At the same time, the improvement takes place also thanks to the enrichment of linguistic and professional skills of students, teaching and administrative staff as well.

As for the most common kind of internationalisation, it is useful to refer to "regionalisation, in fact the cooperation with Europe appeared to be the most known and successful process, also according to the achievements of a striking example as the *Lifelong Learning* Programme and in particular the *Erasmus* project"[11], which in 2012 celebrated its 25th anniversary.

As a result of the incentive for increasing the numbers of mobility, the strategies applied for improving the offers of universities together with the introduction of innovative technologies and communication, it seems that "time and distance are no longer barriers"[12].

After the introduction of the fundamental concepts for the understanding of the internationalisation process, the study tries to analyse the phenomenon starting from the past and tracing an historical background which leads to the most recent developments.

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[10] Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

The first phase of internationalisation coincides with the launch of the Bologna Process, "after the Sorbonne and the Bologna Declaration, around 1998 and 1999, when France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom started to drive a trend which in 2001 involved almost 33 European countries"[13].

The intent was that of creating an European Higher Education Area with the main target of allowing Europe to have "a dynamic knowledge based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"[14].

The first chapter describes the several phases of the project taking into consideration the meetings in which Ministries of Education of every member country took part every second year, during these conferences they discussed about the obtained results and the challenges that still remain.

Proceeding with the historical recreation, the study describes also the principal actions carried out for improving internationalisation: the *European Credit Transfer System* for easing the recognition of periods of study abroad, the *Diploma Supplement* which completed the curriculum of students with their academic experiences abroad, the introduction of the two cycles degrees (Bachelor and Master) and so on: all these initiatives were addressed to the improvement of mobility.

In 2000 the Lisbon Strategy was implemented and the following decisions lead to the creation of the "European Strategic Framework for Education and Training" (also known as ET), the first deadline was the 2010, but the process was then strengthen and developed with a new target date in 2020. The study tries to investigate the principal decisions of the framework and proceeds with the analysis of the main features of the *European Quality Charter for Mobility*, a document that complements the recommendations debated within the previous European Framework.

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[13] Sorbonne Joint Declaration Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system (1998). Paris. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne_declaration.pdf

[14] Lisbon European Council 23-24 March 2000 – Presidency conclusion. European Union Parliament (2000), last visit on 14th March 2013 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

Mainly based on the available statistics provided especially by UNESCO, my work examines the several perspectives constituting the mobility issue, with data describing the evolution of the phenomenon in several regions, including financial and economic aspects, immigration policy and other features.

The second chapter intends to analyse in a more deep way the phenomenon of the *Lifelong Learning* Programme. The huge part of the analysis focus on Europe and especially on the projects of LLP which cover the higher education sector. I tried to analyse the statistics and data which are available on the website of the European Commission in order to better explain the achievements of the several programmes included within the LLP offer.

After the definition of *Lifelong Learning* as "the opportunity to learn from childhood to old age in every single life situation"[15], the study describes the main aspects of its programmes, starting from the *Comenius* projects, focusing then on *Erasmus* and *Leonardo da Vinci*, ending with the *Grundtvig* programme for Adult education. Connected to the main project, LLP provides also some 'transversal programmes', which try to cover fundamental activities such as: "policy cooperation and innovation, languages, information and communication technologies, dissemination and exploitation of results"[16].

Comenius is addressed to pupils during the first phase of their education and allow them to live an European experience, in which they will be hosted by a selected family and they will attend lessons in a foreign institution. But *Comenius* is not only for young people, also the educational staff is involved in this kind of programme, which contribute to the improvement of their professional and social skills. For both pupils and teachers, *Comenius* represents an opportunity to get involved in a new and stimulating environment, for being in contact with a different culture and tradition and for learning and improving a foreign language.

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[15] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. Last visit on 2nd April 2012.http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/
[16] European   Commission.   About   Lifelong   Learning   Programme.   Last   visit   on   5thApril   2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about_llp/about_llp_en.php

The *Comenius* programme allows schools to create partnerships and collaborations with other European institutions, therefore the creation of joint activities and the exchange of knowledge and teaching methods are within the main initiatives of this project. The *Comenius* programme has also brought to the creation of an online platform called e-Twinning for educational staff: "teachers use this innovative way to collaborate, develop projects or simply communicate with other colleagues of different participating Universities"[17].

As already said, the *Erasmus* programme celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2012, it represents one of the most successful mobility programmes, which allows "every year more than 230,000 students to live an European experience for both study or internship"[18] benefiting from a grant.

The results achieved during the period of study abroad will be then recognised also by the home university. Teaching and administrative staff are also eligible for this programme, which allows universities to have an even more internationalised staff.

The *Erasmus* experience represents a chance for growing both at personal and professional level, it is an added value within the carrier of a student or a professor. By now, 33 European countries are partner of the programme and Spain, France, the United Kingdom and Germany represent the main destinations. The development of the analysis of the mobility's numbers is based on data provided by the European Commission statistics. The study takes into consideration both the trend of mobility, incoming and outgoing, and both the reasons of the period abroad, for study or for placement. After having showed the evolution of the mobility trend for students, the research briefly focuses on the *Erasmus* mobility for staff.

Another possibility of spending a period abroad is given by the *Leonardo da Vinci* programme, which allows graduates to work as intern for a limited period of time by a European company.

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[17]   What is eTwinning? Last visit on 8th April 2013. http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/discover/what_is_etwinning.htm
[18]   European Commission. Education and Training. The Erasmus Programme. Studying in Europe and more. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm

Since 2005, the "*Leonardo da Vinci* Programme has enabled 860 000 people to travel abroad for training or work experiences"[19] allowing graduates and staff to benefit from a grant in order to cover at least the basic costs of the experience.

The last project included in the LLP is that addressed to the adult education named "Grundtvig", which is in charge for the delivery of education courses for mature people. This initiative is intended for helping people "who left school early or never had the possibility to enrol in a institution"[20], and at the same time it is an opportunity for ageing people to undertake a learning path and a stimulating experience.

The projects of *Grundtvig* could be useful also for reducing the cultural gap within the society and helping disadvantaged people in feeling more confident since they have the chance to obtain at least a basic qualification.

Then, the study takes into consideration also two projects connected to LLP which do not include only partners from the European Union, but they work on a worldwide perspective: *Tempus* and *Erasmus Mundus*.

The third chapter of my dissertation is probably the less theoretical, because I decided to give it a more incisive slant and to lead some surveys in order to make the topic even more interesting. In order to collect precise and useful data I decided to focus my study on the internationalisation of the University in which I choose to study for my second cycle degree in International Relation, *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice.

After a brief presentation of the first business school in Italy, I started to examine its strategy in order to understand how much this university can be considered internationalised.

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[19] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf

[20] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. General Call for Proposals 2011-2013. Strategic Priorities 2013. Last visit on 14h April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf

The first part of the chapter tried to analyse the Document for the Internationalisation of the University in which are included the main aims of the process and the most important activities in which *Ca' Foscari* University is involved in order to increase the numbers of its mobility.

The attention is not only to home students who decide to live an experience abroad with one of the several programmes of which the institution is a partner, but *Ca' Foscari* intends also to be attractive for international students who can decide to spend a period attending its curricular courses or even to enrol for an entire degree course. Therefore the strategy of *Ca' Foscari* intends to improve its international academic offer, increasing the number of courses taught in English and improving the mobility aspects from both the incoming and outgoing perspectives.

The mobility and the possibility to become even more internationalised are not a reality only from the point of view of students, equally important is having an international teaching and administrative staff, which help also to improve and strengthen the collaborations and partnerships with other Universities across the world.

Not only *Ca' Foscari* offers the possibility of enrolling into an entirely taught in English course for international students, but there are double and joint degree which allow candidates to study in at least two institutions and acquired a double or multiple title of study.

International initiatives are also proposed by the *Summer School* and the *Venice International University* (VIU), which are in charge for the organisation of courses, workshops and other activities open to both home and foreign students. The teaching staff of these programmes often includes widely known professors from international universities and the programmes of study are often followed by the possibility of joining internships in Italy or abroad. These kind of projects help the University in the creation of an international community for both students and professors. For both the outgoing and incoming mobility, from 1987 *Ca' Foscari* is a member of the *Lifelong Learning* Programme and it represents an active participant in Erasmus project.

The *Erasmus* mobility represents a huge and fundamental part of the internationalisation strategy of the university, since it allows a great number of students to spend a period abroad and at the same time the bilateral agreements permit European students to come to Italy and to attend *Ca' Foscari* University courses. For the 2012-2013 academic year, "*Ca' Foscari* University shows around 490 Erasmus exchange agreements and more than 100 international agreements with non-European institutions"[21]. Then, a particular interest toward the Mediterranean area, pushed the University to take part in the Eu-MeS project, which gives students the possibility to experience innovative online methods of learning which are then completed with an internship in one of the European Universities belonging to the project and a workshop that allow to deepen the knowledge of the modules. I lead a brief survey within the *Ca' Foscari* students who participate to the programme for this academic year 2012/2013 and thanks to the outcomes it was more easy to understand the organisation and initiatives related to the project. As for the academic perspective, the programme appeared to be interesting and stimulating, some gaps are instead evident as for the organisational pattern, in fact students affirm that the project, especially because it is developed only since two years, is still immature.

A broader possibility is then given by the *Erasmus Mundus*, a programme funded by the European Commission which organise mobility periods for its partners, that in this case are not only member countries of the European Union, but "the project involved also a geographic area which comprehends Georgia, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine e Bielorussia"[22].

Ca' Foscari mobility is also made up by international exchanges programmes and the possibility of going abroad as a visiting students for both studies or research, initiatives which allow to receive a recognition for the credits acquired at the host university for both incoming or outgoing students.

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[21] Ca' Foscari Univerity of Venice. Infoscari. Boom di partenze e arrivi Erasmus a Ca' Foscari: quest'anno domande in crescita del 18 percento. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=125343

[22] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Erasmus Mundus WEBB. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=144089

Several other activities are offered at both European and non-European level, such as the *Leonardo da Vinci* Programme and the internships organised from the joint action of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and the Conference of Italian University Rectors, that unfortunately for the next academic year appear to be suspended.

As for the mobility outside of Europe, *Ca' Foscari* collaborates with the Co.As.It organisation in Australia and the Colgate University in the State of New York for the teaching of italian language within their institutions.

I decided to give particular attention then to the incoming mobility, especially with the Erasmus programme, leading therefore a survey among the international students which have experienced their Erasmus or international exchange programme in Venice, during the current academic year.

The analysis of this survey which allows to understand how the mobility at *Ca' Foscari* is evaluated from a foreign point of view gives interesting outcomes. Starting from the investigation of the reasons why students choose the *Erasmus* experience and in particular the city of Venice, the questionnaire tries then to explain pro and cons of this adventure. At the end of the survey all the students were asked if they would choose again to experience a mobility period and the majority of them was fully satisfied by the programme to the point that they would strongly recommend it also to a friend.

The last part of the dissertation draws the conclusions of the study, taking into consideration the development of the internationalisation phenomenon and making a particular reflection on how much the process impacted the strategy of *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice.

Chapter 1 - A general overview on Internationalisation

1.1   Internationalisation: a definition.

Since the term *Internationalization* is interpreted and used in different ways, in different countries and by different communities, it turns out to be useful giving it a definition, at least one connected to the development of this study, therefore about Internationalisation of Higher Education. Starting from Globalisation, which is a term strictly related to *Internationalisation*, we can refer to it as a phenomenon which impact internationalisation and not only as a specific or neutral concept.

> "The political, social and economic implications of globalisation flow in a even more interconnected world. It is shaped by an integrated world economy, a network of international knowledge in which an essential role is played by the English language and other interconnected forces"[23].

Globalisation offers to the internationalisation of higher education the idea that studies and researches are no longer limited within national confines and these borders are in some ways fading. Therefore, the internationalisation of higher education can be seen as one of the ways a country undertakes to respond to the effects of globalisation, but at the same time continuing to respect the authority and independence of the nation itself.

Internationalisation consists of a variety of policies and programmes that universities and governments apply to respond to the impact of globalisation, and as Jane Knight stated in her

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[23]   Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization.* Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

"Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalisation": "Internationalisation is changing the world of higher education, and globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation"[24].

Even if the concept of internationalisation and the related meanings illustrate their richness and complexity, it is easy to recognise that the main focus of the term is on "the notion of between and among nations and cultural identities"[25].

One of the definition which best suits with this idea is the one given by Jane Knight in 2008:

> "Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the purposes, functions (teaching, research, and service), and delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels"[26].

This statement contains several concepts which are key-elements for the definition of the term "internationalisation" itself: instead of defining internationalisation as a static and separated activity, it shows its evolution as an active and dynamic process. Through the combination and mixture of different dimensions, internationalisation leads to the creation of an international environment. Finally, when mentioning teaching, research and service, Knight refers to the universal and fundamental purposes of an institution of higher education.

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[24] Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization.* Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

[25] Qiang, Zha. *Internationalization of Higher Education: towards a conceptual framework.* Policy Futures in Education (2003) Vol. 1. Number 2. P. 250. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.ses.unam.mx/docencia/2007II/Lecturas/Mod2_Qiang.pdf

[26] Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization.* Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

Hans De Witt suggests in his "Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe and its assessment, trends and issues" published in 2010, that: "when we talk about internationalisation, it is important to distinguish the question of why we are internationalising higher education from what we mean by internationalisation"[27].

As for internationalisation, it is therefore possible to identify four categories when mentioning the rationales of the process: a political, an economic, a socio-cultural and an academic one. De Witt and Knight tried to give a framework of these rationales in their work "Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education" stating that, from the political point of view, there is internationalisation because it is "seen as a beneficial tool for foreign policy especially with respect to national security and peace among nations"[28].

When referring to the economic rationale, internationalisation can be defined as the result of a global and interconnected economy, since countries are focusing even more on their competitiveness. As for the cultural and social rationales, even if they are decreasing in importance rather than in the past, "the preservation and promotion of national culture are becoming a strong motivation for those countries which consider internationalisation as a way to respect cultural diversity"[29]. Naming the academic rationales, a fundamental role is played by the international and intercultural perspectives of the main purposes of education, such as research and teaching, related also to the enhancement of the quality and level of universities which are trying to reach common academic standards.

Directly connected to the reasons why institutions can be internationalised there are strategies and programmes which are undertaken in order to develop this process.

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[27] De Wit, Hans. *Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe and its assessment, trends and issues.* NVAO Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie. Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (2010), last visit on 7th March 2013
http://www.nvao.net/page/downloads/Internationalisation_of_Higher_Education_in_Europe_DEF_december_2010.p_df
[28] Knight, Jane. De Wit, Hans. *Quality and Internationalisation of Higher Education.* OECD, Paris (1999), p.17.
[29] Ivi, p. 20.

Different approaches were used through years in order to implement programmes aimed at internationalisation: the activity approach refers to the different actions developed by an institution, such as the creation of student exchange programmes, the offer of courses entirely taught in a foreign language, especially English, and the creation of international curricula and joint degree programmes. As suggested by Qiang in his work "Internationalization of Higher Education: towards a conceptual framework", a second approach is connected to competences. Institutions focus on the improvement of knowledge, skills and perspectives of their staff and students and doing so they can become "internationally knowledgable and inter-culturally skilled"[30].

Moving to a more pragmatic perspective and referring to strategies of internationalisation, in particular, to the case of Europe, it is important to take into consideration the issue of regionalisation. Internationalisation has been very remarkable at regional level, "cooperation within Europe is probably the best known and, to some degree, the most successful case of regional collaboration, especially in the higher education sector"[31]. Accordingly, in order to realise the project of regionalisation there was a growing development of mobility programmes, which were often based upon the example of the successful *Erasmus* programme.

Together with this project created by the European Commission, the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy represented essential aspects for the spread of internationalisation, they represent two of the most striking examples of international commitments leading to the creation of the so called 'European Higher Education Area'. In addition, another key aspect related to the internationalisation process is represented by the increasing recognition of the concept of 'Lifelong Learning'.

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[30] Qiang, Zha. *Internationalization of Higher Education: towards a conceptual framework.* Policy Futures in Education (2003) Vol. 1. Number 2. P. 250. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.ses.unam.mx/docencia/2007II/Lecturas/Mod2_Qiang.pdf
[31] Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization.* Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), p.7, last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

This new trend brought to consider *Lifelong Learning* as a beneficial feature for the entire community, with institutions offering continuous programmes for knowledge and skills at international level. A new incentive to internationalisation was also given by the explosion of the innovative information and communication technologies.

Accordingly to the modernisation of all the fields of everyday life, these technologies allow learners to access global resources and increase their international awareness: "The Internet has truly revolutionised how knowledge is communicated"[32]. The change in this kind of technologies is a key part of the "academic transformation of the 21st century, in which distance and time seem to be no longer barriers"[33]. Thanks to the new technologies, there are growing possibilities for the delivery of educational programmes across borders, even without replacing the mobility of people.

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[32] UNESCO. Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic revolution, Report for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO 2009, P. 15, last visit on 15th March 2013 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001831/183168e.pdf

[33] Knight, Jane. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization.* Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers (2008), p.7, last visit on 7th March 2013 https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf

1.2   Internationalisation: an historical background.

Trying to trace an historical background of the recent process of internationalisation, investigating in particular the European experience, it is fundamental to start from one of the first step represented by the Bologna Process and then proceed to the following stages of its evolution until today. "The main precepts of this process date back to May 1998 when France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany signed the Sorbonne Declaration on the harmonisation of the architecture of the European Higher Education System[34]".

This first stage provided the necessary push towards the Bologna Declaration and indicated already in 1998 the main goals of the creation of a "coherent and cohesive European Area for Higher Education by 2010"[35].

> "The Sorbonne Declaration focused on the improvement of the international transparency of programmes and the recognition of qualifications directing the trend towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study. A second target is represented by the attempt of promoting an easier path for the mobility of students and teachers in Europe and their integration into the European labour market. At the same time, the Declaration aimed at creating a common degree level system for undergraduates and graduates"[36].

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[34] Sorbonne Joint Declaration Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system (1998). Paris. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne_declaration.pdf
[35] European University Association. What is the Bologna Process? Last visit on 7th March 2013 www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics.aspxb
[36] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. *Focus on Higher Education in Europe: The Impact of the Bologna Process.* Eurydice (2010). Brussels. P.9. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf

In 1999, the Bologna Declaration was signed by the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries. Because of the importance of this target, the Process started to widespread and, in 2001, 33 European countries were part of it. The number of signatory countries was increasing every year.

> "The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 puts in motion a series of reforms needed to make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents"[37].

Since the adoption of the Declaration in 1999, in order to set new priorities and to control the development of the process, Ministers of Education met every second year.

"After the first in Bologna, Ministers following meetings were in Prague in 2001, Berlin in 2003, Bergen in 2005, London in 2007, Leuven / Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium in April 2009, Budapest and Vienna in 2010 and Bucharest in April 2012"[38].

As for the members, every nation which subscribed the "European Cultural Convention"[39] adopted in 1954 could apply to enter the European Higher Education Area.

These countries must pursue and realise the main targets of the Bologna Process, in order to add themselves to the 47 member countries by now included in the Declaration. "The European Commission is a full member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), together with 8 advisory members: Business Europe, Council of Europe, Education International (EI),

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[37] European Commission. The Bologna Process - Towards the European Higher Education Area. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/bologna_en.htm

[38] Ibid.

[39] Definition of European Cultural Convention: "Adopted on 19 December 1954 , the Cultural Convention is the foundation for European co-operation in the fields of culture, education, youth and sport. Its aim is to encourage cultural co-operation in all its manifold forms, to foster understanding and knowledge between European countries, and to preserve their cultural heritage and treat it as an integral part of a broader "European" heritage". http://hub.coe.int/en/what-we-do/culture-and-nature/european-cultural-convention/ - Council of Europe.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Students Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institution in Higher Education (EURASHE) and UNESCO"[40].

Actual members of the European Higher Education Area are now 47: "from 1999, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. From 2001 also Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein and Turkey were admitted. In 2003 became member states Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Macedonia. In 2005 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were admitted, to which Montenegro was added in 2007 and Kazakhstan in 2010"[41].

Between the main objectives of the Bologna Declaration mentioned there is the adoption of "a system of easily readable and comparable degrees"[42], in addition to it, the Declaration intends to implement the so called "Diploma Supplement", which represents one of the tools for the promotion and improvement of employment of European citizens and a major competitiveness for the system of Higher Education in Europe.

The new system of degrees must be based on an undergraduate and a graduate cycle. "Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. While the first level of degree can be considered a relevant level of qualification for opportunities in the labour market of Europe, the second level should lead to a master or doctorate level degree"[43].

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[40] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. *Focus on Higher Education in Europe: The Impact of the Bologna Process.* Eurydice (2010). Brussels. P.11. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf

[41] Council of Europe. Bologna for Pedestrians (2010), last visit on 7th March 2013 www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/ehea2010/bolognapedestrians_en.asp

[42] European Commission. Joint Declaration of The European Ministers of Education of the 19th June 1999. Bologna, Italy. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf

[43] Ibid.

In order to promote a wider mobility of students and the spread of this trend, the declaration established a system of credits named "ECTS", which allows to recognise exams and credits a student acquired during the mobility period in a foreign institution, since the system follows a standard pattern commonly adopted across Europe.

The improvement of mobility concerns also the overcoming of obstacles in order to efficiently develop "the exercise of free movement of students, with access to study and training opportunities; for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, together with the recognition of periods spent in a European context"[44].

Together with the promotion of a European cooperation for the so called "quality assurance which focus on the development of comparable criteria and methodologies"[45], the declaration confirms the need for European dimensions in higher education, which aim at the improvement of curricular and institutional operations and of mobility programmes for students, teachers and researchers.

During the meeting in Prague (2001), Ministers agreed to add three new targets: the first was intended to introduce a lifelong learning strategy, the second one aimed at involving new partners within the Process, such as higher institutions and students, after that they attempt at improving the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

In 2003, the meeting took place in Berlin, Ministers agreed on the need to speed up the process. Then they decide to "set a new deadline for the 2005 and focused in particular on the issue of the quality assurance, the adoption of the two cycles degree system and the recognition of degrees"[46].

In Bergen, Ministers decided to "reinforce the social dimension of the programme since it helped to reduce the most of the obstacles to mobility, stating the deadline within 2007, year of their following encounter.

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[44]   European Commission. Joint Declaration of The European Ministers of Education of the 19th June 1999. Bologna, Italy. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf

[45]   Ibid.

[46]   Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education (2003). Realising the Higher Education Area. Berlin. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.bmbf.de/pub/communique_bologna-berlin_2003.pdf

Moreover, they decide to implement national frameworks of qualification and to develop the recognition of joint degrees"[47]. During the ministerial meeting in London in May 2007, Ministers analysed and reviewed the general progress which has been made in the last years in the realisation of the European Higher Education Area and they figured out that many challenges still remain.

The 2009 meeting in Belgium confirmed the role of universities, students and business, together with governments, which will collaborate for the development of educational reforms and programmes. The Communiqué underlines "the importance of increasing the quality and quantity of mobility in Europe, together with many other key issues including taking forward lifelong learning, notably through the take-up of European Universities Association's Lifelong Learning Charter and improving researchers careers"[48].

For the first time, also 15 members of different delegations from Africa, Asia and Australia took place at the meeting as "Bologna Policy Forum".

The Ministerial Conference of Vienna and the 2nd Bologna Policy Forum took place in 2010 when the Vienna Declaration officially recognised the launch of the project of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

"Although the process goes beyond the European borders, it is closely connected with European Union policies and programmes. For the European Union, the Bologna Process is part of a broader effort in the drive for a Europe of knowledge"[49].

One of the main intents of the Bologna Process focused on reducing the obstacles to mobility and creating tools for the recognition of periods of study abroad.

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[47] Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education (2005). The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the goals. Bergen. Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf

[48] European University Association. What is the Bologna Process? Last visit on 7th March 2013 www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics.aspxb

[49] European Commission. *The EU Contribution to the Bologna Process.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (2009). Last visit on 7th March 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/higher/bologna_en.pdf

These are considered useful devices to make more transparent the situation in the emerging European Higher Education Area and to allow that degree programmes and qualifications awarded in one country could be understood in another. Therefore, National and European Qualifications Frameworks were implemented to make the system easily comprehensible for students, institutions and employers. Another important purpose focused on the degrees and in particular on the three-years-cycle: as expected from to the Bologna Process, there is the adoption of two kind of degrees: Bachelor and Master degrees, which are currently underway in every participating countries.

> "Many participating countries have made substantial changes to their systems in response to the Bologna Process. Introducing the new degrees has required a tremendous effort in reviewing curricula and expectations toward students. Already over half of European universities have reviewed their curricula entirely, using the Bologna reforms to implement a more student-focused approach and new quality procedures"[50].

According to the definition given by the Bologna process, "the Bachelor degree requires between 180 and 240 ECTS credits and between 90 and 120 ECTS credits for a Master programme, with a minimum of 60 at a second level cycle"[51]. The introduction of the ECTS credit system represented an innovative and important tool which helped to make easier the recognition of periods of study abroad.

At the same time, this innovation allowed to improve and increase the quantity and quality of the European mobility.

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[50] European University Association. European Higher Education Area, Bologna – an overview of the main element. Last visit on 9th March 2013 http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics/Bologna-an-overview-of-the-main-elements.aspx
[51] Ibid.

"The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is a student-centred system which reflects the total workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme"[52]. Between these objectives are included not only hours and lessons, but also results and skills acquired. This kind of system allows to clarify study programmes and therefore it makes more transparent and easier the acknowledgment of mobility experiences in a foreign country.

Together with ECTS, the Diploma Supplement turned out to be an efficient tool for the improvement of mobility: in attachment to an higher education diploma of a student, this Diploma Supplement "describes in a widely comprehensible way the qualifications obtained during the foreign academic experience. The description included in the Diploma Supplement follows a common pattern and gives a definition of the achieved skills, taking into account the level, the status and the nature of the foreign academic experience"[53]. The Diploma Supplement does not constitute a substitute of the original diploma, but it represents a useful tool which comprehends useful details about the period abroad. Since within the purposes of the Bologna Process there is the promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance, in order to guarantee this kind of quality across Europe, a standardisation of the requirements for national educational system was introduced. "The creation of common guidelines inside the European region allowed to provide common reference points to universities and agencies"[54].

Within the most important targets of the process of internationalisation, a great role is played by the recognition of qualifications. This allows students to lead foreign academic experiences, dealing with less obstacle then before, especially for the legal and administrative procedures of the recognition.

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[52] European University Association. European Higher Education Area, Bologna – an overview of the main element. Last visit on 9th March 2013 http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics/Bologna-an-overview-of-the-main-elements.aspx
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

The "Convention on the Recognition of Qualification concerning Higher Education in the European Region" is usually referred to as the Lisbon Convention. This act became law in 1999, when was signed by the majority of countries participating in the Bologna Process. Within the innovations, joint degrees represented the basis for the future of higher education, they provide an example of collaboration between different universities: several countries have modified their structure in order to allow the recognition of this new kind of degree. In 2005 "at European level an amendment to the Lisbon Recognition Convention was adopted to award joint degrees"[55].

European policies on education and training started to gain greater incentive with the adoption of the so called Lisbon Strategy of 2000, a development plan focusing on growth and job. "The European Council held a special meeting in Lisbon in 2000 and set a new strategic goal which concerned a major competitiveness and a dynamic knowledge based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"[56].

For the achievement of this goal they create a common project which aimed at the transition to a knowledge-based economy. In order to succeed in the intents, the social model of Europe needed a modernisation, which consisted in the improvement of the situation against social exclusion and the application of new economic strategies. Between the areas of policy which required urgent action, according to the Lisbon Process, there was the so called "Knowledge society". The strategy aimed at increasing the attractiveness of Europe for researchers and scientists and to promote the use of information and communication technologies. Further interventions focused on the development of an information society, the building of an European Research Area, the creation of an environment which allows to start and develop new innovative enterprises and to renew social protection system.

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[55] European University Association. European Higher Education Area, Bologna – an overview of the main element. Last visit on 9th March 2013 http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/bologna-basics/Bologna-an-overview-of-the-main-elements.aspx

[56] European Union Parliament. Lisbon European Council 23-24 March 2000 – Presidency conclusion (2000), last visit on 14th March 2013 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

For the achievement of these aims, a set of priorities were determined in the field of education, focusing in particular on the importance of the training of individuals, society and economy.

As for the role of Universities within the so called "Europe of Knowledge", the Commission affirmed that in order to obtain success in the Bologna and Lisbon Processes, Europe must reach levels of excellence for their universities. "During the 2009, the cooperation between the European Union Member States and the European Commission grew stronger thanks to the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training, also named ET 2020"[57]. This project represented the following step of the previously stated ET 2010, launched in 2001.

This plan recognised that an high quality in the educational and training field is essential for the success of Europe. ET 2020 shows how "Lifelong Learning needs to be a priority, since it represents the key to employment, economic success and a full participation of people within the society itself"[58].

The new Education and Training Framework of 2020 sets some measures which included "standards such as a "95% of children starting the compulsory school, a percentage inferior to the 15% of children unable to read or with insufficient abilities in mathematics and science, less than 10% of students leaving schools earlier, moreover the framework determined an average of 15% of individuals participating in a Lifelong Learning project"[59].

Within the priorities of this updated framework, the main purpose appears to be that of making mobility and lifelong learning a reality, therefore overcoming obstacles to mobility through the application of the European Quality Charter for Mobility.

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[57] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Policy. Strategic framework for education and training. Last visit on 14th March 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/framework_en.htm

[58] Ibid.

[59] Council of the European Union. Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'). Official Journal of the European Union. Brussels. P. 9, last visit on 14th March 2013. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf

"The strategy will lead to the promotion of equity, social cohesion and active citizenship and to the intensification of creativity and innovation, also with the introduction of programmes in collaboration with the business world and enterprises"[60].

According to the European Strategic Framework, one of the way to make 'Lifelong Learning' a reality for countries is represented by the implementation of joint national strategies related to it and also by the attempt to standardise all the national qualifications to the European Qualifications Frameworks. Countries must increase their learning mobility and collaborate in order to reduce and overcome barriers, in this way there can be a rise in the possibilities of moving through Europe and worldwide thanks to the adoption of the European Quality Charter for Mobility. According to the European Strategic Framework, "the expected advancement will be related not only to the reduction of legal impediments, but at the same time to the introduction of new financial supports, which will be an help in particular to disadvantaged people"[61].

The second point of the Framework focuses on the revision of quality and efficiency of education and training: different language skills are required and citizens are supposed to be able to communicate in a foreign language in addition to their mother tongue. This target implies the creation of more opportunities for individuals to learn the language of the host country and the improvement of the quality of teaching. As for the future time, "countries should ensure that the assessment of future skill requirements and the matching of labour market needs are adequately taken on board in education and training planning processes"[62].

According to the target of promotion of equity and social cooperation, which is in some ways the removal of barriers to mobility within the educational sector, a starting point is recognised in an "equitable access for students and a reinforcement of the quality of teacher and staff"[63].

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[60] Council of the European Union. Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'). Official Journal of the European Union. Brussels. P. 4, last visit on 14th March 2013. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf
[61] Ivi, p. 11.
[62] Ivi, p. 12.
[63] Ivi, p. 13.

Moreover, countries must focus their orientation on innovation of education at all levels, suggesting the creation and improvement of innovative teaching methods, which are supported also by the new technologies and the development of partnerships between business and education sector. In particular, they have to develop a collaboration with cultural and creative companies and research institutions.

Universities and European institutions are still collaborating to build up a common area for higher education and research, an area of growth for both individuals and societies, which turns out to be essential to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship. One of the fundamental aspect for the creation of an international network of education is represented by the mobility of students, teaching and researchers.

1.3   Students Mobility in Europe: policies and targets

"Mobility is one of the main objectives of the European Union's education and training policy. Not only does it help to develop European citizenship and European awareness, by increasing understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity, it also supports the creation of a European area of education and training. The Union's education and training programmes have, since their early days, contributed substantially to this objective. Indeed the Erasmus programme, within which over 1,000,000 young people have studied in another Member State as part of their university studies, is a good example of an iconic action, one of few EU actions to have an identity recognisable to a very large number of its citizens"[64].

The development of programmes concerning internationalisation of schools, universities and training activities has contributed to the growth of a sense of citizenship at a European level, the so called "European citizenship", which tries to go beyond the national boundaries.

Internationalisation aims at reaching a greater efficiency in the mobility of students and workers, also improving the project of *Lifelong Learning*. The encouragement of mobility will "enables citizens of the Union to exercise their fundamental right to move and reside freely within the territory of Member states"[65].

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[64] Commission for the European Communities. Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility (2005). Brussels. P. 2, last visit on 14th March 2013 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0450en01.pdf

[65] European Parliament and Council. 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 amending Regulation. Official Journal of the European Union. Strasbourg. (2004), last visit on 14th March 2013 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:158:0077:0123:EN:PDF

A positive outcome of mobility as the raising of the quality levels of European education allows the development of programmes such as "Erasmus" or "Leonardo da Vinci" which represent experiences capable of enriching the skills and knowledge of the participants. A concrete influence is created by mobility also within the business and market area, in fact, thanks to its impulse, Europe is trying "to become the most innovative and most competitive knowledge based economy in the world"[66]. Over the last years, a wide range of significant measures and instruments related to mobility were adopted by the European Union institutions.

In "December 2000, after an informal meeting of the Education Ministers, the European Council signed a Mobility Action Plan which determined measures for the promotion, funding and recognition of period of study abroad"[67].

This was followed, in July 2001, by the adoption of "Recommendation 2001/613/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on Mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers"[68] which is complemented by the European Quality Charter for Mobility.

The aim of this Recommendation was that of increasing mobility in both education and training through a wider political cooperation. This measure expected an improved preparation and an efficient reception of international students, always associated with a reduction of obstacles to mobility and a formal recognition of the period of study abroad. In 2002, with the effort of improving the 'Principle of freedom of movement of workers' and highlighting the importance of mobility for the employment strategy of the European Union, the Commission approved an 'Action Plan for skills and mobility', with the aim of creating an European Labour Markets accessible to all.

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[66] Council of the European Union. Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'). Official Journal of the European Union. Brussels. P. 1, last visit on 14th March 2013. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf

[67] Commission for the European Communities. Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility (2005). Brussels. P. 3, last visit on 14th March 2013
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0450en01.pdf

[68] Ivi, p. 3.

According to the communication of the project of 2001 named "A Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area", precise initiatives must be undertaken in order to exploit mobility, the fundamental instrument which allow to increase the European capacities and performances in the area of research and careers. "Mobility issues are mentioned as one of the 13 objectives of the general programme 'Education and Training 2010' agreed by the Barcelona European Council in March 2002"[69].

The first *Joint Interim Report* on the process for the implementation of the 'ET 2010' was submitted by the Council and the Commission in February 2004: it underlines the need for an even more increasing level of quality of mobility in education and training and the following step is represented by the proposal for a 'Quality Charter for Mobility and Training'.

In order to better comprehend the evolution and meaning of mobility, it is necessary to analyse the main aspects of the European Mobility Quality Charter: "strengthened by the Mobility Action Plan of 2000 and the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 10 July 2001, mobility has always been of considerable interest to stakeholders"[70].

"The European Quality Charter for Mobility addressed everyone who intends to benefit from a period of studying in a foreign country and it includes students, teachers, volunteers and trainers"[71]. The application of the recommendations of the Charter has the main target to guarantee a positive outcome of the experience abroad. The Charter traces a set of guidelines necessary for a positive completion of the experience undertaken by individuals, with the purpose both of learning or working. The aspects contained into the guideline must be adjusted to every kind of experience, according to the length, purposes and the needs of the candidates.

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[69] Commission for the European Communities. Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility (2005). Brussels. P. 4, last visit on 14th March 2013
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0450en01.pdf
[70] European Parliament and Council. European Quality Charter for Mobility. Annex 30/12/2006. Official Journal of the European Union, last visit on 14th March 2013 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0005:0009:EN:PDF
[71] Ibid.

"The guideline starts stating that the potential candidates for mobility should have access to the information and opportunities of mobility, he needs to know the conditions in which he can apply for this experience. The second step is about the learning plan, in fact, according to the Charter, any kind of mobility (for learning or training), should have an agreed plan which involve the candidate and both the sending and the host countries. In this programme, purposes and outcomes of the experience must be outlined. Every kind of mobility has in some way to fit with the personal attitude, motivations and skills of the candidate: there must be a sort of personalisation of the experience in order to easily reach the expected outcomes"[72].

Essential for the achievement of the experience is a general preparation of the participant: the candidate must satisfy the "required skills as for linguistic, pedagogical, legal, cultural and financial aspects"[73]. In particular, as for the linguistic requirement, effective language skills are essential, not only before the departure, but also because a linguistic support is given by the host country through language courses. The knowledge of the mother tongue of the host country is compulsory. According to the Charter "adequate logistical support should be provided to the participants. This include information and assistance with travel arrangements, insurance, residence or work permits, social security, accommodation, and any other practical aspects, including safety issues relevant to their stay"[74].

For every type of mobility, a referent will be provided from the host country and the correspondent organisation, who will help the participant for the integration within the new environment and will be responsible for further assistance. An essential aspect of the experience abroad is represented by the recognition of it: "If a study or placement period abroad is an integral part of a formal study or training programme, this fact should be stated in the learning plan"[75].

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[72] European Parliament and Council. European Quality Charter for Mobility. Annex 30/12/2006. Official Journal of the European Union, last visit on 14th March 2013 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0005:0009:EN:PDF

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

At the end of the mobility experience the candidate will be provided with a certificate which demonstrate the effective participation to the project and the outcomes of it. After the experience abroad, the home country should give appropriate help for the reintegration of the candidate and suggests way to usefully evaluate the competences acquired during the period of mobility.

Since its adoption, students mobility has been an all-encompassing purpose of the Bologna Process and there has been a consistent tendency to promote mobility throughout the last ten years. Despite this fact, the number of countries which have set targets for mobility as part of their Education development strategy is relatively low. It is less common for a country to express clear objectives related to student mobility, while it is more easy to find general strategies and ideas for incoming or outgoing mobility. "It may also be mistaken to assume that countries all share the same basic objectives in this field, despite the fact that they may be able to reach common goals at the level of the EHEA"[76].

There are countries which tend to focus on incoming mobility and put few measures to encourage outgoing mobility, a clear example of this strategy is that of the United Kingdom; other countries instead, such as Belgium, set policies which are a push for outgoing mobility; finally others try to develop both the kinds of mobility.

Even where countries affirm to have clear mobility strategies and policies, it is rare to find extensive and trustworthy data on the effective level of students mobility.

Within international measures often mentioned by countries when tracing their mobility policy are for example: a "wide information campaign which aim to encourage incoming or outgoing mobility, important forms of cooperation agreements with other countries, together with the offer of degrees taught in English, the possibility of support for accommodation, the facilitation of visa procedures
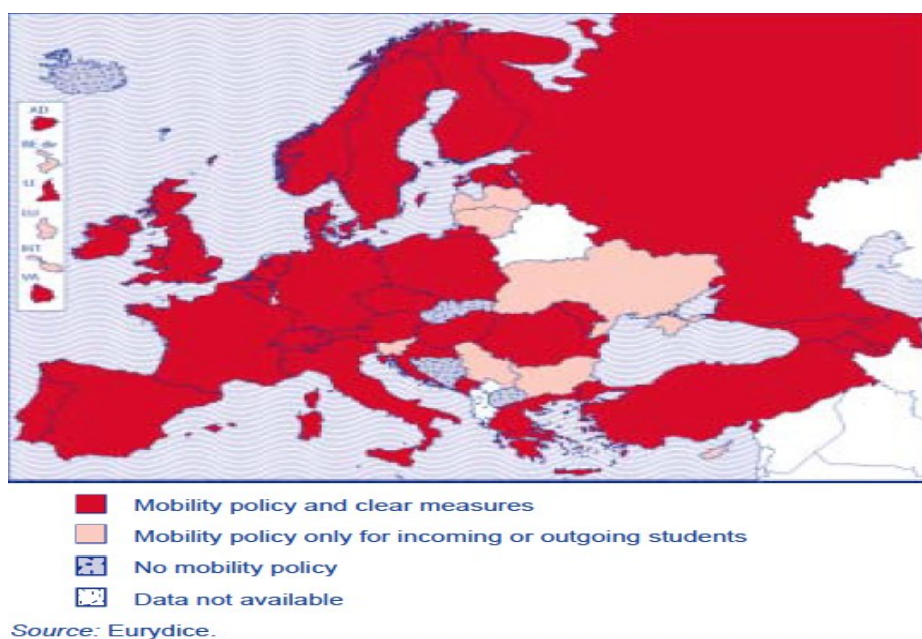
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[76] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Focus on Higher Education in Europe: The Impact of the Bologna Process. Eurydice (2010). Brussels. P.40. Last visit on 16th March 2013. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf

for students and a range of financial measures such as scholarships and grants"[77].

These measures are linked to the main aim of strengthening the implementation of the Bologna Process.

A significant part of the measures set for this process is represented by the financial aspect. Financial measures must be related to the different social and economic realities of countries which are part of the European Higher Education Area. "The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank rankings of countries by GDP per capita both include 6 of the EHEA countries in the top 10 world economies, while other EHEA countries rank as low as 114 out of the 166 countries included"[78].

Figure 1. **Policy on Student Mobility 2009/2010[79]**

Source: Eurydice.

Source: Focus on Higher Education in Europe: The Impact of the Bologna Process. Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Brussels. Eurydice (2010).

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[77] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Focus on Higher Education in Europe: The Impact of the Bologna Process. Eurydice (2010). Brussels. P.41. Last visit on 16th March 2013.
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

According to these information, "even when the best strategies are applied in order to develop the level of mobility, for less wealthy countries it is still difficult to overcome the funding gaps required to cover costs for a citizen to study in a more wealthy country"[80]. One of the aspects which more helps to improve the mobility of countries is the possibility to receive aid from host countries, such as scholarships and grants.

"Another important aspect related to mobility is the issue of immigration policy: a controlled immigration is often applied by countries which have developed and improved their mobility for education or training. Relatively few countries have adopted immigration legislations in order to develop and favour mobility and few others have set strategies which are not aligned with the target of the European Higher Education Area"[81].

"Only Belgium, France, Malta and Switzerland have specifically aligned themselves to the 20 % by 2020 benchmark set for the EHEA. However, countries like the Netherlands have targets which overcome the standard and can reach the 25%, or even the 50% such in the case of Austria and Germany"[82], which means that half of the student population will be able to spend a period of study in a foreign country by 2020.

Particular cases are represented by the United Kingdom, Ireland and Poland, because they haven't remarkable measures for outbound mobility, while they completely focus their strategies on the incoming one.

The mobility policy of these countries is strongly influenced by the European plans, in fact often their national policy is not extended beyond the implementation of particular European programmes and their line of action. Nowadays, it is hard to find a country in which programmes such as 'Erasmus', 'Tempus' or 'Leonardo' are not provided.

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[80] Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. Focus on Higher Education in Europe: The Impact of the Bologna Process. Eurydice (2010). Brussels. P.41. Last visit on 16th March 2013. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf

[81] Ivi, p. 42.

[82] Ibid.

Even if it seems difficult to find complete data about international mobility, the trends appear to be clear, in fact between 2 and 3 million students each year go abroad to study in a foreign country and often the destinations are quite similar.

> "In 2010, more than 4.1 million tertiary students were enrolled outside their country of citizenship. Luxembourg, Australia, the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland and New Zealand have, in descending order, the highest percentages of international students among their tertiary enrolments. In absolute terms, the largest numbers of foreign students are from China, India and Korea. Asian students represent 52% of foreign students enrolled worldwide"[83].

"Between 2008 and 2009 the number of international students enrolled rose by 6.4% while the global amount of tertiary students enrolled in the same period grew by 3.3%, at a slower pace compared to the 8% of growth registered in the precedent year"[84]. During the following years, some obstacles to mobility were represented by the financial crisis and the reduction of funds set for the support of studying abroad.

According to OECD statistics, "countries such as Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, together with Canada, France and Germany, received more than 6% of all international students at global level"[85]. Within the main countries of origin of these international students we find the United States, Japan and Korea, along with France and Germany.

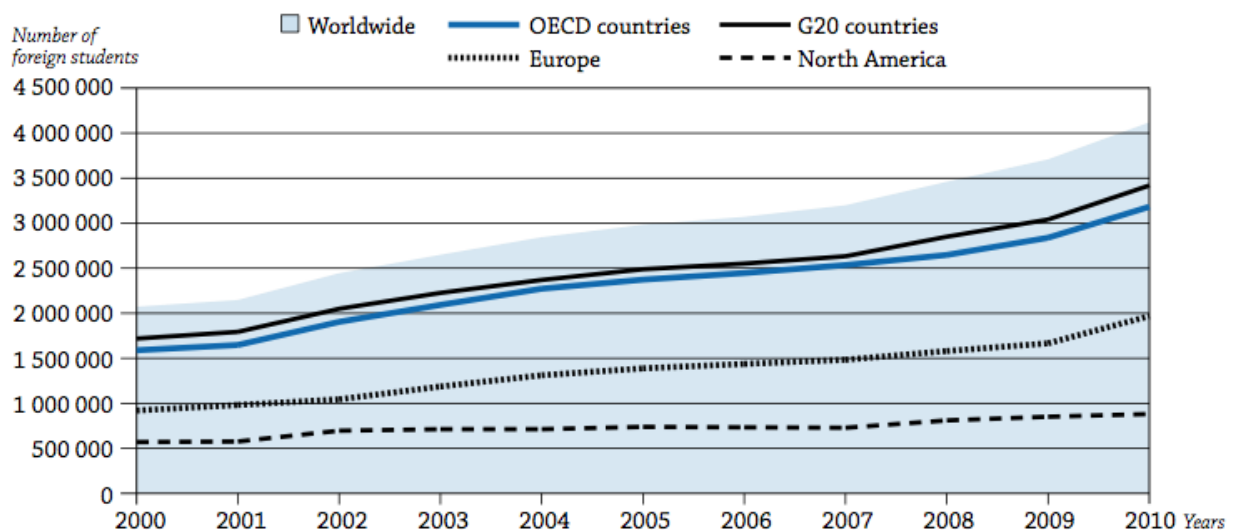[83] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 360. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[84] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 319. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf
[85] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 361. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf

"Since 2000 and up to 2010, the number of foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide has increased by 99%, for an average annual growth rate of 7.1%. The number of foreign tertiary students enrolled in OECD countries doubled since 2000, for an average annual increase growth rate of 7.2%"[86]. Even if the amount of international students has decreased in the past years, European countries still are the favourite destinations.

The latest growing regions of destinations are represented by Latin America, the Caribbean, Oceania and Asia.

Figure 2. **Evolution by region of destination in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship (2000 to 2010)[87]**. Source: OECD and UNESCO institute for statistics for most data on non OECD countries

According to the OECD and UNESCO researches, the student population who decided to enrolled for a period of study abroad has definitely risen over time, statistics show that from "0.8 million in 1975, the number of international students became 4.1 million in 2010"[88].

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[86]   UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 361. Last visit on 24th March 2013
       http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[87]   UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 361. Last visit on 24th March 2013
       http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
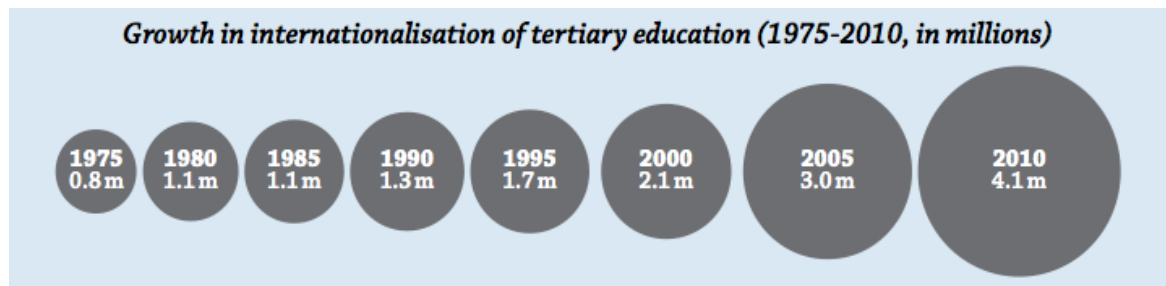[88]   Ibid.

Figure 3. **Long-term growth in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship.** Source: OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf - Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 362. Last visit on 24th March 2013)

The growth of internationalisation in the education sector is strictly connected to the increasing internationalisation of economies and societies, together with the renewed role of universities within the mobility sector. "The UNESCO statistics reported on the chart of the previous page (Figure 2) shows that from 2000 to 2010 there was a growth of the 77% of students participating in tertiary education around the world, which means that 177 million of students decided to move abroad. During the same period, the number of international students increased from 2.1 to 4.1 million students, with a growth of the 99%"[89].

Even more great is the growth in internationalisation of higher education of OECD countries: data show that the number of foreign students enrolled in foreign education more than doubled since 2000 in numerous countries.

"According to the available records, the number of foreign students has grown slower in the European Union countries rather than in the OECD Area but, on average, the rise in international students enrolment between 2004 and 2009 has been higher in 'EU21 countries'[90] with a 43% rather than in the whole OECD area (32%)"[91].

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[89] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 362. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[90] Definition of EU21:"All EU countries prior to the accession of the 10 candidate countries on 1 May 2004, plus the four eastern European member countries of the OECD, namely Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic". http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/ - Glossary of Statistical Terms. Main Economic Indicators. OECD (2005). Paris.
[91] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 321. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf

As stated by an analysis of UNESCO in 2009, the growth in the internationalisation of higher education enrolment showed the growing importance of regional mobility over the global one.

> "G20 countries attract 83% of foreign students worldwide. Around 77% of foreign students are enrolled in an OECD country. Within the OECD area, the EU21 countries host the highest number of foreign students, with 40% of total foreign students. These countries also host 98% of foreign students in the European Union"[92].

The policies applied in Europe for mobility became evident when analysing the composition of the students population in enrolments. For EU21 countries the majority of students come from those countries themselves. "North America represented the second choice for students, in which is however traceable a different profile of students: in the United States the percentage of international students coming from neighbouring countries is relatively low and vice versa (for example: only 4.1% of US international students coming from Canada and 7.4% Canadian international coming from the US)"[93]. As for the destinations chosen, in 2009, half of the student population opted for countries in which the percentage of international students was already high, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and France.

Over time, it is possible to notice the new role of some countries in the field of international education. During 2009, in addition to the regions already cited as main choices for studying abroad and which represent half of the mobility in the higher education sector, a significant amount of international students opted for Canada, Japan, the Russian Federation and Spain.

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[92]   UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 363. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[93]   Ibid.

"Then, during the following decade, a counter trend started and destinations such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany were subjected to a period of decreasing importance with a reduction of choices of international students towards these regions"[94]. On the contrary, as it has already been said, a new role was played, in the field of tertiary international education, when international students started to choose Australia and New Zealand as their destinations together with the Russian Federation. "Some of these changes reflect the different emphases in countries' internationalisation policies, ranging from proactive marketing policies in the Asia-Pacific region to a more local and university-driven approach in the traditionally dominant United States"[95].

When underlying which are the factors in students' choice of a country, the language of instruction is one of the feature which often determines the destination of students to pursue their studies abroad. "Leading destinations of international students are represented by countries where the mother tongue or the official language are widely known and spoken, such as English, German, Spanish, French and Russian"[96].

An exception is represented by Japanese, in fact even if it is not a language extensively known, the country enrols a huge international students, especially from Asia.

As the diagram in the following page (Figure 4) shows, the principal destinations are English speaking countries: "the United States received the most, with 17% of all foreign students worldwide, then we find the United Kingdom (13%) and Australia (7%), followed by Germany (6%) and France (6%). Besides the five major destinations, significant numbers of foreign students were enrolled in Canada (5%), Japan (3%), the Russian Federation (4%) and Spain (2%) in 2009"[97].

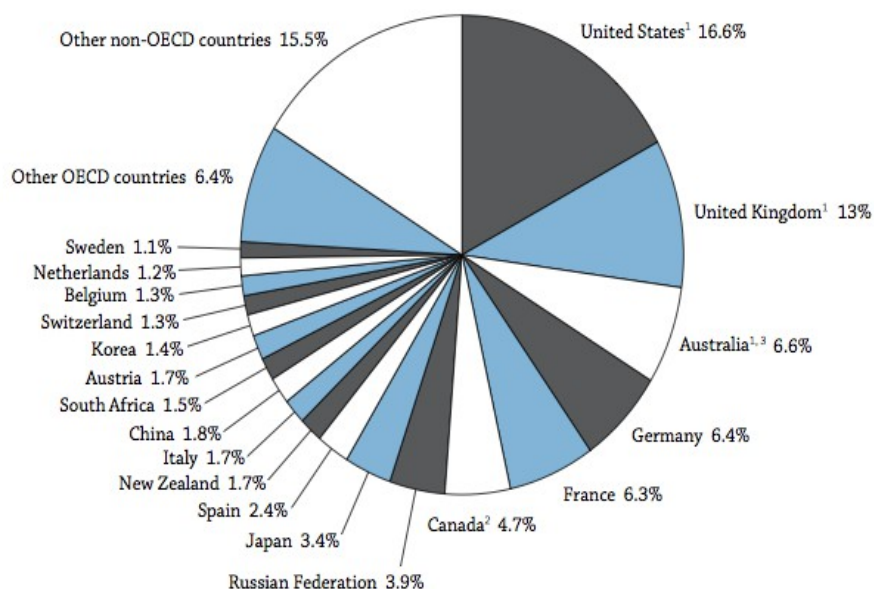[94] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 363. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[95] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 321. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf
[96] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 363. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[97] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 321. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf

Figure 4. **Distribution of foreign students in tertiary education, by country of destination** (2010)
(http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf - Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 364. Last visit on 24th March 2013).

Percentage of foreign tertiary students reported to the OECD who are enrolled in each country of destination

Other non-OECD countries 15.5%
United States[1] 16.6%
Other OECD countries 6.4%
United Kingdom[1] 13%
Sweden 1.1%
Netherlands 1.2%
Belgium 1.3%
Switzerland 1.3%
Korea 1.4%
Austria 1.7%
South Africa 1.5%
China 1.8%
Italy 1.7%
New Zealand 1.7%
Spain 2.4%
Japan 3.4%
Russian Federation 3.9%
Canada[2] 4.7%
France 6.3%
Germany 6.4%
Australia[1,3] 6.6%

"The trend of choosing English speaking countries as favourite destinations leads to the adoption of English as 'global language' and this made regions such as the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia and Canada even more attractive"[98].

English language is often perceived as inevitable in the process of internationalisation and it is seen as a measure to guarantee a certain quality and equality in the delivery of international programmes of study.

"In most of the cases students prefer to study in an English speaking country because they wish to improve their skills through the immersion in a native English speaking context"[99], also because English represents the second language for the majority of students.

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[98] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 365. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[99] Ibid.

The use of English as the main language for international education is often considered as a very important factor for the recruitment of international students. "The rapid growth of international students enrolment between 2000 and 2009 in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand is often ascribed to linguistic factors"[100].

Due to this consideration, a great number of universities started to enrich their formative offer introducing courses entirely taught in English in order to attract even more foreign students and the picture below (Figure 5) offers an overview of the situation in 2010.

"Since international students always more frequently select their destination based on the quality of education and programmes offered by universities, institutions of higher education started to raise their standards in the quality of teaching, to adapt to more diverse student populations and to place a major attention on external perceptions and suggestions"[101].

Figure 5. **Countries offering tertiary programmes in English** (2010)

Source: (http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf - Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 365. Last visit on 24th March 2013).

Use of English in instruction	
All or nearly all programmes offered in English	Australia, Canada,[1] Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States
Many programmes offered in English	Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden
Some programmes offered in English	Belgium (Fl.),[2] the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland,[3] Turkey
No or nearly no programmes offered in English	Austria, Belgium (Fr.), Brazil, Chile, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico,[3] the Russian Federation, Spain

Another important aspect for the choice of the university abroad is represented by the cost of living and tuition fees.

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[100] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 365. Last visit on 24th March 2013
http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[101] Ibid.

"As for the matter of tuition fees, international students from the European Union are considered as domestic students in countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Germany and others, they pay the same amount of money of a community student"[102].

According to the UNESCO document, in some cases, such as in Ireland, in order to be considered a domestic student, the candidate has to show he has been living in Ireland for the three previous years, this condition allows him to benefit of free tuition fee during that current academic year.

> "While there are no tuition fees in Finland and Sweden, in Germany, tuition fees are collected at all government-dependent private institutions and, in some *Bundesländer,* tuition fees have been introduced at public tertiary institutions as well. In Denmark, students from Nordic countries (Norway and Iceland) and EU countries are treated like domestic students and so pay no fees, as their education is fully subsidised"[103].

Particular situations are represented by students who, thanks to their talent and skills can obtain scholarships which help them to partly or fully cover the costs of tuition fees, while the majority of non EU students or who come from non-European Economic Area countries are due to a full payment of tuition fees. "In Norway, international and domestic students pay the same amount of money for tuition fees, if they attend a public institution there are no fees, they have to pay only if they choose a private university"[104].

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[102] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 365. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[103] Ivi, p. 366.
[104] Ibid.

Several countries outside of the European Union, such as Iceland, Japan, Korea and the USA provide the same tuition pattern for foreign or home students.

> "The fact that Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden do not have tuition fees for international students, combined with the availability of programmes taught in English, probably explains part of the robust growth in the number of foreign students enrolled in some of these countries between 2000 and 2009"[105].

A particular case is represented by Japan, where the tuition fees provided for both domestic and internationals students are equivalent and furthermore, there is the possibility for some foreign students to be financed through private scholarship.

In Korea, the situation is variable and it depends on the agreement between the university of origin and the chosen destination. In general, "most international students in Korea pay tuition fees that are somewhat lower than those paid by domestic students"[106].

Full tuition fees are instead paid by international students in New Zealand, while in Australia they can benefit from subsides in the same way of native students. Similarly are treated international students in the Russian Federation.

The possibility to benefit from the absence of fees represents an high cost for those countries and therefore international students represent an heavy financial weight for them. Between 2006 and 2007, this situation leads countries where this policy was applied, to adopt a new system, introducing tuition fees for non EU and non EEA students, an example is represented by Denmark.

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[105] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 324. Last visit on 22nd March 2013
http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf
[106] Ivi, P. 317.

"Finland and Sweden started to discuss about the adoption of a similar system when the growth of the international students enrolment increase of more than 14% and 57% respectively, between 2005 and 2010. Sweden introduced tuition fees, compensated by scholarships, for students from outside the EU/EEA starting from the academic year 2011/12"[107].

Anyway, the available data confirm that the introduction of tuition fees does not dissuade international students from choosing that countries as favourite destinations for their studies, since the quality of education provided is valid and worthwhile.

One of the situation in which the cost of studies played an important role is represented by universities with equal opportunities and quality: a particular case is represented by the United Kingdom and the United States which have seen a decreasing enrolment of international students due to the competitiveness of other English speaking countries offering similar programmes of studies at "cheaper prices".

"Advanced research programmes in New Zealand, for example, have become more attractive since 2005, when tuitions fees for international students were reduced to the same level as those paid by domestic students, as it is possible to understand from the box in the following page (see Figure 6)"[108].

Within the different initiatives undertaken by universities in order to become even more internationalised, they started to improve their immigration policies. This allows to reduce barriers to mobility and become more attractive to international students and push their durable or transitory stay. Together with the aspect of tuition fees, immigration policy represented a factor which could affect the choice for the destination of their foreign studies.

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[107] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 367. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[108] Ibid.

Figure 6. **Structure of tuition fees.** Source: OECD Indicators B5.

Tuition fee structure	OECD and other G20 countries
Higher tuition fees for international students than for domestic students	Australia[1], Austria,[2] Belgium,[2, 3] Canada, the Czech Republic,[2, 4] Denmark,[2, 4] Estonia,[2] Ireland,[4] the Netherlands,[2] New Zealand,[5] the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United Kingdom,[2] the United States[6]
Same tuition fees for international and domestic students	France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico,[7] Spain
No tuition fees for either international or domestic students	Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

1. "International students are not eligible for government subsidised places in Australia and therefore are full-fee paying. While this typically results in international students having higher tuition fees than domestic students (who usually attend subsidised places), it should be noted that some domestic students in public universities and all students in independent-private universities are full-fee paying and pay the same tuition fees as international students.
2. For non-European Union or non-European Economic Area students.
3. In Belgium (Fl.), different tuition allowed only if institutions reach 2% of students from outside the EEA area.
4. No tuition fees for full-time domestic students in public institutions.
5. Except students in advanced research programmes, or students from Australia.
6. In public institutions, international students pay the same fees as domestic out-of-state students. However since most domestic students are enrolled in-state, international students pay higher tuition fees than most domestic students, in practice. In private universities, the fees are the same for national and international students.
7. Some institutions charge higher tuition fees for international students"[109].

"According to the OECD researches there are several other factors which persuade or dissuade an international student in the choice of the destination for the studies. The reputation of an academic institution together with its programmes and the possibility to have recognition for the period spent abroad have a great influence in the decision"[110].

Within the obstacles which can drive a student to pursue the study abroad there are "limitations of tertiary education in the home country and restrictive university admission policies at home"[111] which can be overcome thanks to administrative strategy which also ease the recognition of the foreign degree. Proximity and historical partnerships between countries can represent positive aspects for the decision together with the prospective of job opportunities.

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[109] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 366. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[110] Ivi, p. 367.
[111] Ibid.

If we attempt to analyse international mobility highlighting the countries which seem to be more internationalised, without taking into account the size and the importance of their market, we will find out that within "countries which show the highest rates of incoming students mobility we find the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, together with Austria and Switzerland"[112].

As it is possible to understand from the diagram below (see Figure 7), which is part of the study "Education at a Glance 2012" of the OECD, the percentage of foreign students enrolled in "Australia are 21.2%, they represent the 15.4% of total higher education enrolments in Austria and 41.4% in Luxembourg. As for New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom the percentage are around the 14% and 15%. In contrast, incoming student mobility accounts for less than 2% of total tertiary enrolments in Chile, Estonia, Norway, Poland and Slovenia"[113].

Figure 7. **Student mobility in tertiary education (2010).** Source OECD.(http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf - Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 368. Last visit on 24th March 2013).
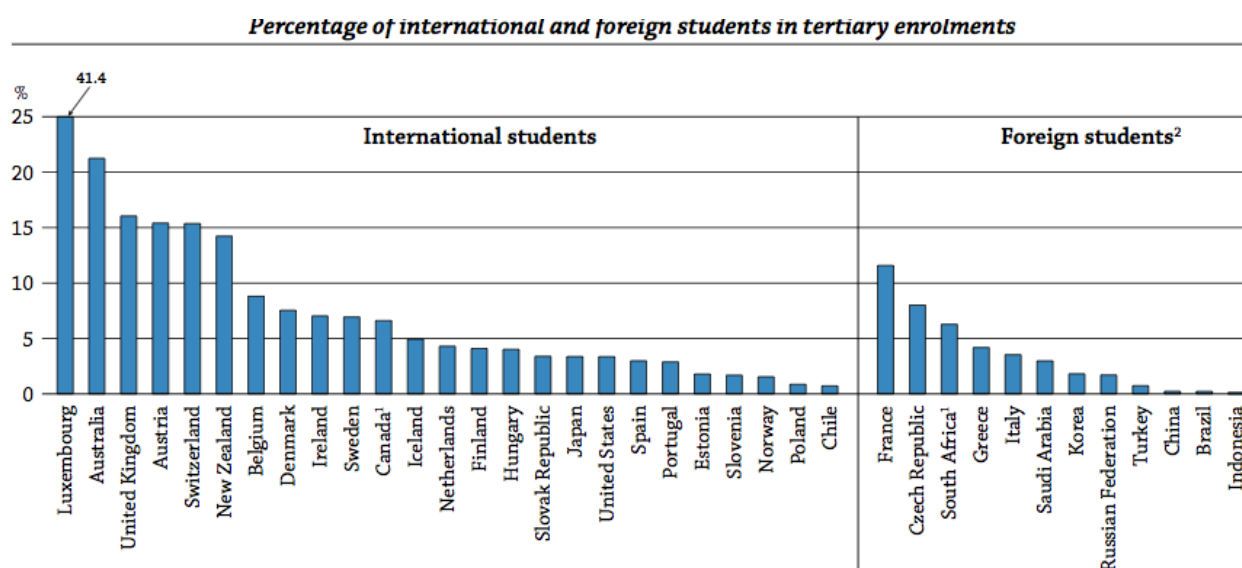
112 UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 367. Last visit on 24th March 2013
     http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
113 Ivi, p. 368.

Looking at the graph (see Figure 7 in the previous page), it is evident that enrolment of international students constitute an important aspect for the higher education sector in France (11.5 %), while foreign enrolments represent 1% or less of total foreign students enrolments in Turkey, China, Brazil and Indonesia.

According to the available data, as for higher education, when looking at the profile of international students, we noticed that in OECD countries that are higher numbers for the incoming mobility rather then that of outgoing students.

> "In 2010, OECD countries hosted 2.9 foreign students per each student studying outside the country of origin. This represents for 3.2 million foreign students in OECD countries, compared to more than one million students outside of their OECD country of citizenship. In the OECD area the majority of students come from a non-member country, while the 93% of OECD students study in another OECD country"[114].

As for the main region of origin, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (See Figure 8 in the following page), "Asian students represent the largest group of international students enrolled with a total average of the 52%. Their prevalence is particularly visible in countries such as Australia, Japan and Korea, where they represent the 75% of international students. The following group is composed by European students and reach around 24% of international students. The 10% of the international student population is make up by African students and only the 3.3% comprehend the North American mobility"[115].

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[114] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 368. Last visit on 24th March 2013
http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf
[115] Ivi, p. 369.

"An higher percentage is seen in Latin America and Caribbean components with a 6%, while the 30% of international students enrolled in the OECD area originate from another OECD country"[116].

Figure 8. **Distribution of foreign students in tertiary education, by region of origin (2010)**.

Percentage of foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide
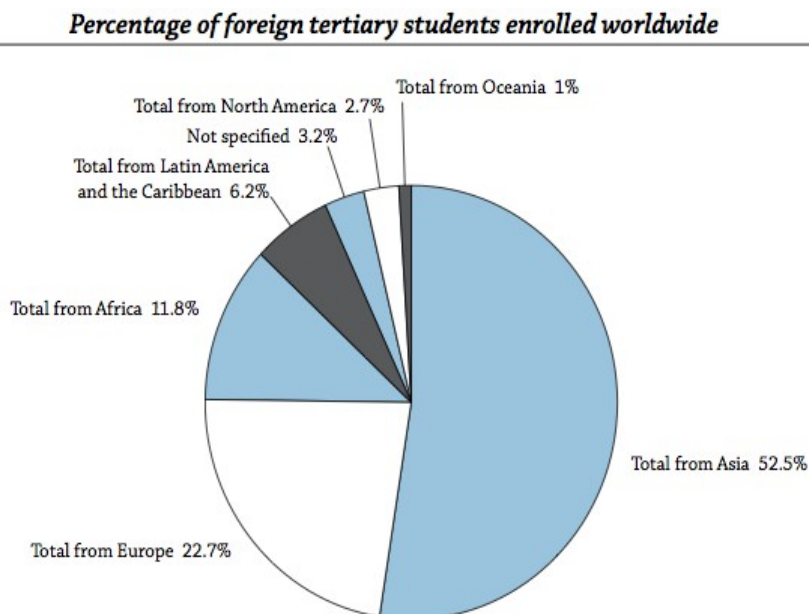
Referring to the individual countries of origin, UNESCO statistics show that there is a visible predominance of Asian and European students. "The largest percentage of international OECD students enrolled in member countries come from France, Germany and Korea, followed by students from the United States, Canada and Japan. As seen before, within students coming from non-member countries, the prevalent group is that of Chinese students which reaches the 19% of all international students in OECD countries"[117]. "In OECD countries, students from China are followed by those from India (7.3%), Malaysia (1.9%), Morocco (1.6%), Viet Nam (1.5%) and the Russian Federation (1.3%); at the same time also Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore and Thailand represent countries with a significant number of Asian students abroad"[118].

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[116] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 369. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf

[117] Ibid.

[118] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 370. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf

It is well-known that one of the reason which influenced the decision for the destination country is represented by the geographical aspect of proximity, in fact around the 20% of foreign students choose to go to a neighbouring country.

Features which push toward this choice could be represented by economic aspects, for example, costs or enrolment advantages or by social ties such as similar education system and culture. "One of the most striking example of this trend is represented by Korea, where the percentage of this kind of 'neighbouring mobility' are really high, in fact the 81% of foreign students come from China or Japan. Also in Estonia the situation is similar, almost 80% of foreign students come from really close countries, the same happens in the Czech Republic, where more than a half of the students come from Austria, Germany, Poland or the Slovak Republic"[119].

In contrast, "countries such as Australia, Canada, Portugal and the United States shows a different tendency, in fact the percentage of neighbouring students is relatively low: around 5% for Australia and Canada, even less for Portugal, with only 4% coming from Spain or Morocco, and the 8% for the United States related to students coming from Bahamas, Canada and Mexico"[120].

In the case of Portugal, the majority of students come from distant countries such as Brazil, Capo Verde or Angola, but at least they are all places where Portuguese is an official language.

"As previously confirmed, students from OECD countries who intend to pursue their studies abroad normally decide to enrol in another OECD country, with an average of the 93%. Also the proportion of foreign students coming from the G20 countries and studying in an OECD country is relatively high and reaches at least the 80%, with students coming from Brazil, Argentina, India, China, South Africa, the Russian Federation and Saudi Arabia"[121].

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[119] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 328. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf
[120] Ibid.
[121] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 371. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf

Within the factors which determine where international students are going to complete their studies there are cultural and linguistic aspects, the affinity of the educational system together with the basic aspect of geographic closeness of the host country.

Striking examples which confirm this trend are represented by countries such as "Austria where there is a numerous group of German students, Belgium with French students, Canada with students from the USA"[122]: for these regions proximity is within the main reasons together with the issue of admission requirements.

> "Language and academic traditions also explain the propensity for English-speaking students to concentrate in other countries of the Commonwealth or in the United States, even those that are distant geographically. This is also true for other historic geopolitical areas, such as the former Soviet Union, the *Francophonie* and Latin America. Migration networks also play a role, as illustrated by the concentration of students with Portuguese citizenship in France, students from Turkey in Germany or those from Mexico in the United States"[123].

Between the motives which determine the choice of a particular university, the prestige of the institution and the following opportunities of work and career are among the most important aspects for the attractiveness of an educational institute.

In addition, countries are even more attractive when they have arranged their policy in order to ease the immigration for international students.

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[122] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 371. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf

[123] Ibid.

"It is noteworthy, for example, that students from China are mostly in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States"[124].

Another important aspect is represented by the number of students who decide to stay in the host country and the reasons why they decide not to go back to the country of origin. There are different reasons which can persuade an international student to stay in the host country in which he decided to study. These rationales can include the different opportunities of work offered in the host country compared to those presented in the country of origin, together with advantages and positive expectations for the future career. Even the integration in the new country and the creation of a new network of relations can represent a reason for staying.

"Numerous countries have rearranged their immigration policies to facilitate the movement of students and persuade their temporary or permanent stay: for example, the system of Australia, New Zealand and Canada allows students who choose their universities to pursue their studies abroad to received additional point within the immigration system"[125].

> "Finland and Norway amended their naturalisation acts and now take the years of residence spent as students into account when they assess eligibility. In France, enrolment of international students in advanced research programmes reduces the period of residence needed to be eligible for naturalisation"**[126]**.

A huge number of countries provided to facilitate working visa and residence procedure in order to simplify the stay of international students and graduates.

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[124] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 371. Last visit on 24th March 2013 http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/oecd-eag-2012-en.pdf http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2012-en
[125] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 328. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf
[126] Ivi, pp. 328-329.

Together with legal adjustments, countries attempted to facilitate the integration of international students offering language courses for teaching the official mother-tongue of the country and internship opportunities, which allow candidates to feel more comfortable in the new environment.

"In addition, freedom of movement of workers within Europe as well as national treatment with respect to tuition fees partly explain the high level of student mobility in Europe compared to that among the countries of North America. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) does not permit the free movement of workers within a common labour market"[127].

Another important aspect is represented by students who decide to make their mobility period a more permanent solution. What allows to understand the number of students who decide to remain in the country in which they choose to study is the "stay rate". This rate does not control the number of students that decide to longer their stay in the foreign country, but "the proportion of international students changing their status from student to another kind of residence status to the total amount of students who decide not to renew their permits"[128].

According to the chart (see Figure 9 in the following page), the stay rate "averaged 25% among international students who decided not to renew their student permit in 2008 and 2009, this percentage is superior in France, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia and Canada"[129].

It is important to consider that not all students may decide to stay for work motivations, but also for social or personal reasons, and from this data are excluded European students who do not need residence permit to change their status.

Anyway, the UNESCO data show that in the countries were statistics are available, normally the "stay rate is higher than 17%, reaching even the 33% in Canada"[130].
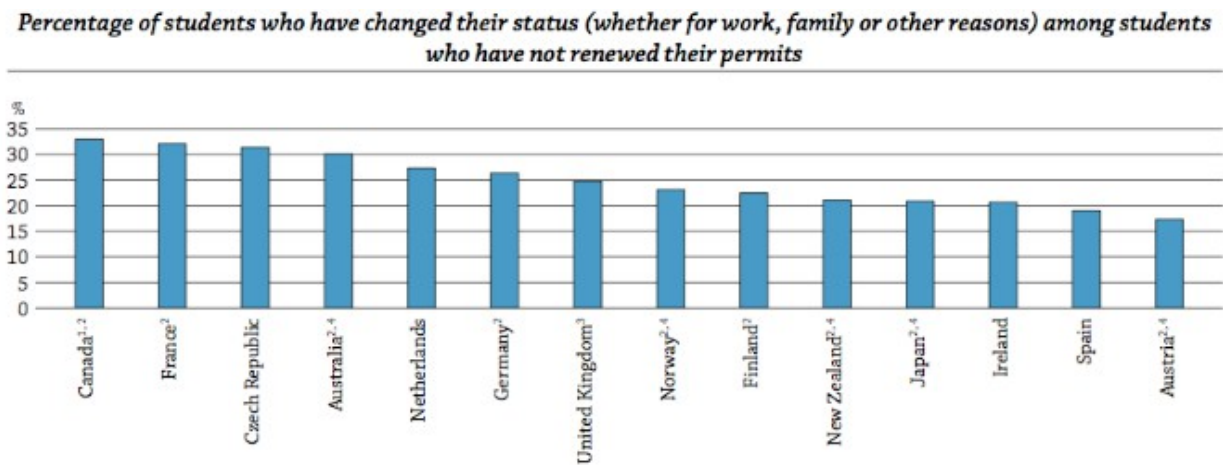
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[127] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 329. Last visit on 22nd March 2013
      http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf
[128] Ivi, p. 329.
[129] Ivi, p. 330.
[130] Ibid.

Figure 9. **Percentage of international students changing status and staying on in selected OECD countries, 2008 or 2009.** (http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf - Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P.329, last visit on 25th March 2013)

Percentage of students who have changed their status (whether for work, family or other reasons) among students who have not renewed their permits

"Within the students who decide to change their residence status, between the 74% do so for work reasons, especially in countries such as the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Canada and the Netherlands"[131].

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[131] UNESCO. Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. P. 330. Last visit on 22nd March 2013 http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/48631582.pdf

Chapter 2 - The Lifelong Learning Programme and its pillars

2.1 Lifelong Learning: a general overview

The use of the term *Lifelong Learning* dates back to 1996 and the White Paper of the Council of Europe "Teaching and learning: towards the Learning society" can give a proof of it. This paper was discussed after the debate which took place "in Venice on the occasion of the inauguration of the *European Year of Lifelong Learning* and it states that the real challenge for the education system is to create the conditions under which everyone can be offered appropriate education and training opportunities with lifelong learning in view"[132].

This paper also contains the idea of a future society in which education and training would be useful not only for an easier integration of young people within the world of market and work, but also for the central role attributed to them: education is considered as fundamental for the growth of a person from the social point of view, it helps people in the the social integration and in the construction of a series of shared values within the society. *Lifelong Learning* means, as words themselves suggest, "an opportunity to learn from childhood to old age in every single life situation"[133].

The main objectives of the *Lifelong Learning* Programme are set out in the "Decision of the European Parliament and the Council of November 2006": the programme aimed at contributing to the "development of the European Union as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, at the same time it aims at protecting and improving the situation for future generations"[134].

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[132] Council of Europe. White Paper "Teaching and Learning: towards the Learning society". 2006. Last visit on 2nd April 2013 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/009a0004.htm
[133] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. Last visit on 2nd April 2012 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/
[134] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. General Call for Proposals 2011-2013. Strategic Priorities 2013. Last visit on 6th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf

Lifelong Learning is not the first programme which aims to support education and training throughout the all life of a person, in fact its predecessor is *Socrates*, an educational plan of the European Commission which started in 1994 until 1999, when it was replaced by *Socrates II*. The second turn of the *Socrates* was completely substituted by the "LLP"[135] in 2007.

"The increase of quality, the development of a European dimension at all levels of studies together with the promotion of the knowledge of different languages are the main intents of the *Socrates* Programme"[136].

From 2007, the *Lifelong Learning* Programme allows people of any age to live interesting and stimulating experiences abroad and at the same time it helps the development of the educational sector throughout all Europe.

"LLP has a budget of € 6,970 million for the period 2007-2013 and it is built

up on four sectoral programmes and four so called 'transversal' programmes.

The four main pillars of the plan are:

- *Comenius* for schools and colleges;

- *Erasmus for Higher Education*, addressed to students, professors and

administrative staff;

- *Leonardo da Vinci* for Vocational Education and Training, it aims to build a

skilled workforce around Europe and the creation of partnerships;

- *Grundtvig* for Adult Education"[137].

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[135] LLP: abbreviation for Lifelong Learning Programme.
[136] European Union. Summaries of EU Legislation. Last visit on 2nd April 2012 http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/c11023_en.htm
[137] European Union Programmes Agency. Lifelong Learning Programme. Last visit on 5th April 2013 http://llp.eupa.org.mt/files/Lifelong%20Learning%20Programme%20Booklet.pdf

In order to obtain the best outcomes, the LLP provides also some 'transversal programmes' connected to the four main projects, which try to cover "four key-activities: policy cooperation and innovation, languages, information and communication technologies, dissemination and exploitation of results"[138].

Under the plan of the LLP, there is one more important project called "*Jean Monnet*" which is intended for improving the level of teaching and research and at the same time for stimulating the reflection on the integration of European students and researchers within worldwide education institutions.

According to the "Call for Proposal 2013" of the European Commission, the LLP is "open to applicants established in one of the following countries: the 27 Member States of the European Union, the EEA/EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), candidate countries such as Croatia and Turkey, together with Switzerland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia"[139].

2013 is the last year for the LLP, in fact in November 2011 a new programme was suggested by the European Commission under the name of "Erasmus for All", dedicated to education, training and sport for the period 2014 – 2020.

> "In the current economic situation, the European Union is faced with the twin challenge of consolidating public finance in a zero or very low growth context and at the same time fostering the excellence of its education and training system to best equip people with the broad range of knowledge,

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[138] European Commission. About Lifelong Learning Programme. Last visit on 5th April 2013
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about_llp/about_llp_en.php
[139] European Commission. Call for proposals 2013 — EAC/S07/12. Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), 2012/C 232/04. Last visit on 5th April 2013
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:232:0006:0008:EN:PDF

skills and competences they need to constantly adapt on a fast-changing and

even more demanding labour market in the short and longer term"[140].

The new Agenda sets for 2020 is composed by several initiative both at international and national level, which aim at reinforcing the contribution to the educational and training sectors in order to best achieve priorities and targets.
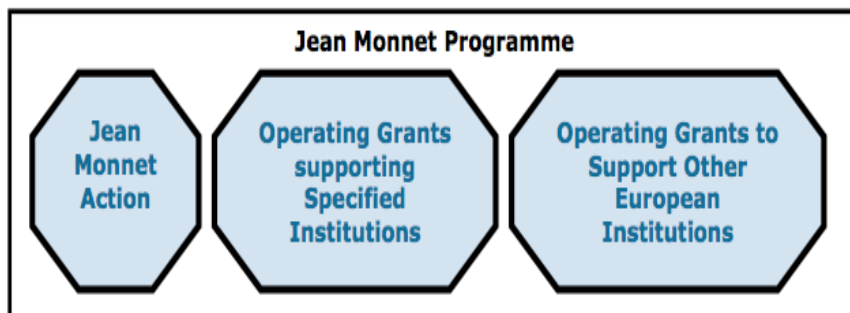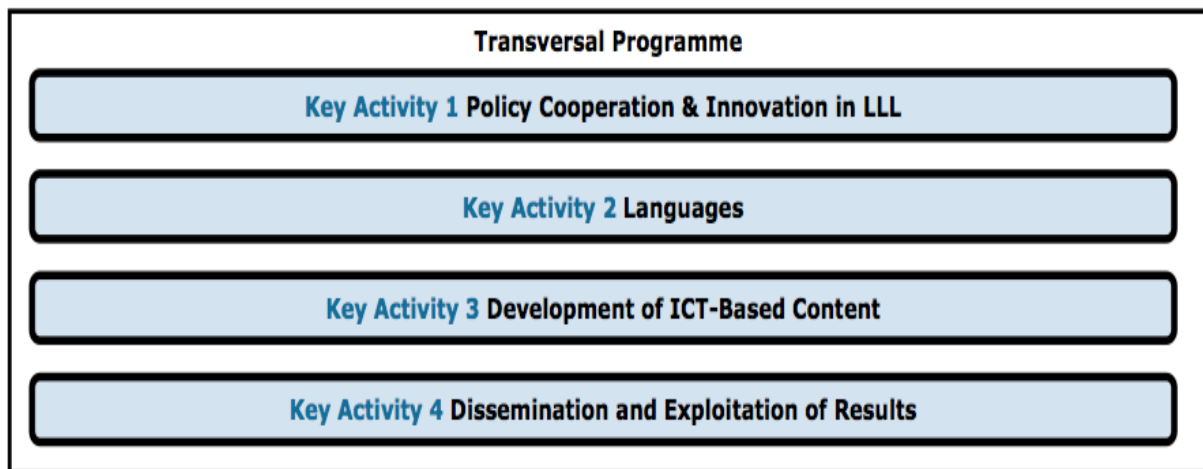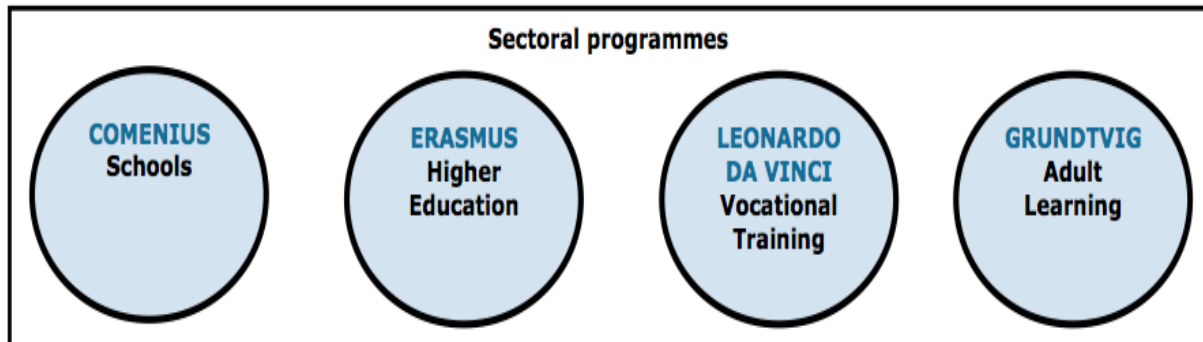
"With the aim of improving the possibilities for young people of finding a job and increasing the quality of education system in Europe, the Commission defined the initiative 'Youth on the Move'. A following important stage is represented by the 'Agenda for new skills and job', which intends to help people in getting the most suitable competences required for a job; the third main focus is on the improvement of the funding for research and innovation which is named 'Innovation Union', it will help to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services. Connected to all the aspects of the new strategy for 2020, there is the 'Digital Agenda for Europe', which is based on the possibilities offered by Internet and its applications"[141].

The figure in the next page is a scheme provided by the European Commission which will ease the understanding of the structure of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

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[140] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. General Call for Proposals 2011-2013. Strategic Priorities 2013. p. 6. Last visit on 6th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf
[141] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. General Call for Proposals 2011-2013. Strategic Priorities 2013. Last visit on 6th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf

LLP Programme

Sectoral programmes

- **COMENIUS** Schools
- **ERASMUS** Higher Education
- **LEONARDO DA VINCI** Vocational Training
- **GRUNDTVIG** Adult Learning

Transversal Programme

Key Activity 1 Policy Cooperation & Innovation in LLL

Key Activity 2 Languages

Key Activity 3 Development of ICT-Based Content

Key Activity 4 Dissemination and Exploitation of Results

Jean Monnet Programme

- **Jean Monnet Action**
- **Operating Grants supporting Specified Institutions**
- **Operating Grants to Support Other European Institutions**

Source: European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Guide 2013. Part I: General provisions. Last visit on 15th April 2013. http://llp.eupa.org.mt/files/part1_en.pdf

2.2   The four pillars of the LLP

2.2.1   Comenius

After this general introduction, in order to better understand the *Lifelong Learning Programme*, it is useful to analyse all the sectorial projects already cited, with a particular focus on the initiatives which involve the Higher Education sector.

First pillar of the LLP is the *Comenius* Programme which focuses on the first phase of education, from pre-school and primary to secondary schools. "It is relevant for all members of the education community and it seeks to enrich the knowledge about the diversity of European cultures, languages and values among young people and educational staff"[142].

The programme is oriented towards the improvement of those basic skills and competences of young students which are considered useful for their personal growth and for a future involvement in a respectable carrier. In order to success in the planned objectives, there must be improvement in the quality of teaching and an increase in the numbers of pupils mobility, aspects which are strictly connected to a growth of the partnerships between schools and the rest of Europe. For better outcomes, the programme intends to push the knowledge and learning of foreign languages and that of the innovative information and communication technologies.

The offers of *Comenius* are addressed to pupils as well as to teachers: the first opportunity for educational staff members to increase their professional skills is taking part in the so called *"Comenius In-Service Training"*, which involves teachers in activities abroad. The maximum length of the training is 6 weeks and it takes place in a country different from that of the candidate's origin.

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[142] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. Comenius Programme. Last visit on 7th April 2013
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/comenius/comenius_en.php

As we can see from the graph below (Figure 10), there is a growing interest on behalf of the educational staff for this kind of experience: "more than 77 000 applied to participate between 2007 and 2010. During this period the growth of the annual application was around the 56%"[143].

Figure 10 :**In-Service training: application received and approved per funding year**
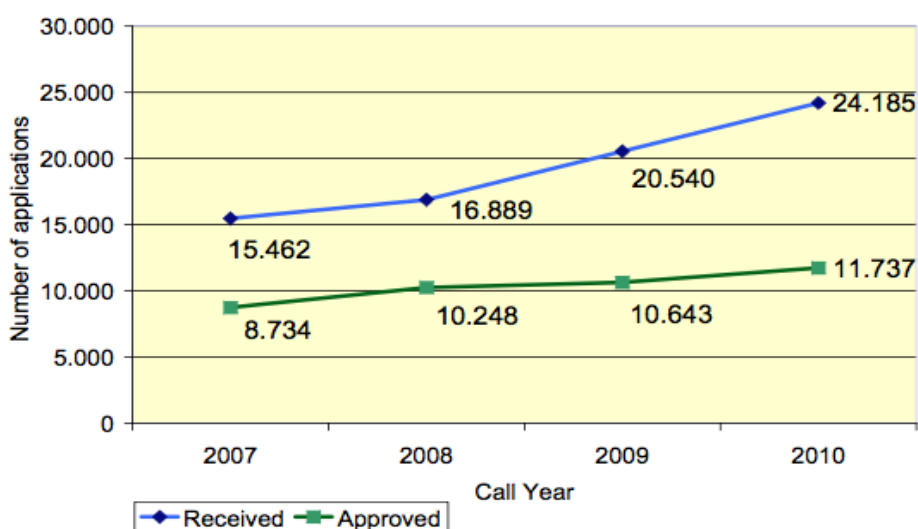
This possibility is open also to future teachers who want to enrol for the *"Comenius Assistanships"*, thanks to which they can acquire experience in a school of a foreign country. These two projects of *Comenius* are considered the best ways to increase the quality of teaching and its educational staff, since they allowed to gain experience, knowledge and skills in an European context. "Every year more than 10 000 school professionals take part in a training course, a conference, a seminar or job-shadowing abroad"[144]. Teachers who decide to take part in this kind of experience can approach different methods of teaching and grew up at professional level.

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[143] European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012). Last visit on 7th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf
[144] European Commission. LLP. Comenius. Europe in the classroom. European Commission Publication Office. Last visit on 7th April 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/leaflet_en.pdf

"Future teachers have the possibility to acquire knowledge and practical classroom experience abroad, *Comenius Assistants* usually help experienced teachers in teaching, they support school projects and teach their native language"[145].

The experience gained abroad return to be useful also back home, since these future teachers will stimulate even more the interest of their pupils in knowing other cultures and languages, because they have acquired the suitable skills for helping them.

Particularly interesting from the point of view of the mobility of students, within *Comenius* Programme, there is the project of "*Individual Pupil Mobility*":

> "Every year hundreds of secondary pupils in Europe embark on a life-changing adventure, apart from learning foreign languages, discovering other countries and making new friends, pupils acquire skills they need for their personal development and enhance their self-confidence.
> Moreover, their studies at partner schools abroad are recognised by their own schools when they return"[146].

Thanks to this project, pupils of the secondary school have the possibility to spend a period of study abroad (between three and ten months) in a host country, where they will attend lessons and live with a host family.

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[145] European Commission. LLP. Comenius. Europe in the classroom. European Commission Publication Office. Last visit on 7th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/leaflet_en.pdf
[146] Ibid.

Pupils have therefore the chance to live an European learning experience which "broadens their understanding of the diversity of European cultures and languages"[147].

The project *Comenius* helps the development of a European dimension of the educational sector, and it involves the teaching staff in the organisation of the mobility period of their pupils, since they have to prepare them for an international experience.

According to the data of the European Commission, already in 2007-08, "nearly 300 pupils from 10 European countries took part in a pilot of *Comenius* Individual Pupil Mobility"[148].

Applications for this kind of mobility are allowed to "pupils who are at least 14 years old, regularly enrolled and it includes also an amount of money which should cover administrative and training costs, one return journey and a monthly grant for the pupil"[149]. As for the period of stay, the pupil will be a guest by a selected family that will try to ease his/her integration into the new environment.

This project gives also the possibility of a recognition of the mobility period abroad: "the host school and the pupil will draw up a learning agreement detailing the studies to be followed"[150], which will then be rewarded by the sending school at his/her return.

According to the graph in the following page (Figure 12), provided by the European Commission, the countries from which comes the highest number of applications are Spain, France and Italy, which turn out to be the biggest participants for both ingoing and outgoing mobility of pupils.

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[147] European Commission. Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility. A European Learning Experience for Secondary Pupils (2011). Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/mobility/leaflet2012_en.pdf
[148] European Commission. Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility. A European Learning Experience for Secondary Pupils (2011). Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/mobility/leaflet2012_en.pdf
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.

Figure 12: **Individual Pupil Mobility: received applications**[151]
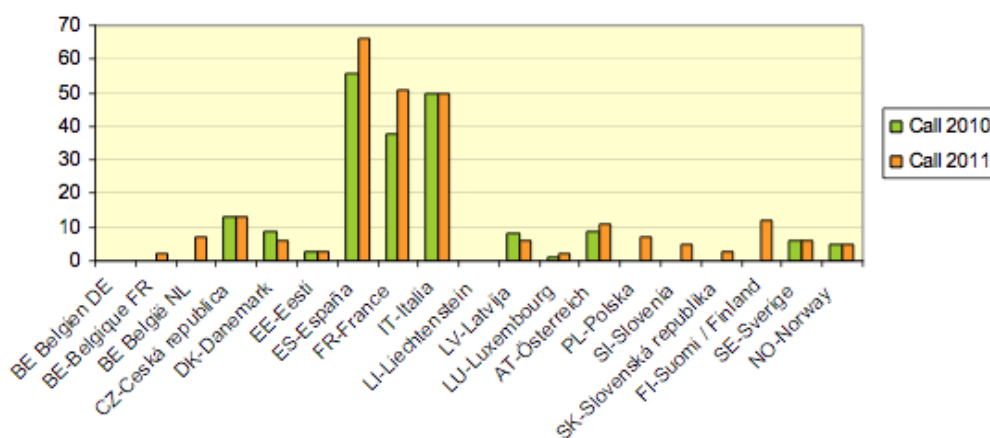
An important aspect included in *Comenius* is that of "*School Partnerships*" which "support cooperation and project-based pedagogy between schools from two, three or more countries"[152]. This allows pupils to take part in meetings and visits or even class exchanges. "*Comenius School Partnerships* stand for around three quarters of the programme budget, they give the possibility to build up collaborations and projects which can last also more than one year"[153]. All these aspects help schools at improving their teaching methods, their reputation and their integration in an even more internationalised context.

The areas covered by the *School Partnerships* are connected to different aspects of life of a schoolchild, they do not only intend to promote educational aspects such as language learning, but they turn out to be useful for improving the social integration of pupils of foreign origin or in disadvantaged situations and to promote sport or other activities for a better social cohesion.
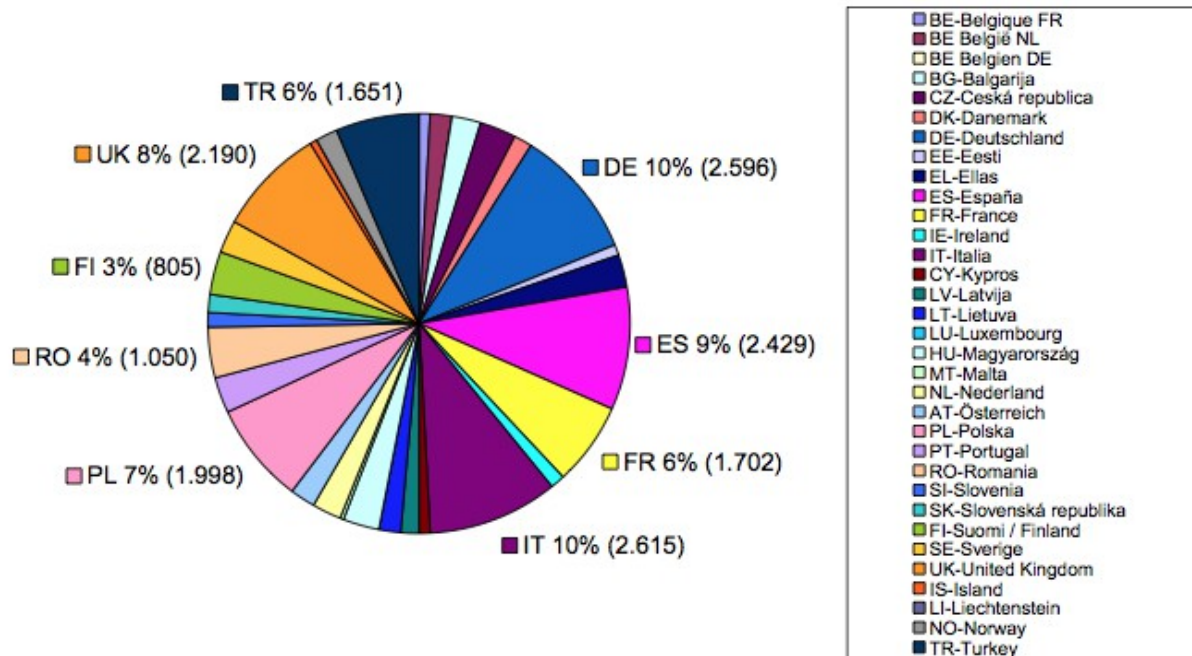
[151] European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012). Last visit on 7th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.

As the figure above (Figure 13) shows the major number of schools which decided to take part in the programme of "School Partnerships" are in "Germany and Italy, together with Spain and the UK. More than 50 000 schools sought grants for School Partnerships between 2007 and 2010. The budget available allowed the EU to support one out of two schools applying.[155]"

Another important action which is part of the *Comenius* project is represented by *"Comenius Regio Partnership"* which allows schools to build up partnerships with local and regional authorities or stakeholders. The new partnerships allow schools to be part of joint activities which represent benefits for both pupils and teachers, because thanks to these relations they have the possibility to broaden their horizons and experience a different culture and environment.
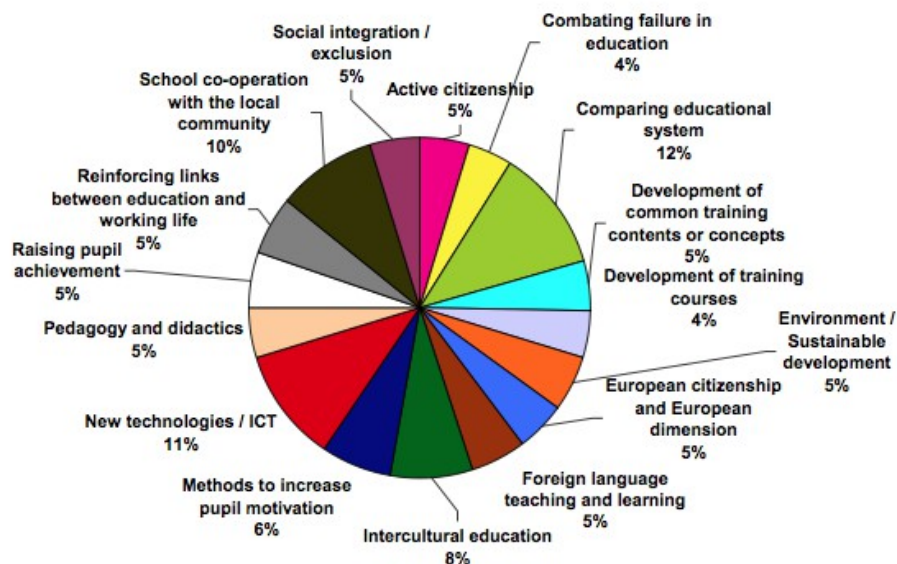
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[154] European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012). Last visit on 7th April 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf

[155] Ibid.

"Comenius Regio Partnerships help schools to open up to the wider world. Every year the partnership grants give local or regional educational authorities, schools and other partners in hundreds of European regions the opportunity to work together on a topic of mutual interest. They help regions to improve their educational offer for young people and to develop sustainable cooperation across borders"[156].

As the figure below (Figure 14) shows there are several shared topics which are crucial for the educational offer of schools, within the most popular, we find the issues of "school cooperation with the local community (10%), the possibility to compare several education system (12%) and the aspect of innovative information and communication technologies (11%)"[157].

Figure 14: **Regio Partnerships: the most popular topics[158]**

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[156] European Commission. Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility. A European Learning Experience for Secondary Pupils (2011). Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/mobility/leaflet2012_en.pdf
[157] European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012). Last visit on 8ʰ April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf
[158] Ibid.

An innovative project offered by *Comenius* is "eTwinning", defined as the most exciting learning community in Europe. "Launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning Programme, eTwinning has been firmly integrated in the *Lifelong Learning* Programme since 2007"[159].

This programme is controlled and supported by an international partnership which comprehends several Ministries of Education and other National Support Services.

eTwinning is a platform for educational staff, working in a school in one of the European countries involved, which allows them to collaborate or develop projects or simply to communicate. The innovative technologies give the possibility to provide support, services and tools to schools through this platform.

> "The eTwinning Portal (www.etwinning.net) is the main meeting point and workspace for the action. Available in twenty-five languages, the eTwinning Portal now has the involvement of nearly 170 000 members and over 5324 projects between two or more schools across Europe. The Portal provides online tools for teachers to find partners, set up projects, share ideas, exchange best practice and start working together"[160].

The graph in the following page (Figure 15) is about the number of teachers who decided to take part in the platform of eTwinning: "in 2010 the members were 123.594, which means a percentage of 225% more than 2007"[161].

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[159] What is eTwinning? Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/discover/what_is_etwinning.htm
[160] Ibid.
[161] European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012). Last visit on 8h April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf

Figure 15: **eTwinning: Total number of registered teachers each year**[162]

Source: European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012)
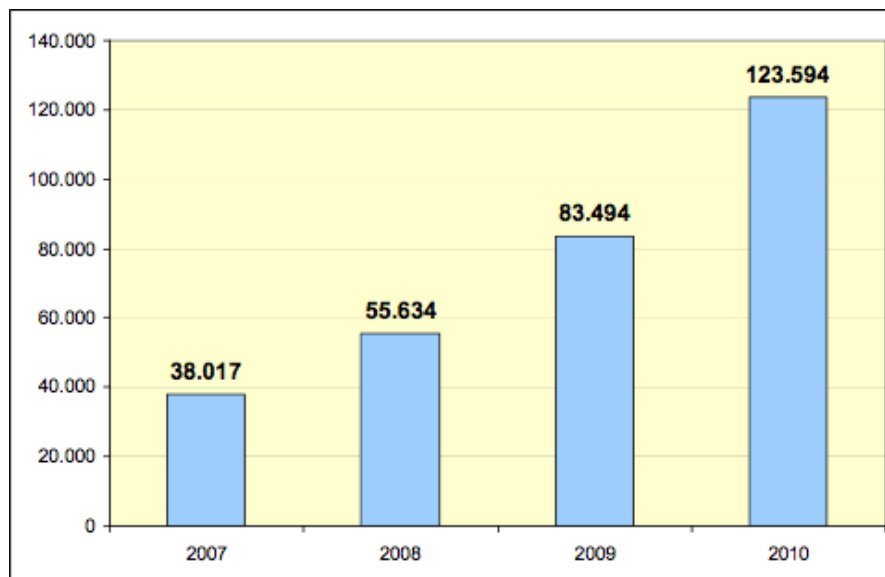
Within the several initiatives of *Comenius*, *Comenius Multilateral Projects* are programmes which work on relevant issues and are supported by the collaboration of different institutions located in foreign countries. "These collaborations are intended for the creation of new teaching methods or for the solution of common problems, in fact, although school education systems in Europe differ one from another, the challenges they face are actually very similar"[163].

Next to this projects, *Comenius* is represented by its networks: *Comenius Multilateral Networks* foster cooperative operations of educational actors throughout Europe. This kind of network consists in a sort of platform which allows an easier exchange of information and reflections.

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[162] European Commission. Comenius in figures. EU support to schools (2012). Last visit on 8[h] April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf
[163] European Commission. LLP. Comenius. Europe in the classroom. European Commission Publication Office. Last visit on 7th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/leaflet_en.pdf

"For years *Comenius Multilateral Networks* have been the framework for European action on issues such as reducing school dropout, special needs education, reinforcing school leadership and links with the world of work. Through comparative analyses, formulating recommendations, or dissemination activities, they have contributed to promoting innovative approaches and improving education across Europe"[164].

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[164] European Commission. LLP. Comenius. Europe in the classroom. European Commission Publication Office. Last visit on 7th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/leaflet_en.pdf

2.2.2 Erasmus for Higher Education

"Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2012, *Erasmus* is the most successful

student exchange programme in the world. Each year, more than 230 000

students study abroad thanks to the *Erasmus* programme. It also offers the

opportunity for student placements in enterprises, university staff teaching

and training, and it funds co-operation projects between higher education

institutions across Europe"[165].

Erasmus is the best-known example of mobility programme in education and training at European

level and since it was established in 1987 more than 2 million students had the possibility to enjoy a

European experience in a foreign country.

The name of the programme "ERASMUS is not only an acronym which can be read as *EuRopean

Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*, but it refers also to one of the

mentor of this project, the theologian Erasmus of Rotterdam, who became the precursor of mobility

grant by leaving his fortune to the University of Basel"[166].

Even if nowadays *Erasmus* is extremely popular, at the beginning some European Member

States were hostile to its birth, the original proposal of 1986 was refused by countries with ongoing

exchange programmes. Thanks to a compromise, especially on the budget proposed for the

programme, it was officially adopted in June 1987.

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[165] European Commission. Education and Training. The Erasmus Programme. Studying in Europe and more. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm
[166] European Commission. History of the Erasmus Programme. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/history_en.htm

"The programme was built on pilot student exchanges from 1981-1986, and although it was adopted only shortly before the start of the 1987/1988 academic year, it was still possible for 3244 students from 11 countries to participate in its first year"[167].

As already said the LLP replaced the previous *Socrates* programme and in 2007 *Erasmus* became part of it, with a wider policy intended for covering new areas such as the possibility of training and placement in enterprises for students and training for teaching or business staff.

> "*Erasmus* is the perfect example of a European success story: close to 3 million students have participated since it started in 1987, as well as over 300 000 higher education teachers and other staff since 1997 (this type of exchange was also expanded further in 2007). The annual budget is in excess of 450 million Euro; more than 4 000 higher education institutions in 33 countries participate, and more are willing to join"[168].

During the years of its development, several researches have shown that what *Erasmus* allows to do is an added value for the candidates who decided to join such an experience. It is evident that spending a period in a foreign country not only represents an enrichment within the personal life from the professional or academic point of view, but the participant can also acquire new intercultural and linguistic skills, improving the knowledge of a language different from the mother tongue. The *Erasmus* experience is useful also for the self-reliance and self-awareness of a person and for the conscience of being an European citizen. Also from the point of view of the staff, the abroad experience is considered a benefit for their carrier and an added value.

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[167] European Commission. History of the Erasmus Programme. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/history_en.htm

[168] European Commission. Education and Training. The Erasmus Programme. Studying in Europe and more. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm

It could be useful to start describing the development of the *Erasmus* programme from the way it is administrated, giving therefore an overview of the basic principles that institutions have to follow for their procedures in order to guarantee the quality of the programme. In fact, "higher education institutions which want to participate in *Erasmus* activities must have an *Erasmus University Charter*. […] The European Commission is responsible for the overall programme implementation; its Directorate-General for Education and Culture coordinates the different activities"[169].

Moreover, according to the Charter, "the 33 National Agencies of the participating states are responsible for the individual mobility actions, while the centralised action are run by the EU's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency"[170].

In particular, as for the Erasmus for students, which is the more interesting for this study, before the departure for both studying or placement period the home university will give to the participant its Erasmus Student Charter. This Charter explained the conditions to respect during the period in the foreign country, it outlines rights and duties of both students and institutions. "It outlines the basic entitlements of the *Erasmus* students, such as free tuition and full recognition of studies or placements abroad"[171]. During the Erasmus period, the student will fill a transcript of the results and credits achieved at the host university, which will respect the procedure of the ECTS .

At the end of the experience, in both cases of study or placement, the mobility period will be recognised also in the Diploma Supplement. "The length of the period abroad, for both study or placement, can vary from 3 to 12 months. The candidates for the *Erasmus* period should be at least second year students from one of the Member States which are included in the programme as for studying (while he/she could be a first year student for the training)"[172].

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[169] European Commission. Education and Training. The Erasmus Programme. Studying in Europe and more. Last visit on 8th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm
[170] Ibid.
[171] European Commission. Erasmus Student Charter. Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/erasmus-student-charter_en.htm
[172] European Commission. Erasmus Student Mobility for Studies. Last visit on 8th April. http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/study_en.htm

The selected students have the possibility to benefit from a grant which could cover, at least partially, the basic costs during the period abroad, since the participants do not have to pay any tuition fee for studying at the host university.

"In addition, students with special needs, such as physical disabilities, may get extra funds to help them cover additional expenses related to their stay abroad"[173].

Erasmus for students is addressed to university students and gives the possibility to study or join an internship in a foreign country. As already said, the experience abroad is considered a way to enrich ones knowledge of cultures and language from an academic point of view, but at the same time it gives more value to the personal life of a student.

According to the statistics, "more than 2.5 million students have experienced what it means to do an Erasmus term in one of more than 4 000 higher education institutions in 33 participating countries. These include all the EU Member States as well as Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey"[174].

Providing a general overview on students mobility (without separating the datas of Erasmus for studies from the ones of Erasmus for Placement) we can notice that "in 2010-11, student mobility accounted for more than 81 % of the annual Erasmus budget and some 4.5 % of all students in participating countries in Europe received Erasmus grants at some stage during their higher education studies to go abroad"[175].

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[173] European Commission. Erasmus for students. Get a new perspective on Europe. Last visit on 9th April 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/students_en.htm

[174] Ibid.

[175] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf

Figure 16: **Progress to achieving the 3 million Student Mobility target**[176]
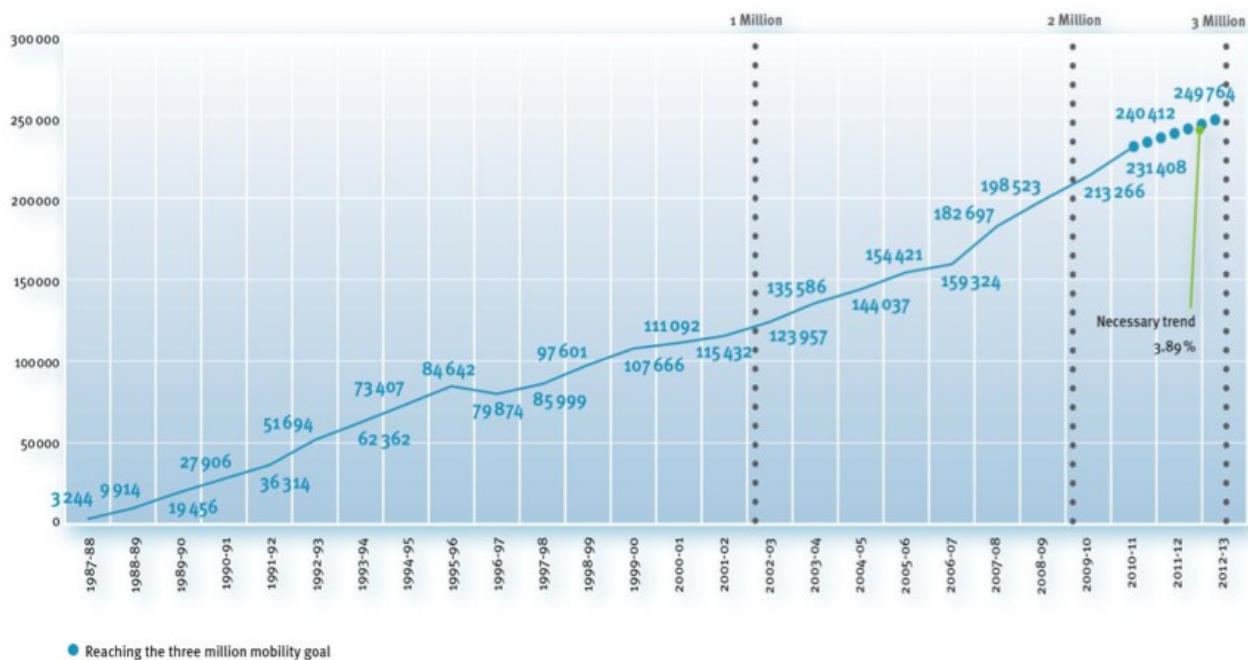
"Since the programme's inception, France has moved the highest number of students (15.16%) share), followed by Germany (15.12%), and then Spain with the 14.1% Erasmus student participants"[177].

From the beginning of the programme there was a great increase in the number of the participants and the record was reached in 2011 with more than 230 000 students abroad. The new target of the LLP is that of having around 3 millions students involved in a mobility programme within 2013 (see Figure 16 above).

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[176] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[177] Ibid.

Erasmus Mobility for study

Particularly interesting for the topic of this study is focusing on the *Erasmus* experience for studies. During the *Erasmus* period, students follow lessons and courses at the host university in order to pass the exams they decided to include within their Learning Agreement.

Figure 17 : **Student Mobility for studies from 1987 to 2011[178]**
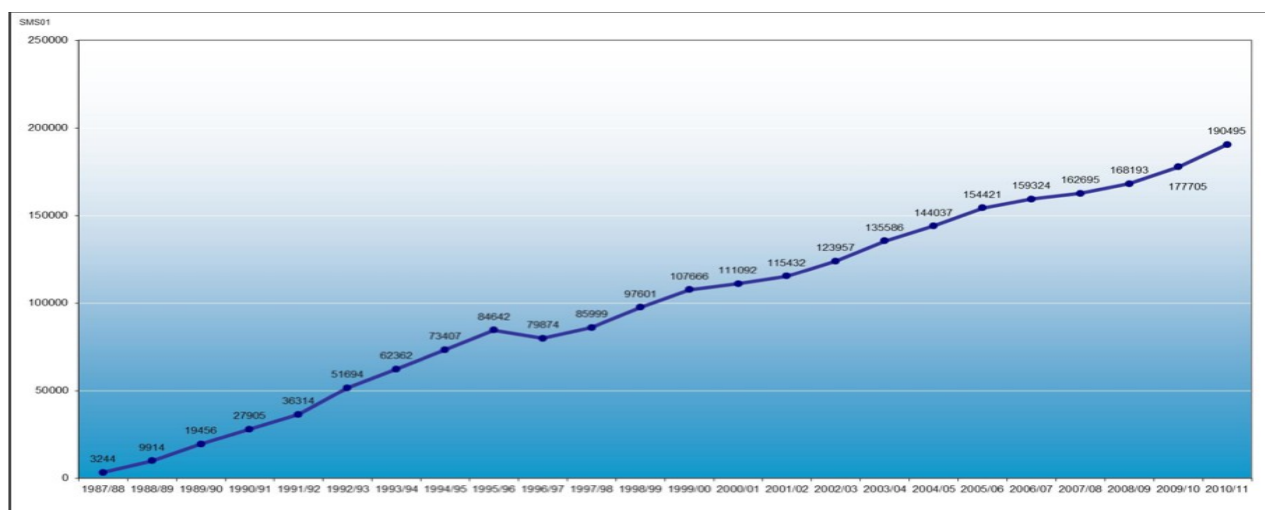
Analysing the data of the European Commission we can notice that the majority of students which decide to participate in an Erasmus programme in 2010-11 were "from a Bachelor degree (69.7%). The following high percentage (28.8%) is constituted by Masters programmes students, while only 0.9% of Doctoral students take part in this kind of experience"[179].

Analysing the graph above (Figure 17), if we have a look at the past, especially the first years of Erasmus programme just over 3000 students decide to join Erasmus, thanks to a grant, while enormously different is the situation of 2010: "we have 231 408 Erasmus students, of which around 190 000 just for studying"[180].

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[178] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.

European Commission's statistics of September 2012 affirm that the country with the "highest number of outbound students between 2010 and 2011 was Spain (16.5%), followed by France and Germany (both around 13%)"[181]. As for the increase in the number of students who decide to study abroad, important data come from Croatia and Liechtenstein.

As for it concern the data on incoming mobility we found again Spain, the country in fact appeared to be the main destination for *Erasmus* students, with around 30 000 incoming candidates.

"The second most popular destination was France with 23 173 students (12.2 %) and then Germany with 19 119 (10%). Students learn most often in English (28 390), followed by Spanish (23 478) and French (20 616)"[182].

Between years, incoming mobility followed almost the same trend of outbound mobility, in fact there was an increase in the number of incoming *Erasmus* students for study reason and the highest growth is visible in countries such as Luxembourg, Cyprus and the Turkey. According to the statistics, there was also "a case of decrease: Greece, with a 3.8% less of students"[183].

Following the data of the European Commission, the chart in the next page (Figure 18: the colour blue is for the outbound students and the colour green stands for the incoming students) compares the situation of outgoing and incoming students for studies for each country: it is clear that several states had an evident discrepancy between students who decide to go abroad and students who choose that country as destination in 2010-11.

"The greatest imbalances were found in Sweden and Denmark where there were about three times as many incoming students as outbound. The imbalance was also high in Norway, Ireland and the UK"[184].

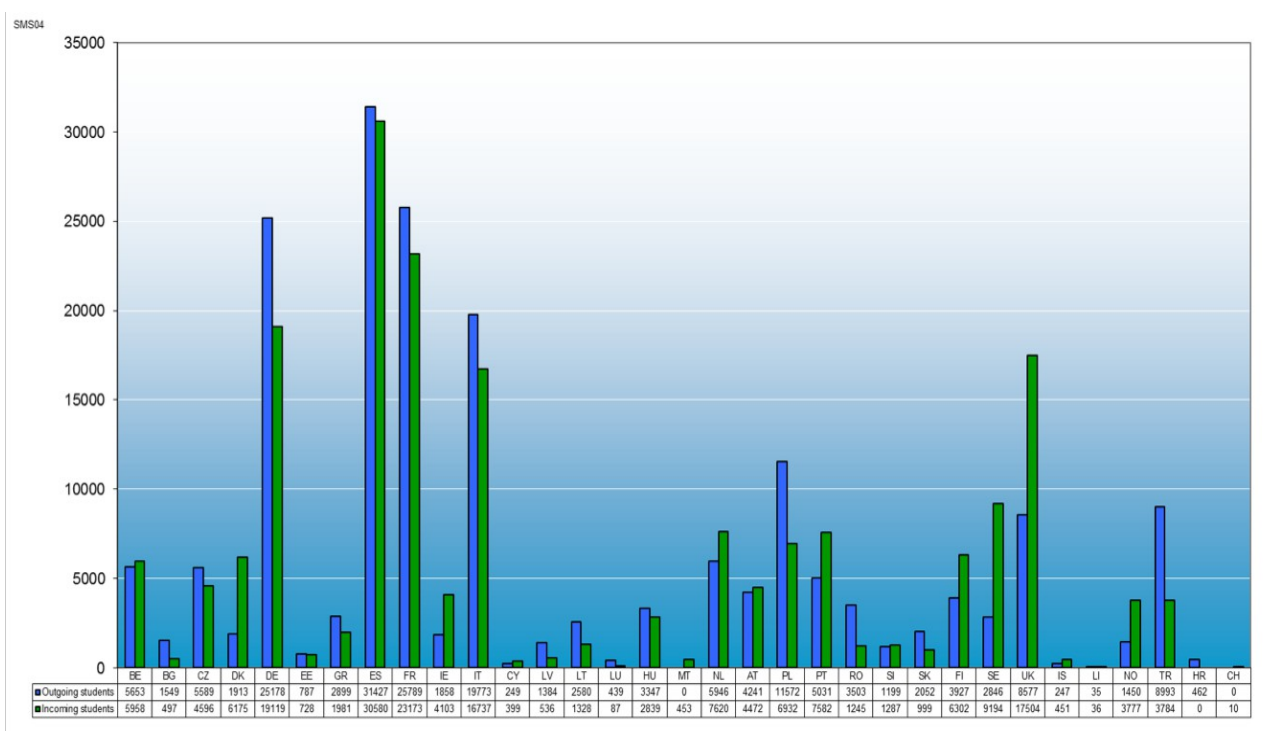[181] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.

Instead, as data already shown, the best balanced situation is in Spain, where both incoming and outgoing students are around 30 000 in 2010-11, followed by Liechtenstein and Austria. Other countries which represent balanced situation, according to the graph (Figure 18) are Slovenia and Estonia.

Figure 18: Incoming vs. outbound Mobility for Studies per home country in 2010-11[185]

	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	GR	ES	FR	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	LI	NO	TR	HR	CH
Outgoing students	5653	1549	5589	1913	25178	787	2899	31427	25789	1858	19773	249	1384	2580	439	3347	0	5946	4241	11572	5031	3503	1199	2052	3927	2846	8577	247	35	1450	8993	462	0
Incoming students	5958	497	4596	6175	19119	728	1981	30580	23173	4103	16737	399	536	1328	87	2839	453	7620	4472	6932	7582	1245	1287	999	6302	9194	17504	451	36	3777	3784	0	10

Source: European Commission. **Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview** (September 2012)

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[185] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf

As for the duration of the stay, by now, it is on average around 6 months. As for the grant provided from the *Erasmus* Programme, the "average monthly amount is around EUR 232"[186], which is a lower sum in respect to the previous years, clearly due to the crisis situation which is hitting Europe nowadays.

Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) are also included in the offer of Erasmus: these are specialised courses for less common languages which are organised in the countries where they represent the teaching language. According to the programme, languages such as Spanish, German, French, German and English are not included within the list of EILC teaching subjects. "The EILCs give Erasmus students visiting these countries for studies and placements the opportunity to study the language concerned from two to six weeks (with a minimum of 60 teaching hours in total, and at least 15 teaching hours a week) with the aim of being prepared for the mobility period abroad"[187]. The first country to organise a EILC was Spain.

> "The languages eligible for EILCs are Dutch, Bulgarian, Croatian, Greek,
> Czech, Danish, Estonian, Finnish and Swedish, Hungarian, Icelandic,
> Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,
> Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Catalan, Valencian, Basque and Galician,
> and Turkish"[188].

It is important to remember that students which are already studying the language of the host country as main subject of their degree are not included in the selected EILC's students. The rest of the Erasmus students normally apply for the course through the home university.

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[186] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[187] Ibid.
[188] European Commission. Education and Training. Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC). Last visit on 10th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/eilc_en.htm

As for the number of EILC's, it has increased enormously, "in 2011 there were 392 courses across Europe. According to the statistics of the European Commission, the highest number of courses were organised in Italy (57) followed by the Dutch speaking part of Belgium (35) and Turkey (32)"[189].

Figure 19 :**Participation in EILC between 2001 and 2011[190]**

As the chart above (Figure 19) shows, more than 5000 incoming students decided to take part in an EILC in 2011. According to statistics, the country which as seen the highest growth in participation are Poland and Turkey.

"Italy still receives the highest number of students or 1006, which represents a 17.1% share of all students participating in the EILC scheme"[191]. If we have a look on statistics of the European Commission about outbound students, the major active participant in this language courses were from Germany, followed by Spain and Poland.

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[189] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.

> "*Erasmus* also benefits students who want to do traineeships in companies abroad. Grants enable students to spend a period from three to twelve months doing a placement abroad. Having a working experience in a company – or an organisation – abroad allows students to develop specific skills that are valued and adapted to the requirements of the labour market, and thus boosts students' employability"[192].

In 2010-11 around 150 000 students benefited from the grants for *Erasmus* Placement and half of the participants were enrolled in a Bachelor degree. Since the beginning, "the number of placements in a foreign country have increased enormously and it doubled the results of 2007-08, especially for the outbound mobility. For the years 2010-11, placements represented a 17.7% share of all Erasmus student mobility"[193].

The chart in the following page, (Figure 20) shows the countries with the highest number of students involved in an Erasmus placement in the academic year 2010-11. "The country which send the highest number of students is represented by the 14.6 % of France, followed than by Germany with 5096 placements (12.4%), Spain and its 4756 placements and the UK with a 10.4%"[194].

As for the incoming mobility for placement, the countries involved in the highest percentage are more or less the same, but in a different level of the chart: in fact, at the first place we found the United Kingdom. Other top destinations are still Spain, Germany and France.
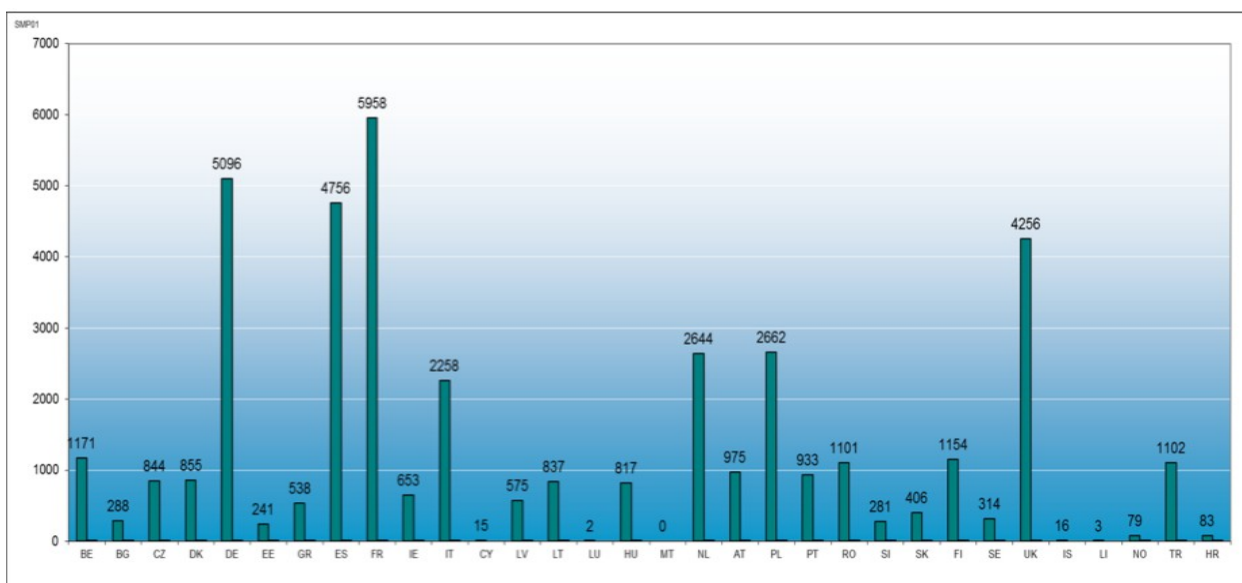
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[192] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.

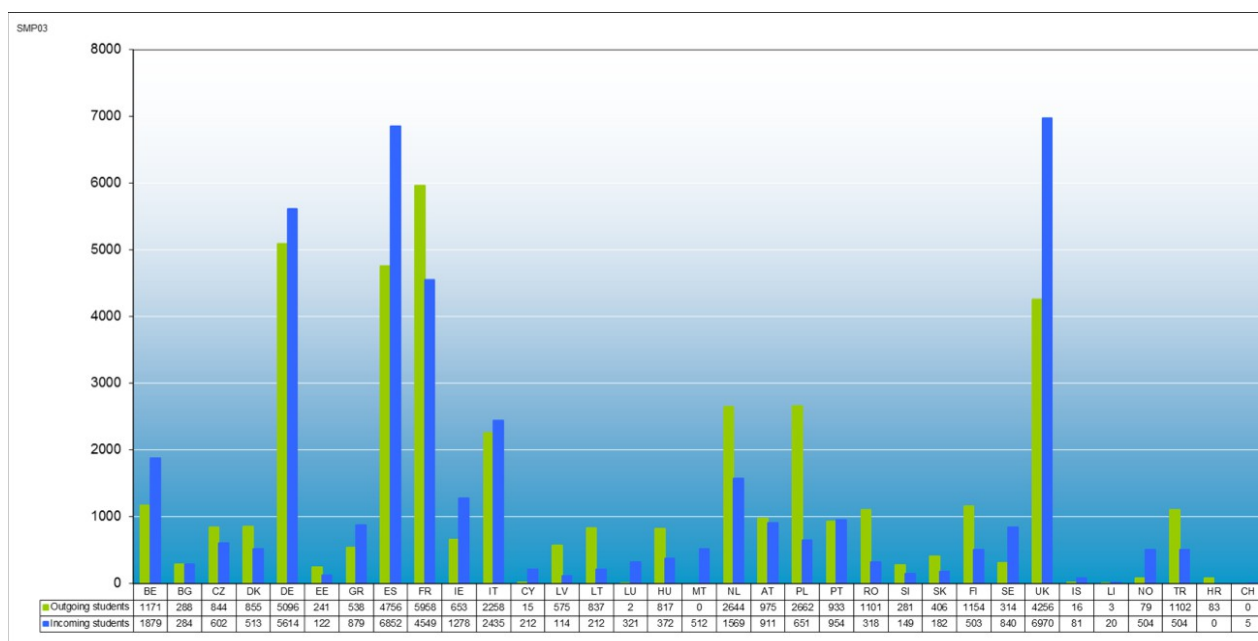Figure 20 : **Outbound students on Placement per home country in 2010-11**

Source: European Commission .Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview
(September 2012)

An interesting situation is also explained by the balance between outbound and incoming mobility

for placement, which is better figured out by the following graph:

Figure 21 : **Balance of incoming vs outbound placement in 2010-11**

Source: European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview
(September 2012)

	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	GR	ES	FR	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	LI	NO	TR	HR	CH
Outgoing students	1171	288	844	855	5096	241	538	4756	5958	653	2258	15	575	837	2	817	0	2644	975	2662	933	1101	281	406	1154	314	4256	16	3	79	1102	83	0
Incoming students	1879	284	602	513	5614	122	879	6852	4549	1278	2435	212	114	212	321	372	512	1569	911	651	954	318	149	182	503	840	6970	81	20	504	504	0	5

The chart (Figure 21 in the previous page) demonstrates that in almost 20 countries the incoming mobility for placement is higher than the outbound one. A striking example is given by Luxembourg, which sent out only 2 students during 2011-12 and received around 300 of foreign students for placements. An imbalanced situation is also visible in countries such as Cyprus and Norway, while a particular case is that of Malta, which only had numbers in its incoming mobility. Countries with an higher outgoing mobility are especially Lithuania and Poland. "Bulgaria had the most balance between outbound and incoming students, followed by Portugal, Austria and then Italy"[195].

The average duration of *Erasmus* student mobility for placements was around 4 months in 2011 and as for the grants students receive a very different amount of money depending on their country of origin and the home institution. "The average for an European monthly grant for placements is today around 360 Euro in 2011 and it is decreased in respect to the previous year. The average European monthly grant for placements ranged from 243 Euro for students from the Netherlands to 684 Euro for students coming from Luxembourg"[196].

In regards to the *Erasmus* Placement experience for students I can give my personal opinion since I joined it in 2012. My internship lasted 3 months, I was working as a trainee in a company in Nottingham. In this company I was doing researches for the development of a programme, which intended to send English students to attend an university abroad in Europe. At the same time, the company was organising internships in European companies for British students graduates, a sort of "private Erasmus or Leonardo". As for the importance I can now attribute to this experience, I would define it as essential for my personal growth, not only I had the chance to improve my linguistic competences, but I had the possibility to understand the world of work in a foreign reality.

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[195] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf

[196] Ibid.

In my opinion, the *Erasmus* experience lets students improve their personal skills and it introduces them in a European perspective, also from the point of view of their carrier. From the social point of view, the placement represented a continuous growth, in which independence and maturity are the keywords. My experience was also officially recognised as credits from my home university and it is now part of my personal Curriculum Vitae. The only negative aspect for me was the economic one, the grant covered only really partially the cost of my internship. (Camilla, 25 years old, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, International Relations).

Erasmus Staff Mobility

As we have already said, *Erasmus* is not only for students, but teachers and educational staff are eligible too for the programme. Staff mobility aims at contributing to the innovation and internationalisation of the education sector and enriching the knowledge and professional skills of trainers and teaching staff.

"Since its launch in 1997 a total of 300 000 staff exchanges have been supported and in 2007, the scope of *Erasmus* staff 'mobility' initiatives was expanded to non-teaching staff and visiting lecturers from the business sector in order to bring a wider range of experience to campuses"[197].

Erasmus staff mobility is based on two main initiatives: the first one is represented by teaching assignments, this programme gives the possibility to teachers from higher education institutions to spend a teaching period in a foreign country. Within the aim of this kind of experience there is the improvement and enrichment of the quality of their teaching, the possibility for students to benefit from a really skilled professional staff, and at the same time teachers can open their perspectives, establish new relations creating partnerships and projects abroad.

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[197] European Commission. Erasmus for staff. Building knowledge and contacts. Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/students_en.htm

"Out of the 42 817 staff mobilities, 31 620 were teaching assignments in 2010-11 and since its introduction in 1997 the number of teaching assignments has grown constantly. Between 1998 and 2011 there was an incredible growth of teaching assignments (data of the European Commission confirm that application rise from 7797 to 31 620)"[198].

As for the origin of candidates, according to the statistics, "teachers from 'humanities and arts' spent the most number of periods abroad on teaching assignments. These accounted for 30.5% of all assignments supported. This was followed by teachers of 'social sciences, business and law' (22.6% share) and then teachers in 'engineering, manufacturing and construction' (13.7%)"[199].

The second initiative of *Erasmus* Staff Mobility is open to both administrative and academic staff. They can participate in several programmes of training in a foreign countries, "such as job-shadowing or attending job-related conferences and workshops"[200]. The training is an opportunity to work in a company abroad for a period between 5 days and six weeks.

Erasmus staff mobility is intended for allowing professional staff to acquire new knowledge and experience in relevant issue for both their personal development and that of the institution they belong to. "Staff mobility for training continues to increase in popularity. Out of the 42 817 staff mobilities 11 197 were staff training periods in 2010-11. This represented an increase of 28% over the previous academic year"[201].

Other kind of activities for which candidates are eligible for within the programme are *Erasmus Intensive Programmes* (IPs) which are short subject-related (380 study programmes across Europe) than can last between ten days and six months and involve students or teaching staff from at least three different countries.

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[198] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.

"These short study programmes encourage the multinational learning of specialist topics; provide students with access to academic knowledge that is not available in one Higher Education Institution alone; allow teachers to mobilities views on course content and new curricula approaches; and to test teaching methods in an international classroom environment"[202].

Within the most common subjects for IPs, the statistics mention social sciences, business and law.

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[202] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. The Erasmus Programme 2010-2011. A Statistical Overview (September 2012). Last visit on 9th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011/report.pdf

2.2.3. Leonardo Da Vinci for vocational education and training

Included within the initiatives of the *Lifelong Learning* there is the "Leonardo da Vinci Programme", which is intended for the development and growth at personal and professional level, for both graduates and teachers, it gives the possibility to be a worker or a trainer in a European company of a foreign country which is involved in the project.

The grants are offered to young people, that can be teachers, graduates, workers or simply looking for a job, who can exploit this experience in order to increase their practical skills and competences, especially in a selected area.

"Since it was created in 1995, the *Leonardo da Vinci* Programme has enabled 860 000 people to travel abroad for training or work experiences, or for professionals to gain new skills and develop VET (Vocational Education and Training) tools, methods and systems. In the five years from 2007-2011 it has provided EUR 1.27 billion in grants"[203].

As already said for the *Erasmus* experience, young people are more motivated when they come back from their period abroad, they shaped their skills and they can even develop an idea for their future carrier with a wider European perspective.

Also teachers and staff consider the placement a possibility to improve their professional attitude and to learn new teaching methods. "Thanks to the Programme, many schools have developed their own internationalisation strategies to increase graduates and staff mobility,including countries outside the EU. They have also made efforts to develop the transnational recognition of learning outcomes, supporting better connectivity between institutions and greater mobility for staff and students"[204].

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[203] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf
[204] Ibid.

Thanks to *Leonardo*, several small companies have the possibility to become more attractive and competitive, increasing their connection and collaboration across Europe, therefore, this kind of programme turns out to be useful also for businesses which host students and teachers.

"Each year from 2007-2011, the Programme provided grants for some

75 000 people to travel to another country to study, train or work,

supporting a total 375 000 mobility visits over five years.

Around 84 000 more people took part in a *Leonardo* mobility visit in the

past five years than in the previous *Leonardo* period, from 2000-2006"[205].

In 2011 the number of applications for Placement Mobility increased of the 13% compared to the 2007, according to the European Commission data, and almost half of these applications were successfully granted by the programme funds.

According to the European Commission perspective, by 2013, last year of the ongoing LLP, the aim is to increase the number of placements across Europe reaching quota 80 000 a year.

More than a half of the funds of the *Leonardo da Vinci* budget are intended for mobility projects, and according to the statistics, "from 2007-2011 it funded 16 700 candidates"[206].

Moreover, other activities are funded by the programme and included in the area of co-operation projects and networks.

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[205] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf
[206] Ibid.

"Having a look to mobility activities, the three main projects are represented by:

-People in Initial and Vocational Training (IVT);

-People in the labour market (PLM);

-Professionals in vocational education and training (VETPRO)"[207].

Also part of the *Leonardo da Vinci* are mobility certificates, with which institutions that show an excellent quality in *Leonardo* activities and particular improvement in internationalisation strategy are awarded.

Starting from the first initiative, *Leonardo da Vinci* comprehends the *Initial Vocational Training* (IVT) which is a project that gives the possibility to students and interns to travel in a foreign country for a working experience or vocational training in a business company. The major part of the students involved in a mobility project choose this option, the duration can vary between two weeks and ten months, but on average nowadays placements last from a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of two months.

The second project included in *Leonardo* is *People in the Labour Market* (PLM), "it allows workers, self-employed and jobseekers (including recent graduates) to spend a period abroad to undertake vocational training either in a training institution or an enterprise. […]. From 2007-2011, 78 100 people took part in PLM projects"[208]. PLM work placements have a shorter duration than IVT projects and can last maximum 7 months.

Mobility visits for *VET Professionals* (VETPRO) allows staff to exchange their experience of the period abroad, with which they can support the improvement of practices and system of vocational education and training. "The focus is on updating and improving professional skills, and the transfer of innovative methods and practices in VET"[209].

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[207] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.

According to the statistics of the European Commission, "more than 60 000 professionals decided to take part in a placement programme within 2007 and 2011"[210]. The duration of a VETPRO placement is quite short (from one to six weeks).

If we have a look at the main destinations for *Leonardo* Placements, data of the European Commission show countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain, which together attract almost half of the participants to those projects. As for the outgoing countries, most of the candidates are from Germany, France and Italy. A particular case is represented by the United Kingdom, with a great number in incoming mobility, but just a 6% for the outgoing.

The following graph shows the percentage of people involved in each Leonardo's initiative:

Figure: 22: **Number of Mobility Visits 2007-2011.** Source: European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011.
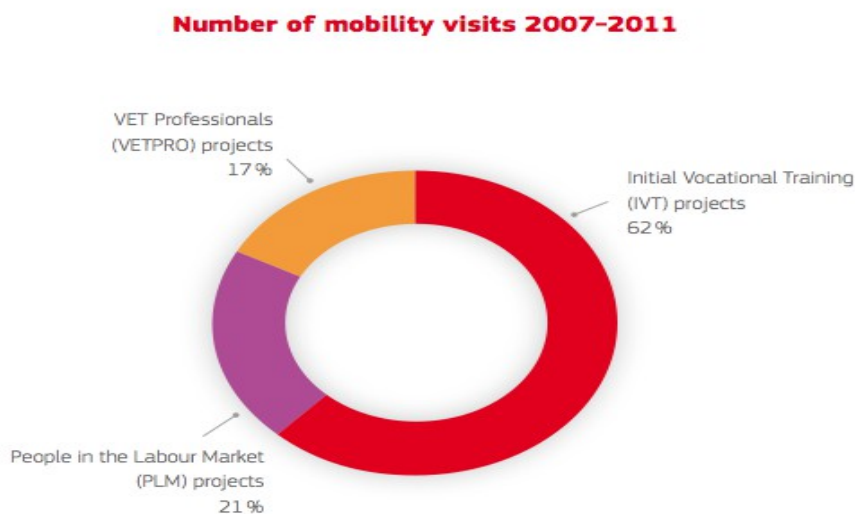

"Mobility projects target a wide variety of VET fields, from accounting to veterinary care. Three of the most popular fields for projects are natural sciences, law and skills for the hotel, restaurant and catering trades"[211].

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[210] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf
[211] Ibid.

Figure 23: **Mobility visits in IVT, PLM and VETRO projects 2007-2011.** Source: European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011.
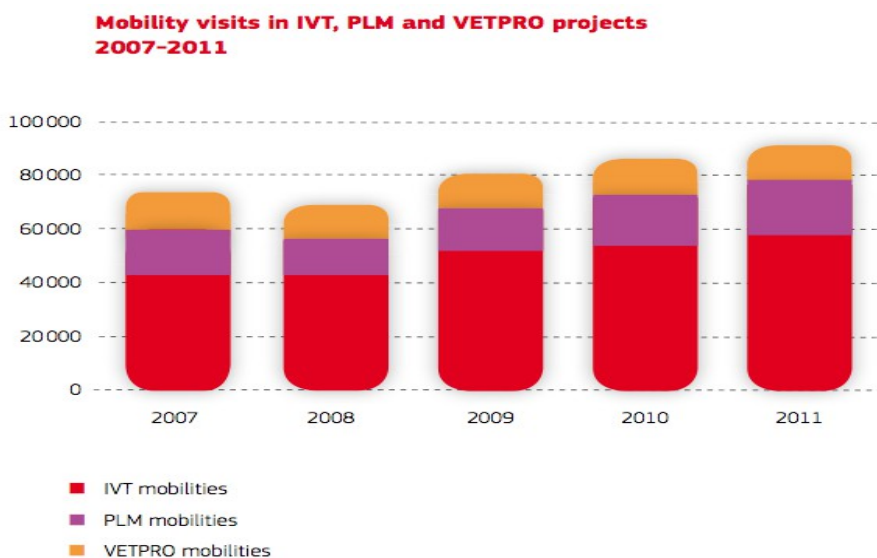
"In 2007 and 2008, *Leonardo* Mobility Grants totalled 751.5 million, an average of Euro 2 007 per participant. The amount of money allows to cover the costs of the travel, basic costs, along with that for the cultural and linguistic preparation for the visit"[212].

Looking at statistics of the European Commission, we can notice that in all the three initiatives women represent more than the 50% of the candidates.

"In 2007 and 2008, organisations performing professional, scientific and technical activities hosted the most mobility visits (11 % of PLM visits, and 5 % of VETPRO visits). The biggest hosting sector for IVT visits was the accommodation and food service activities sector (9 %). The second biggest hosting sector for PLM and IVT visits was manufacturing (6 % and 8 % respectively), and for VETPRO the public administration, compulsory social security sector (5 %)"[213].

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[212] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf

[213] Ibid.

Within the latest projects, from 2008, we found partnerships, which have in some ways contributed to a rapid growth of the *Leonardo* actions and their popularity. From 2008-2011, according to the available data, the partnership projects funded were almost 3800.

Their aims are to share and transfer experience, good practice and innovation. Many organisations see them as a first entry point for European cooperation. Partnership projects last two years and involve organisations from at least three countries. "Since 2008, when they were introduced, partnerships represent the initiatives with a really fast growth, every year there was an increase of the 25% of application, at the same time the available funding has increased from EUR 13.7 million in 2008 to EUR 18.7 million in 2011 EUR 18.7 million in 2011"[214].

Every year several companies (around 800 and 1100) decide to become part of a *Leonardo da Vinci Partnership* project, and most partner organisations belong to the education sector (almost half of them), the non-profit and public sector, the rest are enterprises.

As we can see from the graph in the following page (figure 24), "the top three topics for Partnership projects are the development of common training contents or concepts (13 %), integration of skills needs of the labour market into VET (8 %) and reinforcing links between education and working life (8%)"[215].

Leonardo da Vinci Programme is also represented by multilateral projects, which are larger-scale actions, in which organisations from different countries collaborate to develop working practices in the education and training sector. These centralised actions are: Development of Innovation projects (DOI), Networks and Accompanying Measures.

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[214] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf
[215] Ibid.

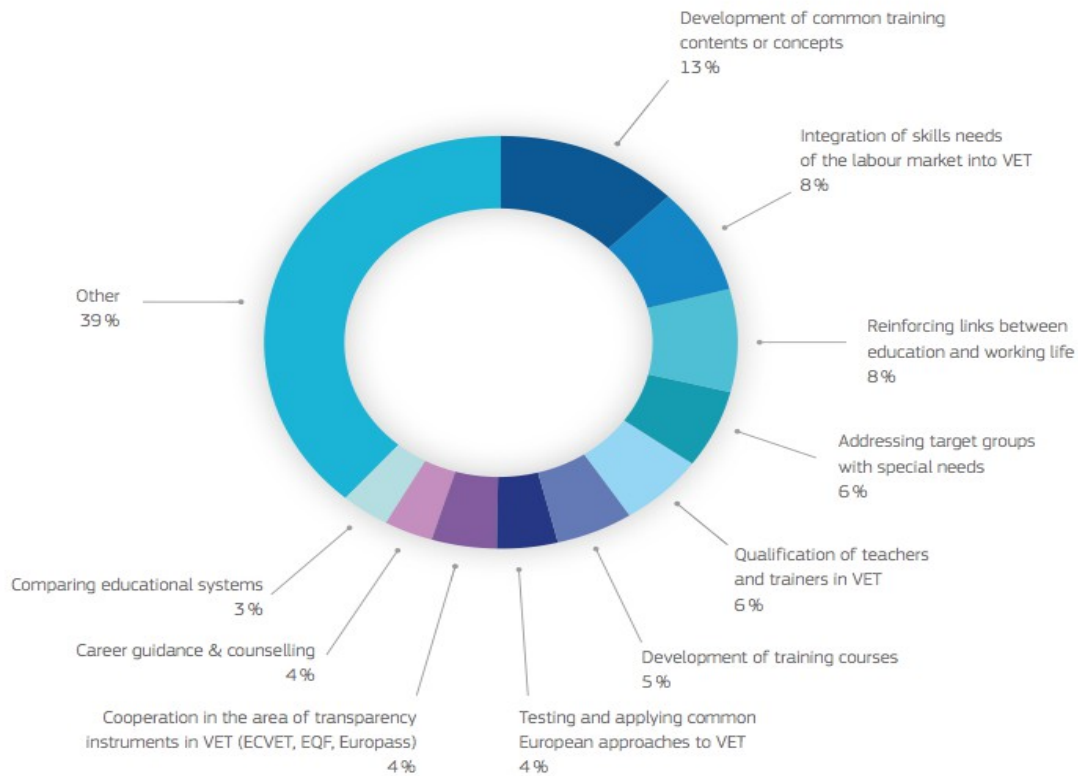**Most popular topics covered by Partnership projects 2008-2011**

Development of common training contents or concepts
13%

Integration of skills needs of the labour market into VET
8%

Reinforcing links between education and working life
8%

Addressing target groups with special needs
6%

Qualification of teachers and trainers in VET
6%

Development of training courses
5%

Testing and applying common European approaches to VET
4%

Cooperation in the area of transparency instruments in VET (ECVET, EQF, Europass)
4%

Career guidance & counselling
4%

Comparing educational systems
3%

Other
39%

Figure 24: **Most popular topics covered by Partnership projects 2008-2010.** Source: European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011.

"Development of Innovation (DOI) projects seek to develop innovative solutions at a European level to improve the quality of VET systems"[216]. The duration of a DOI project can last between one and three years, it includes partner from at least three different countries.

Even if during the last years, "the applications decreased from 23% to 14%, there is strong competition to participate in a DOI project"[217].

As for it concern networks, these kind of projects involved several stakeholders from different countries, their aim is to improve the collaboration between the various actors of the educational sectors and to develop the analysis of activities and issues of common interest in this field.

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[216] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf

[217] Ibid.

The duration of this kind of project is between one and three years, but they can continue also after that the period of funding is ended.

"A smaller funding stream in the *Leonardo* Programme exists for Accompanying Measures, communication projects that promote the objectives and results of earlier Leonardo projects"[218].

Another initiative which is part of the *Leonardo da Vinci* programme is represented by Transfer of Innovation (TOI) projects, which are intended "to improve the quality of VET in the participating countries by transferring existing innovations to new legal, systemic, sector, linguistic, socio-cultural and geographic environments through working with transnational partners"[219].

The chart below can give an overview of the types of projects funded between 2007 and 2011 (Source: Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011 – http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf):

Mobility	16 727
Transfer of Innovation (TOI)	1 530
Partnerships	3 783
Preparatory visits	4 540
Development of Innovation (DOI)	188
Networks	31
Accompanying measures	12

[218] European Commission. Leonardo Da Vinci. Facts and Figures. EU support for vocational education and training 2007-2011. Last visit on 11th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/vocational/leonardo0711_en.pdf
[219] European Commission. Leonardo da Vinci actions - multilateral projects: Transfer of Innovation. Last visit on 14th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/transfer_en.htm

2.2.4. Grundtvig: practical learning for adults

The *Grundtvig* Programme covers the area of Adult Education, it is in charge for the organisation and the delivery of education courses for adults, therefore, on one hand it tries to respond to the problem of "people who left school early or never had the chance to attend to it; on the other hand it is an offer for ageing people to undertake learning experiences"[220].

"Launched in 2000, *Grundtvig* aims to provide adults with more ways to improve their knowledge and skills, facilitate their personal development and boost their employment prospects"[221]. Within the activities organised by *Grundtvig* there is the possibility for adults to take part in a learning experience in a foreign country, or it creates networks and partnerships between several organisations abroad.

Adult participation in education is essential and a vital component of the LLP and according to data "Member States have agreed to raise the benchmark for adult participation in lifelong learning to 15% by 2020"[222].

Other objectives of the programme are represented by the "improvement of the quality of the *Grundtvig* experience and the conditions for benefiting from this experience, raising the possibility of adult mobility to 7,000 people per year by 2013"[223]. *Grundtvig* Programme has to ensure that "people on the margins of the society have access to adult education, especially older people and those who left education without basic qualifications"[224].

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[220] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. General Call for Proposals 2011-2013. Strategic Priorities 2013. Last visit on 14ʰ April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf

[221] European Commission. Grundtvig: Practical Learning for Adults. Last visit on 14th April 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_en.htm

[222] European Commission. Lifelong Learning Programme. General Call for Proposals 2011-2013. Strategic Priorities 2013. Last visit on 14ʰ April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf

[223] Ibid.

[224] European Commission. Grundtvig: Practical Learning for Adults. Last visit on 14th April 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_en.htm

Grundtvig in figures	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Adult education insitutions participating in Partnerships	0	478	924	1,182	1,402	1,795	1,980
Multilateral Projects, Networks and Thematic Seminars	78	67	59	45	74	81	51

As we can notice from the graph above (figure 25) , "between 2000 and 2006 *Grundtvig* supported more than 400 Multilateral Projects, these projects were focused on the improvement and innovation of the adult education sector"[225]. At the same time, the programme funded more than 1600 Learning Partnerships.

"Multilateral projects aim to develop high quality didactical material and innovative didactical approaches, and develop solutions in areas like valuing learning, guidance and counselling in adult learning, or information tools"[226]. The *Grundtvig* programme is influencing the perception of the importance of adult education throughout all Europe, it develops also interesting studies about learning in later life or it analyses delicate issue such as prison education.

"*Grundtvig* changes the lives of many disadvantaged learners by giving them self-confidence, improving their motivation to learn, their communication skills and their understanding of other cultures"[227].

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[225] European Commission. Grundtvig. Success stories. Europe creates opportunities. Last visit on 17th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/grundtvig/success-stories_en.pdf
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.

2.3   Other Projects: Jean Monnet, Tempus and Erasmus Mundus

Included within the offer of the LLP, we found the "Jean Monnet Programme" and its three key activities for understanding the European integration. The project is build up by actions which are intended for "stimulating the teaching, research and reflection on European integration in higher education institution worldwide"[228]. The first project was launched in 1989 and the following were then developed reaching more than 70 countries both inside and out of Europe. Other initiatives which are part of the *Jean Monnet* Programme are provided in order to support several institutions partner of the programme, between which there are "the College of Europe , the European University Institute, the European Institute of Public Administration, the Academy of European Law, the International Centre for European Training, and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education"[229]. Finally the plan supports associations on a European level, which are in charge for the integration in Europe and for its education and training sector.

Internationalisation is not only Lifelong Learning, in fact, it includes also several initiatives for education and training external to the LLP.

Within these project there are for example ALFA, which is a programme supporting the cooperation between European higher institutions and Latin America, EDULINK that is a project focusing on the implementation of programmes in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific Group of states, together with *Tempus* and *Erasmus Mundus* which are widely known.

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[228]   European Commission. The Jean Monnet Programme: understanding European Integration. Last visit on 19th April 2013 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/monnet_en.htm
[229]   Ibid.

"*Tempus* is the European Union's programme which supports the modernisation of higher education in the EU's surrounding area. *Tempus* promotes institutional cooperation that involves the European Union and Partner Countries and focuses on the reform and modernisation of higher education systems in the Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region"[230].

What is important to notice within the project of *Tempus*, is the fact that it does not only focus on the promotion of collaboration between different institutions, but also a sort of "people-to-people" connection and at the same time it is strictly connected to the *Eramus Mundus* programme.

The programme was created in 1990, when it started to successfully build cooperation between universities and it was renew for the most recent term in 2007. The programme gives particular attentions to the collaboration with Partner countries, in which the higher education sector is facing hard changes, due especially to demographic causes, the strong competition of more powerful and globalised states and other transformations within the society.

"The overall objective of *Tempus* is to contribute to the creation of an area of cooperation in the field of higher education between the European Union and the *Tempus* Partner Countries"[231].

The programme aims to help the member countries to open themselves to the world of work and in order to make them more integrated within the society, also increasing the introduction of their graduates in the business area and improving their understanding of the rest of the world.

Tempus funded two kind of actions, the first is represented by Joint projects, which are based on multilateral partnerships between EU institutions and Partner Countries.

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[230] European Commission. Tempus Programme. Tempus IV (2007-2013): Overview of the Programme. Last visit on 24th April 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about_tempus_en.php
[231] Ibid.

These projects are intended for exchanging information and knowledge within different universities and in general they last a maximum of 3 years.

The second initiative funded by *Tempus* is represented by structural measures which "seek to contribute to the development and reform of education institutions and systems at national level in the Partner Countries. They can address issues linked to the reform of governance structures and systems (qualification systems, quality assurance, national laws, organisation, coordination, accreditation, evaluation and the policy of higher education systems etc.) or enhance the links between higher education and society"[232].

As already said the *Tempus* programme is strongly connected to the *Erasmus Mundus* programme which funded grants to students from third country giving them the chance to join Master courses or Doctorate in countries outside the European Union.

"Erasmus Mundus is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third-Countries"[233].

The programme aims at increasing mobility between Europe and Third Countries allowing students, researchers and staff to spend a period abroad in a joint programme or for a cooperation partnership. Since its implementation, more than 12 000 candidates joined a Master course or Doctorate in one of the 1000 universities which was included in the programme. An *Erasmus Mundus* course offers a study or research programme which is fully recognised by institutions and can lead to the award of a double, multiple or joint degree to all successful candidates.

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[232] European Commission. Tempus Programme. Tempus IV (2007-2013): Overview of the Programme. Last visit on 24th April 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about_tempus_en.php

[233] European Commission. Erasmus Mundus Programme. About Erasmus Mundus. Last visit on 26th April 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/about_erasmus_mundus_en.php

2.4   Funding crisis for LLP and Erasmus

According to the news, in October 2012 "the European Commission asked the Council and the European Parliament to urgently bridge a € 9 billion shortfall in the 2012 EU budget"[234], this amount of money would be necessary to continue the experience of *Erasmus* programme and keeping this project an European reality.

The crisis for the budget was then overcome, in fact, EU Member States and the Parliament, have averted the problem and granted funds for more than 280 000 *Erasmus* students scholarships for the next academic year. Current and future students who will join the LLP programmes are therefore reassured and they will receive the grants for their experience, since the budget will cover also the expenditures for the other projects of LLP, such as *Leonardo*, *Comenius* and *Grundtvig*.

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[234] European Commission. All News. Erasmus and its budget. Last visit on 26th April 2013
http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20121029-erasmus-budget_en.htm

Chapter 3 - Internationalisation in Italy: the case of Ca Foscari University of Venice

3.1 Ca' Foscari University of Venice: an introduction of the analysis

Ca' Foscari University of Venice was founded in 1868 as a Business College, it was the first institution to offer an academic programme of higher education in business and economics and has now reached an excellent reputation both inside and out of Italy.

Through times, while widening its fields of interest, the university's offer started to cover several academic topics and introduce new programmes of study, therefore reaching nowadays a total of 45 degree programmes (including both first and second cycle degrees): "In 1954 the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures was established, followed by the Faculty of Humanities and Chemistry in 1969"[235]. Moreover, according to the data, almost 40 Master's Programmes and 16 Research Doctorate Projects are included within its offer.

Ca' Foscari University is an active participant in the Venetian society, it contributes to its cultural life with the organisation of several events, joined by national and international personalities, and created in collaboration with other widely known institutions and companies.

> "*Ca' Foscari* has drawn up over 400 international cooperation agreements with Universities from all over the world, with the aim of promoting mobility for education and research. The University actively participates in European programmes for technological research, education and training, with projects involving partner institutions from all continents"[236].

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[235] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Welcome Guide for International Students 2012/2013. Last visit on 27th April 2013. http://www.unive.it/media/allegato/mobilita_internazionale/welcome_guide_EN.pdf
[236] Ibid.

Internationalisation is one of the priorities of *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice, which is trying to become part of a network of institutions even more wider, in order to offer to its students and teachers study or training opportunities for their growth and development, both at personal and professional level. At the same time, the University intends to improve an internationalised context and environment for international students who decide to study in Venice, for a period or for their entire degree. The same possibilities are given to professors: the attraction of teaching staff from abroad is essential for making the professional body even more internationalised and for creating collaborations with European institutions. "The effort in making *Ca' Foscari* a more internationalised University is connected also to the improvement of its position within the International Universities ranking and it is important for the approach to the MIUR criteria for an highly internationalised University"[237].

According to the *Document for the Internationalisation of Ca' Foscari University of Venice* the main objectives are represented by: "the support of international projects of research with an attempt to focus on the most qualified network in order to be involved in them; the enrolment and recruitment of excellent international students and professors; the increase of the mobility numbers for students, teaching and administrative staff; the development of international programmes such as double joint degrees at all levels (bachelor and master degree and doctorate – PhD) linked to an increasing number of courses completely taught in English. All these initiatives are relevant for the growth of *Ca' Foscari* in its international visibility and attractiveness and at the same time for the attraction of funds coming from other programmes oriented to internationalisation of higher education"[238]. The Document also defines the activities in which the University is involved in order to improve its internationalisation: not only the promotion of *Ca' Foscari* offer on the educational market abroad in order to attract international students, but also the creation of international

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[237] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Document for the Internationalisation of the University. Reserved Material. P. 1.
[238] Ibid.

networks and partnerships with other institutions for increasing the outgoing mobility at the same time. As already said, the activities of internationalisation are oriented to incoming and outgoing students, as well as to teaching and administrative staff and researchers.

The most involved areas of the internationalisation strategy are "the teaching, services and students areas, such as International Relations, Placements, Internship, together with the research and human resources areas"[239]. The International Relations office is in charge for the development of the activities related to internationalisation, its aim is to give adequate support to all the initiatives of the university, it organises and coordinates the different phases of the international projects.

On one hand, *Ca' Foscari* International Relations Office intends to promote new agreements with both public institutions and private partners and to foster collaborations with other universities; on the other hand it deals with the mobility sector, it improves the mobility of students, teachers and staff and the cooperation for the development area.

Two different kind of agreements are undertaken by the International Relation Office: the first is the "Memorandum of Understanding, it is a politic act, in which the parts contributing to the understanding show their shared interests, but this does not implicate economic or legal duties. These duties are instead included within the second kind of agreement called Supplementary agreements"[240].

The budget for internationalisation points at the development of strategic activities, especially within the most interesting areas, there is a sort of selection for the projects which are considered more valuable. Within *Ca' Foscari* policy, according to the Document for Internationalisation, the focus is on strategic geographic areas, a particular importance is given to double or joint degrees and to activities strictly connected to the Italian Minister of Education and Research.

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[239] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Document for the Internationalisation of the University. Reserved Material. P. 2.
[240] Ibid.

Great importance is also attributed to the internationalisation of the teaching staff: according to data, "for the academic year 2012/2013, 18 visiting professors are coming from renowned foreign universities, they will hold a series of lessons to students of *Ca' Foscari* University"[241].

Professors will come from inside and out of Europe and thanks to the approval of this proposal, the didactic offer of *Ca' Foscari* turns out to be even more internationalised.

Another aspect which build up the internationalisation strategy of *Ca' Foscari* is represented by the cooperation for the development. "La Cooperazione allo sviluppo nasce dall'esigenza di garantire il rispetto della dignità umana e assicurare la crescita economica di tutti i popoli"[242], from 2007 *Ca' Foscari* is a member of the CUCS project (Cooperazione Universitaria per lo Sviluppo) and it is in charge for the coordination of collaborations between universities and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it promotes activities of research in the field of cooperation in each sector from the economic to the linguistic one.

From 2012, the University is also part of UNIMED (Union of Universities of the Mediterranean), an organisation which is intended for the improvement and development of partnerships and relations with the Universities of the Mediterranean South Bank. An important initiative within this area is represented by EU-MeS programme that I will analyse in the following pages including also a brief survey I lead within *Ca' Foscari* students who decided to join this experience.

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[241] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Infoscari. "In arrivo 18 visiting professor". Infoscari. 10/04/2012. Last visit on 20th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=126234

[242] Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo. Last visit on 20th April 2013. http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo.esteri.it/pdgcs/italiano/cooperazione/intro.html

3.2   International Offer of Ca' Foscari University of Venice

In order to make the University even more attractive for international students it seemed useful to improve the didactic offer, including and integrating courses entirely or at least partially taught in English, at all levels of education, therefore allowing students from different countries to attend them.

International students who intend to enrol at *Ca' Foscari* have to ask for an evaluation of their degree or previous academic curriculum through an online procedure for accessing only one degree course, the candidate will then receive a communication for the admission.

For the current academic year (2012/2013) around 30 courses (including all the level of education from Bachelor degree to PhD) were available for students and partially or fully taught in English language. Within the most important courses completely taught in English we find for example several of them belonging to the economic area: "Economics and Management for the Bachelor degrees, Models and Methods in Economics and Management, Economics and Finance and Computer Science for the Master degrees, together with Master's programmes in "Global Economics and Social Affairs and Sports Management and Marketing, as for the PhD the offer is within the economic and computer science sector and one in Science and Management of Climate changes"[243]. There is a continuos increase in the enrolments of International students and current data are provided by the "Ufficio Pianificazione e Valutazione dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia".

In order to have a clear idea of the number of international students who decided to enrol in *Ca' Foscari* University, I created a chart based on the recorded data of the source "Data Warehouse Ca' Foscari" for the academic year 2012/2013.

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[243] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. English taught programmes. Last visit on 20th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=75895

International Students enrolled at Ca' Foscari (Academic Year 2012/2013)

Degree Course	European	Non-European	Total
Degree DM 509	5	26	31
Degree DM 270	147	509	656
Master Degree LM	38	142	180
Master – First Level	7	15	22
Master – Second Level	28	2	30
Master Degree LS	2	4	6
Doctorate Course	22	60	82
Degree Course L1	0	1	1
	Total 249	Total 759	**Total 1008**

Source: Data Warehouse Ca' Foscari – Data Mart Carriere Studenti - Last update: 06.05.2013
Ufficio Pianificazione e Valutazione – Settore Banche Dtai - UCF

The chart above comprehends degree courses for which the first enrolment is not more possible, but that still have students attending them. Data are clear: 1008 students are now attending a *Ca' Foscari* degree course, of which 249 students come from the European Union and the majority comes instead from non-European countries (759 students).

Data[244] gave me the possibility also to investigate on the origin of *Ca' Foscari* international students and I decided to create two different graphs in order to classify both the European and non-European students, including countries which send the major number of students to Venice.

Statistics show that the country, within the European Union, which sends the highest number of students is Romania with 115 students, followed then by the 42 french students now enrolled at *Ca' Foscari* and only respectively 17 and 13 students of Greece and Spain. The graph in the following page can give an explicit idea of the situation.

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[244] Source: Data Warehouse Ca' Foscari – Data Mart Carriere Studenti. Ufficio Pianificazione e Valutazione – Settore Banche Dati – UCF. Last update 6th May 2013.

## International Students from the European Union

Ca'Foscari University a.y. 2012/2013
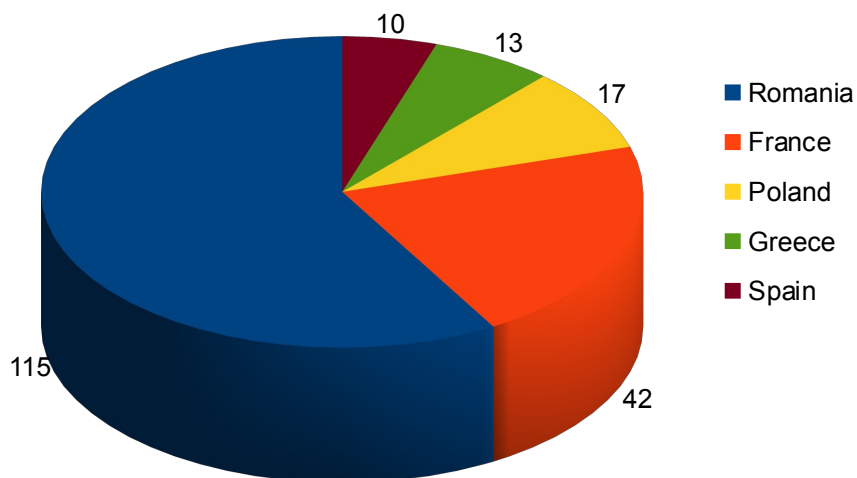
As for the non-European countries, the leading state of origin is Albania with 124 students enrolled, an high number probably favoured by the proximity of the countries and the wave of immigration which affected Italy during the last years. The second sending country is Moldavia with 106 students, immediately followed by the 104 Chinese students, probably attracted by the "Marco Polo programme" of which *Ca' Foscari* is an active member. The following graph includes the major countries of origin of non-European students enrolled at *Ca' Foscari*:

International Students from non-European countries

Ca' Foscari University a.y. 2012/2013
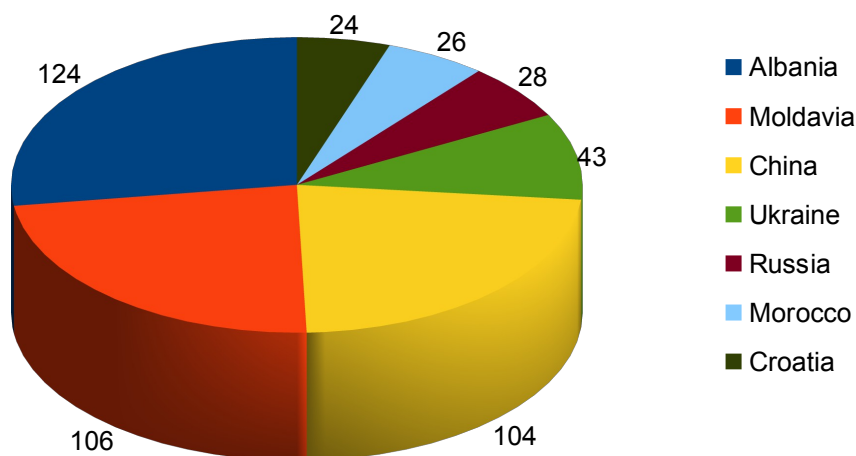
As we can notice from the data above, the majority of International students are enrolled in a first cycle degree with 656 candidates, this number is followed by the 180 students attending a second cycle degree. Around 80 students are now enrolled at *Ca' Foscari* for a doctorate.

Particularly interesting from the point of view of the enrolment of international students is also the "Marco Polo Project", according to which after the "agreement between the Popular Republic of China and the Republic of Italy in force from 2006, chinese students have the possibility to ask for a VISA in order to study in an Italian University"[245].

The procedure demands students to stay in Italy between 6 and 9 months before the official start of the courses, in order to learn Italian language attending an organised course. Then they have the possibility to enrol in an Italian University without going back to their country of origin and asking for a second VISA.

Ca' Foscari University of Venice is part of this project and several department of the University reserved some seats for Chinese students who participate to "Marco Polo" in order to facilitate their enrolment also in courses with a limited enrolment. As mentioned above are 104 the Chinese students by now enrolled in a *Ca' Foscari* course and China represents for the University the third sending country as for the incoming mobility of non-European candidates.

Included within the international academic offer of *Ca' Foscari* University we find Double and Joint Degree. In order to receive a joint or double degree, students have to attend an integrated course, which is build up on a programme jointly decided by two different universities and regulated by a specific agreement.

> "Students who freely choose the programme undertake defined periods of
> study in both academic establishments in terms of duration and content.

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[245] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Marco Polo Project: Enrolment of Chinese students. Last visit on 28th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=41192

At the end of the courses and after the relevant joint examinations, the students are awarded either a single qualification jointly signed by the academic authorities of both institutions (joint degree) or the final national qualifications of both institutions (double degree)"[246].

The enrolment in a double or joint degree course demands students for specific requirements they should have acquired in their previous educational carrier, in order to successfully access and attend the degree course. Even if students have not got the necessary knowledge, they can access the course with a "supplementary educational debt", according to which they will follow activities or supplementary courses organised by the university in order to satisfy the requirement they were lacking.

As for the next academic year 2013/2014 within the offer of *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice, students can choose their joint or double degree within two Bachelor courses, one of them is Economic and Management and it is a dual degree in collaboration with the *Georgia State University* and the other is an European Computer Science Degree which is supported by the partnership of several universities such as "*Universität Hamburg* (Germany), *Universidad de Burgos* (Spain), *Istituto Politécnico de Coimbra* (Portugal), *Université Paul Verlaine* - Metz/Nancy (France), *Université François Rabelais* - Tours/Blois (France), *Timisoara* (Romania), *Turun Yliopisto* - Turku (Finland)"[247]. As for the second cycle degree programmes, the University offer around ten courses in subjects such as Economics or Business Administration, Languages and Foreign Studies, Sustainable Development and Chemical Technologies.

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[246] CIMEA. Fondazione RUI (2003). Joint Degrees. The Italian Experience in the European context. Rome. Last visit on 22nd April 2013 http://www.crui.it/crui/inaugurazione_bruxelles/Joint%20Degrees.pdf

[247] European Computer Science Website. Partner Universities. Last visit on 24th April 2013 http://ecs.ecs-emacs.net

For improving its internationalisation, "*Ca' Foscari* University is starting a new double degree in collaboration with *Universidad Nacional del Litoral* (Argentina) and a Joint Degree supported by the consortium of 3 European universities for French studies"[248]. As for the course of Iberian studies, it will give students the chance to receive a double degree recognised by both the universities and to attend the courses in the two universities included, obtaining a double degree in Iberian and Ibero-american studies. An already active partnership with Argentina was represented by the degree in History which is a collaboration with *Universidad Tres de Febrero* of Buenos Aires, this project allowed *Ca' Foscari* University to join several activities at the "Europogrados fair" in Argentina. Within the European area, a new course started by *Ca' Foscari* is a second cycle degree in collaboration with two french Universities and the *Humboldt Universität* of Berlin. This partnership offers student the chance to choose an international course in French studies and to attend its programme in at least two of the participating universities with the recognition of the results in both the institutions.

Students can also choose within six international programmes including Master of first and second level which cover different areas such as the one in 'Economic and Management of Tourism' or in 'Management of Cultural and Artistic Activities', and PhD courses such as the 'European Doctorate in Economics', connected to the project *Erasmus Mundus* and supported by the partnership of 7 institutions and coordinated by the University of Paris I in France.

As for this kind of experience, I decided to focus on the 'Joint Master's Degree in Sustainable Development' at *Ca' Foscari*, in order to understand how a Joint degree is organised and which are the main intents of this kind of degree.

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[248] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Infoscari. *"A Ca' Foscari due nuovi titoli internazionali"*. Infoscari. 04/07/2012. Last visit on 24th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=134670

The Joint Degree in Sustainable Development is a second cycle programme addressed to "highly qualified and motivated students interested in the issue of sustainable development and its international dimension"[249]. The partnership of *Ca' Foscari* for this degree is build on the collaboration of other five universities which are "the *Karl Franzens University of Graz* in Austria, the *Leipzig University* in Germany, the *Utrecht University* of the Netherlands, the *Basel University* in Switzerland and the *Hiroshima University* in Japan"[250].

In order to access this Joint degree students are required to have a first cycle degree connected to the master programme and they have to spend at least one semester at one of the partner institutions in order to obtain the equivalent of 30 credits. Courses are taught in English language and as for the costs, students have the possibility to ask for an Erasmus grant for the mobility period spent abroad.

"The International Joint Master's Programme in Sustainable Development is a prime example of a programme where sustainability issues are approached from an inter-disciplinary perspective"[251].

The target of this Joint Degree is that of instructing and developing figures of scientists who will be prepared to help the evolution to a sustainable society thanks to the competences acquired during their studies. "Sustainable development requires a process of change in which a balance is achieved among ecological, technological, economic, and socio-cultural values, from the local to the global scale, in both the short and the long term. Academics play an important role in this transition by integrating and applying their specialised knowledge"[252].

Courses of the joint degree are build up by two common modules on general issue which follow the same pattern in all the member Universities and some specialisation paths which focus on determined sustainable development issues.

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[249] Joint International Master in Sustainable Development. Joint Master's Programmes. Last visit on 26th April 2013. http://www.jointdegree.eu/sd/
[250] Ibid.
[251] Joint International Master in Sustainable Development. Joint Master's Programmes. Welcome Kit 2012-2013. Last visit on 26th April 2013. http://www.jointdegree.eu/sd/
[252] Ibid.

The main interest of this joint programme is that of analysing the process of changes connected to the target of reaching a sustainable society.

As for the compulsory and common courses the subjects are: "Basics in Sustainable Development" and an integration module.

The specialisation courses are normally attended during the mobility period at the foreign university: *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice is in charge for the offer of two tracks: "Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Environmental Assessment and Remediation Technologies. The final 'Integration Module' will connect the different scientific approaches and prepare for the master's thesis"[253].

Another initiative included within the internationalisation strategy of *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice is the "Summer School", the project was funded in 2011 in order to offer to home and international students a didactic experience during the summer period.

With the aim of widening its international perspective offering to students a new programme of studies for improving their knowledge and enriching their academic carrier, the *Summer School* represents an international experience thanks to the connected initiatives, such as the "Harvard Summer School which provides students with a stimulating and intercultural environment that creates a new and engaging dialogue between students and the city of Venice"[254].

The activities proposed by the project of the *Summer School* are not only academic courses, but also seminars, lecturers and internships within several disciplines and areas of interest and they give the chance to study together with professors from renowned international institutions.

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[253] Joint International Master in Sustainable Development. Joint Master's Programmes. Welcome Kit 2012-2013. Last visit on 26th April 2013 http://www.jointdegree.eu/sd/

[254] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Ca' Foscari Summer School. Last visit on 26th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=98875

"The Summer School offers courses during the months of June through August to assist students in better planning their academic career and preparing for their future. These seven-week courses (five weeks of lessons, one week of intensive exercise and one week for exams), consist of either 30 or 60 hours of in-class lessons and are worth respectively, 6 and 12 CFU"[255].

The courses taught both in Italian and English are offered also within the standard curriculum of an academic year of *Ca' Foscari* University and, in some cases, they can be necessary to students for filling the debt they had for accessing a Master's programme.

"Courses are taught by both *Ca' Foscari* professors and professors from some of the most prestigious universities in the world. Academic courses offered by the International schools have a limited enrolment. Courses last a minimum of six weeks (5 weeks of lesson + 1 week for exams)"[256].

As for the collaborations, by now the *Summer School* is working together with the Harvard and Columbia Universities, but the project intends to wide its partnerships.

For international students the experience is not only that of studying in Italy, but also enjoying the celebrated city of Venice, because joining the *Summer School* allows them to become part of a community which grants them an inspiring experience through the city, with guided tours, activities and events. For *Ca' Foscari* students, it is more than an alternative way to proceed with their carrier, since they have the possibility to study with international students and attend lessons taught by international professors.

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[255] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Ca' Foscari Summer School. Academic courses. Last visit on 26th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=120627
[256] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Ca' Foscari Summer School. International Schools. Last visit on 26th April 2013. http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=120628

"*Ca' Foscari* offers the opportunity to participate in a summer experience rich with diversity, with the goal of opening the doors of the university to an intergenerational and international audience that is united by their curiosity and their desire to learn through the arts, sciences, economics and culture"[257].

As for the workshops organised and included in the Summer School programme, they are open also to people outside of *Ca' Foscari* and they try to integrate different disciplines together with practice. The activities of the workshops can last more then a week and candidates received also a certificate for their participation.

"Within the partners of *Ca' Foscari* for the organisation of workshops and the various laboratories there are the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia*, the *Centro Internazionale di Studi sull'Economia Turistica* (CISET) and the *Treviso Chamber of Commerce*"[258].

As for the other initiatives open to both *Ca' Foscari* and international students, Venice International University (VIU) represents the result of the collaboration between *Ca' Foscari* University and IUAV, together with the support of the "Province of Venice, the Foundation of Venice and other several foreign universities such as Ludwig Maximilian Universität of Munich, Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona, Duke University of Durham (USA)"[259].

Founded in 1995 in order to contribute to the improvement of the University's internationalisation, VIU is considered an international higher education institution which has grown though times and has now reached a total of 11 members, including also the "Boston College, Tel Aviv University (Israel), Tilburg University (The Netherlands), Tsinghua University (China), Tongji University

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[257] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Ca' Foscari Summer School. Workshops of Art, Science, Economics and Culture. Last visit on 26th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=120625
[258] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Ca' Foscari Summer School. Workshops of Art, Science, Economics and Culture. Last visit on 26th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=120625
[259] VIU Venice International University. VIU Members. Last visit on 27th April 2013 http://www.univiu.org

(China) and Waseda University (Japan)"[260].

VIU represents an international perspective for both teaching and studying, it allows candidates who choose this experience to learn in an international environment with a continuous exchange of knowledge between students and professors coming from inside and out of Europe.

VIU's activities are organised by the *School of Humanities and Social Science* (SHSS) and they offer a programme taught in English including interdisciplinary courses which try to connect different approaches of learning and teaching, from a more scientific to a more humanistic perspective.

The main activities are included within the "innovative Globalization Program which analyses indeed the subject of globalisation and its economic, social, environmental and cultural causes and it focuses on different aspects of the issue and the topic changes semester after semester.[...] Each semester 120-140 students come to Venice to take part in VIU's Globalization Program"[261].

During the autumn period of study, the focus of the programme is on Cultural Heritage, in particular on the management and regard of it, and on Urban Cultural Policy. "Since the perceptions about the issue of Cultural Heritage are nowadays in continuous evolution, the programme intends to show how the subject is not only constituted by a catalogue of monuments and buildings that are being preserved and safeguarded but it takes into considerations the narrative and history which are held within the works of art"[262].

In Spring, during the following semester, the main theme moves to "Sustainable Development, with particular attention on the management of environment and the international division of labour"[263]. There is a sort of urgent necessity in developing researches and solutions about the environmental issue especially from an economic and technological point of view.

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[260] VIU Venice International University. VIU Members. Last visit on 27th April 2013 http://www.univiu.org
[261] VIU Venice International University. Globalisation Program. Last visit on 28th April 2013 http://www.univiu.org/shss/globalization-program
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.

During both the fall and spring semesters, there are then courses about Venetian and Italian studies. "Venice is a world heritage city with a great patrimony of culture and history. The city represents a unique example of a living society build on water, which is considered an extraordinary urban and social concept.

The city offers the chance of experiencing contemporary challenges connected to the environmental and economic sustainability and it is affected by the phenomenon of global travelling, which provides ideas and resources for several programme courses, linked also to the role the city covers being the administrative centre of one of the most dynamic part of Italy from the industrial point of view"[264].

The programme is enriched by a series of integrating activities which give students the opportunity to wide their educational experience discovering the city of Venice and its surroundings. The project organises sightseeing visits, but also business journeys together with cultural events, strictly connected to the issues debated during the courses.

Students who decide to enrol for the VIU's programme have the possibility to ask for the recognition of the credits acquired during the semester or during the entire academic year, but they are also eligible for being selected as participants of the mobility project related to the school.

In fact, students who attend the Globalisation programme of VIU, after the semester, can join an internship in companies abroad or in Italy and benefits from the economic support of a scholarship. "VIU organizes the internships and scholarships of the Globalization Program in collaboration with the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and thanks to the generous contribution of the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea which are VIU members"[265].

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[264] VIU Venice International University. Globalisation Program. Last visit on 28th April 2013 http://www.univiu.org/shss/globalization-program

[265] VIU Venice International University. Internships and Mobility. Last visit on 27th April 2013 http://www.univiu.org/shss/internships-and-mobility

Internships and their destinations are often related to the issues debated during the VIU's courses.

Particular attention is given to the Asian region, indeed, connected to the topic of sustainable development, a strong partnership is developed between the Department of Asian Studies of *Ca' Foscari* and two universities in China.

As for the issue of Cultural Heritage and thanks to the collaboration with the already cited Italian National Research Council, the Mediterranean regions have strong importance. For both Italian and international students internships last between two and four months and give the chance to continue their stay in Italy for foreign students who will join a work or research experience in an Italian company.

School of Humanities and Social Sciences of VIU organise also joint seminars in the field of human and social science, including programmes open to students belonging to the VIU's Member Universities and lecturers in collaboration with other Venetian institutions open to public.

3.3   Ca' Foscari University and its Mobility

As already said in the Document of the Internationalisation strategy of *Ca' Foscari*, mobility is within the main objectives of the University, from both the outgoing and incoming perspectives: mobility is considered a means for the development of knowledge, for the personal and professional growth of people who decide to join one of its programmes.

Outbound mobility is promoted by the university, not only for students, but also for its teaching and administrative staff, *Ca' Foscari* University participates in the most widespread projects of international mobility, trying to develop and improve the collaborations and partnerships with universities and companies all over the world.

Within the most common initiatives, *Ca' Foscari* as Italian University participates to the activities of the *Lifelong Learning* Programme, and especially important for its mobility is the Erasmus Programme in which it is an active member from 1987, sending abroad every year hundreds of students who enrich this international experience and allow the improvement of the university's internationalisation. Looking at numbers, "for the 2012/2013 academic year, *Ca' Foscari* University shows around 490 Erasmus exchange agreements and more than 100 international agreements with non European institutions all over the world."[266].

The LLP/Erasmus programme intends to strengthen the quality of higher education trying to stimulate the collaboration between international institutions and universities and, at the same time, push and increase the mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff. The Erasmus programme gives the possibility to *Ca' Foscari* students to spend a period of study or training abroad in a partner University or company which have signed a bilateral agreement with *Ca' Foscari*.

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[266] Ca' Foscari Univerity of Venice. Infoscari. *"Boom di partenze e arrivi Erasmus a Ca' Foscari: quest'anno domande in crescita del 18 percento"*. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=125343

Thanks to the data available on the website created by the National Agencies of the Lifelong Learning Programme "Statistics for All" (http://www.statisticsforall.eu/index.php) in which are collected database and statistic information about the various project of the LLP, it is possible to create a chart to describe the evoultion of the Erasmus Programme in respect to the Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

Mobility – Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Year	Study	Placement	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	PhD	Total
2008	345	20	346	11	8	365
2009	311	24	232	88	15	335
2010	353	87	236	203	1	440
2011	339	24	337	25	1	363

(Source: http://www.statisticsforall.eu/beneficiary.php?id=I%20%20VENEZIA01&country=IT – Statistics for All – Ca' Foscari University of Venice, last update 2nd May 2013).

The chart above shows the evolution of the number of students which had the possibility to spend a period abroad for both Erasmus for Study and Erasmus for Placement: as we can see, the year 2010 represents a peak in the number of candidates eligible for the Erasmus experience.

"As for the academic year 2012/2013 the University has seen an increase in the number of applications for the outgoing mobility within the Erasmus programme with a growth of the 18% : the International Relations Office received 707 application forms, around 100 requests more than the last year. For the academic year 2011/2012 around 340 *Ca' Foscari* students joined this experience and as for the main destinations we found the United Kingdom, France and Spain, but an increasing interest has been showed also toward 'new' countries such as Turkey"[267].

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[267] *Ca' Foscari Univerity of Venice. Infoscari. "Boom di partenze e arrivi Erasmus a Ca' Foscari: quest'anno domande in crescita del 18 percento"*. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=125343

According to the data of the LLP statistics, Ca' Foscari students' main destinations are Spain, France and United Kingdom, followed by Germany and the Netherlands, then "within the main partners we found Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona, Université Paris Sorbonne, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Université Pantheon – Sorbonne (Paris I) and the Institut National des Langues et Civilations Orientales"[268].

As for the degree programmes to which Erasmus students of *Ca' Foscari* belong, the graph below can be a clear representation:

Erasmus Students - Degree Courses at home university
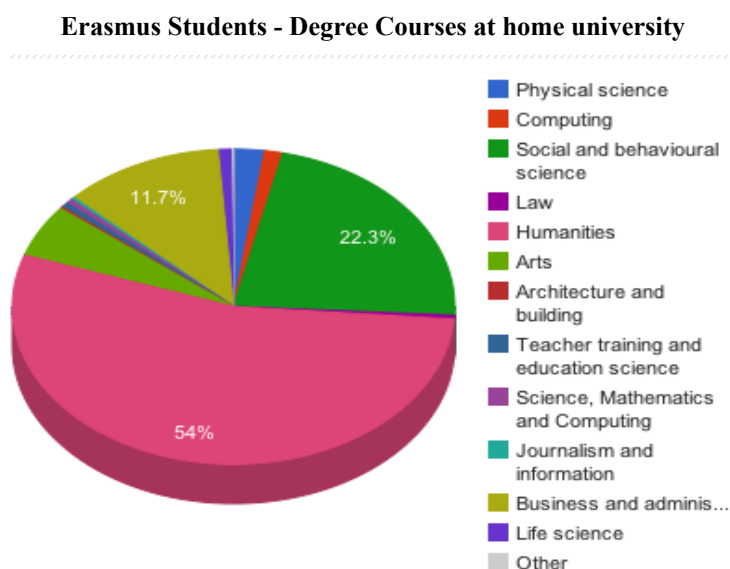
Source: http://www.statisticsforall.eu/beneficiary.php?id=I%20%20VENEZIA01&country=IT – **Statistics for All – Ca' Foscari University of Venice**, last update 2nd May 2013.

The same importance is given by *Ca' Foscari* University to the LLP/Erasmus Placement, which allows to students enrolled in a Bachelor or Master degree or PhD to spend a period abroad for a paid internship in a European company participating in the project.

Not only students will have the possibility to improve their linguistic skills, but they will also acquire professional competences.

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268 LLP database. Statistics for All – Ca' Foscari University of Venice, last update 2nd May 2013 http://www.statisticsforall.eu/beneficiary.php?id=I%20%20VENEZIA01&country=IT

As already said for the Erasmus for study, this is an experience which gives candidates the opportunity to grow up from both the personal and vocational point of view, students can better understand the socio-economic culture of the host country and they can try to integrate in a new working environment. I find interesting, in order to catch the perception of students in regards to the Erasmus Placement programme to interview a *Ca' Foscari* student of the International Relations degree course, who decided to join this experience during the last academic year (2011/2012).

"I lived my Erasmus Placement experience in 2012: the programme allowed me to work as an intern for a press agency located in Bruxelles, at the very core of the European Union institutional framework. The internship lasted three months: during such period, I had the opportunity to exercise my writing skills, since I was responsible for the daily updating of our website, a blog about environmental and energy issues, always with a focus on European Union activities on the matter. However, I would say that the biggest chance was attending to several conferences and events, mainly focused on sustainable energy, organized by the European Commission. Therefore, I would say that the Erasmus Placement was "an European experience" from all points of view. In addition, I strongly believe that a working experience abroad not only helps you to improve your linguistic and cultural skills, but also that it really expands your horizon, proving to be an essential and priceless part of your Curriculum Vitae. The internship was also recognized by my home university as credit. If I should find just a couple of negative aspects, I would say that probably the economic allowance granted by the programme is not enough to cover the cost of living, at least in an expensive city like Bruxelles; moreover, even if I was quite satisfied with my tasks, I think that the periodical assessments and

feedbacks required by the Programme are not fully able to capture the actual compliance of the internship with the initial training agreement. (Angela, 26 years old, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, International Relations)"

According to the Document of Internationalisation, as already said, the University has a particular interest for the collaboration with institutions of the Mediterranean region, in order to contribute to the European trend of creating and promoting activities for the development of economic prosperity and stability of this area. Included within *Ca' Foscari* mobility offer, there is a project funded in collaboration with the European Union named EU-MeS, the 'Euro Mediterranean Region: Sustainability between people and politics'. "The project includes the joint collaboration of Universities such as SOAS University (London), UAB (Barcelona), Paul Valery (Montpellier 3) and Paris 8, together with the support of 3 partners Universities of the South Bank of Mediterranean which are Rabat, Meknes and El Oued"[269].

The programme is directed to students of master courses, especially that of International Relation and it consists of online teaching modules which students can attend thanks to the *moodle* platform. "The EU-MeS curriculum consists of 11 online teaching modules, which have been chosen according their pertinence to subject interesting for International Relations programmes and similar courses such as migration studies and Gender studies in the Euro-Mediterranean region"[270].

Each partner involved is specialised in a particular topic which is considered essential for the curriculum, the online modules are both in English and French language (and also Spanish for the University of Barcelona) and they are officially recognised within the curriculum of students of their home university.

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[269] European Commission and Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency. EU-MeS: Euro-Mediterranean Region Sustainability between people and politics. Progress Report 2010. Last visit on 30th April 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/documents/erasmus/multilateral_actions_2010/ECD/510379-llp-1-2010-1-it-erasmus-ecdce_the_euro-mediterranean_region_sustainability_between_people_and_politics_eu_mes.pdf

[270] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Interdepartmental School of International Relations. Educational Activities. Last visit on 27th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=143317

"Candidates who decide to join the project will include in their plan three specific courses on *Moodle* e-learning platform (one common module and two selected online modules, for a total amount of 24 credits) and a training period in one of the programme members or a workshop"[271].

The shared module for the 2012/2013 academic year was about 'Gender in the Euro-Mediterranean context', while for the elective online courses, students can choose within this list of study programme: "Palestine Society and Diaspora: Culture, Politics and the International Context and Sustainable Development and the South Mediterranean as for the SOAS University of London, État, politiques sociales et régulation sociale dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen and Intellectuels et intelligensias en méditerranée du sud et Diasporas were offered by the University Paris 8; the Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona is in charge for the Communication and International cooperation and Knowledge Society in the Mediterranean region module and for the one one in Policies and strategies of cooperation and development; The basic economic mechanism of a sustainable partnership between countries of the Mediterranean area and a course on Public policies, States and Societies in the Mediterranean are provided by the University of Montpellier III; while Ca' Foscari University of Venice offers a module in French Theories et pratiques des Diasporas et des mouvements transnationaux dans la Mediterannée and one in English Cultural transfer, democratic society and constitutionalism in the history of Euro-Mediterranean relations"[272].

Candidates of EU-MeS have, therefore, the chance to spend a period abroad as guests of one of these universities and they can ask for having a supervisor for their final dissertation.

Students can decide also to join a workshop, that for the academic year 2012/2013 had Morocco as its destination, which will allow students to discuss and improve the knowledge of the online modules they attend.

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[271] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Interdepartmental School of International Relations. Educational Activities. Last visit on 27th April 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=143317

[272] Ibid.

"Students will benefit from a better understanding of the potential offered by new teaching methodologies and technologies, […] using languages others than their mother tongue, contribute to the building of a community of knowledge characterised by a new European mentality thanks to shared experiences of students and teachers coming from different countries"[273].

In order to better analyse how *Ca' Foscari* is managing this new programme, I decide to lead a very brief survey within the students who decide to take part in it for the 2012/2013 academic year. From the answers of these candidate I understood that the project can be considered still in progress, since they move a few critics in particular towards the organisation of the programme itself.

The promotion of Eu-MeS project is lead in particular by professors who suggest to students to join this experience and benefit from the possibility of spending a period abroad in an international university: all the students confirmed that the suggestion for Eu-MeS came from the teaching staff.

Students decided to join the project therefore for the possibility to go abroad and at the same time because they considered the programme an interesting way for deepening their studies.

As already said, the programme follows an innovative method of teaching, which is supported by an online platform: it represented a change within the everyday study carrier of these students, according to the outcomes of the survey for all of them it was the first time they had the possibility to improve their knowledge thanks to an online teaching method. A part from some inconvenient, all the students did not have big difficulties in using it, therefore, since it seems to work quite well, in my opinion, this method could be taken into consideration also for the curricular courses of *Ca' Foscari* University.

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[273] European Commission and Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency. EU-MeS: Euro-Mediterranean Region Sustainability between people and politics. Progress Report 2010. P. 6. Last visit on 30th April 2013 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/documents/erasmus/multilateral_actions_2010/ECD/510379-llp-1-2010-1-it-erasmus-ecdce_the_euro-mediterranean_region_sustainability_between_people_and_politics_eu_mes.pdf

Did you find difficulties in using the online platform and following the modules?


yes
no
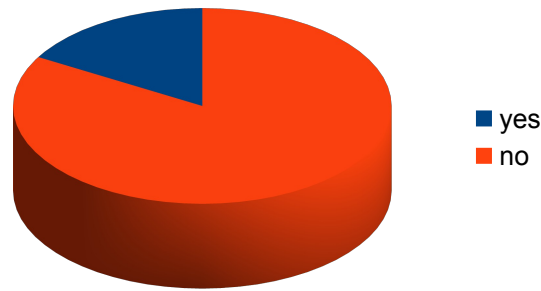
From an academic point of view, students felt satisfied with the online courses and considered the amount of work balanced to the number of credits they acquired at their home university, a part from one candidate who has an unfavourable opinion about the programme.

5 out of 6 candidates decide to spent three months abroad, they were relatively hosted by SOAS University of London and the Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona, but just 1 out of 6 decide to join the workshop in Morocco.

As for the period they spend in the United Kingdom or Spain, the candidates had the possibility to have a recognition and they included it within their curriculum as internship.

Even if students appeared to be almost satisfied by the programme, they affirm that the project is still immature and there are a lot of organisational gaps: at the question "Is the programme well developed?", the answer for all of them was a clear "No".

Is the programme well developed?
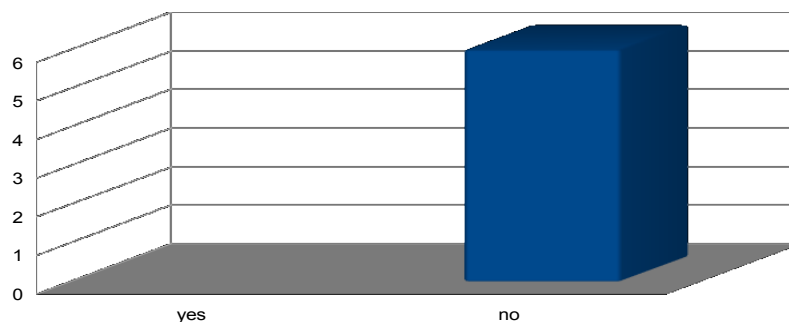
The general feeling of students was that of 'being abandoned', there is a lack of communication between teaching and administrative staff, information are often not clear or even incongruent and the same situation was perceivable also at the universities abroad, where they feel like foreigners and they have difficulties to integrate in a comfortable way. Despite these obstacles, candidates would choose again the Eu-MeS project and would suggest it also to friends.

The survey allows therefore to conclude that the project is itself a valuable alternative option to the classic teaching methods and the correlated abroad experiences are stimulating for students, with the right organisational improvements and an intensive communication between teaching and administrative staff, the programme could become an excellent international offer of *Ca' Foscari*.

Within the partnerships of *Ca' Foscari* University there is also the project of "Erasmus Mundus WEBB Whole Europe Beyond Borders", from 2012 the programme is funded by the European Commission for the cooperation within the sector of education between Europe and third countries.

The project involved European countries such as "Italy, France, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, Finland and Sweden and third countries of a geographic area which comprehends Georgia, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine e Bielorussia"[274].

Not only teaching and administrative staff are eligible for this experience, but the offer is valid also for students of first or second cycle degree and for post-graduate and PhD. The chance to spend a period abroad is addressed not only to students of European University, but also to third countries students who decide to participate in the mobility programme towards Europe. The duration of the mobility period is from 6 to 10 months. The project is open also to students belonging to universities which are not partner of the programme, but who live in countries where the project is developed.

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[274] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Erasmus Mundus WEBB. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=144089

Internationalisation of *Ca' Foscari* University does not intend to cover only the European perspective, in fact it maintains several agreements of Scientific and Cultural Cooperation with non-European institutions and universities. The main objective of these accords is the development of joint actions for study and research which often allow students to experience an international exchange at the partner University.

Candidates of international exchanges have the chance to attend courses and to prepare exams at prestigious institutions without the payment of tuition fees. Students can agree with the home university for the recognition of the credits acquired during the period abroad. As for the incoming international students, they are selected in their home universities and they can access to *Ca' Foscari* if they satisfied the established requirements.

A similar opportunity is given by the University for both home and international students, according to a system called "Visiting students", which allow to spend a period abroad and having the credits recognised by the university. The status of visiting students is offered for both a period of study or research.

Also the LLP/*Leonardo da Vinci* programme is part of *Ca' Foscari* strategy of internationalisation, but unfortunately there are no announcements for the academic year 2013/2014. Probably this is caused by the difficulties in funding the programme on behalf of the European Commission, because, as already said in the previous chapter, the cuts to the funding system imposed some obstacles to the ongoing projects.

Anyway, by now, thanks to the project of Leonardo da Vinci "I see a leader", which funded "internships to strengthen European Employability and Local Entrepreneurial Advanced Development and Excellence Reality, the University offered to 50 students to benefit from a grant for internship for their professional development in European companies partners of the project"[275].

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[275] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Leonardo da Vinci I SEE A LEADER. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=94396

Thanks to this experience, candidates had the possibility to develop their competences for the planning and management of research of funding, in order to start and manage processes for the transformation and improvement of the territory and the cooperation of human resources.

Even if by now, internships offered by the joint action of the Ministry of Foreign Affair (MAE) and the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI) are temporarily suspended, they are still part of the international offer of *Ca' Foscari* and they represented an interesting opportunity for students.

The main aim of the apprenticeship programme is "to place recent graduates and students enrolled in their final year in training and orientation programmes offered within the offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affair both in Italy and abroad"[276].

Candidates have therefore the possibility to experience the environment of diplomatic offices, consulates, delegation and other governmental institutions.

Within the initiatives for the mobility outside of Europe, an important project is developed together with the Co.As.It. (Comitato Assistenza Italiani), which works in the field of education and assistance in the area of Melbourne, thanks to an agreement with the Ministry of Public Education and the Catholic Education Office of Victoria.

The Co.As.It. Programme offers the possibility to *Ca' Foscari* students to join a training course for the teaching of the Italian language within school in the state of Victoria (Australia), with a partial grant for their stay.

Another proposal comes from the Colgate University in the state of New York, which is a private college that gives the opportunity to *Ca' Foscari* students to win a scholarship to attend an entire academic year (9 months), contributing to the didactic offer of the institution helping in the teaching of the Italian language.

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[276] Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The MAE-CRUI programme. Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=77192

The candidate will collaborate with the professors of the university in order to help students in the learning of Italian language.

In order to improve the attractiveness of the University and to become even more widely known, in relation also to the development of international placements, *Ca' Foscari* is improving its activities thanks to the initiative called "Ca' Foscari Desk in the World".

This kind of activity should represent a sort of bridge between the University and its students, since it is supposed to increase the possibility of meeting and collaboration between them. The main target of the desk, which students can find in Italian institutions and authorities, is to inform and promote international placements and bilateral agreements between *Ca' Foscari* and other organisations. The desk will represent a meeting point for the exchange of information managed by students, graduates and doctoral candidates.

As for the incoming mobility, as already said during the study, *Ca' Foscari* University accepts foreign students for both mobility period and complete enrolment, as well as researchers, professors and members of the administrative staff of international universities.

"As for the outgoing mobility, statistics offer data also for the incoming students at *Ca' Foscari*, in fact the Erasmus students hosted for the 2011/2012 academic year were 218, while the previous year just 187 students were registered within the programme. There was therefore an increase of the 16.5% and the main countries of origin were Spain and Germany, which send abroad their candidates for a period lasting on average one year, even if in some cases, students decide to protract their stay."[277].

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[277] Ca' Foscari Univerity of Venice. Infoscari. *"Boom di partenze e arrivi Erasmus a Ca' Foscari: quest'anno domande in crescita del 18 percento."* Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=125343

Erasmus Students Survey

Ca' Foscari is trying to be more attractive for incoming students by improving the welcome of international candidates, thanks to guide of the University, welcome days for their orientation supported also by the buddy programme and other initiatives in which *Ca' Foscari* students have an important role as tutors. At the same time, the University is trying to enrich its international academic offer and improve its international competences.

In order to have also an external point of view of the internationalisation of *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice, I decided to lead a survey within the Erasmus and international students of the current 2012/2013 academic year, who are spending their period of mobility in this university.

Trough the innovative social network Facebook I had the possibility to contact the students, in fact, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) of Venice created a virtual group of which quite all the candidates for this kind of experience are members. I outlined a questionnaire in English language, in order to make it comprehensible for all of them and I sent more than 200 questionnaires to the students. After having received around 50 filled questionnaires I collected all the data and here I will analyse the interesting results.

After requiring personal data such as the sex and the country of origin, I asked students the length of their Erasmus or exchange period and these are the first results:

Length of Erasmus	Number of students
3 months	2
4 months	5
5 months	18
6 months	8
7 months	
8 months	
9 months	9
10 months	8

As we can notice from the chart in the previous page, the majority of the students joined an international experience which lasted 5 months. The following main durations are between 6 and 10 months. According to the data of the European Commission, as already said in the previous chapter, the duration of Erasmus nowadays is on average of 6 months and these data can confirm the thesis. The chart below, instead, schedules the countries of origins of the candidates who answer at the survey:

Country of Origin	Number of Students
Austria	2
Belgium	1
Bulgaria	1
Croatia (international exchange)	3
Cyprus	3
Denmark	1
United Kingdom	4
France	5
Greece	5
Germany	4
Hungary	1
Spain	4
Israel (Viu)	1
Japan (international exchange)	1
Lithuania	1
Netherlands	1
Poland	1
Portugal	3
Romania	1
Russia (international exchange)	2
Switzerland (international exchange)	1
Taiwan (international exchange)	2
Turkey (international exchange)	2

As for the mobility period, the countries which send the majority of students appear to be France, Spain, Germany, Greece and Croatia. The case of England catches our attention, in fact, contrary to the expectations there are 4 cases of outgoing mobility, while data confirm that the United Kingdom is one of the country with the lower percentage of this kind of mobility, while they have a great number of students for the incoming one. Germany, Spain and Croatia confirm instead what the previous chapter stated, Germany had a 13% of outbound mobility and Croatia showed an increase in the number of students who decided to study abroad.

1 – <u>Factors which push students towards the choice of Erasmus / International Exchange</u>

The first question of the survey asked to students the reason why they choose to join an Erasmus period or an international exchange, in the case of students coming from outside the EU, students have the possibility to select 2 options out of the 5 I proposed: academic reason, cultural aspect, for their future carrier, to live an European experience or to learn and improve a foreign language.

The majority of the students affirmed that they choose this experience in order to improve their linguistic skills, the second most selected answer was that of cultural aspects. The graph below can give a clear idea of the results.

Factors for the choice of Erasmus/International exchange
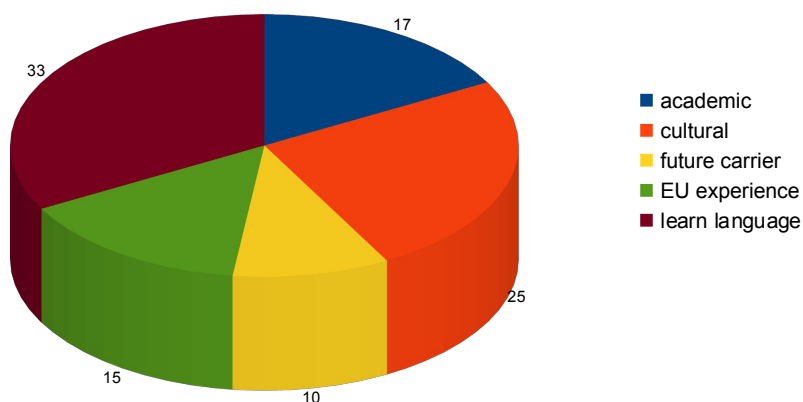
The outcomes of this question are not so weird, in fact it is well known that spending a period abroad is one of the best way to learn and improve the knowledge of a foreign language thanks also to the possibility to practice it on a everyday basis. Learning a new language is probably the main intents of a great part of the students who decide to leave their country for living in a new one.

2 – Factors which pushed students to choose *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice as destination

The second question was more specific and asked students to choose between 4 options the reason why they selected *Ca' Foscari* University as destination. The results were interesting, in fact the majority of the students opted for Venice because of their interest for the city itself. The question with the lower number of students was that of the prestige of the school, while more selected was the fact that this Erasmus was connected with the studies they were attending at their home university. The following chart collects all the answers received.

Factors for the choice of Ca' Foscari
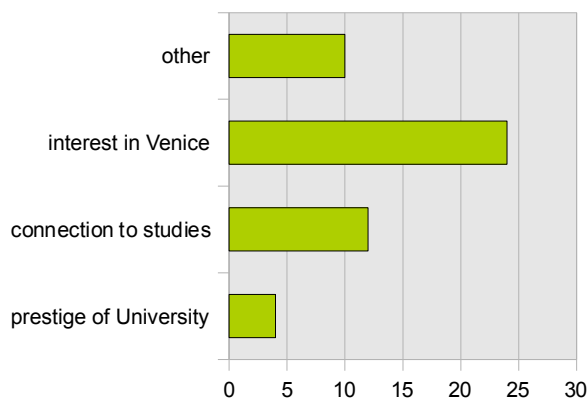
In my opinion, the University should exploit the great opportunity given by the environment from which it is hosted, Venice is in fact an incredible resource from the cultural, historic and architectural point of view and it is one of the most famous city visited by people from all over the world.

3 / 4 / 5 – <u>Information about Erasmus / International Exchange at *Ca' Foscari* University</u>

The following three questions were about the information on Erasmus or international exchange at *Ca' Foscari*, after answering to the question if "to get information was for them easy or hard", students had to tell where do they look for information and if what they found was useful or not. According to the data, getting information was quite easy, but the rest of the answers do not exclude that for some students it was almost hard. As for the way students used to look for information, the more selected options are "online by themselves" or "through *Ca' Foscari* University services".

Difficulties in finding information
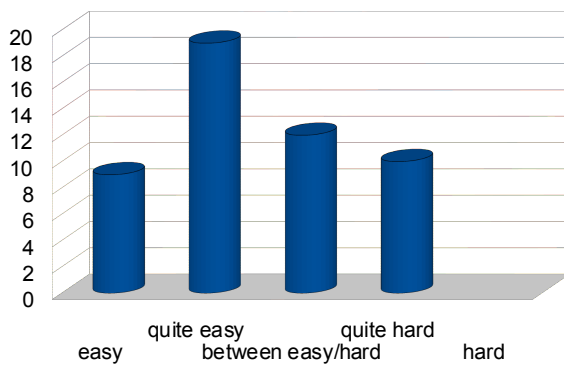
Where did the student find information?

- online (by him/herself)
- through the home university
- through Ca' Foscari University
- through an Erasmus student
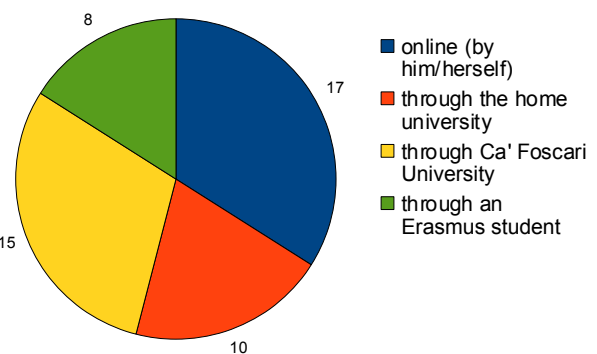
Validity of information
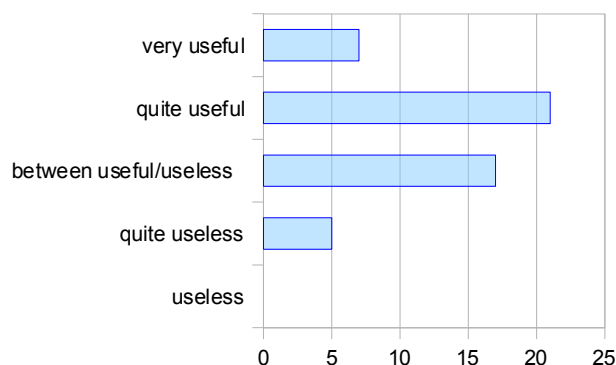
As for the information they get, on average, students considered them quite useful. The overall consideration is that it is quite easy to get interesting information also through the services offered by the University itself. The improvement of the online resources is certainly a priority since the online research seems to be the most selected.

6 / 7 – <u>Welcome to Erasmus and International Students in Venice and support</u>

The sixth and the seventh questions focused on the welcome to foreign students, the survey look for answers about the organisation of welcome days, of an orientation programme and the presence of tutors who can help students during their stay. The second question required also an overall mark to the support received in order to understand if *Ca' Foscari* guests were satisfied with the organisation of their period in Venice.

Welcome and orientation of Erasmus/International students
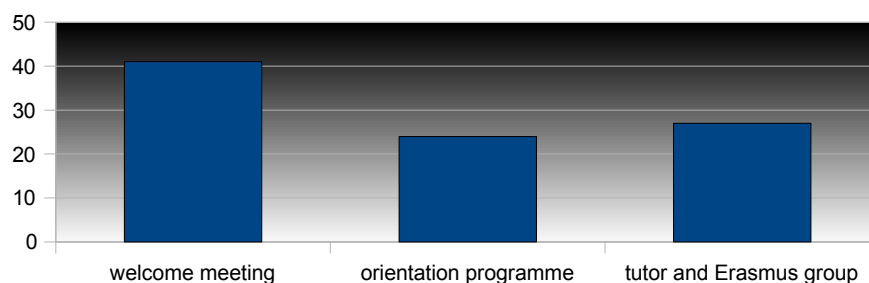
Almost all the students joined the Welcome Day, but just half of them had information about the orientation programme and the possibility of being helped by a tutor.

For sure, these are aspects that the University would try to improve, since for a foreign students the first period is the most difficult and to find an adequate support is a basic element.

Despite that, as for the mark, on average students considered the support received good and just a few students had a bad opinion of it.
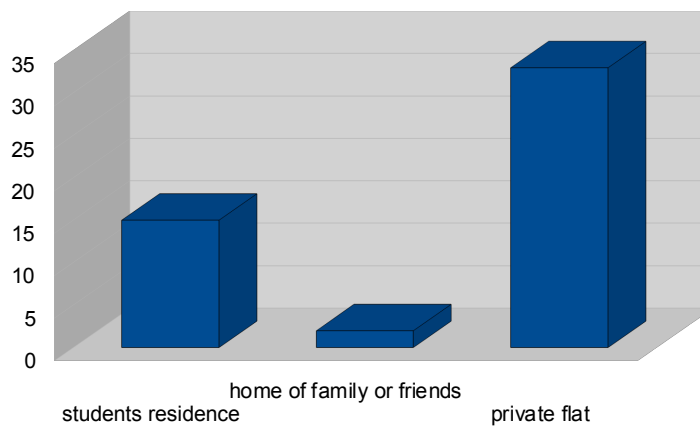
Quality of the support received

- bad
- quite bad
- between good and bad
- good
- very good
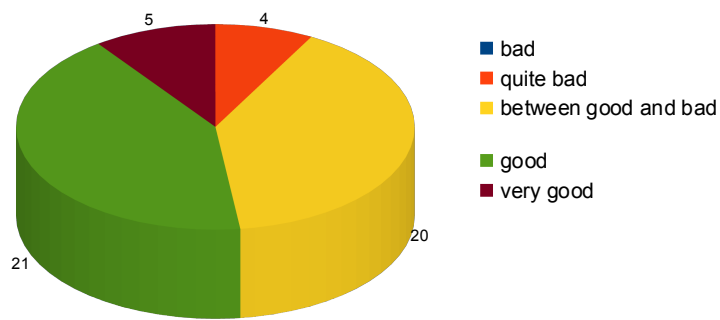
Anyway, the University is trying to improve the welcome and support of international students, as already said, trough buddy programmes and welcome services.

8 – <u>Students accommodation during the period abroad</u>

Students accommodation during the period abroad

As for the accommodation, question n.8 analysed which was the option chosen by international and Erasmus students for their stay in Venice and according to data, despite the high costs of the renting, the more selected option was that of the private flat. Half of the students have the possibility to be a guest of the students residence and only two were living in the house of some friends.

9 – <u>Access to Library and study material</u>

Question n.9 is about the possibility to access to libraries and study material and it is probably the one with the most unexpected results. In fact, when students have to define how they considered the access to libraries and getting the study material necessary to prepare their exams, the results shows that for a great number of them it turned out to be 'quite hard or hard'. The chart below shows all the answers.

Access to library or study material
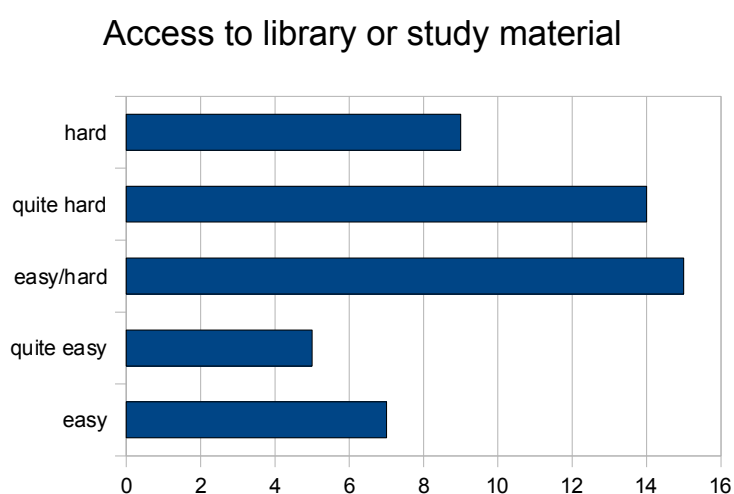
I think that this is a very uncomfortable aspect, since libraries and study material are essential for the success of an Erasmus experience, in fact students have to complete their exams in order to have them recognised by the home university. Probably, the causes of these setbacks are lead by the fact that often some courses do not have material online or in one of the University library, but students can find them just in a copy bureau, where often the material is damaged or incomplete.

It would be useful at least to make the material available in multiple copies therefore students can consult it or, in the best case, make it available online.

10 – <u>Recognition of the period abroad</u>

Even more interesting from the point of view of internationalisation is the question about the recognition of the period abroad. The results help to understand if the process of internationalisation and its reforms are working properly, for example if the system of credits transfer is adopted by several universities. Fortunately, outcomes are positive and according to data almost all the participants have a learning agreement, the majority of them can benefits from the recognition of the credits by both the university (even if 8 of them just partially) and almost all the students have an official recognition for the period abroad (only partial in some cases).

I must admit that in some questionnaires, students were complaining that often the ECTS is not working properly and they have found some complications when they were filling their learning agreement.

Recognition of the period abroad
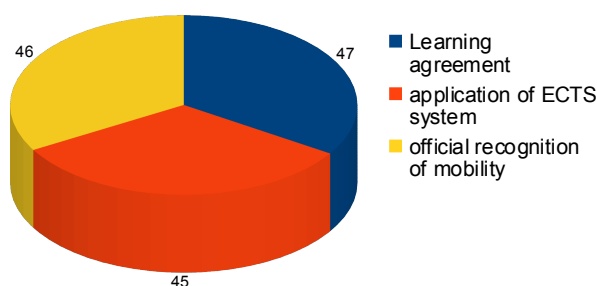

11 – <u>Linguistic preparation for Erasmus</u>

Answers to question 11 confirm that *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice organised one of the already cited EILC, which are Erasmus Intensive Language Courses that allow Erasmus students to learn and improve Italian language.

The survey shows that the majority of the students were aware of this opportunity and more than half of the students decided to join it. Often students decided by their own to attend other language courses inside the university As for other courses only for Erasmus, students confirm that the university does not offer this kind of activities.

Language courses (EILC)
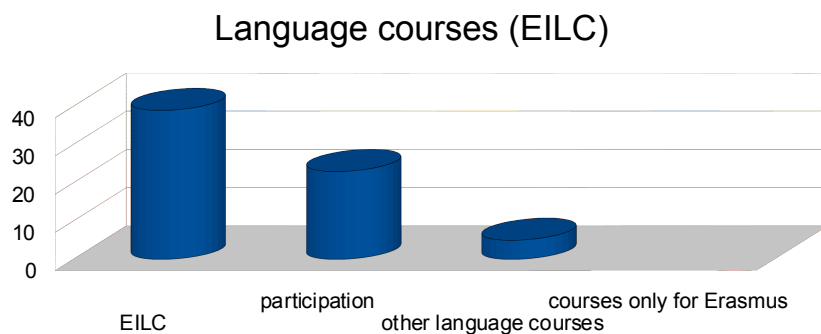


12 – Overall mark to *Ca' Foscari* from the academic point of view

When students were asked to define how they considered courses and academic aspects of *Ca' Foscari* University, these were the results:

Mark to Ca' Foscari from the academic point of view
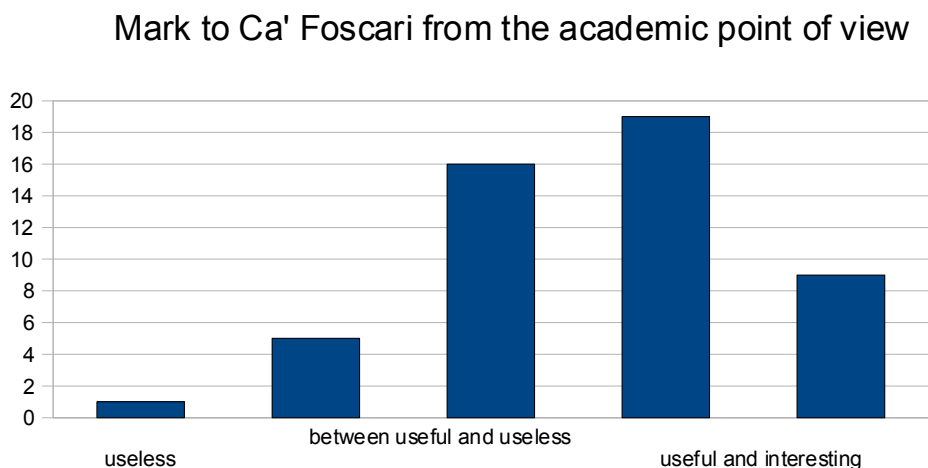
Therefore, the university can be quite satisfied by the outcomes, since international students and their external point of view have on average a positive opinion of *Ca' Foscari*. Even if there is a smaller percentage of students who grade the courses as more or less useless, the majority of the candidates affirm that courses were useful and interesting.

13 – Costs coverage

Grant's coverage of the costs
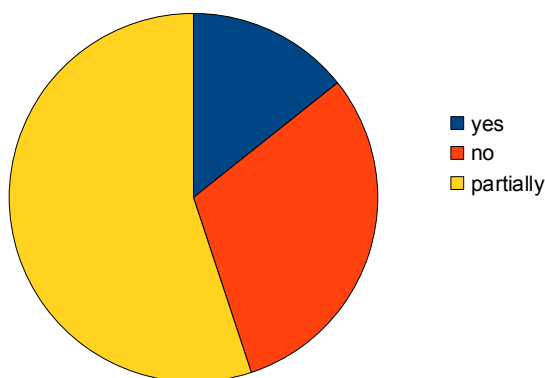
As it is clear from the graph above, unfortunately, the grants funded by the programme are in the majority of the case insufficient to cover the costs of the period abroad. I can confirm that this is the reality: I received a grant for my *Erasmus* Placement and even if it was around EUR 1500 for three months, it was even not enough to pay the rent of a flat for the duration of my internships. In my case, a lot of money was lost with the change of the currency, in fact I was living in the United Kingdom.

14 – <u>Overall mark to the experience abroad</u>

The result of the next question are somehow expected, the answers of students were almost positive when they were asked to give a mark to their experience abroad. A part from some candidates who defined their *Erasmus* or exchange period quite useless, for the rest of the students it was a great time and for half of the students who answered to the survey it was a really stimulating experience.

Mark to the experience abroad
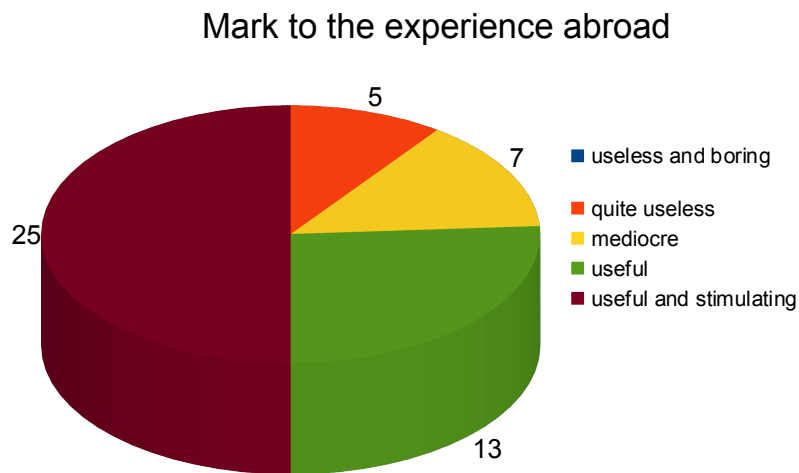
15 – <u>Would you like to join again this experience? Would you recommend it to a friend?</u>

As it was predictable from the results of the previous question, the answers to questions such as "Would you like to join again this experience? Would you recommend it to a friend?" were going to be almost positive. In fact, the chart in the following page will show that only 4 students wouldn't choose again a mobility period. Within the positive answers, two students affirm that they would choose again the experience, but not the city of Venice as destination.

As for the reasons why they would choose again this experience, answers were really similar and the majority of students replied saying that they do not only improve their linguistic competence, but this experience helped them in opening their mind, become more aware of themselves and of the opportunity they have both for their studies and job carrier.

Will the student choose again the experience?
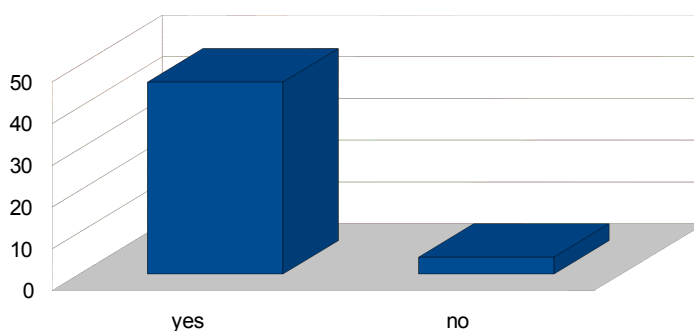
Even if for some students the experience was not extremely useful and stimulating, almost all of them would recommend Erasmus or international exchange programme to a friend. Only 2 students would even not suggest to try this kind of experience.

Will the student recomment it to a friend?
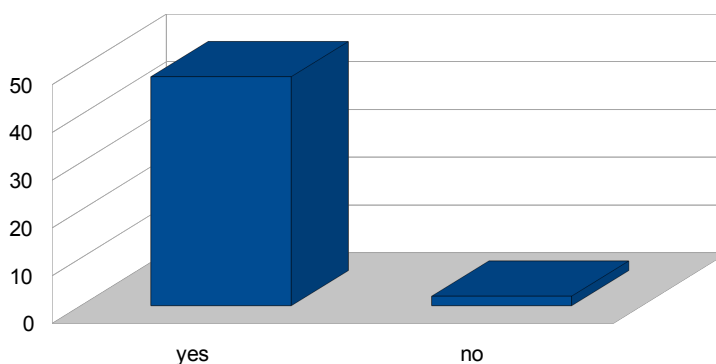
This survey was a stimulating way to investigate on the issue of internationalisation, I considered the debate with students who are experiencing *Ca' Foscari* and its international perspective the most direct method in order to catch reliable information and opinions. I did not meant to criticise the negative aspects of *Ca' Foscari* strategy, neither exalt the positive outcomes, but my aim was that of giving an objective idea of the level of internationalisation seen from a neutral point of view, therefore that of a foreign student.

The overall opinion about the experience of a mobility period in this university was almost satisfying from both the academic and administrative point of view, some difficulties are still present, but the developments occurring will soon improve the situation.

I want complete my analysis reporting some interesting data about the increasing numbers of *Ca' Foscari* mobility from the academic year 2006/2007 to 2011/2012.

<u>Outgoing students</u>

from 2006/2007 to 2011/2012 → 1924 students (+20%)

2006/2007 → 283 students

2011/2012 → 340 students

<u>Incoming students</u>

from 2006/2007 to2011/2012 → 1085 students (+28.9%)

2006/2007 → 169 students

2010/2011 → 187 students

2011/2012 → 218 students

<div align="center"><u>Training for students</u></div>

2009 → 272 internships

2010 → 351 internships

2011 → 361 internships

Source: Ca' Foscari Univerity of Venice. Infoscari. "Boom di partenze e arrivi Erasmus a Ca' Foscari: quest'anno domande in crescita del 18 percento". Last visit on 2nd May 2013 http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=125343

Data can prove the fact that the internationalisation of Ca' Foscari University is a phenomenon which continues to evolve and improve every year, the increasing number of incoming and outgoing students demonstrates that for the institution the process is active and dynamic and its strategy is allowing its growth.

Conclusions

The process of internationalisation of the higher education sector and of the universities' strategy is in continuous evolution. Through times, the phenomenon of internationalisation was affected by improvements and innovations with the aim of widening its range of actions.

Internationalisation is now part of the policy of the majority of the countries inside and out of Europe and the connection between different universities became even stronger.

The development of the process is demonstrated by the increasing number of people involved in its projects and by the multiple opportunities included in its programmes.

Starting from a worldwide level and ending up into a small reality such as that of the *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice, we notice that internationalisation is within the main objectives of institutions and it represents a factor for the attractiveness and prestige of universities.

The success of this process is evident, programmes and partnerships can last for years and a striking example, as already said, is represented by the Erasmus project that just celebrated its 25th Anniversary.

The reality of *Ca' Foscari* is a clear example that the process of internationalisation is influencing in a huge way strategies and offers of universities and the increasing number of its mobility is a proof of the positive achievements of the process.

Even if some setbacks are still present, the University is improving its international perspective and it is becoming even more attractive for foreign students. The diffusion of mobility programmes will lead to a growth of the amount of people who will choose to live this kind of international experiences.

The survey directed across the international students who decided to attend *Ca' Foscari* University for their mobility period shows that the opportunity of experiencing an Erasmus programme is considered an added value for the carrier of a person and almost all the interviewed candidates have a positive opinion of their experience, they would choose to join it again and also recommend it to a friend. Even if in some cases students found some difficulties, the procedures implemented with the *Bologna Process* seem to be working, such as the system for the transfer of credits or the recognition of the mobility period.

In my opinion, internationalisation is a positive aspect of the contemporary society which allow students, teachers and other professional figures to experience foreign cultures and environment improving at the same time professional and linguistic skills and growing at personal level.

Internationalisation allows to increase the feeling of a European citizenship and its evolution helps in decreasing the barriers for mobility, which is a fundamental element for a successful construction of an even wider European Higher Education Area.

The internationalisation of the higher education sector will help Europe and the rest of the world to build up networks and partnerships which turn to be useful not only for the education area, but also for the collaboration within the economic, political and social sectors as well.

The quotation of Nelson Mandela at the beginning of my work states "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world", and I think that probably an internationalised education will ease this process of changing.

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