

# Mobility and data in the EHEA:

What do we know? What don't we know?

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# Mobility: always at the heart of EHEA

EHEA objectives: open and inclusive higher education

Mobility both an instrument to connect systems, and an objective to improve quality of student-centred learning

Creating easily comparable degrees to service internationalisation and increase attraction to Europe

# Main forms of physical mobility

- Credit mobility: Erasmus programme has been the main motor through 2 decades of Bologna
- Degree mobility: facilitated by Bologna degree structure architecture and portability of student support (in some systems)

# Developments along the way

- **Joint programmes / degrees:** catalyst of Erasmus Mundus supporting joint master (and later PhD) programmes - and paving the way for European Universities / European degrees
- **Mobility target** (in Leuven 2009) *“In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad.”*
- 20% by 2020 target was partially set in the dark, as data could not tell us in 2009 the percentage of graduates that had been mobile

# Credit mobility data

- First decade of Bologna: good data on European mobility programmes, but no reliable source of other credit mobility data
- Few national systems collected credit mobility data systematically, and so neither did Eurostat

# Degree mobility data

- First decade of Bologna: national data didn't measure numbers of mobile students, but numbers of foreign students
- Some foreign students were mobile, but others were simply students of a different nationality resident in the country
- Additionally, until ISCED 2011, no distinction was made between first and second cycle students...

# Impact of target-setting on data collection

- Important changes in international data collection (Eurostat/OECD/UNESCO)
- ISCED 2011 enabled picture of mobility in different cycles to become visible
- Collection of degree mobility data from 2013 on the basis of country of usual residence – ie country where the previous level of education was acquired
- Comprehensive credit mobility data became available in 2018 (reference year 2016/17)
- However, international data only as good as national data, and some countries still report degree mobility on the basis of citizenship/nationality and have gaps in credit mobility data

# What is happening with mobility?

- EHEA will fall short of reaching overall objective of 20% by 2020
- Indeed 9.6% graduates had mobility experience (2016/17)
- But things are more complex, and not as bad as that information suggests
- Target-setters overlooked an important issue, which is clear when looking at the data by cycle...



# Rates of mobility by cycle (from BPIR 2020)

- ISCED 8 (PhD): 17.3 %
- ISCED 7 (Master) 16.1 %
- ISCED 6 (Bachelor) 9.6 %
- ISCED 5 (short cycle) N/A – too few systems with data

For PhD and Master, the 20% target is within reach

For Bachelor, % low: but 2/3 of students enrolled at BA level

In other words, Bachelor level makes it very difficult for target to be reached...

# Other aspects of mobility to consider

- **Staff mobility:** can have a big impact (with relatively small numbers)
- Implications in terms of human resource management of HEIs means that it isn't necessarily desirable simply to have large numbers of mobile staff..
- Data can be difficult to define and compare (when is staff mobility meaningful for students? E.g. Research projects? Conferences? One-off guest lectures?)

# Other aspects of mobility to consider

- **Virtual mobility:** role to play in enhancing inter-institutional cooperation
- But how to assess quality of virtual learning experience?
- Combination with physical mobility might be desirable, but difficult to capture combinations in data...

# Other questions

- **Social dimension of mobility** (addressed in P&G 8).
    - Policy action to stimulate students that may be more hesitant to participate in mobility
    - Improve data on student characteristics in mobility
  - Are some **fields of study** worth particular attention (eg teacher training)?
  - Should we focus more on **earlier levels of study**? (short cycle and BA?)
- ... To be discussed 😊

Thank you for your attention