

The Professional Value of ERASMUS Mobility

By Oliver Bracht, Constanze Engel,
Kerstin Janson, Albert Over, Harald Schomburg and
Ulrich Teichler

International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel)
University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany

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

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Executive Summary

Aims and Design of the Study

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

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

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

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

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

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

Modes of Inquiry

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

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

Subsequently, four key surveys were undertaken:

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

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

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

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

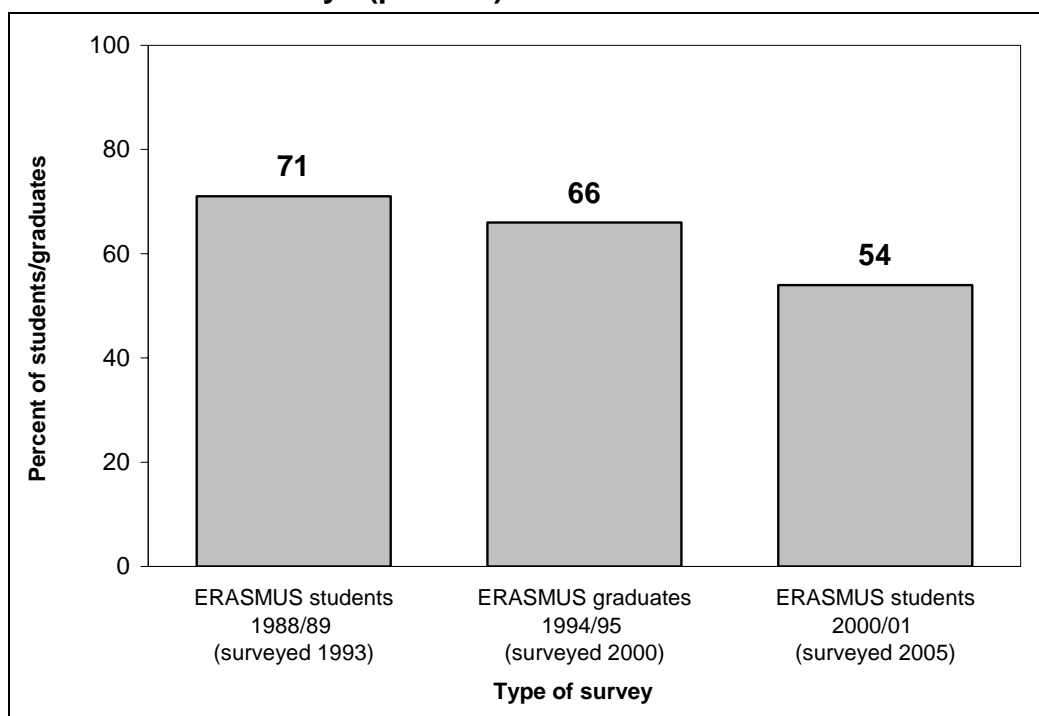
that reason an extension of the project to about twice the period initially envisaged. Moreover, the research team – well experienced in studies on international mobility and responsible for ERASMUS evaluations between the start of the programme and the late 1990s - contributed to the survival of the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

Transition from Study to Employment

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

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

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



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

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

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

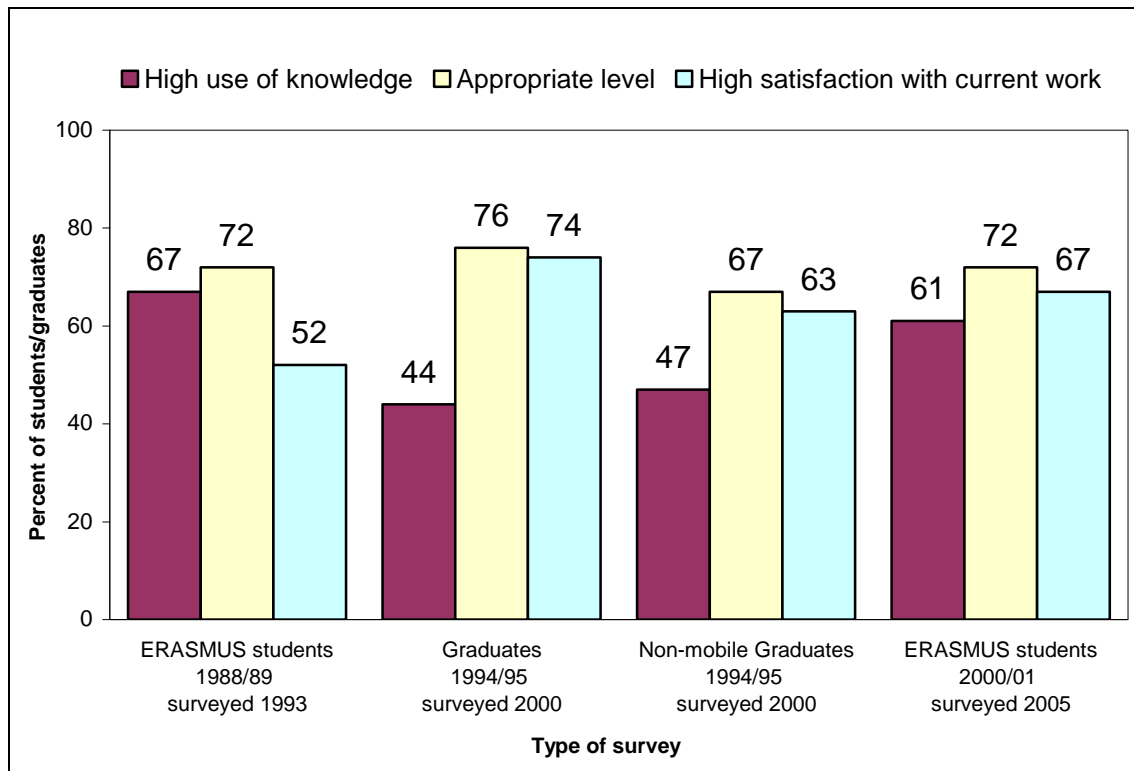
Graduate Career and Work

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

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

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

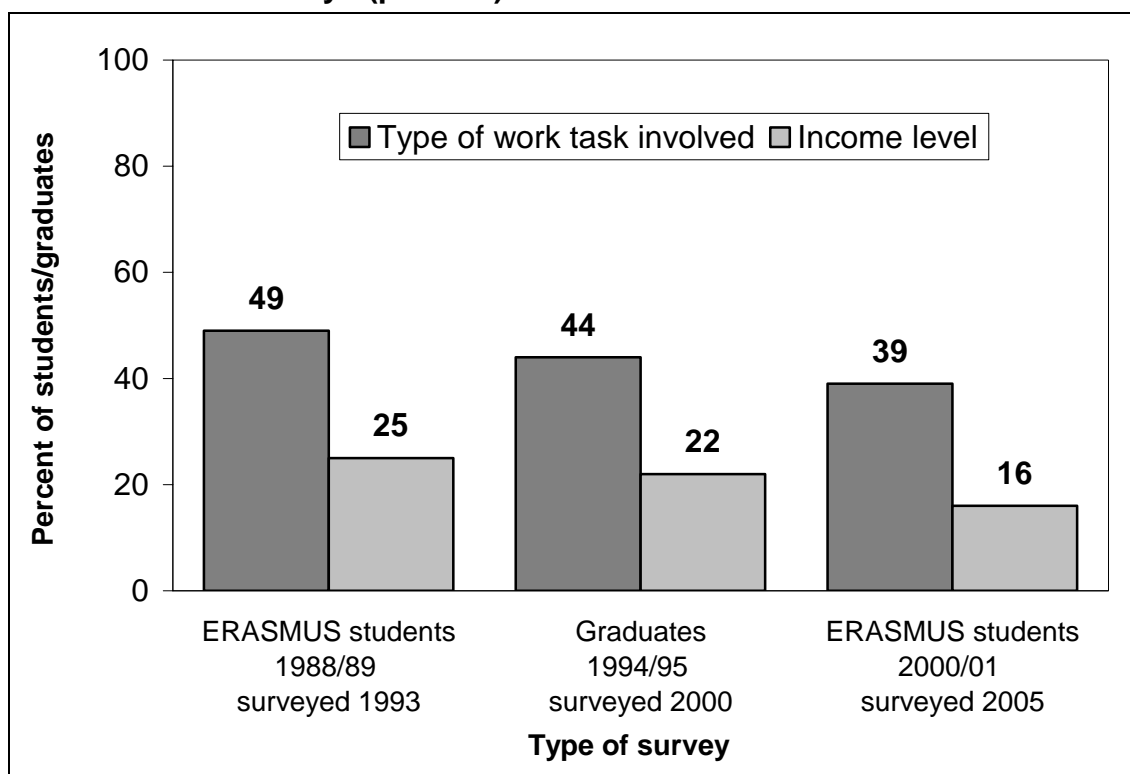
Figure 2 Links Between Study and Subsequent Employment and Work Perceived by Employed Former ERASMUS Students - a Comparison with Previous Surveys (percent)



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

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

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



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

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

Competences and Work of Former ERASMUS Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

International Assignments of Former ERASMUS Students

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

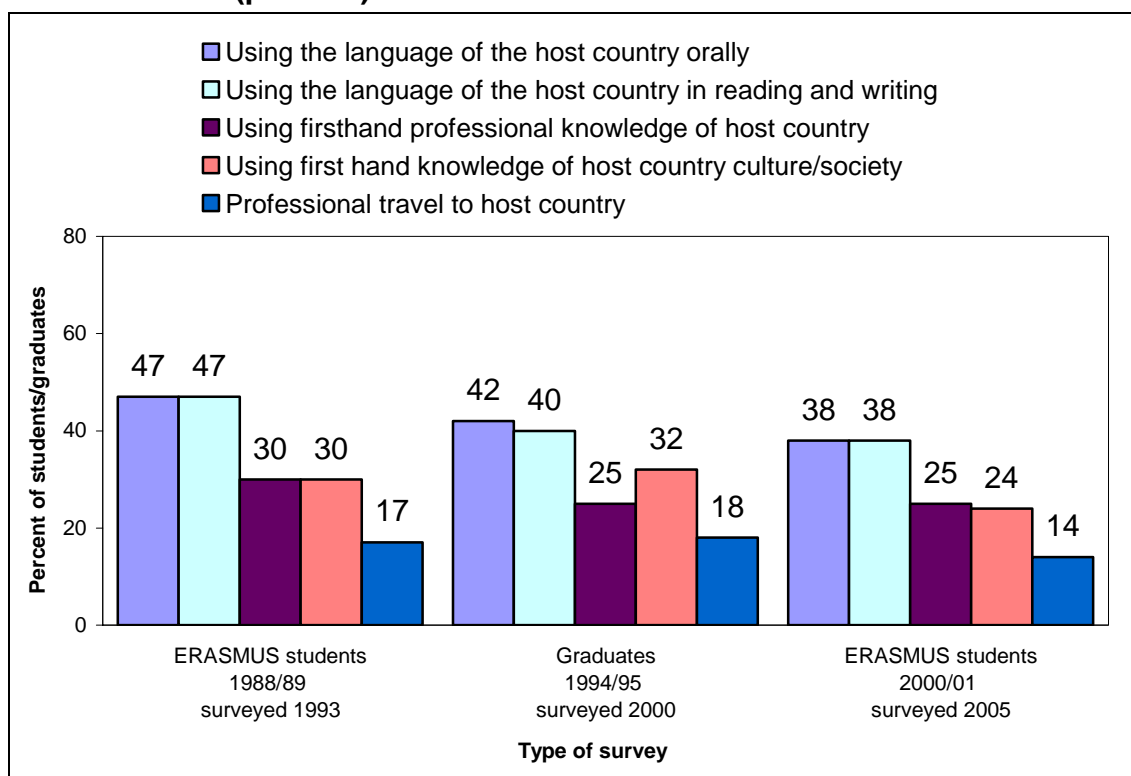
18 percent of the 2000/01 ERASMUS students employed five years later have been regularly employed abroad – at least for some time - after graduation; this figure is more or less equal to that of prior surveys. Available statistics suggest that this figure is several times as high as among non-mobile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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Additional Findings about the Professional Value of Student Mobility

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

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

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

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

The Professional Value for Mobile Teachers

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

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

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

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

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

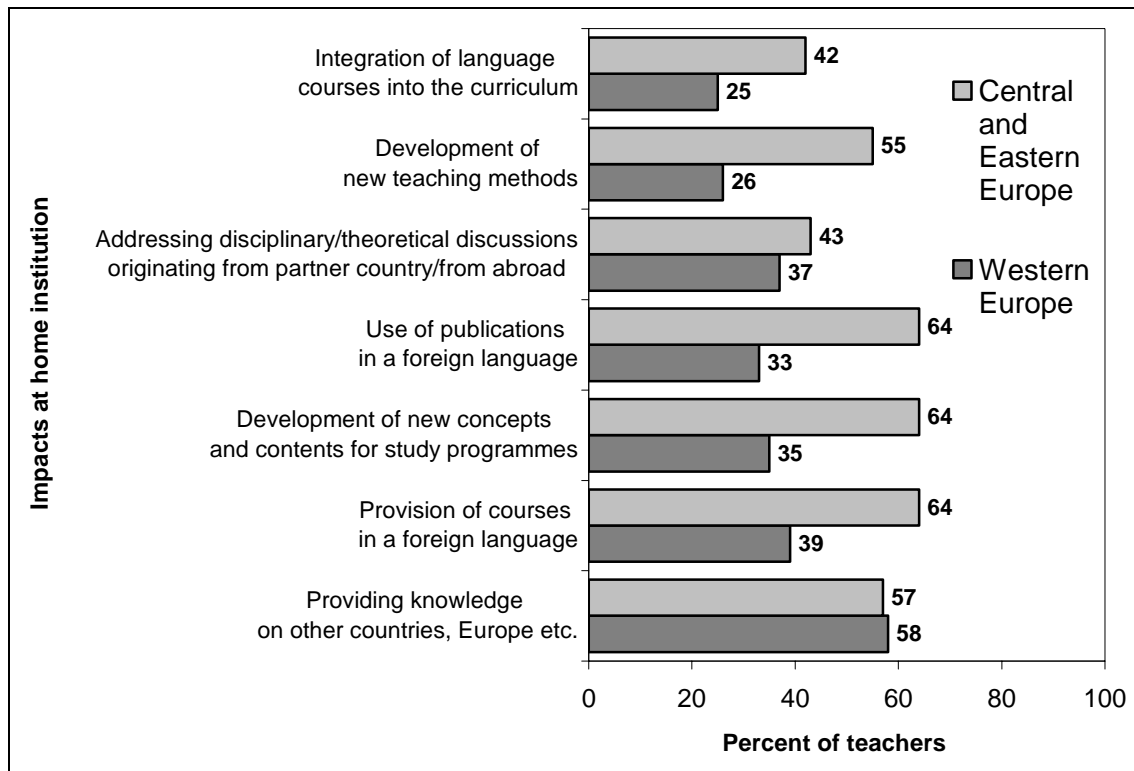
Moreover, formerly mobile teachers are convinced that ERASMUS teaching mobility has a positive impact on their institution of higher education. More than half of them argue that teaching mobility has been helpful for improving advice provided to mobile students and for providing knowledge on other countries.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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The Overall Value and Recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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