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Article

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AGNIESZKA WYSOKIŃSKA

Reform of Governance in Higher Education Sector as a factor enhancing international mobility of students - the case of Poland

Abstract

The aim of the paper is the presentation of main directions and programmes enhancing international mobility of students in Europe and outside Europe and some results of this programmes in the case of Poland. The paper examines also the main decisions of the European Commission related to the reform of the Higher Education Sector in the EU as one of the most important factors stimulating mobility in the tertiary education schools.

1. Reform of Governance in Higher Education Sector in the EU

Higher education plays an essential role in the European society, creating new knowledge, transferring it to students and fostering innovation. Institutions throughout Europe are working to modernize, both in terms of the courses they offer and the way they operate. Europe has around 4,000 higher education institutions, with over 19 million students and 1.5 million staff. Some European universities are amongst the best in the world, but overall potential is not used to the full. According to the opinion of the experts of European Commission curricula are not always up-to-date, not enough young people go to university after finishing school and not enough adults have ever attended university²⁰.

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc62_en.htm.

Governments and higher education institutions are looking for ways to creating better conditions for universities.

The European Commission has published a modernization agenda for universities which was welcomed by the Member States and the main stakeholders in higher education. The modernization agenda for universities is part of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. The main fields of reform are:

- **Curricular reform:** The three cycle system (bachelor-master-doctorate), competence based learning, flexible learning paths, recognition, mobility,
- **Governance reform:** University autonomy, strategic partnerships, including with enterprises, quality assurance,
- **Funding reform:** Diversified sources of university income better linked to performance, promoting equity, access and efficiency, including the possible role of tuition fees, grants and loans.

Curricular reforms are also promoted through the Bologna Process, in which 46 countries in the wider Europe are working towards establishing the European Higher Education Area by 2010. The European Commission is helping member states and neighbouring countries in their modernizing efforts through policy initiatives, discussion papers and forums, as well as through EU programmes such as Erasmus, Tempus and Erasmus Mundus. Curriculum changes have to demonstrate their relevance to the wider world, leading to a distinction between traditional and emerging curricula. Academic excellence is increasingly equated with improving international competitiveness, not least because, as public funding to higher education has been reduced, the advocates of additional funding for education have been forced to rationalize it in terms of its contribution to greater economic competitiveness²¹.

²¹ Bache, J., The Europeanization of Higher Education: Markets, Politics or Learning?., *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume, 44, Number 2, 2006, p. 234.

Table 1. Traditional and Emerging Curricula

Traditional Curricula	Emerging Curricula
Knowing that	Knowing how
Written communication	Oral communication
Personal	Interpersonal
Internal	External
Disciplinary skills	Transferable skills
Intellectual orientation	Action orientation
Problem-making	Problem-solving
Knowledge as a process	Knowledge as a product
Understanding	Information
Concept-based	Issue-based
Knowledge-based	Talk-based
Pure	Applied
Proposition-based learning	Experimental learning

Source: Barnett ,R., Parry, G., and Coate, K., Conceptualising Curriculum Change, Teaching in Higher Education, Vol.6, No.4, p.437.

The European Commission helps EU member states and neighbouring countries in their modernizing efforts through policy initiatives, discussion papers and events, as well as through EU programmes promoting mobility in education such as Erasmus, Tempus and Erasmus Mundus²².

²² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc62_en.htm

The European Commission identifies 9 areas where changes should be made so that Europe's universities can contribute to the creation of a true knowledge economy. Each institution should find the balance of education, research and innovation which is best suited to its role in its region or country. This will necessarily mean a differentiated approach. The aim is to create a framework within which universities can become stronger players in the global knowledge society and economy. The primary goal must be to achieve excellence in the teaching and research functions of universities.

The proposals put forward by the Commission today include:

- Boost the proportion of graduates spending at least one semester abroad or in industry,
- Allow students to make use of national loans and grants wherever in the EU they decide to study or do research,
- Bring procedures for the recognition of academic qualifications in line with those for professional qualifications and make European degrees more easily recognized outside Europe,
- Introduce training in intellectual property management, communication, networking, entrepreneurship and team-working as part of a research career,
- Refocus courses to allow greater participation at later stages of the life-cycle, thereby addressing the skills needs of Europe's workforce, and ensuring that universities are able to adapt to Europe's ageing population,
- Review national student fee and support schemes so that the best students can participate in higher education and further research careers whatever their background,
- Review systems for funding universities, to be more focused on outputs and give universities more responsibility for their own long-term financial sustainability, particularly in research,
- Allow universities greater autonomy and accountability, so that they can respond quickly to change. This could include revising curricula to adapt to new developments, building closer links between disciplines and focusing on overall research areas domains (e.g. renewable energy, nanotechnology) rather than disciplines. It could also include more autonomy at individual institution level for choosing teaching and research staff²³.

Taking into consideration the most important objective oriented on creation of a true knowledge economy in Europe until the year 2010, the European Commission has proposed that 2009 is the 'European Year of

²³<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/592&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>.

Creativity and Innovation'. Both are essential elements for the future success of Europe and its long-term economic competitiveness²⁴.

The Bologna Process aims also to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 has put 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. Reform was needed then and reform is still needed today if Europe is to match the performance of the best performing systems in the world, notably the United States and Asia. The three priorities of the Bologna process are: Introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

ECTS makes teaching and learning more transparent and facilitates the recognition of studies (formal, non-formal and informal). The system is used across Europe for credit transfer (student mobility) and credit accumulation (learning paths towards a degree). It also informs curriculum design and quality assurance²⁵.

2. EU Programmes promoting student and staff mobility in Higher Education in Europe and outside Europe

The main objective of the EU's Erasmus Programme, is to promote student and staff exchanges in higher education. EU actions in education and training aim to improve the quality of learning systems and provide greater opportunities for people at all stages of their lives. While each Member State is in charge of its own education and training system, co-ordinated action can help achieve common aims. The European Commission focuses on two aspects: firstly, co-operation with national authorities and European stakeholders on improving policies and exchanging good practice, and secondly the development and administration of funding programmes²⁶.

²⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc56_en.htm.

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48_en.htm.

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/at-a-glance/about141_en.htm.

Co-operation among the Member States and the EU institutions gathered pace following the adoption of the EU's overarching Lisbon Strategy. This acknowledged that increased collaboration on education and training policy is essential if the EU is to become a world-leading knowledge-based economy. To achieve these ambitious goals, the Education and Training 2010 work programme launched in 2002 sets out a policy framework that aims to make the EU's education and training systems a world reference and turn the Lisbon objectives into reality.

The European Commission Programme 'Education and Training 2010' has led to a number of initiatives supporting lifelong learning which include a framework of key competences that each citizen should gain to succeed in today's knowledge society, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as well as key policy documents on higher education, the education and training of teachers, and the challenge to make Europe's education and training systems efficient as well as equitable.

There are a number of funding programmes that complement the European Commission's policy-related work and contribute to priorities agreed by the EU institutions and Member States. The most important programmes from the point of view of supporting students mobility and staff exchange are still the Tempus Programme, Erasmus Programme as well as Erasmus Mundus. The Tempus programme, first launched in 1990, helps modernize higher education in countries surrounding the EU. Meanwhile, the Erasmus Mundus Programme, launched in 2004, opens up EU education systems to students and organizations around the world.

Starting from the year 2007 Erasmus is a sub-programme of the EU's global programme in the area of education and training, the *Lifelong Learning Programme* (LLP). Erasmus has an overall budget of approximately € 3.1 billion for the period 2007-2013, and aims at enhancing the quality and reinforcing the European dimension of higher education as well as at increasing student and staff mobility. Currently, more than 3,100 higher education institutions in 31 countries in Europe participate in the Erasmus programme, which has so far supported 1.7 million students²⁷.

Learning mobility, i.e. transnational mobility for the purpose of acquiring new skills is one of the fundamental ways in which individuals, particularly young people, can strengthen their future employability as well as their personal development. Studies confirm that learning mobility adds to human capital, as

²⁷<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1058&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>; Brussels, 30 June 2008.

students access new knowledge and develop new linguistic skills and intercultural competences. Furthermore, employers recognize and value these benefits. Europeans who are mobile as young learners are more likely to be mobile as workers later in life. Learning mobility has played an important role in making education and training systems and institutions more open, more European and international, more accessible and efficient. It can also strengthen Europe's competitiveness by helping to build a knowledge-intensive society, thereby contributing to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs²⁸.

In the context of the current international economic crisis, the Commission has stressed that investment in education and training, is crucial. It has also underlined that while there may be a temptation in such circumstances to divert resources away from such activities, it is precisely in times of economic difficulty that investment in knowledge and skills needs to be safeguarded. Thence the mobility of learners should form part of a renewed drive to build Europe's skills and ability to innovate and compete at international level. It can also help to overcome the immobility paradox whereby even today, during a severe crisis, there are unfilled vacancies in some countries and sectors, due to skills shortages. Learning mobility has other positive features. It can, for example, help combat the risks of isolationism, protectionism and xenophobia which arise in times of economic crisis, help foster a deepened sense of European identity and citizenship among young people. It also boosts the circulation of knowledge which is key to Europe's knowledge-based future²⁹.

3. Some results of the Erasmus Programme in Poland³⁰

During the recent ten years of the Erasmus Programme in Poland, the annual number of outgoing students increased almost eight-fold from 1,426 in 1998/99 to 11,219 in 2006/07 and a total number of 53,530 students have already undertaken a study period at European universities. (p.47). Polish students undertaking a study period under the Programme represented ca 1.4% of European Erasmus students in 1998/99 and already 7% in 2006/07.

²⁸ Promoting the learning mobility of young people, GREEN PAPER COM(2009) 329 final Brussels, 8.7.2009, p.2-3.

²⁹ As above.

³⁰ 10 YEARS OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME IN POLAND (1998 - 2008); Foundation for the Development of the Education System; Warsaw 2008.

As a result, in 2006/07 Poland ranked fifth in terms of the number of outgoing students among all 31 countries participating in the Programme and was outdistanced only by Germany, France, Spain and Italy (p.48). Likewise, the number of our outgoing Erasmus students as a proportion of all students in Poland is not particularly impressive as compared to that in other countries. Polish Erasmus students represented 0.11% in 1998/99, 0.33% in 2003/04 and 0.58% of the total student population in Poland in 2006/07. In spite of the increasing volume of mobility in terms of numbers and percentages, Poland is still below the European average of ca 0.8% for recent years. In 2006/07 the number of Erasmus students as a proportion of the total student population in a given country was equal to, or larger than, the European average in 18 of all 31 countries participating in the Programme, and smaller than the European average in 13 countries (p.48). Between 1998/99 and 2006/07 a total number of over 200 Polish universities were sending students abroad.

The top 10 universities in the overall rankings sending students abroad within Erasmus Programme are mainly the largest and large public universities with the total student population ranging between ca 30,000 and over 50,000. To this top universities belong:

- University of Warsaw,
- Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan,
- Jagiellonian University,
- University of Wrocław,
- University of Łódź,
- Technical University of Łódź,
- Warsaw School of Economics,
- Warsaw University of Technology,
- Wrocław University of Technology,
- Silesian University of Technology (p.50).

The list of countries where Polish students undertook a study period between 1998/99 and 2006/07 includes all countries participating in the Programme, except Liechtenstein. Among those which are most often chosen, Germany ranked first for years, hosting in total over 27% of all 53,530 Polish students. A smaller, but still fairly large, group of Polish Erasmus students completed a study period in France (12.4%), Spain (8.7%), Italy (7.5%) and the United Kingdom (6%). These five countries attracted jointly over 61% of Polish students. Four of them are also the most popular destinations among students from all 31 Erasmus countries, though the rankings are slightly different here,

with Spain still in the lead, followed by France, Germany and the United Kingdom (p. 55).

Erasmus students coming to Poland from other European countries are clearly outnumbered by Polish outgoing students, but their number (according to the figures given by universities) grew almost eighteen-fold from 220 to 3,913. In total, between 1998/99 and 2006/07, Polish universities hosted 13,630 foreign Erasmus students (p.59). In 2006/07, like in the previous years, Poland ranked fourteenth among all 31 countries participating in the Programme in terms of the number of incoming students. The top five countries hosting largest numbers of students in 2006/07 were Spain, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy. In 2006/07 Polish students represented 10.1% of all students in 31 countries, whereas incoming students in our country represented 2.3% of all European Erasmus students (p.60).

Only Turkey had a bigger disproportion between the two figures: 11.0% to 0.8%. The corresponding ratios for the top five countries were as follows: 8.4% : 17.2 in Spain, 10.3% : 13.0% in France, 10.7 : 11.2% in Germany, 10.9% :10.4% in the United Kingdom, and 9.5% : 9.3% in Italy. Universities in the other 22 countries (excluding Liechtenstein and Luxembourg where both proportions are 0.0%) generally have much lower “absorption capacity” than in the above-mentioned seven countries, including Poland and Turkey, as students there represent only 0.1% to 3.9% of the total European student population (p.61).

Below is presented the top 10 universities in the overall rankings for the period 2000/01-2006/07. It includes no more than five universities with the total student population of over 30,000 to over 50,000 students. The following universities are on the list:

- University of Warsaw,
- Jagiellonian University,
- University of Wrocław,
- Warsaw School of Economics,
- Cracow University of Economics,
- University of Łódź,
- Technical University of Łódź,
- University of Economics in Katowice,
- Adam Mickiewicz University,
- Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow (p.62).

During the examined 10 years, the largest “delegations” were sent to Poland by the same four countries that hosted largest numbers of Polish

students, including Germany: 22.1%, France: 16,0%, Spain: 11.4% and Italy: 8.97%. Number five is Portugal (8.0%) which holds a slightly lower position in the geographical breakdown of Polish outgoing students. Students from these five countries represented jointly over 66% of all incoming students in Poland (p.63).

Five following Polish Universities are on the top positions on the list presenting incoming students as a proportion of outgoing students at universities sending and/or hosting largest numbers of students: University of Warsaw, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Jagiellonian University, University of Wrocław, University of Łódź.(p.69).

In 2006/07 those figuring most prominently among Erasmus students from all 31 countries participating in the Programme were students of business, languages/ philological sciences, social sciences, and engineering and technology. These four areas of study were also represented by the largest number of Polish Erasmus students both in 2006/07 alone and during ten years of the participation in the Programme. In Erasmus study areas are not fully translatable into the groups of fields of study as classified in Poland.

Thus only selected groups of fields can be taken as an example to assess whether Polish Erasmus students are a proportional representation of the total number of Polish students in specific fields of study. Comparing figures for 2006/0737, one can clearly see that the top three Erasmus areas with the strongest student representation are also among the groups of fields in the Polish classification (business and administration, a breakdown by area for the period 1998/99-2006/07, the proportions of students in the four areas were as follows: 20.1% in business studies, 15.1% in social sciences, 12.8% in engineering and technology, and 12.1% in languages/philological sciences. Students in these areas represented jointly 60.1% of all Polish Erasmus students (p.57-58).

Graphs presented below show the crucial increase in the number of foreign students in tertiary education schools in the examined period in Poland.

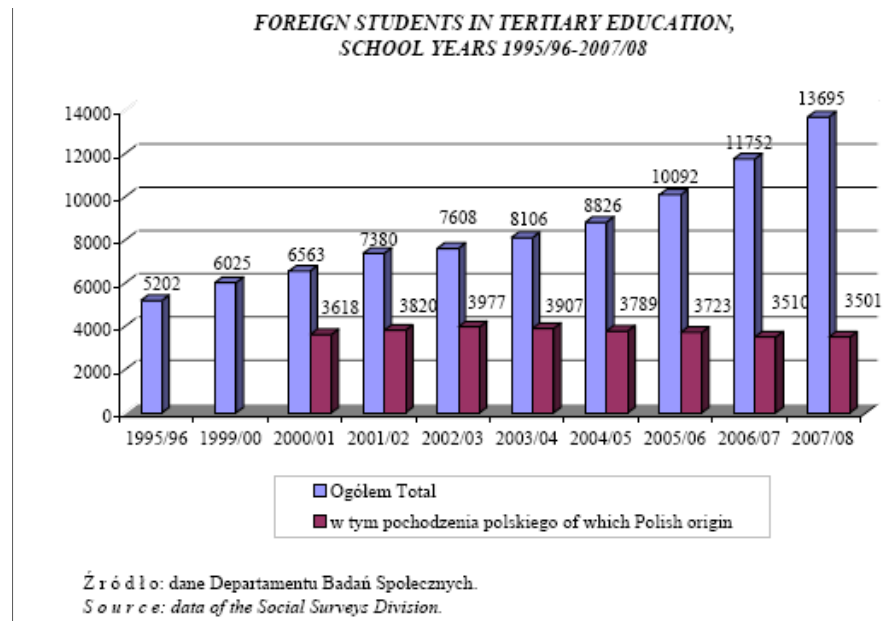
4. Conclusion

Growing mobility of students in Europe and in the world belongs to the most important factors stimulating internationalization process in the higher education sector and has also the potential influence on the innovation and competitiveness of the economy in the direction to create the knowledge based economy in the nearest future. Exchange of new ideas and knowledge among the

young generation in different countries is also the important factor enhancing entrepreneurship and internationalization of the national economies.

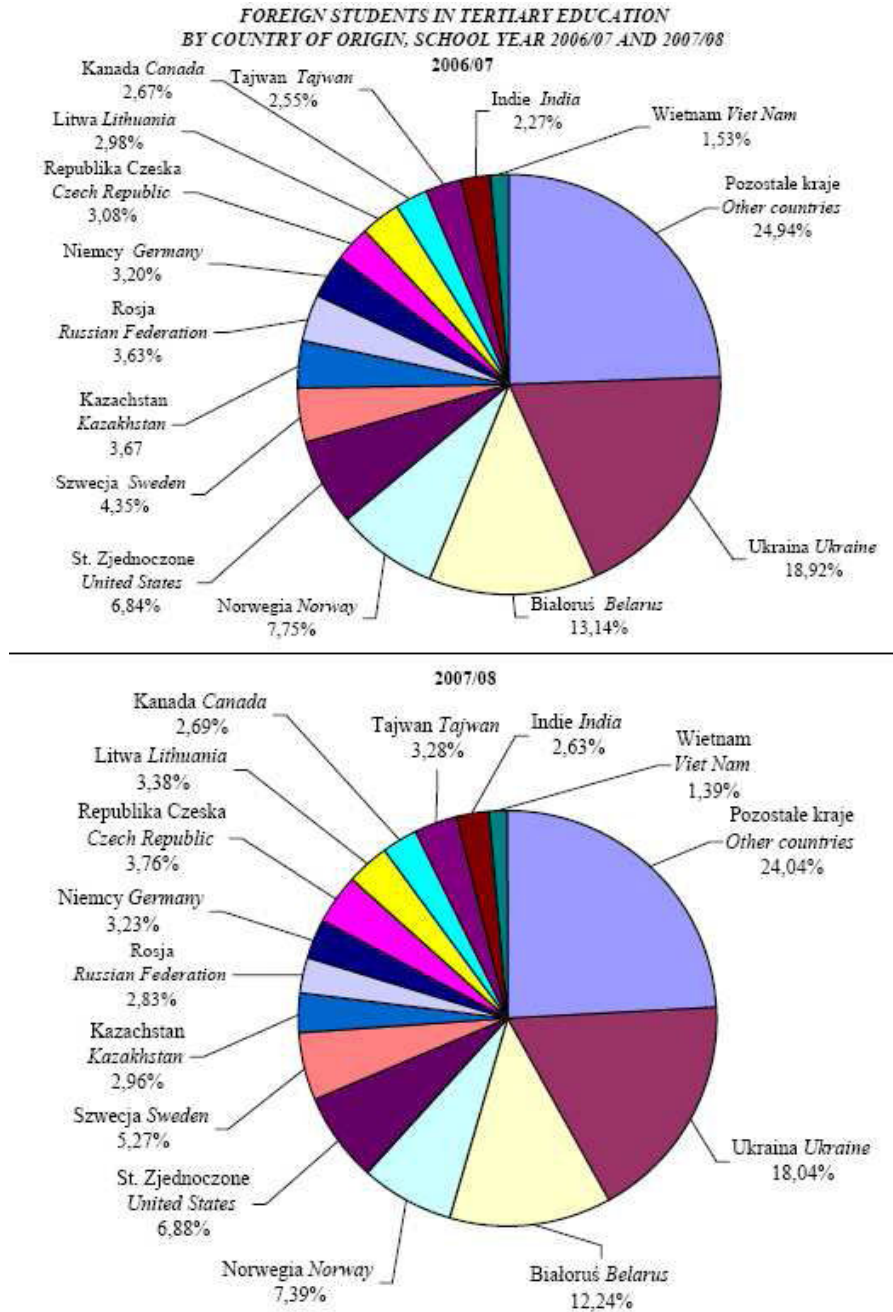
Graphs:³¹

Graph 1.



³¹ Graphs are based on statistical data presented in the statistical yearbook "Science and Technology in Poland in 2007, Warsaw, Central Statistical Office, 2008, p.218 (Graph 1) and p.217 (Graph 2).

Graph 2.



Źródło: dane Departamentu Badań Społecznych.
Source: data of the Social Surveys Division.

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Science and Technology in Poland in 2007, Warsaw, Central Statistical Office, 2008

10 YEARS OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME IN POLAND (1998 - 2008); Foundation for the Development of the Education System; Warsaw 2008