

# SUMMARIUM

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## STUDENT MOBILITY

The goal of the higher education reform initiated by the Bologna Declaration in 1999 was to harmonize higher education systems across Europe. This will enhance the permeability of higher education systems on the continent, the mutual recognition of diplomas, and ultimately the free flow of the European workforce. The most commonly mentioned issue raised in official documents, analyses and conferences evaluating the state of the reform is the international mobility of students. This fairly concrete and measurable phenomenon might serve as an appropriate indicator of the results of the so-called Bologna process even on the short run, because it concentrates the objectives laid down in the declarations, being clearly connected to each of these. It embodies the realization of the three prominent targets: harmonization of degrees, quality assurance and the mutual recognition of qualifications. Moreover, the issue of student mobility is connected to the most comprehensive question, that of the social impact of the reform. This topic and its closer analysis is lively urged by various higher education actors – and especially by the students themselves. The analysis of mobility is a “rescuing solution”, as the comprehensive study of the hardly definable social impact factors is more or less an expectation of political nature, and yet a theoretical question for researchers.

Attending universities abroad is not a new phenomenon in Europe. On the contrary, it has been part of the university and student life since the beginnings, from as far as the Middle Age. Study tours abroad, as well as obtaining foreign qualifications had different incentives from time to time; therefore the intensity and trends altered a lot, according to the changing historic, political, and academic environments. The emerging European Higher Education Area can now build on this tradition, and meanwhile it is also necessary to discover the new model/models of mobility in compliance with the conditions and requirements set by mass higher education and the globalizing world of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The current issue of *Educatio* reviews some selected topics of international student mobility, with the aim to make us better understand this complex, and in its social, economic and academic effect a noteworthy phenomenon. The specificity of the topic is that researches have already analyzed its historic aspects from many perspectives, however, the developments of the recent past were not studied with theoretically well-grounded social scientific methods. Our hope is, that this collection of articles will raise the interest of researchers and will give incentives for a systematic examination of the issue in Hungary. The published articles can be classified into three different groups according to their way of posing their question and their approach. One group is concerned with the sociologically defined institutional system of European mobility; the second analyzes the main characteristics of mobility based on official statistical data, while the third group of articles presents the results of recent surveys, offering a view on the motivations of certain well-defined student groups. The articles are mostly limited to Hungary, however, due to the nature of the topic, an international aspect is always integrated, especially with reference to the on-going European higher education reform, but the special topic of the mobility of ethnic Hungarian students from abroad is also raised.

The article of Ildikó Hrubos sums up the preliminaries of student mobility, its main characteristics before the present-day period when it is defined as an international program. The author also reviews the accelerated European events occurring in the last decade of the twentieth century. She examines the Bologna reform, especially its aspects affecting student mobility from the perspective of activities and behavior of its main actors. The study compares the steps taken by the two institutions highly influential to the process: that of the European Union (and its governing bodies), as an above country-level ruling body, and the European University Association (and its partner), representing the academic community and the higher education institutions

altogether, with the reaction of country-level governments. Finally, the article discusses the future of student mobility, with global events influencing it, and providing new patterns to it. The competition for students demands higher education institutions to take cognizance of the market logic, while the globalization of higher education will be visible when masses of students from Asian countries will appear in Europe.

The study of László Szögi describes the history of foreign university attendance of Hungarian students. After summing up the main trends of the period between 1526-1867, he examines in detail the case of Hungarian students in Vienna, which was the most popular study-target for this group in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until the Compromise. Based on university documents, he reconstructs the distribution of students according to faculties, groups of disciplines, social background of the family, religious denomination, nationality and regional origin.

Hungarian higher education faced many different changes in the last 15 years, which ultimately served the aim to join up with the higher education of the Western European countries. The Tempus Program initiated by the European Commission supported and still supports this goal. The article of Tamás Lajos describes the preliminaries of the Hungarian Tempus Program and the first – laborious but productive – period of its existence. The author points to the fact that the attention focused to student and academic mobility and to its regulation has been a new and basic factor in the institutional strategies of universities, and also a resource or a threat to their implementation, when the competition between these was just about to develop.

The European Committee operates several educational and higher educational programs which Hungary is part of. The study of Gabriella Kemény scrutinizes the problems arising in the organization and performance of higher education mobility schemes under these frameworks. She tries to answer the question what were the obstacles related to the management of the programs acting against a more effective exploitation of the possibilities provided by these programs. The pitfalls can be identified along different levels of the programs: on the level of the European Committee, the participating countries, and on the level of the higher education institutions. The author examines more closely the institutional level management as a specifically Hungarian aspect, but she also concludes, that even though the government develops a strategy for strengthening international mobility, these schemes do not connect to extensive development projects, therefore the financial support for these strategies are not assured.

It is almost impossible to get a full picture about the quantity, the trends, the disciplinary or other important characteristics of student mobility. This problem is raised in nearly all the manifestations connected to the European Higher Educational Area. There are on-going inquiries aiming to develop a unified European statistical data system. We can gather fairly extensive information about Hungarian students studying abroad from the data collection of various organized programs. The article of Éva Tót puts to account these databases, emphasizing the questions of equity in the access to the mobility support programs, the incentives and impediments to participation in these programs. She also touches upon student opinions about mobility opportunities, and how direct and indirect effects of studies abroad can be characterized. She concludes that although Hungarian students are increasingly mobile, only a small part of them is able to use this opportunity, compared to their Western-European peers. Home institutions and family background play a determining role in the exploitation of mobility opportunities.

The other aspect of the topic, that of the attributes of foreign students studying in Hungary is discussed in the article by Marianna Szemerszki. In this case the data gathered by the higher education institutions permits the author to analyze only those foreign students who are attending full-time, at least one semester long students (for shorter visits there are no statistical data). The article examines the mobility in the Hungarian higher education also from an international comparative perspective. According to this, Hungary is considered to be a country with a low mobility rate, compared to developed countries. The detailed analysis of the composition and other aspects of in-coming and out-going students could be informative for the development of a long-range mobility strategy. An important statement is, that the foreign students in Hungary are mostly involved in basic higher education programs, while the PhD programs that usually play such an important role in the international mobility in Western countries, attract very few students in Hungary yet.

A specific group of students arriving to Hungary for study reasons are the ethnic Hungarians from abroad, who usually wish to attend full tuition programs, and working in Hungary or even Hungarian long-term residence may be among their long-term plans. The article of Itala Erdei is based on a survey done in 2004 among students coming from Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. The survey included questions regarding the students' social-economic background, the motivations of their studies in Hungary, as well as their plans for further studies, work and returning home. The study states that the mobility in the Carpathian Basin functions at the moment mainly as a reproduction channel for the cultural-economic elite of the region, but in the meantime the Hungarian higher education institutions show up as competitors against the similar institutions abroad.

The article of Gabriella Pusztai and Éva Nagy deals also with the issue of further education of the Hungarians from abroad, focusing on a specific region across the Eastern border of Hungary. The article tries to find the answer to the question: what are the reasons for Hungarian young people abroad choose either to remain at home and continue their studies at a closely located, Hungarian-language institution, or, cross the border and choose to attend a similarly quite closely located higher education institution in Hungary. The comparison of the social distribution, social embeddedness, and the attitudes towards further education of – in these terms – mobile and not mobile young people points to such fine relationships, which helps a more thorough understanding of the extremely complicated issue.

*Text of Ildikó Hrubos – translated by Ágota Szentannai*

## STUDENTENMOBILITÄT

Das Ziel der europäischen Hochschulreform, die mit der Bologna-Erklärung eingeleitet wurde, ist die Harmonisierung der Hochschulsysteme in Europa, die zur Konvergenz der Studienstrukturen auf dem Kontinent, zur gegenseitigen Anerkennung der Abschlüsse und letzten Endes zur freien Mobilität der Arbeitskräfte führen soll. Fragen der internationalen Studentenmobilität sind beliebtes Thema von amtlichen Dokumenten, diversen Analysen bzw. von internationalen Konferenzen, die sich der Aufgabe widmen, den jeweiligen Stand des Reformprozesses zu prüfen. Nicht überraschend, handelt es sich doch dabei um ein relativ konkretes und gut messbares Phänomen, das sich auch auf kurzer Strecke als ein brauchbarer Indikator der Resultate des Bologna-Prozesses erweisen kann. Es drückt ja nicht nur die Gesamtheit der in den unterschiedlichen Erklärungen niedergelegten Ziele konzentriert aus, hat aber auch eindeutigen Bezug zu jedem einzeln deklarierten Ziel. Der Problembereich internationale Studentenmobilität berührt zudem die drei Hauptziele von Bologna: die Harmonisierung des Gradierungssystems, die Qualitätssicherung und die gegenseitige Anerkennung der Abschlüsse. Auf der anderen Seite hängt die studentische Mobilität auch mit dem umfassendsten Problem, den gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen der Reforme zusammen, deren Untersuchung von den verschiedenen Akteuren des Hochschulbereichs (vor allem von den Studenten selbst) immer stärker gefordert wird. Demzufolge kann die Analyse der Mobilität quasi als eine „Rettungslösung“ dienen, ist doch eine vollständige Untersuchung der gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen heute noch eher ein politischer Wunschtraum bzw. kaum mehr als eine theoretische Fragestellung für die Wissenschaftler.

Studieren im Ausland ist keineswegs ein neues Phänomen in Europa, bildet es doch seit den Anfängen im Mittelalter einen Teil des Lebens der Universitäten und Studenten. Studienreisen, Erwerbung eines Diploms im Ausland hatten in den einzelnen Epochen unterschiedliche Gründe; auch lassen sich Verschiebungen in Richtung und Intensität der Mobilität in der sich verändernden geschichtlichen, politischen und akademischen Umwelt leicht nachweisen. Auf diese Tradition kann sich zwar der jetzt entstehende Europäische Hochschulraum stützen, gleichzeitig muss man aber heute, am Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts, offensichtlich ein neues Modell oder neue Modelle der Mobilität aufstellen, um den Anforderungen der Vermassung der Hochschulen, der globalisierenden Welt zu genügen.