

**Future of Higher Education – Bologna Process Researchers' Conference,
Fifth Edition (FOHE-BPRC5)
25 – 26 March 2024, Bucharest**

Session 1: Internationalization of Higher Education – beyond 2020 EHEA targets

1. Internationalisation with limitations: Bologna Process and internationalisation of the third mission of the university, *Flora Laszlo (Central European University)*

The present paper investigates key arguments for the inclusion of the third mission of the university into the internationalisation policy script of the Bologna Process. Existing concrete initiatives in this area are scrutinized as evidence for both the necessity and practical possibility of such an endeavour.

Excellent studies are available that underscore the centrality of internationalisation to the entire Process as well as its particularities. One of these particularities has to do with the fact that the focus of the Bologna Process discourse on internationalisation and related initiatives in the European Higher Education Area touch primarily if not exclusively on aspects regarding education (student mobility), which is only one of the three main missions of the university, along with research and service to society. This paper discusses the reasons for leaving out the third mission and concludes with further arguments for considering internationalization of the third mission when reflecting on the priorities and targets for the future of the European Higher Education Area.

2. Exploring academics' views regarding Erasmus teaching mobility, *Elena Marin (University of Bucharest) and Donatella Donato (University of Valencia)*

Erasmus mobility for teachers has a long-standing history dating back to its inception. However, there has been a lack of scholarly examination regarding its overall influence and effects within the academic literature, especially in the last 10 years. In general, teaching abroad presents a myriad of advantages for university teachers across the globe, encompassing both personal and professional growth (Kreitz & Teichler, 1997; Enders, 1998; Enders & Teichler, 2005). This article aims to thoroughly assess the influence of Erasmus mobility for teachers, drawing from the experiences of university teachers at various points in their academic careers. This was accomplished through semi-structured interviews, which delved into the effects on professional development, including adjustments to different educational systems, teaching methods, and curriculum. Additionally, the study examined how this experience altered their teaching philosophies and broadened their global perspective on education.

3. The Role of Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects in Internationalization of Armenian Higher Education, *Lusine Fljyan (Northern University, Armenia)*

In today's globalized world, internationalizing higher education is imperative. This not only equips students with essential 21st-century skills but also fosters a culturally aware and collaborative future. Armenia's commitment to this was exemplified when it joined the Bologna Process in 2005, then, hosted the Bologna Ministerial Conference, in 2015, thus, aligning its education with European standards, and moving closer to Europe. The country has actively been engaged in various international platforms and projects, of which the

EU funded Erasmus+ CBHE (Capacity Building in Higher Education) program efficiently stands out, and it has played a pivotal role in internationalization of the Armenian higher education institutions.

This article intends to analyze 10 Erasmus+ CBHE projects from 2015-2020, exploring their influence on Armenian higher education. It presents a comprehensive exploration of the impact of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) projects on the internationalization of higher education in Armenia. The research questions will examine the nature and impact of Erasmus+ CBHEs on the development of concepts, dialogues, and policies of Internationalization of higher education in Armenia, integration with the European Higher Education Area, institutional level changes and strategic approaches. It will be a broad-spectrum analysis where all these facets are considered, leading to comprehensive understanding of their role in internationalizing higher education system of Armenia.

The projects catalyzed reforms to align Armenian higher education with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Significant outcomes will include the introduction of innovative pedagogies, a strategic shift towards internationalization in universities, and the formation of academic partnerships based on European best practices. These reforms, however, face challenges like sustainability and limited staff engagement. The study will conclude by calling for accelerated reforms for more integrated collaboration with the EHEA.

4. The European Universities Initiative (EUI): where are we now and where to next?, *Andrew Gunn (University of Manchester)*

This paper revisits ‘The European Universities Initiative: A Study of Alliance Formation in Higher Education’ — a contribution made by the author to the FOHE-BPRC4 conference — considering four years of developments. The EUI, and the alliances it has fostered, now stand at a more mature stage of their evolution. This provides an opportune moment to revisit and reflect on some of the issues set out in early 2020, including: the effectiveness of the ‘network of networks’ structure and how the EUI has balanced the competing considerations of ‘excellence’ and ‘inclusiveness’. The paper summarises the conclusions of the growing body of EUI research and seeks to update the conference on its main features through a systematic analysis, providing a comprehensive overview in a concise format. It charts the journey travelled as the EUI has grown following calls in 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023, producing 50 alliances involving over 430 institutions, and moves towards a fifth call for expansion. The analysis considers the role the alliances play in internationalisation of curricula, delivering virtual campuses and blended mobility, as well as developing joint programmes and solutions to societal challenges. The paper considers the role of the EUI in reinforcing transnational cooperation between universities, this being one of the four “flagships to boost the European dimension in higher education and research”, as well as how the EUI has constructed cooperation during recent challenges, such as: the pandemic, conflict resulting in displaced people and universities and the changing position of the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

5. Study-abroad Portals in the EHEA: A Case Study of the StudyInRomania platform, *Wesley Felipe da Silva Siqueira (University of Bucharest)*

National governments employ various strategies to attract international students, ranging from comprehensive public policies to specific marketing actions. One relevant part of promoting universities and their programs abroad is related to the concept of nation branding. In this sense, one of the most common means of advertising a country as a study destination is through official study-abroad platforms targeted at international audiences. The “study-in” websites inform about the administrative and bureaucratic requirements for admission to higher education institutions, allow international students to discover degree options and, in many cases, are the direct channel for applying for courses and scholarships. Using the case of Romania and the StudyInRomania initiative, this work seeks to address the research question: What is the role of official study-abroad portals in the digital transitions of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)? For

this purpose, this international higher education paper will incorporate perspectives from Place Branding and examine selected examples of similar study-abroad websites in comparison to the Romanian one. The research will be supported by both primary data, through an interview conducted with a staff member of The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) in December 2022, and secondary empirical data, such as the number of applications submitted through these portals and the number of foreign students enrolled in the universities of a country. As a result, the present work will elaborate on lessons learned and good practices from the data and literature review, providing recommendations for the StudyInRomania platform in order to potentially promote the image of Romania abroad as a more attractive study destination. The findings of this study can help universities and national governments with improving digital approaches to attracting and supporting international students in the EHEA.

6. Exploring Services and Support for International Mobile Students: An Institutional Survey Analysis of Erasmus Careers Project, *Adriana Perez-Encinas, Pablo Villarrubia and Sandra Tobon (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)*

Despite the increasing flow of students participating in international mobility programs and the growing demand for services to enhance their experience mobility, there is a noticeable lack of literature addressing this topic. Consequently, this research fills a critical gap by presenting the results of the first institutional survey, as part of a European project “Erasmus Careers” that examines inbound and outbound mobility services and competence support that institutions provide at the different stages of the international student lifecycle in a European context. The survey reached out to 50 institutions across Europe, yielding a robust response rate of 70%. The survey encompassed 25 questions, categorized into four sections: institutional particulars, services and support mechanisms, academic facilities, and teaching methodologies.

Results show that the broad spectrum of services and support institutions extend to mobile students. Predominantly, institutions offer services related to accommodation, language courses, and cultural engagement activities. Moreover, the survey indicates that institutions provide support to mobile students at various stages of their international student experience, including pre-departure, arrival, and the duration of their stay. Additionally, the survey reveals that both local and international students generally enjoy equal access and opportunities in most institutions.

However, the survey also highlights areas where institutions can enhance their services and support for mobile students. Notably, there is room for improvement in providing support during the students' stay, including academic support, as well as psychological and health assistance. In conclusion, the Erasmus Careers institutional survey yields valuable insights into the services and support offered to mobile students throughout their international academic journey. While the survey demonstrates that institutions already offer a diverse range of services and support, it underscores the potential for further enhancement in specific areas. These research findings can serve as a guide for institutions seeking to improve their support structures for mobile students and as a basis for policymakers to formulate policies that bolster student mobility across Europe.

7. Internationalisation or Europeanisation? Capturing Dynamic Concepts Starting from Higher Education Institutions, *Junaid Kajee and Mattia Quinteri (Universität für Weiterbildung Krems, Austria)*

The myriad international crises in the recent years highlighted the importance of actions and solutions taken by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to contend with global challenges. In this context, HEIs in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) interpreted in different ways the impulses from international and European influences. Not by chance, the current strategy launched by the European Commission aims to empower HEIs

to carry out their European objectives in Higher Education (HE): HEIs play a core role in implementing the international and European dimensions in HE.

HEIs develop their strategies and organisational design considering, with varying priorities and viewpoints, the international and European external factors at social, economic, and political levels. Besides, how their institutional actors interpret HEIs' strategy highly influences HEIs' responses to international and European impulses. Internationalisation and Europeanisation are evolving processes shaped inside the HEIs, and due to their evolving nature, they are dynamic concepts challenged in their definitions.

This paper examines the differences and similarities between the two processes from an institutional bottom-up perspective - considering the HEIs' strategy and actors. Using institutional logics, this paper provides a framework for research and practitioners to understand internationalisation and Europeanisation in changing times, based on the following research questions:

How and to what extent could internationalisation and Europeanisation diverge in terms of their impact on HEIs?

What are the predominant steering mechanisms and strategies employed by HEIs to facilitate the inclusion of the international and/or European dimensions?

What characterised the agentic role that institutional actors play in fostering internationalisation and Europeanisation?

What implications do external factors have on institutional and actors' autonomy and decision-making processes in HEIs?

8. Educational Spaces as Immigration Sites: A Critical Examination, *Aisling Tiernan (RWTH Aachen University)*

As the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) advances its mission of internationalisation, there is an urgent need to examine how immigration processes are increasingly becoming embedded within higher education systems. Drawing on a study of the United Kingdom's higher education landscape, this paper argues that universities are no longer merely educational institutions; they are also becoming operational arms of immigration control.

By analysing interview data from 29 participants from diverse national backgrounds, the paper reveals how immigration policies and practices related to student visas, are becoming increasingly institutionalised within universities. This institutionalisation is manifested in forms of surveillance, complex administrative procedures, and an overall marketised approach that places considerable emotional and financial burdens on international students.

The paper draws on Ahmed's theories of stranger encounters and Berlant's concept of cruel optimism, to critique the convergence of internationalisation and immigration processes. The analytical lens applied permits a nuanced understanding of how this convergence amplifies precarity and creates stigmatised identities among international students.

This study concludes that for the EHEA to genuinely advance the internationalisation of higher education, there must be a critical re-examination of how immigration processes are integrated into educational spaces. Ignoring this dimension risks perpetuating systems that are discriminatory, exclusionary, and antithetical to the very principles upon which the EHEA was founded.

9. The role of language preparatory programme and governmental scholarships in increasing the participation and graduation of international students in Romania, *Cristina Ramona Fiț (National University of Political Science and Public Administration, Romania) and Mihai Cezar Haj (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, Romania)*

In the past 10 years the rationales for implementing internationalization of Higher Education policies have evolved, with “economic rationales more dominant” (de Wit, Deca, 2020). In the case of Romania, the decrease of the student population over the last 15 years due to low demographics, migration and a high drop-out rate (Alexe-Cotet et al, 2022), has changed the way in which internationalization of HE is perceived and used, to tackle issues like brain drain and the decrease of the student population. This paper aims to explore the role of Romanian language preparatory programme and the role of Governmental scholarships for international students, as a tool to enhance the internationalization of HE. The paper will analyse the effects of these public policies on international students' access, participation and graduation rate in higher education in three-year bachelor programmes. Romania has a diverse range of Governmental scholarships offered to international students interested in enrolling in a Romanian-taught study program. This includes scholarships through bilateral or multilateral inter-governmental or intercultural agreements, scholarships offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, and by the Ministry of Economy, aimed to promote the Romanian language and culture, including a one-year programme for the study of the Romanian language included. The main research questions are: Is the Romanian language preparatory programme supporting the internationalization of the Romanian HE? Does this programme have an influence on the student participation and success rate in higher education? Are scholarships a mechanism that impacts the rate of success of international students? The paper will answer the research questions by following international students' educational path from enrolment through participation in the three-year bachelor programs until graduation. The analysis is based on the available data from the Romanian National Student Enrolment Registry (RMUR).