



ERASMUS MUNDUS

Graduate Impact Survey



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Executive Summary

The Graduate Impact Survey (GIS) has been conducted since the year 2009. Thus, today there is a large sample of students and graduates who participated in Erasmus Mundus, which can be explored for longitudinal effects. In order to analyse how students and graduates develop during and after their EMMC program, samples will be sorted in two different ways for longitudinal calculations: Either according to years that have passed since the participants started their EMMC or – in the case of the graduates only – since they finished the program. In order to analyse how the program itself is developing we will compare the results of the recent samples (2012-2015).

The participants of our survey – both students and graduates – were highly satisfied with the Erasmus Mundus program on the whole as well as with the quality of their courses, although only a relatively small percentage thought that their courses had prepared them well enough for the labour market. While students from different fields of studies evaluated their courses differently these differences were relatively small. Students of the Humanities and Arts as well as students of Social Sciences, Business and Law were not as satisfied with their courses as other students.

Two thirds of the former students in our survey had found a full-time job. This number does not seem very high, however, it does not take into account the various reasons students had for not looking for a job after their EMMC, e.g. choosing to gain further professional qualifications (PhD etc.). Also, those students who indicated they had found a job found their job with relative ease: Nearly 60% had found a full time job in less than two months. The Erasmus Mundus students and graduates were highly satisfied with the increase in their language skills, although some graduates mentioned a language barrier as a reason why they had not yet found a job.

We also explored the impact of Erasmus Mundus on a personal level. Studying an EMMC provides the participants with some valuable skills. Graduates see the greatest impact on their intercultural competencies. Over the years after their graduation the perceived effect on the personality of the former students drops significantly. The opposite is true for the perceived impact on the attitude towards Europe and the EU. While the receding impact on the personality of the students is to be expected, the development of the impact on their attitude towards Europe is pleasant to report. Other factors remain stable over time after graduation.

While graduates were asked in which areas they had perceived the greatest impact, students were asked in which areas they expected the greatest impact. The results of these questions revealed quite a large gap between expectations and reality. Students expected much more impact on their career than graduates, while these had perceived greater impact in the other areas than the students.

Participants were also asked why they decided to study an EMMC. In all surveys since 2009, including the 2015 sample, the scholarship was the single most important reason why students decided in favour of the EMMC. The reputation of Erasmus Mundus has improved over the recent years, which is a positive development. While the visibility of the program has slightly decreased in recent years, it can still be considered rather high. However, it seems that in some regions of the world, e.g. the Americas and the EU, Erasmus Mundus is not as prominent as in other regions, e.g. Africa and Asia.



I INTRODUCTION

Since 2014, Erasmus Mundus is part of the integrated program Erasmus + which is the European Commission's program for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014 - 2020. Erasmus + promotes in particular the mobility of learners and staff from and to partner countries.

In this regard, Erasmus Mundus aim to foster excellence and internationalization in higher education institutions (HEI); increase the quality and the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and supporting the EU's external action in the higher education field, by offering full degree scholarships to the best Master students worldwide (European Commission, 2015).

Furthermore, Erasmus Mundus main goal is to enhance quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures.

In a world, where intercultural competence grows ever more important, the Erasmus Mundus program provides a chance to gain these values, not only for citizens of the European Union, but also for students around the world.

Given the fact that students from around the world get to know Europe, its culture and its citizens, one can assume that this program does not only influence the participants' personalities but also their view of the European Union in the world. It may also help to enhance the position of the EU as a centre of excellence in the world by keeping some of the sharpest minds in the Union. In order to determine whether this aim has been reached and in order to reveal the long-term effects of a participation in the Erasmus Mundus program, not only for career development but also for personal growth, an annual online questionnaire has been conducted.

You will find the results of our survey in this report.

II METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the Graduate Impact Survey is to find out which effects the program has on students and graduates, and to detect which factors contribute to the personal and professional development of the Erasmus Mundus graduates – from both a cross-sectional and a longitudinal angle. Therefore, the survey has always adopted a mainly quantitative approach, which was maintained in this year's study. The study was conducted online and carried out from October 1 - October 20, 2015.

1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of approx. 40 items. Some of these contained subcategories with further questions: For instance, when participants answered the question if they had found a job after graduating with "yes", then they received further questions about the kind of job they had gotten.

The answering scales varied from rating scales to drop-down menus to standardised alternatives, from which the participants could choose up to three answers. The last question was an open ended question that left space for individual suggestions for improvement of Erasmus Mundus.

In order to allow longitudinal comparisons and observations of developments, the survey was generally made up of questions that had been asked in the previous years as well. However, as the questionnaire has received numerous revisions since the survey was started and only the last four samples (2012-2015) offer comparable results we, consequently, used only these data for our analyses. Nevertheless, the newer samples contain data from graduates who have participated in the program in the years before, so that it will still be possible to make observations of those years.



2 Participants

As in the last years, students and graduates of Erasmus Mundus were invited to participate in the survey. The report focuses on the longitudinal aspects¹ and developments over the years. Therefore, the information on the participants is twofold: First of all, the sample of the students and graduates who participated in 2015 is introduced, followed by a presentation of the sample consisting of all students and graduates that have participated in the surveys between 2012 and 2014.

Only completed questionnaires and only valid percentages are being reported, hence there will be a slightly varying total number of respondents per question due to item non-response to individual questions.

2.1 Sample of the 2015 Graduate Impact Survey

In 2015 1,458 participants completed the questionnaire. 1,035 (71.0%) participants had already graduated while 423 (29.0%) participants were still students. The percentage of graduates is higher in the 2015 survey than in previous surveys, because the survey was conducted in October and not September like the previous ones. Socio-demographic information is available in table 1, while detailed information on the region of origin can be obtained in figure 1 (see below).

Table 1: Frequencies of socio-demographic data among survey participants 2015

| | Age in years (average) | Gender | | Region of Origin | |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------|-------|------------------|--------|
| | | Female | Male | EU | Non-EU |
| Students | 26.27 | 47.0% | 53.0% | 24.2% | 75.8% |
| Graduates | 30.59 | 46.8% | 53.2% | 21.6% | 78.4% |
| Average | 29.34 | 46.8% | 53.2% | 22.4% | 77.6% |
| N=1,458 | | | | | |

Region of Origin - Sample 2015

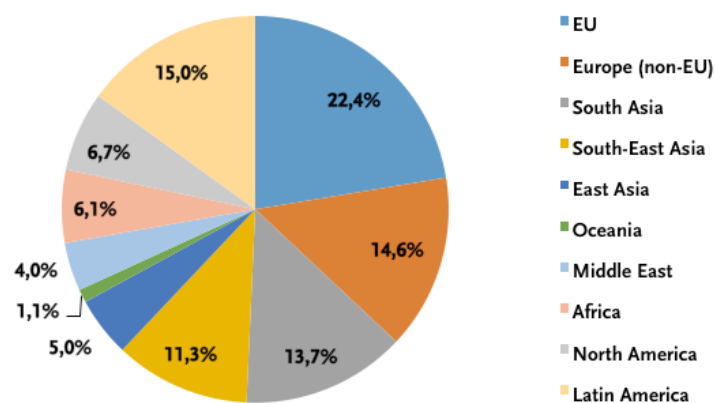


Figure 1: Region of Origin of the sample of 2015 (N=1,457)

¹ Strictly scientifically speaking the survey is not a longitudinal one, as there have not always been the same participants taking part in the study. The terms used for study designs like the present one, however, vary: “Time-lag study” (e.g. Kirk 2013) or “cross-sectional longitudinal design” (Gravetter & Forzano 2012) are used. To keep things simple, this report classifies developments over time as “longitudinal aspects”.



2.2 Joined survey samples (2012-2015)

In order to outline developments over the past years for selected questions, the following report incorporates results from three previous survey (2012 to 2014) for which the original raw data still exists. It is differentiated by EMMC student status (current or former) at the time of the respective survey. Only completed questionnaires are taken into account.

Accordingly, the data is displayed in one of the following ways:

- 1) For graduates (at the time of the survey) the data is arranged by years after graduation or by years after starting EMMC. Two additional analyses are arranged by year of starting EMMC.
- 2) For students (at the time of the survey) the data is arranged by years after starting EMMC.

Table 2: Frequencies of socio-demographic data among survey participants from 2012-2015, related to the year of graduation, year after graduation and year of starting EMMC

| Time Lag Approach for selected questions | | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| Including Surveys from 2012 – 2015 | | | | | |
| | N | Female | Male | EU | Non-EU |
| Graduates - Year of Graduation | | | | | |
| <=2009 | 950 | 37.9% | 62.1% | 8.8% | 91.2% |
| 2010 | 537 | 41.4% | 58.6% | 10.8% | 89.2% |
| 2011 | 658 | 45.8% | 54.2% | 12.2% | 87.8% |
| 2012 | 668 | 43.7% | 56.3% | 28.0% | 72.0% |
| 2013 | 368 | 45.1% | 54.9% | 25.8% | 74.2% |
| 2014 | 330 | 51.2% | 48.8% | 32.7% | 67.3% |
| 2015 | 216 | 50.9% | 49.1% | 25.0% | 75.0% |
| Graduates - Year after Graduation | | | | | |
| 0 | 560 | 45.6% | 54.4% | 26.6% | 73.4% |
| 1 | 829 | 48.9% | 51.1% | 24.6% | 75.4% |
| 2 | 644 | 44.8% | 55.2% | 19.9% | 80.1% |
| 3 | 565 | 42.4% | 57.6% | 13.6% | 86.4% |
| 4 | 429 | 43.3% | 56.7% | 9.1% | 90.9% |
| 5 or more | 700 | 35.3% | 64.7% | 9.9% | 90.1% |
| Students Start EMMC | | | | | |
| <=2010 | 193 | 43.2% | 56.8% | 26.9% | 73.1% |
| 2011 | 430 | 46.0% | 54.0% | 26.0% | 74.0% |
| 2012 | 731 | 48.5% | 51.5% | 30.1% | 69.9% |
| 2013 | 342 | 40.6% | 59.4% | 24.0% | 76.0% |
| 2014 | 412 | 45.1% | 54.9% | 20.9% | 79.1% |
| 2015 | 101 | 39.6% | 60.4% | 20.0% | 80.0% |



As shown in table 2, the sample of students who started their EMMC in or before 2010 is much smaller than between 2011 and 2014. This is an effect of the analysis being limited to the 2012 to 2015 surveys. Students who started their EMMC earlier have already moved to the graduates group. The group of students who started in 2015 is also quite small. This could be an effect of the time of survey in October.

The sample sizes of graduates decline with every additional year after the graduation. That is an unsurprising development and does not limit the reliability of statistical calculations, since the smaller samples are still well above 400 participants.

III RESULTS OF THE GRADUATE IMPACT SURVEY

1 Satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus

This chapter will focus on the participants' level of satisfaction with the Erasmus Mundus program on the whole and with the perceived quality of the courses. Since the level of satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus is an important indicator of the quality of the program we will go into detail and not only depict the total data but also sort data by time and field of study.

As can be seen in figure 2, the program is rated highly satisfactory. Over 90% of all participants rated the program as satisfying or even better with 20.6% of the participants rating it as extremely satisfying. That is a statement about the quality of Erasmus Mundus in itself. Yet, there were those who did not consider the quality of the program to be high. While only 2.5% of all participants were actually explicitly unsatisfied with the program (“very unsatisfied”, “unsatisfied” or “not satisfied”), another 7.4% were only partly satisfied.

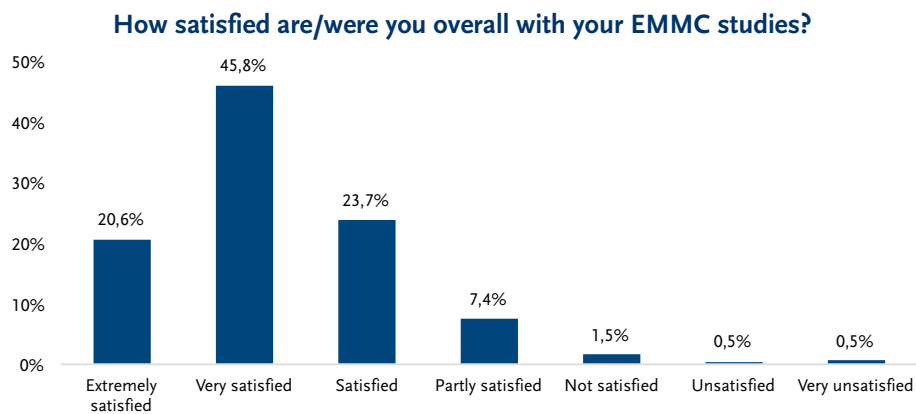


Figure 2: Overall Satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus (all participants; N=5,957)

Figure 3 shows how the level of satisfaction develops over time according to years after starting the program. Here you can see that the level of satisfaction with the overall program drops noticeably after the first year. This is unsurprising taking into account that students who have recently joined the program might be somewhat less critical and more enthusiastic than those who are more experienced. Nonetheless, the level of satisfaction of the more experienced students remains very high.



How satisfied are/were you overall with your EMMC studies?

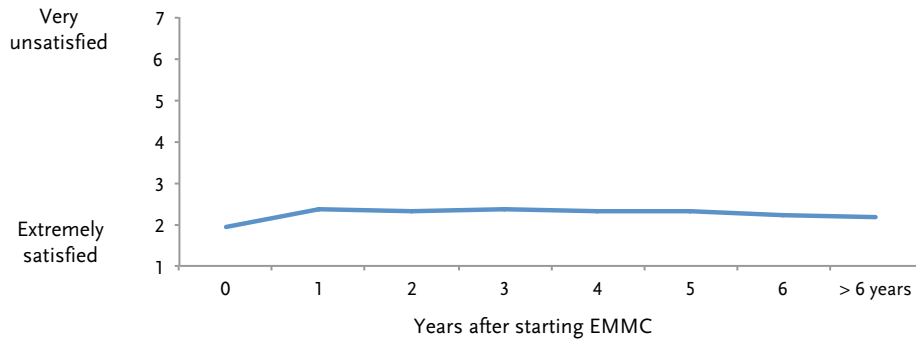


Figure 3: Average satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus by years after starting EMMC (all participants; N=5,957)

How satisfied are/were you overall with your EMMC studies?

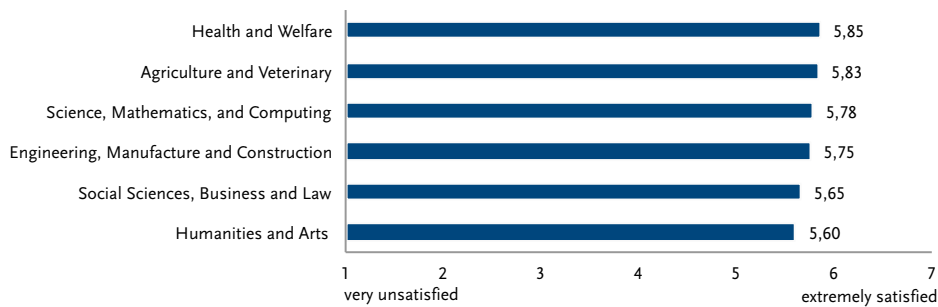


Figure 4: Average satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus by field of study (all participants; N= 5,957)

Figure 4 shows the level of overall satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus sorted by field of study. Students and graduates from the different areas do not evaluate the program all too differently, but the differences are there: While Health and Welfare, Agriculture and Veterinary, and Science, Mathematics and Computing (in this exact order) were rated above average and while Engineering, Manufacture and Construction was more or less average, Social Sciences, Business and Law and more noticeably the Humanities and Arts were rated below average.

Aside from the general satisfaction with the program, participants were asked about the quality of the courses they attended. Figure 5 shows the satisfaction with the quality of the courses at the respective Erasmus Mundus host universities.



How satisfied are you with the quality of courses at your EM host universities?

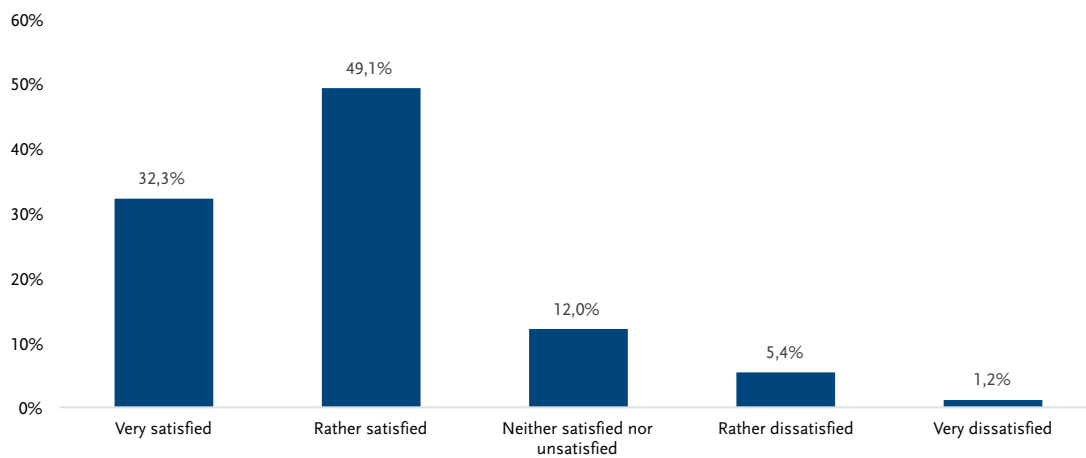


Figure 5: Satisfaction with quality of Courses at Erasmus Mundus host universities (all participants; not asked in 2012; N=4,617)

All in all, the level of satisfaction with the quality of the courses is similar to the level of overall satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus. The large majority of students (81.4%) and graduates were rather satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of courses at their host universities. However, compared to the overall satisfaction, the level of satisfaction with the courses appears to be lower: 6.6% of the participants were explicitly unsatisfied with the courses at their host universities rating them as rather dissatisfying or very dissatisfying, compared to the mere 2.5% of participants who were explicitly unsatisfied with the program on the whole.

The overall result still stays the same when the sample of participants is sorted according to their field of study (see figure 6). Of course, there are fields that rate the quality of the courses in their field as more satisfying than others, e.g. Health and Welfare or Agriculture. The ranking of the different fields of study is the exact same as the ranking by overall satisfaction as reported above. Keeping in mind that the percentage of those participants who were explicitly dissatisfied with the program itself was lower than the percentage of those who were dissatisfied with their courses, one may assume that, beside the quality of the courses, there are other reasons for the high satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus. In order to determine where further improvements can be made, graduates of Erasmus Mundus were asked what their study program had lacked.

How satisfied are you with the quality of courses at your EM host universities?

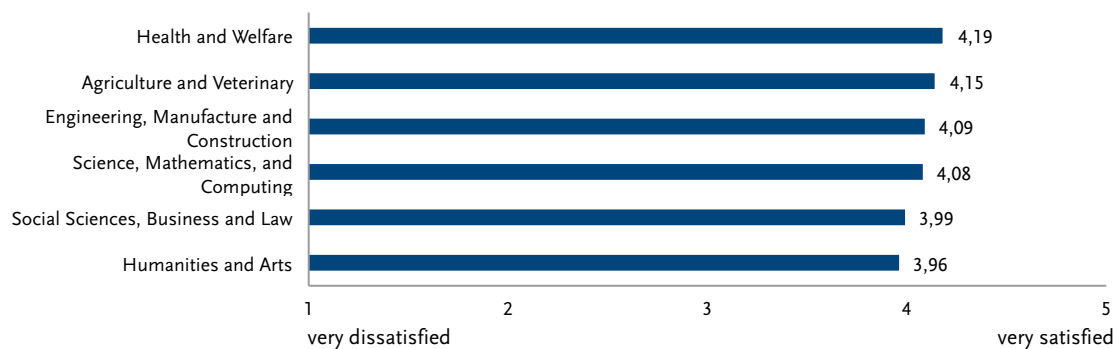


Figure 6: Average satisfaction with the quality of courses by field of study (all participants; not asked in 2012; N=4,617)



As can be seen in figure 7, the aspect graduates identified as lacking the most in Erasmus Mundus were contacts to potential employers (72.6%). Practical experience was missed the second most (55.3%). Integration activities and mentoring were regarded as lacking the most by over one third of the participants and 20% of the graduates named flexibility in the content of the courses as lacking the most.

What did your study programme lack in terms of preparation for the labour market?

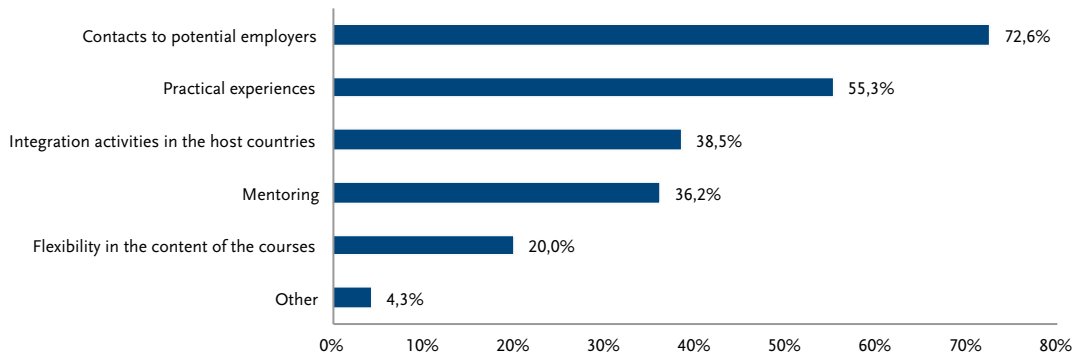


Figure 7: Lacking elements in study program (graduates; N=3,462)

If subdivided by field of study, the elements perceived as “lacking” by students almost do not change (see figure 8). In all fields of study contacts to potential employers and practical experiences were named as most lacking. Students of the Humanities and Arts especially, find these two aspects to be lacking. Integration activities and mentoring are on ranks three and four with similar percentages, although, in the fields of Agriculture and Veterinary integration activities are missed distinctly more than mentoring. On the other hand, lack of mentoring seems to be more of an issue among students of Health and Welfare as well as students of Social Sciences, Business and Law.

What did your study programme lack in terms of preparation for the labour market?

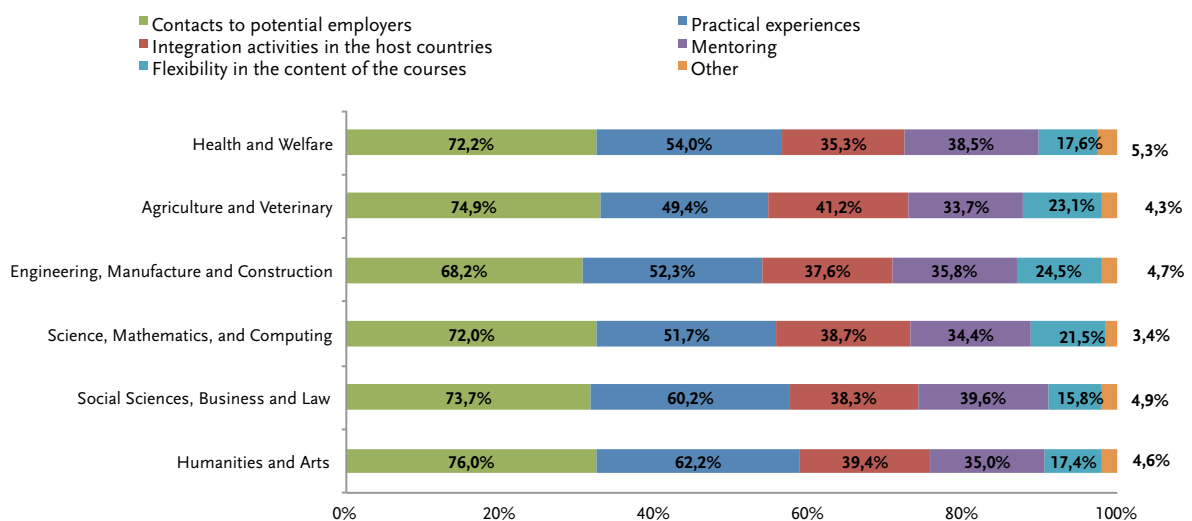


Figure 8: Lacking elements in study program in relation to fields of study (graduates; not asked in 2012; N=4,617)



2 Professional Impact and Employability

In the following chapter we will analyse the impact Erasmus Mundus had on students in terms of employability. Graduates were asked if and how they had found a job after their Masters Course and how well Erasmus Mundus had prepared them for the labour market. The question whether graduates had found a job served as a filter for all following questions which were answered either by those who had found a job or by those who had failed to find a job after graduating from Erasmus Mundus.

Have you found a full-time job after finishing your Erasmus Mundus?

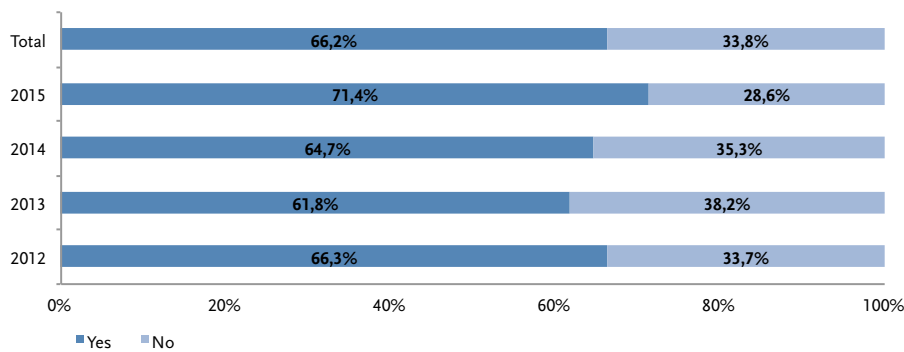


Figure 9: Employment status after graduating from Erasmus Mundus (N=3,744)

All in all, 66.2% of the EMMC graduates had found a full-time job at the time our survey was issued. Comparing the samples of the different panel years one can see that the proportion of former EMMC students who found a job has increased significantly over time (figure 9; Spearman's $\rho = -0.05$; $p < 0.01$; $N = 3,744$). However, considering that the proportion of those graduates with a large time gap between graduation and the time of the survey has also increased, this is not surprising. These participants have had more time to look for and apply for a job or have had more time for further qualification. In order to assess how easy or difficult it is for graduates to find a job we may have to look at the answer to a different question.

Figure 10 shows the development of the amount of time needed to find a job after graduation sorted by the year the survey was conducted. One can see that there is no noticeable change over time, so it is safe to say, that for graduates of EMMC finding a job in 2015 was as easy or difficult as it was in 2012: Of the EMMC graduates who had found a job by the time the survey was carried out, some 60% had found it within 2 months of graduation, while only 15.1% had looked more than 6 months for a job.

How long did you spend searching for your first job after finishing your EMMC?

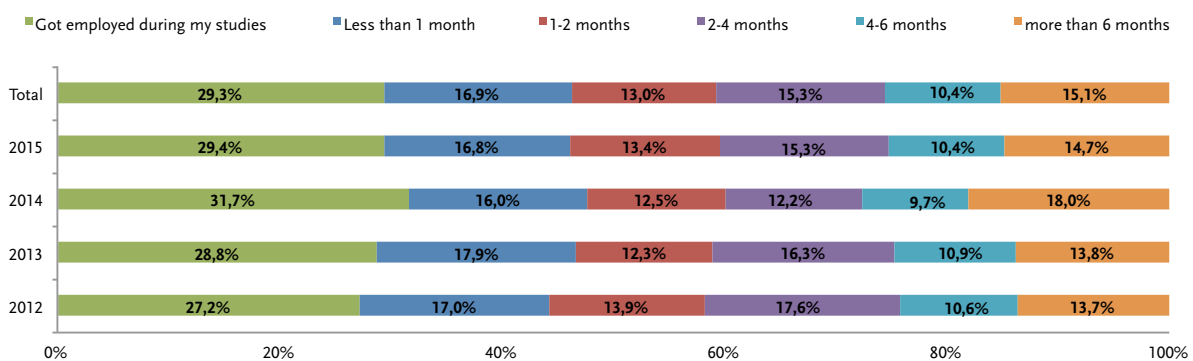


Figure 10: Time spent searching for the first job after finishing EMMC (graduates who had found a full time job; N=2,393)



How did you find your first job after graduating from Erasmus Mundus?

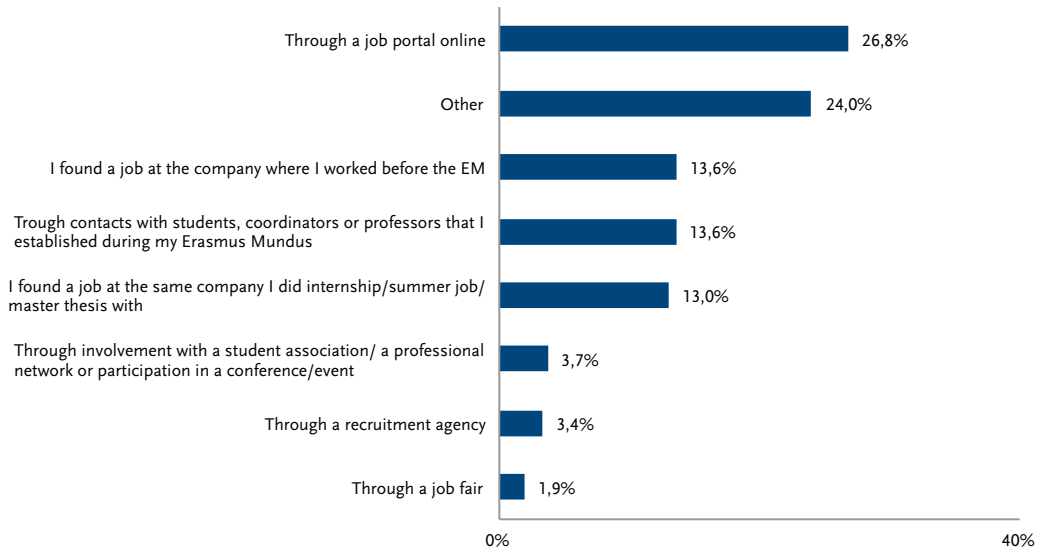


Figure 11: Tools that were used to find a job (graduates who had found a full time job; not asked in 2012; N=1,909)

We also asked by what means the participants had found their first job after graduating from Erasmus Mundus. As figure 11 displays, most graduates name job portals on the internet as the most important tool for finding a job (26.8%). The percentage of those participants who had found their job through contacts established during their EMMC is comparatively low (13.6%). The graduates who stated they had found their job in some other way (24%) mostly mentioned their own personal network (contacts unrelated to EMMC, mostly friends) as a means of finding a job. Other notable mentions include unsolicited applications for a job, direct applications to universities in order to enter a PhD program and direct inquiries by the future employer.



Figure 12 depicts how the relevance of these different tools has developed over time. While the relevance of the internet (online job portals) has increased (Spearman’s rho=0.07; p<0.01; N=1,909) the mobility of graduates also appears to have increased. The percentage of graduates who went back to the company, where they had worked before their EMMC has decreased significantly (2013: 17.8% / 2014:13.5% / 2015: 10.7%; Spearman’s rho=-0.08; p<0.01; N=1,909).

How did you find your first job after graduating from Erasmus Mundus?

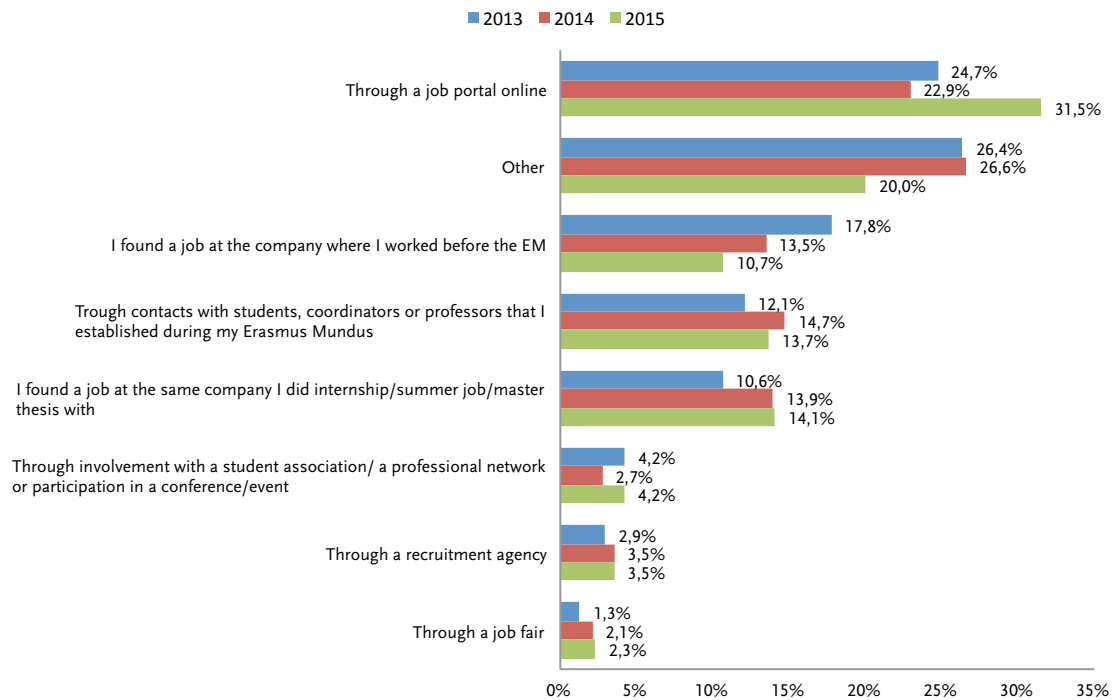


Figure 12: Tools that were used to find a job by cohort (graduates who had found a full time job; N=1,909)

Participants who had not found a job when the survey was conducted were asked about potential reasons for encountering difficulties in the job search. The answers to this question are displayed in Figure 13. 7.2% stated that they had experienced difficulties because their EMMC degree was not recognized in the country in which they were looking for a job.

What do you think are the reasons for not having found a permanent job yet?

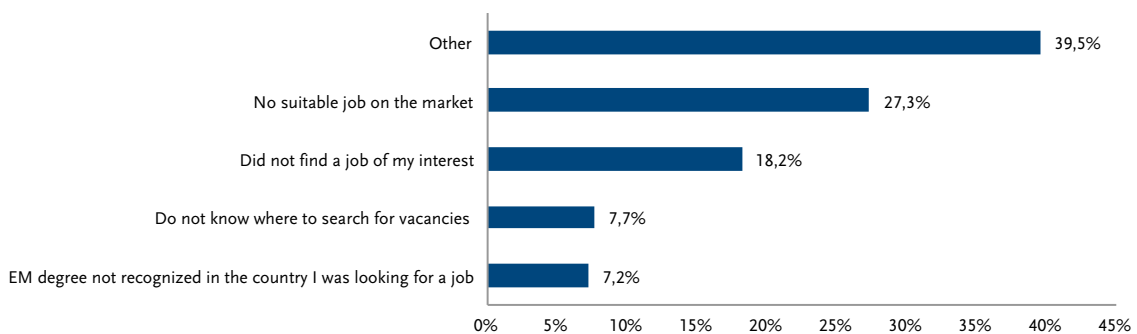


Figure 13: Reasons for not finding a job (graduates who had not yet found a full-time job; not asked in 2012; N=483)



Most participants stated other reasons than the ones listed. The open answers to this question comprise various reasons for not having found a job. Aside from those graduates who did not have enough time to look and apply for a job because they had just recently graduated or simply had not looked because they did not want to be employed right after their graduation – e.g. if they chose to continue their education - the most frequently mentioned answers came from graduates who had work permit issues or – surprisingly - saw a language barrier. The “economic crisis” was also mentioned frequently when explaining why one had not found a job at the time of the survey.

In order to determine whether the Erasmus Mundus students perceived any shortcomings in the area of language acquisition during their program, we will take a look at figure 14. Both students and graduates responded to this question, the distribution of their answers was very similar. All in all, 92.7% rated the increase in their language skills due to their Masters Course as at least fair. This is a high figure especially considering that there will be other factors apart from the program itself that enhance the participants’ language skills during their stay abroad e.g. coming into contact with the local population or other students. Hence, it is safe to say that, although the language barrier was regarded as one of the reasons for not finding a job by some of the graduates, the increase in the language skills of the students due to their EMMC was high.

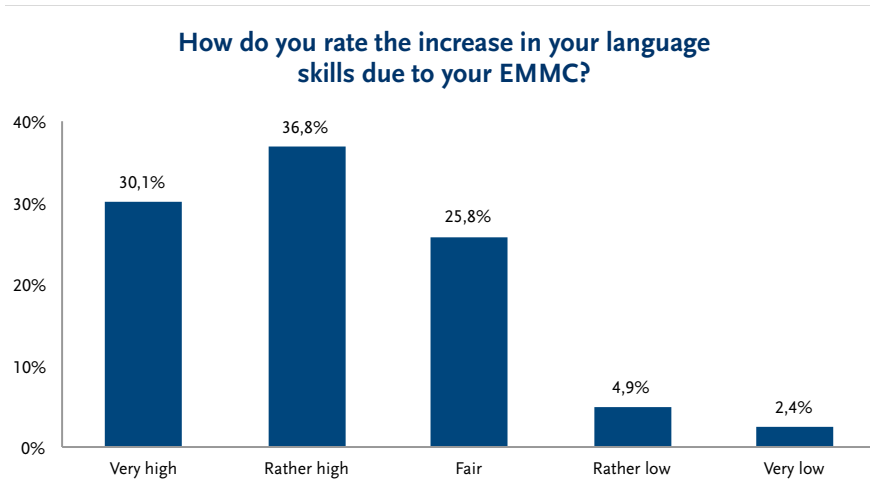


Figure 14: Increase in language skills (all participants; not asked in 2012; N=4,477)

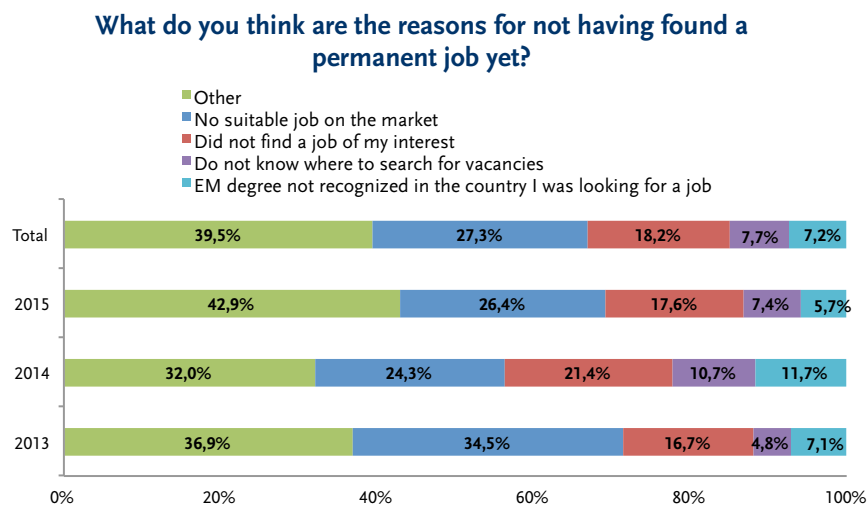


Figure 15: Reasons for not finding a permanent job by cohort (graduates who had not yet found a full-time job; N=483)



Figure 15 shows how the reasons for not finding a job developed over time sorted by sample years. This question was answered by graduates who had not yet found a full time job. As one can see, the percentage of graduates who stated that a lack of recognition of their degree was a reason for not being able to find a job has decreased somewhat. Also, not being able to find a suitable job was less common in 2015 than in 2013. However, these values must be treated with caution because the amount of data is limited.

Another item to be analysed in this report concerns itself with the relation between the field of study and the field graduates work in. Graduates were asked to evaluate how well their fields of study and the fields they currently worked in matched. Figure 16 shows that 58.9% of the participants think that their field of study and their field of work match in the best way. Another 18.9% of the participants indicate that another field of study would have prepared them equally well for their job. In total, over three out of four graduates (77.8%) feel themselves well prepared for their field of work. Only 6.3% of the graduates who had found a full-time job after finishing Erasmus Mundus stated that “another field or qualification would have been more useful”.

How would you describe the relationship between your field of study and your area of work?

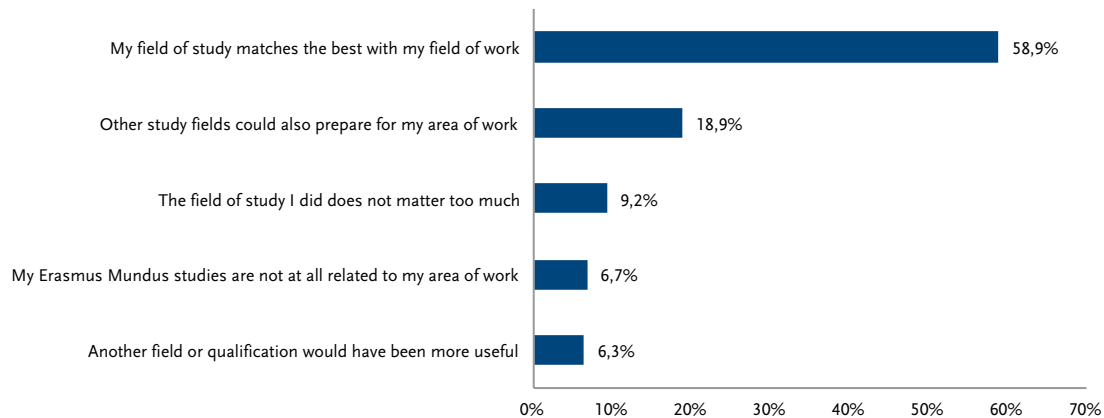


Figure 16: How well do fields of study match with fields of work (graduates who had found a full time job; not asked in 2012; N=1,909)

In conclusion it can be said that graduates of Erasmus Mundus are well accepted on the job market. 66.2% of all graduates in our survey had found a full time job after graduating from EMMC. This figure does not take into account the large number of graduates who were not looking for a job after graduating, because they wanted to receive further training and education instead. A whole 59.2% of those graduates who were employed after finishing the program, found their job in less than two months. On the other hand, 7.2% of those graduates who hadn't yet been employed stated that they had had difficulties because their EM degree was not recognized in the country where they were looking for a job.



3 Personal impact of Erasmus Mundus

3.1 Perceived impact of Erasmus Mundus

Beside the impact of Erasmus Mundus on the participants' professional life, the personal impact of the program on students and graduates is an equally important issue. Accordingly, participants were asked directly about the perceived impact Erasmus Mundus had on them as a person. The most interesting results are shown in this chapter.

Where do you personally see the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus?

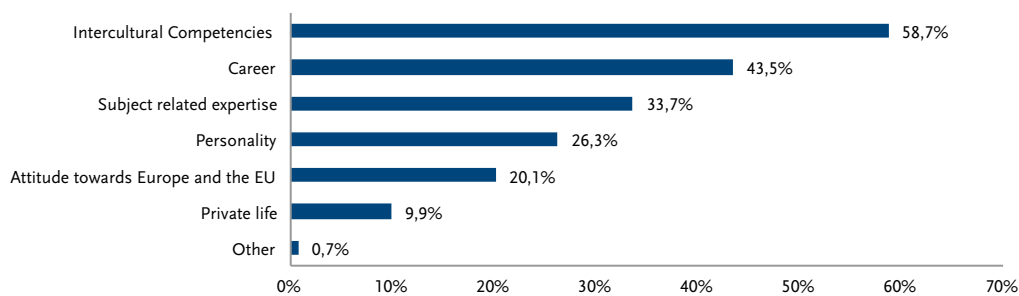


Figure 17: Where graduates see the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus (graduates; N=3,610; 2 choices)

Figure 17 shows that graduates see the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus on their intercultural competencies (58.7%). Another 43.5% of the graduates believed that the greatest effect studying EMMC had was on their career and 33.7% thought the greatest gain was that of subject related expertise. Approximately a quarter of graduates (26.3%) thought the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus was on their personality, while every fifth graduate sees an effect on his attitude towards Europe and the EU (20.1%). Graduates consider their private life affected the least by Erasmus Mundus (9.9%).

Another question was how the perception of these effects after studying an EMMC would develop. Figure 18 shows how the perceived impact on the various aspects develops after finishing the program. The perceived impact on the career increases over time only to plunge after five years. The impact of Erasmus Mundus on the career of the graduates seems to be only temporary. This is not surprising taking into account that, as already reported, many former students choose to get further academic qualifications beyond EMMC, which will have an impact on their careers just as well as the success they achieve in their jobs.



Where do you personally see the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus?

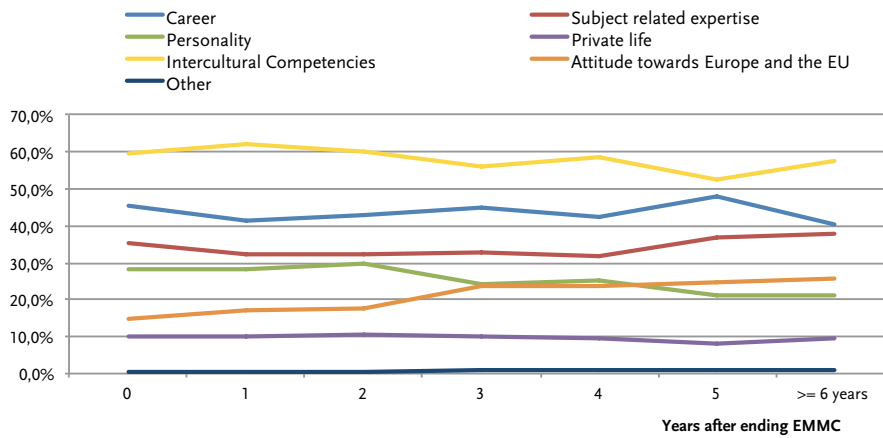


Figure 18: Where graduates see the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus by years after ending EMMC (graduates; two choices; N=3,610)

The only aspect that constantly and noticeably increases significantly in relevance over the years after ending EMMC is the attitude towards Europe and the EU (Spearman's $\rho=0.10$; $p<0.01$; $N=3,477$). Thus, it may be said that Erasmus Mundus has a sustainable impact on the participants' view of Europe. Assuming that the experienced change of attitude is of a positive nature, this, of course, is a very pleasant development, as it is one of the aims of Erasmus Mundus to further dialogue and understanding between people and cultures and, in particular, to influence their view of the European Union.

Development of provenance (graduates)

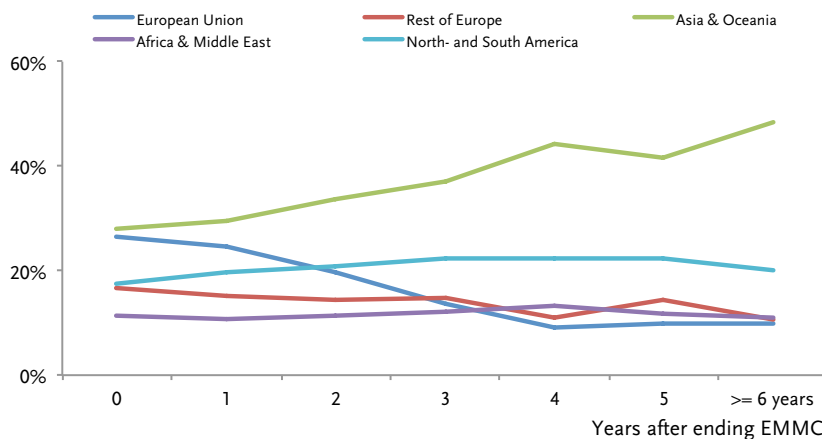


Figure 19 Development of provenance by years after ending EMMC (graduates; N=3,744)

Figure 19 provides a different explanation for this development. As one can see there is a strong and constant shift of distribution of EMMC graduates in terms of their region of origin over time. The distribution of those former EMMC students that have graduated a longer time ago is in favour of non-European participants, while the opposite is true for those graduates who just finished their program, who have a higher percentage of European (EU and non-EU) participants. Since students from Europe can be expected to have a more firm opinion and attitude towards Europe and



since these students make up a higher percentage among graduates who have just recently finished their program, more graduates will perceive more impact on their attitude towards Europe the larger the time gap between graduation and the time of the survey is. However, it has to be mentioned that the increase in EU origin 4 years ago can also be explained by the inclusion of EU scholarships, which lead to a bigger number of European students.

While the perceived impact on subject related expertise, private life and intercultural competencies remain more or less stable after finishing the program, the impact on personality is the only one that decreases significantly and constantly (Spearman’s rho=-0.06; p<0.01; N=3,477). On the one hand, this is unfortunate considering that it is one of the aims of Erasmus Mundus to influence the personalities of her students. On the other hand, this might simply be a natural development, because personality changes constantly with continuing experience of life and one may only expect an immediate impact of Erasmus Mundus in this area.

After having analysed the graduates’ perception of the impact of Erasmus Mundus, we will now compare these results to students’ expectations regarding the impact of EMMC (see figure 20).

Where do you personally see the greatest impact of Erasmus Mundus?

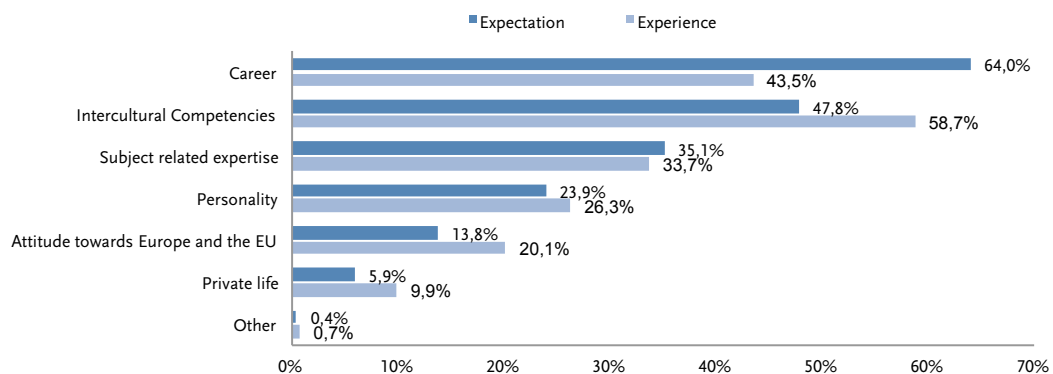


Figure 20: Expectations (students) and experience (graduates) of impact of Erasmus Mundus (N=5,956)

As shown in figure 20, there is a significant difference between the expected impacts on intercultural competencies by students compared to the perceived impact of EMMC by graduates. A possible explanation for this difference may be that most students underestimate the cultural differences in the beginning of EMMC. In contrast, graduates may have encountered greater cultural differences than expected and think themselves now more competent in intercultural situations. Another possible explanation is the shift of the region of origin of Erasmus Mundus students. As figure 21 shows, the percentages of Europeans and non-Europeans vary noticeably between graduates and students. The percentage of Europeans (EU and non-EU) among students is significantly higher (42.5%) than the percentage of Europeans among graduates (32.1%) ($\chi^2=4.33$; df=1; p=0.04). Correspondingly, the percentage of those students originating from any of the other regions is lower than the percentage of graduates from the respective regions. Students from both Africa and the Middle East are the only exception. These observations are in accordance with the fact that there is a constant shift in the region of origin among Erasmus Mundus graduates over time as we have already mentioned above (see figure 19).



Have you already finished your EMMC?

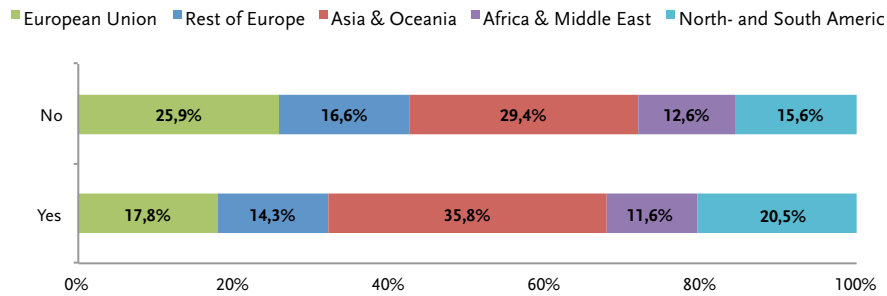


Figure 21: Distribution of region of origin by student status (all participants; N=5,955)

Graduates also rate the impact on personality, private life and attitude towards Europe higher than students expect. The only category where students' expectations are higher than graduates' experiences is "career".

Students seem to underestimate the impact of EMMC on their personal development, while emphasizing the impact on their career. Since advancing their career is such an important aspect for Erasmus Mundus students and since the level of overall satisfaction with the program among both students and graduates is so high and stays stable over time one must conclude that the data does not suggest that the impact on the career is lower than expected but rather that other aspects have been overlooked by students. These findings may help to promote Erasmus Mundus in the world. Students should and can expect more outcome than they actually do, especially in terms of their personal development.



3.2 Places of residence

In order to assess whether the EU is an attractive place for young academics to work, we examined how many graduates stayed in the EU after graduation. Figure 22 compares the region of origin of the graduates to the place of residence. Evidently, Europe, and the EU in particular, remain an attractive place of residence. 53.2% of all participants stayed in the EU even after finishing their EMMC program. Compared to the mere 17.8% of graduates who originally come from one of the EU countries this is a relatively high figure and proof that Erasmus Mundus succeeds in attracting qualified human capital. Beside the EU, only Oceania (1.9% living there vs. 1.4% originally from there) and North America (both 6.5%) seem to be attractive working places, but not nearly as attractive to the graduates as the EU.

Place of residence vs. region of origin (graduates)

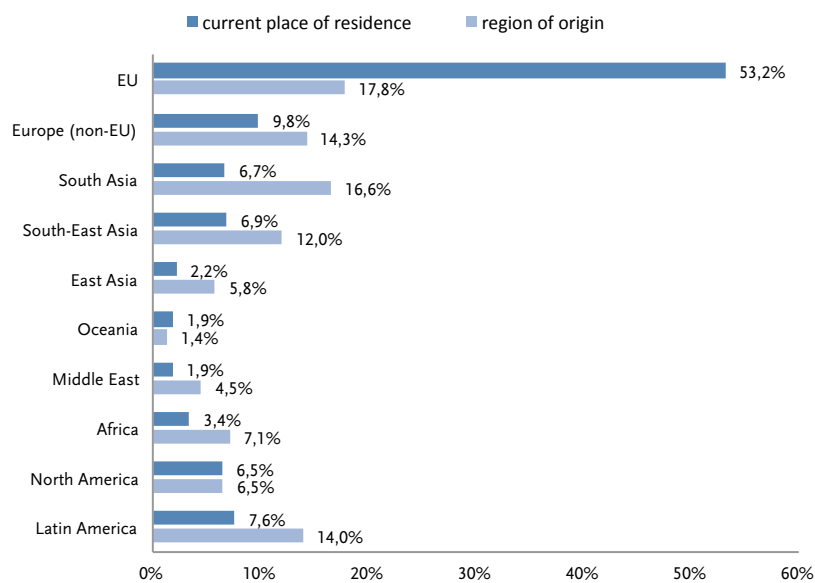


Figure 22: Place of residence vs. region of origin (graduates; N=3,744)

As figure 23 shows, the number of graduates who originally came from non-EU countries but who stayed in the EU decreases over time. More than one quarter (30.5%) of the graduates from outside the EU remain in the European Union even six or more years after they have graduated. All in all, 43.9% of the graduates stayed in the EU after finishing the program. On the other hand, most citizens from the EU stay there after their MC (87.5%). There is a steady decrease over the first four years after graduation but, subsequently, the percentage of graduates from the EU that also live in the EU increases again. This is a positive development as it shows that, although graduates from the EU may choose to go abroad, these people come back to Europe. As we have already shown, a number of graduates choose to receive further qualification after finishing their program instead of taking on a job straight away. Perhaps these graduates choose to qualify outside of the EU in order to broaden their academic education.



Former EMMC students living in the EU

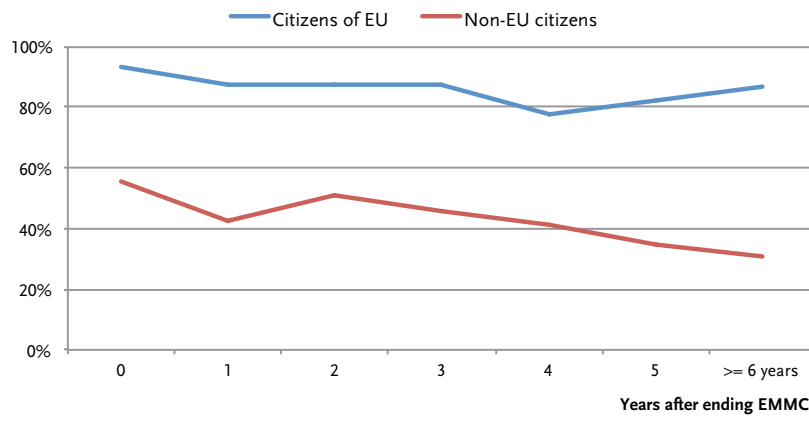


Figure 23: Percentage of graduates (EU-citizens and non-EU citizens) living in the EU by years after ending EMMC (graduates; N=3,727)

Since it is one of the aims of Erasmus Mundus to attract third country residents to the EU, we will take a closer look at the graduates from outside the EU. Figure 24 shows that better job opportunities are by far the most important reason for staying in the EU (73.3%), followed by the quality of working and living environment (56.1%). This shows that the EU is regarded as an attractive workplace. Surprisingly, “financial, social and political stability” only ranks on third position (32.1%). On the other hand, those graduates that had not stayed in the EU unsurprisingly mentioned personal reasons (family issues/private life: 47.3%; it is my home, I grew up here: 43.1%) as the most important reasons for their choice of place of residence. Only 36.7% stated that better job/career opportunities were an important reason for their choice of place of residence.

All in all, we have seen that graduates see the greatest impact on their intercultural competencies. Over the years after their graduation the perceived effect on the personality of the former students drops significantly. The opposite is true for the perceived impact on the attitude towards Europe and the EU. While the receding impact on the personality of the students is to be expected, the development of the impact on their attitude towards Europe is pleasant to report. Furthermore the survey revealed discrepancies between what students expected of their program and what graduates had experienced. Students expected much more impact on their career than graduates, while these had perceived greater impact in the other areas.



What are the reasons for your choice of place of residence?

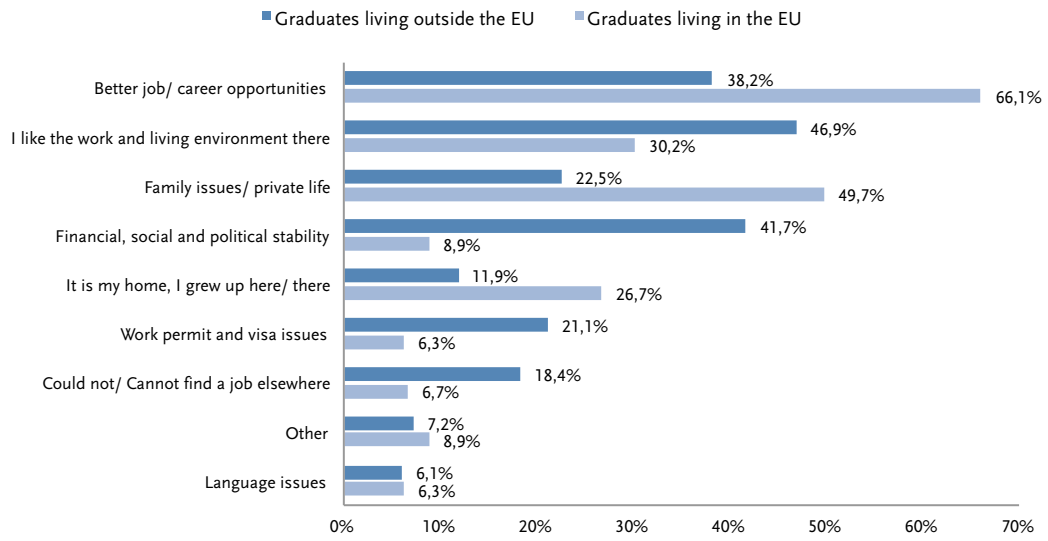


Figure 24: Reasons for choice of place of residence (non-EU graduates; N=2,947)



4 Visibility and Profile of Erasmus Mundus

One of the three objectives of the Erasmus Mundus program is “the promotion of the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world” (Erasmus Mundus program 2013). In order to verify whether this objective can be realised, the following chapter will analyse the answers to several questions revolving around two main issues: The reasons for students to choose Erasmus Mundus as a Masters Course and the awareness of Erasmus Mundus.

Reasons for taking an EMMC

As can be seen in Figure 25 the strongest argument for taking an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course is the scholarship. More than two thirds of all participants (69.6%) named the scholarship as a reason for participating in Erasmus Mundus. The second and third most important points nevertheless underline that the opportunity to study in Europe (51.7%) and the academic level of Erasmus Mundus universities (48.7%) are also important reasons for students to choose the program.

What convinced you to choose Erasmus Mundus as a Masters course?

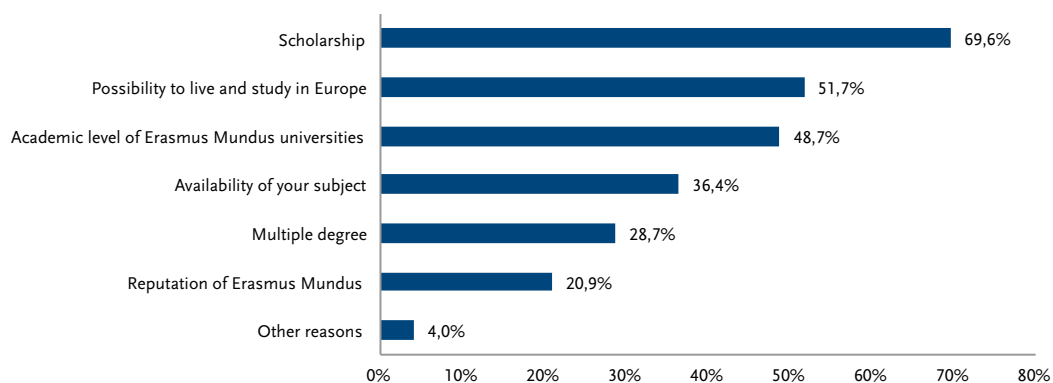


Figure 25: Reasons for choosing Erasmus Mundus as a Masters Course (all participants; N=5,939)

This result confirms that the Commission’s aims are reached. Through scholarships, higher education becomes an option for many students, whatever their cultural or socioeconomic background may be. The fact that the opportunity to study in Europe and the academic level of Erasmus Mundus rank on positions two and three shows that the European Union is indeed regarded as a centre of excellence by the participants of Erasmus Mundus.

Figure 26 depicts the reasons for students to choose EMMC sorted by years after starting the program. Participants were allowed three answers to this question so as to provide a more precise view on this issue. This allows to not only compare the relevance of the different reasons to each other but also to assess the relevance of the reasons by themselves. Unfortunately, the data from those students who began their EMMC in 2015 (N=103) is not yet sufficient to deduct valid results, so we will concentrate our view on the answers of the participants who started studying in 2014 or earlier. Since 2009 the ranking of the reasons for choosing Erasmus Mundus has changed only slightly. Nevertheless, figure 26 offers three important findings: Firstly, while the scholarship has been the single most important motive for studying an EMMC over the entire period of observation, the percentage of students mentioning it as one of the reasons they chose Erasmus Mundus has decreased constantly and significantly (Spearman’s $\rho = -0.11$; $p < 0.01$; $N = 4,374$). Secondly, the possibility of living and studying in Europe has become a significantly less important reason to choose Erasmus Mundus (Spearman’s $\rho = -0.06$; $p < 0.01$; $N = 4,231$). Following an initial increase this aspect has lost steadily in importance. A possible explanation for this may be the difficult economic situation in the EU since 2009 rendering the EU a less attractive place to work and study, although this is somewhat countered by our findings in chapter three, where we saw that graduates look favourably upon the EU as a place of residence. This aspect should



therefore be further monitored in future surveys. Thirdly, the reputation of the program is an increasingly important reason for young people to study an EMMC (Spearman’s $\rho=0.13$; $p<0.01$; $N=3,935$). This is, of course, an important discovery as it suggests that the reputation of the Erasmus Mundus program itself has risen over the last years. The other reasons remained - more or less - on a constant level.

What convinced you to choose Erasmus Mundus as a Masters course?

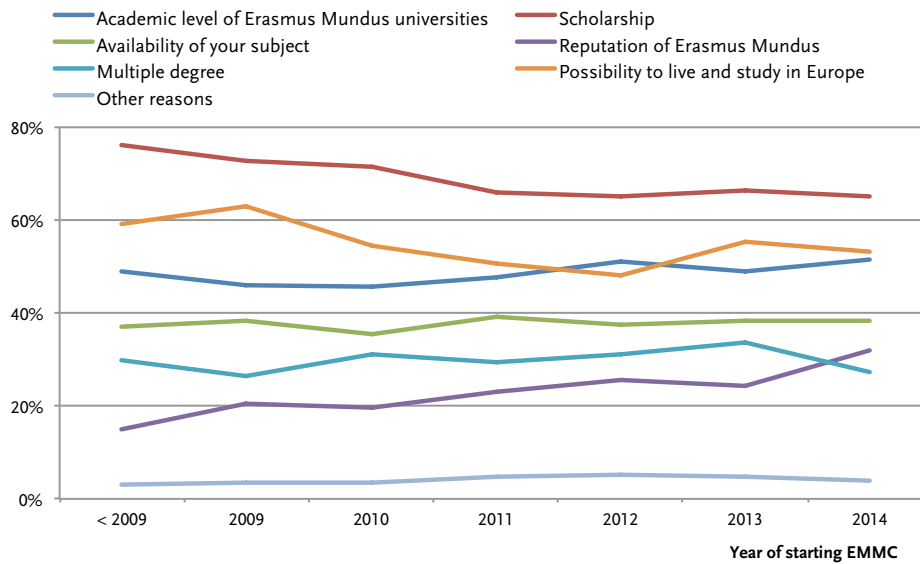


Figure 26 Reasons for choosing Erasmus Mundus by year of starting the program (all participants; N=5,939)

4.1 Visibility of Erasmus Mundus

In order to assess the visibility of the Erasmus Mundus program, this chapter will investigate how well Erasmus Mundus was known in the respective home countries and how the participants found out about the program.

The question of how well Erasmus Mundus is known reveals a somewhat ambiguous result (see figure 27). In tendency, the participants rated the program rather well-known than unknown. Nevertheless, the percentages of those participants who rated the program as rather unknown or not at all known are high. Moreover, the visibility in the home countries has slightly (but significantly: Spearman’s $\rho= 0.03$; $p=0.04$; $N=4,592$) decreased: In 2013 48.5% said that the program was (at least fairly) known whereas in 2015 only 44% said so. On the other hand, 35.0% said the program was rather unknown or not at all known in 2013 while 37.2% said the same in 2015.



How well known is Erasmus Mundus in your home country?

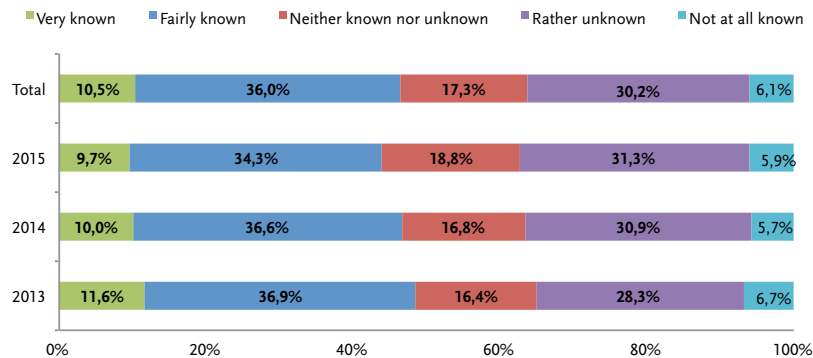


Figure 27: Level of awareness of Erasmus Mundus by cohort (all participants; not asked in 2012; N=4,592)

Figure 28 shows how well known the Erasmus Mundus program is in the different regions of origins of the participants. As can be seen in figure 28, there are regions where Erasmus Mundus is considered rather well-known (foremost Africa, South-East Asia, and South Asia) and on the other hand there are regions where Erasmus Mundus is considered rather not well known (North- and Latin America, Oceania and the EU). In Europe, in countries outside the EU, Erasmus Mundus has an average level of awareness. As we have shown earlier more and more students are coming from Europe and the percentage of students from other parts of the World, Asia in particular, is diminishing. Since the Erasmus Mundus program is rather well known in Asia and not so well known in the EU, the reason why the awareness of Erasmus Mundus is decreasing may be the change of distribution of students in terms of their region of origin.

How well known is Erasmus Mundus in your home country?

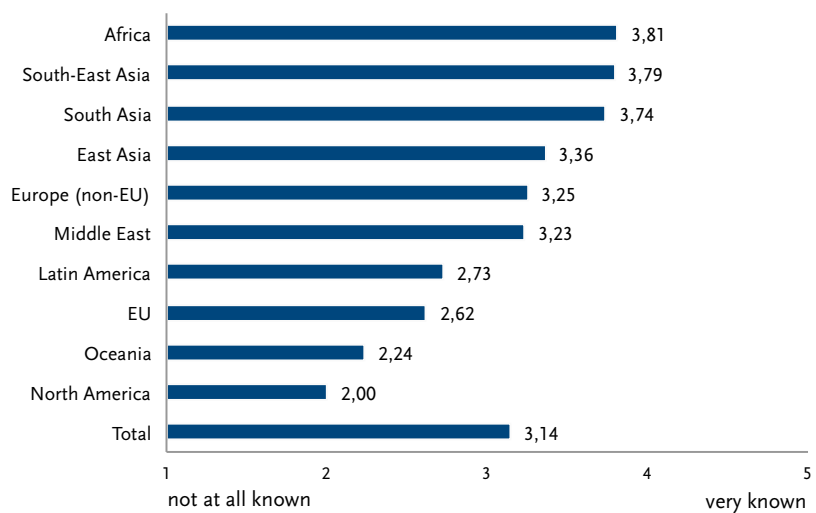


Figure 28: Level of awareness by region of origin (all participants; not asked in 2012; N=4,592)



In summary, the visibility of Erasmus Mundus can be considered to be quite good. However, in certain regions of the world, especially in the EU and in the Americas, there, clearly, is room and need to improve the awareness of Erasmus Mundus, particularly considering that more and more students are coming from the EU. Furthermore, we have seen that the reputation of the program is on the rise, which will make any efforts to further the awareness of Erasmus Mundus all the more fruitful.

Having determined that the visibility of Erasmus Mundus can be improved in some regions of the world, we will now investigate what the most economical way to accomplish this might be. In order to find a solution to this problem, it may help to take a look at the responses to the question of how participants found out about Erasmus Mundus (figures 29 and 30). Only students who had not yet finished the program were asked this question.

How did you find out about the Erasmus Mundus Programme?

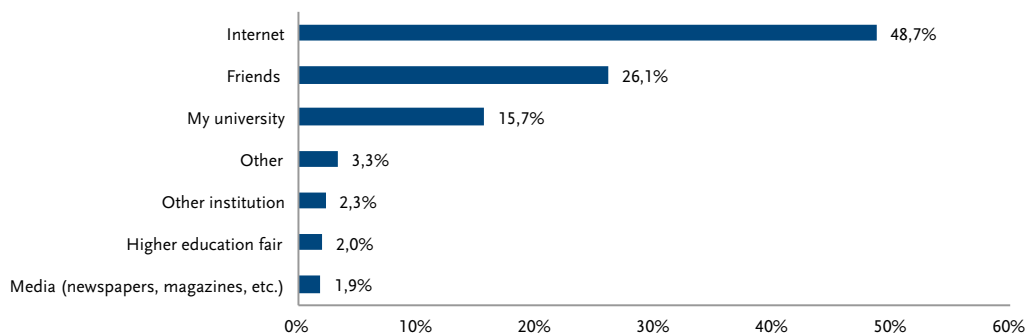


Figure 29: Sources of initial information (students 2012-2015 and graduates in 2012 and 2015; N=4,104)

Most students (48.7%) found out about Erasmus Mundus on the internet. Their friends (26.1%) were the second most important source of information followed by their university (15.7%) on rank three.

How did you find out about the Erasmus Mundus Programme?

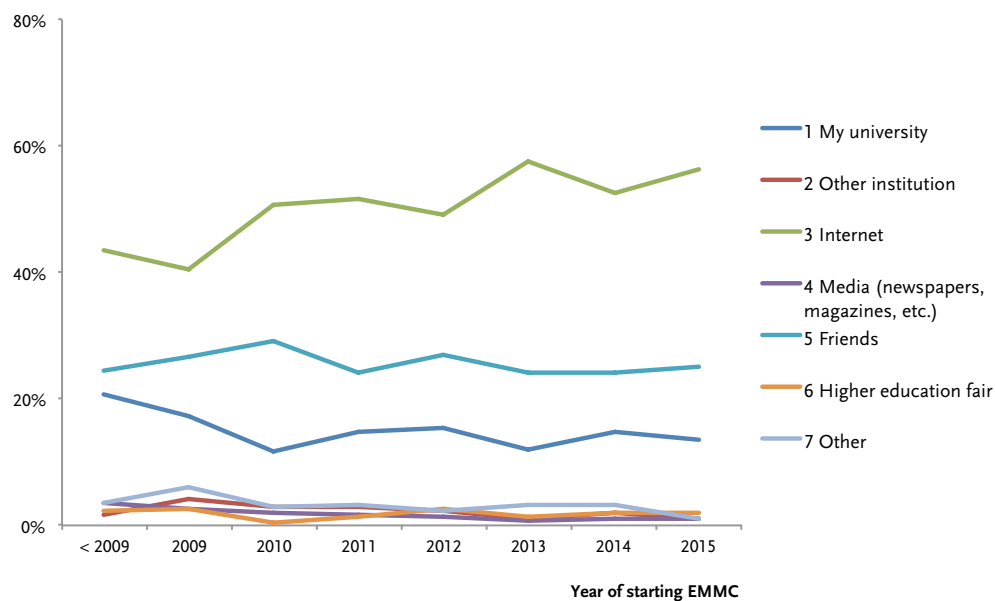


Figure 30: Sources of initial information by year of starting EMMC (students 2012-2015 and graduates in 2012 and 2015; N=4,104)



Figure 30 shows how the influence of these sources developed over the years in which students and graduates started studying. All in all, the distribution has not changed too much over the years since the first students started studying. Unsurprisingly, more and more students find out about Erasmus Mundus through the Internet (43.5% before 2009 and 56.3% in 2015; Spearman's $\rho=0.06$; $p<0.01$; $N=3,234$). At the same time, (slightly) significantly less students find out about Erasmus Mundus in their universities (Spearman's $\rho=-0.03$; $p=0.08$; $N=3,234$), albeit the key sources for finding out about the program have stayed the same over the whole period: The Internet, friends and the education institutions.

Summarizing the findings in this chapter, it can be said that Erasmus Mundus is fairly well known. However, in some regions of the world, e.g. the EU and the Americas, the visibility of Erasmus Mundus can be improved. Considering how students find out about Erasmus Mundus, expanding the internet presence is advisable. Also, taking into account that the reputation of Erasmus Mundus is becoming an important factor when deciding for the program, it is equally sensible to further the promotion of Erasmus in those places, where students can not only obtain information but also determine the program's reputation, i.e. the educational institutions.

IV IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have established a high level of satisfaction with Erasmus Mundus throughout students and graduates. Nonetheless, there is plenty of room for improvement.

When asked what the program was lacking, graduates especially mentioned contacts to potential employers and practical experience within their courses. These are key aspects in terms of employability, and successfully tackling the students' concerns in this area should increase the prospects of Erasmus Mundus graduates on the labour market. Only 13.6% of graduates have found their job through contacts established during their EMMC and we recommend putting further effort into bringing together students and potential employers.

Students' expectations differ distinctly from the graduates' experience of where the program has the greatest personal impact. Students expect a great impact on their career and while graduates also see a large impact in this area they tend to experience a greater impact in non-career related areas than the students expect. In order to even out these differences we recommend to more clearly emphasize the program's impact in non-career related areas when promoting Erasmus Mundus.

The visibility of Erasmus Mundus is not as high as it can be. Considering that the reputation of the program is high and steadily increasing, putting more effort into the promotion of the program should yield immediate results. Promotion should especially take place in those areas where the reputation can also be determined, i.e. the educational institutions, as well as on the internet where most people find out about the program. Moreover, the visibility in certain countries is quite low. Promoting Erasmus Mundus here should be profitable. We have seen a shift of the distribution of students by region of origin. If it is desirable to attract as many students as possible from outside Europe, strengthening efforts to promote Erasmus Mundus in third countries will be all the more fruitful.

From the perspective of potential employers, the visibility of the program should also be higher. 7.2% of the graduates who had not found a job after their EMMC stated they had experienced difficulties because their degree was not recognized in the country in which they were looking for a job. While this figure has decreased somewhat in 2015, it is still considerably high.



V LITERATURE

Erasmus Mundus Program

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/index_en.php

Erasmus +

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf