

Virtual exchange: *Borderless mobility between European Higher Education Area and Regions Beyond*



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We commit to developing the role of higher education in securing a *sustainable future* for our planet and our societies and to finding ways in which we, as EHEA Ministers, can contribute to meeting the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* at global, European and national levels.



ON EHEA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FINAL REPORT, 2018

It is important for the EHEA *to listen to and learn from the world* and *engage on common problems*.

STATEMENT OF THE FIFTH BOLOGNA POLICY FORUM Paris, May 25th2018

Higher education has a long tradition of forging international links and there are many examples of productive partnerships between our countries. Higher education institutions and stakeholders are among the key drivers of international cooperation through the mobility of staff and students, international research partnerships, transnational education and collaboration on reaching solutions to global challenges. In this way higher education has provided a strong basis for the cross-fertilisation of ideas and good practice that contribute to solving global issues.

http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/72/2/MEN_conf-EHEA_AG1_03_950722.pdf

http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/36/8/BPFStatement_with_Annex_958368.pdf



Student **mobility** programmes



- Seen as a key to a person's formation as a European and global citizen and to improving social cohesion between populations of different nations as well as to internationalising higher education.
- Focused on cross-border exchanges of students (e.g. Erasmus+)
- Erasmus has also had a profound impact on the students that take part in it: **gaining significant competences** like resilience in new situations, becoming more **open-minded, tolerant and curious**

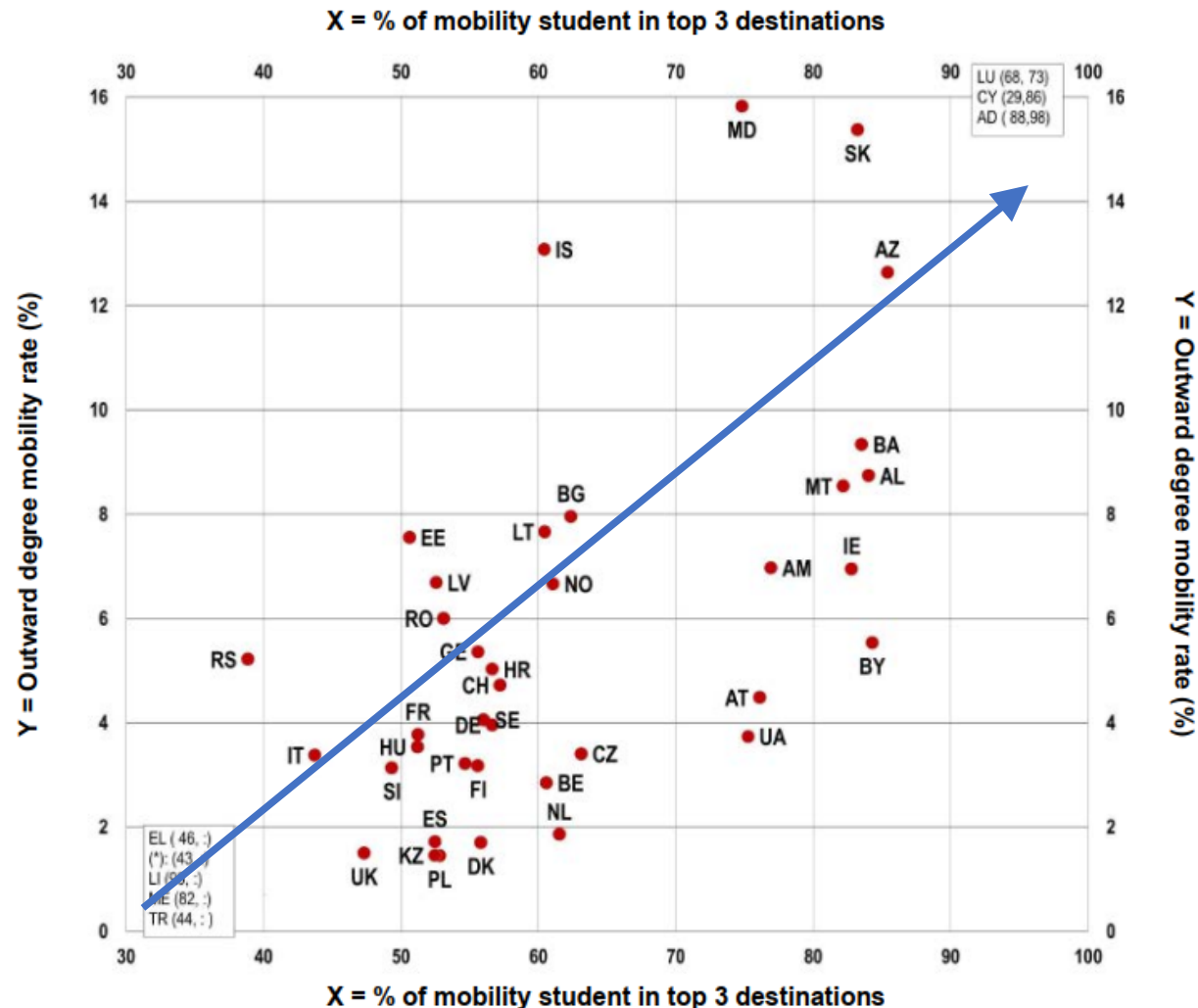
But: **Mobility** is not for all

Challenges:

1. To ensure that a **large share** of the student population can take part in international mobility during their studies.
2. To ensure that **every student has the same opportunity** to go abroad and that participants in mobility programmes are drawn from all parts of the student body.



Figure 7.22: Outward mobility versus diversity of destination countries (mobility flows within and outside the EHEA) 2014/15



And: mobility is not as globally diverse as we hope

- There is a negative correlation between high outward mobility rates and diversity of countries of destination.
- Students from countries with high outward mobility rates show also a high concentration on only three destinations.

Virtual exchange: Expanding the learning space



- The potentials of digitalisation to create ***network-based teaching and learning*** environments have not sufficiently been taken into account.
- Digital technologies can play a role here in promoting ***connections between learners***, fostering collaborative learning as well as enriching, deepening and extending physical mobility.
- Changing mobility patterns will ***encourage transnational, multipartner study programmes***, personalised learning opportunities and seamless data flows - based on common standards, interoperable interfaces and service-oriented IT-infrastructures.

Extending the skill set

e.g. Open Virtual Mobility Competence Framework

- Media and digital literacy
- Self-regulated learning
- Autonomous learning
- Networked learning
- Intercultural skills and attitudes
- International collaboration



Offering new learning opportunities across the globe

e.g. Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange



Shoukrie I. Shoukrie // Libya

Project Coordinator Assistant, Moomken Youth Organization

Shoukri oversaw the participation of 29 Libyan youth in an eight week Online Facilitation Dialogue programme during the autumn of 2018 .

“Under the horrors of the Libyan civil war, it was extremely difficult for civil society organisations to provide meaningful exchange opportunities for youth, in order to gain the necessary exposure to diverse perspectives. Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange gave us an innovative approach to reach marginalised youth across the struggling country, and enabled them to overcome the barriers and restrictions imposed by the war. Participants, for the first time, had the chance to interact with their peers in other countries, exchange knowledge and transfer the culture of dialogue into their local communities as a contribution to the peace-building and reconciliation process.

Need to provide opportunities for mobility in the curriculum

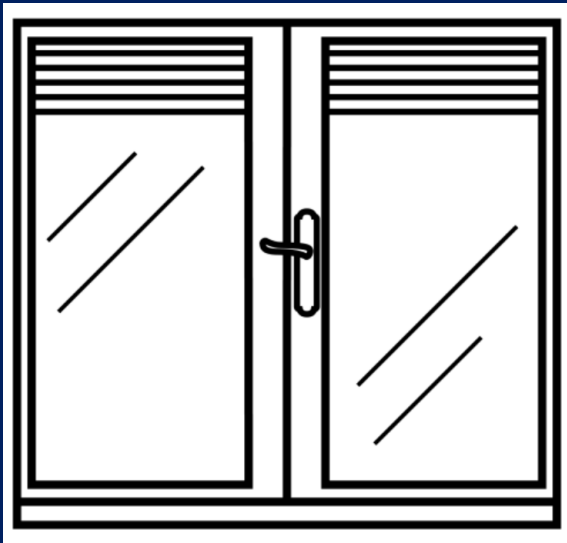
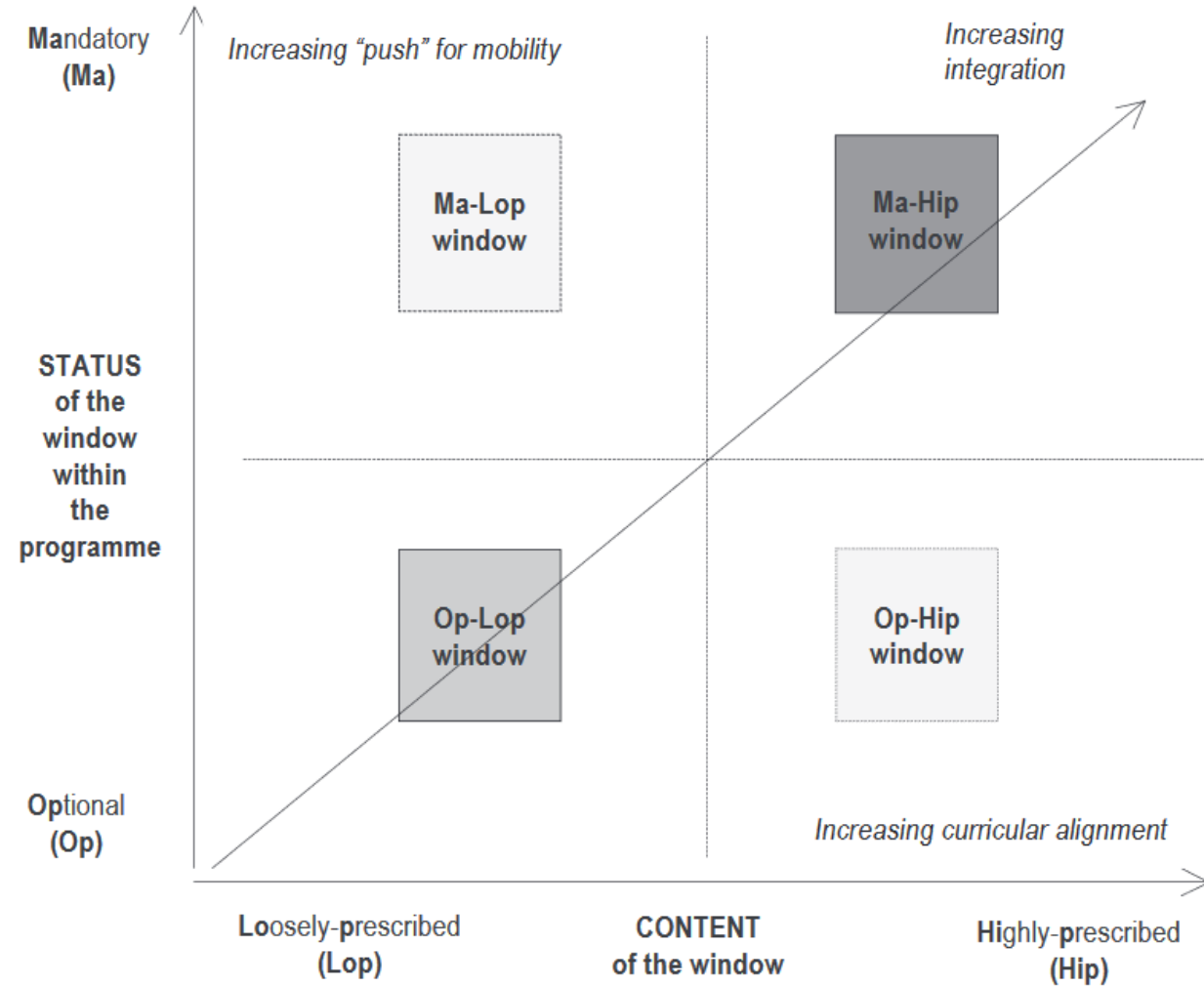


Figure 4: Typology of mobility windows



Recalling the social contribution of internationalisation

Defining internationalisation of higher ed. (de Wit):

“The *intentional process* of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and ***to make a meaningful contribution to society.***”

Brandenburg, U., de Wit, H., Jones, E., & Leask, B. (2019, June 29). Defining internationalisation in HE for society. Retrieved from University World News website:
<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190626135618704>



Bologna Digital Recommendations

We encourage higher education institutions, stakeholders and policymakers to work separately and together in the following areas:

1. Higher education institutions are encouraged to ***develop blended mobility approaches***, which can help students and staff to be better prepared for their period abroad and help them integrate their new learning and experience into their studies once they return home.
2. Higher education institutions are encouraged to ***make better use of virtual exchange*** and blended mobility opportunities in addition to physical exchange programmes for students and staff. This can strengthen the incoming and outgoing mobility offer, enhance its quality, and help to ensure that learning outcomes are met and that experiences are open to a diverse group of participants.
3. Higher education institutions should ***provide didactical and technical support for lecturers and students*** in order to enable them to develop and participate successfully in virtual exchange scenarios. Therefore, they should also make use of their ***strategic networks*** to mutually profit from each others competences and fields of teaching.
4. New modes of mobility and exchange should be guided by ***clear objectives and learning outcomes*** by which they can be judged. Member states and European stakeholders should work to clarify common goals and objectives of networked curricula, virtual exchange programmes and blended mobility schemes, so these can act as guidelines for higher education institutions.

