



Press release – 4 September 2012

New EUA report examines mobility strategies in European universities

The European University Association (EUA) today publishes a new report examining the issue of academic mobility which covers university students, young researchers, academic and administrative staff. Entitled 'Mobility: Closing the gap between policy and practice', the publication is the outcome of a two-year project entitled 'Mapping university mobility of staff and students – MAUNIMO'. It will be presented today at a two-day dissemination conference and policy debate on mobility, taking place at the University of Oslo in Norway.*

Led by EUA, the MAUNIMO project has explored the university perspective on mobility and how institutions are responding to increased pressures from policy initiatives at both European and national levels to increase mobility. These policy initiatives include, for example at the European level, the targets set by the European Union and through the Bologna Process, which state that by 2020, 20% of all students graduating should have had a study or training period abroad.

The MAUNIMO project centred on the creation and pilot of a (web-based) mobility self-assessment tool for universities. A total of 34 universities from 21 countries agreed to pilot the tool which is designed to help universities examine a variety of issues such as: how they are defining and implementing strategies for mobility, how they collect different types of data on mobility, how different external stakeholders (including local and regional government, employers, etc) influence mobility, and how perceptions of mobility vary within an institution. The tool consists of a questionnaire that helps structure an internal consultation and mapping of mobility perceptions and practices, and has been further supported by other interactive activities such as practice sharing between universities, facilitated by an online workspace and two workshops.

In terms of lessons that have been drawn from the pilot, the project highlights that universities feel they need to take a more strategic cross-institutional approach to mobility, even if mobility is already inherent to their international strategy. A number of universities explained that approaches to various types of mobility (student, staff and researcher) were currently somewhat fragmented across the institution making it more difficult to have a strategic vision (and to collect comprehensive data).

Pilot universities emphasised that the commitment of university leadership was key to the development of mobility strategies and their implementation – in particular in terms of encouraging the active participation of staff and students. They also outlined a range of other issues that are crucial for the implementation of mobility strategies such as establishing and coordinating a range of dedicated services (for international and mobility-related activities) and better capturing some of the creative practice taking place at faculty level for motivating and evaluating mobility.

The report recommends that universities underpin mobility strategies with comprehensive data collection covering different kinds of mobility across the institution (such as incoming and outgoing, short-term, long-term, students, administrative and academic staff and young researchers). National reporting requirements and European data parameters can provide the basis for collecting such data but they should not determine exclusively what kind of data universities collect and use.

In addition to the university perspective on mobility, the report examines how policy and practice can be better coordinated with regard to mobility in the future. It outlines that it is crucial that universities are consulted on the development of national mobility strategies, policies and programmes. As universities have diverse goals

with regard to mobility, it is also important that policy makers ensure universities have incentives to develop their own mobility strategies in line with their needs and resources.

Outlining the current gaps that exist in data collection on mobility at European level and at many national levels, the report stresses that EU institutions, national governments and data collection agencies need to work in close partnership with HE institutions to identify and agree data collection parameters and reporting procedures. The enhancement of data collection in the future will have an impact on universities in terms of administration and management of mobility, and the use of such data will also have implications for quality assurance, student and graduate tracking, student services, learning provision and strategic development in general.

MAUNIMO is a project supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. It is led by EUA and supported by partners: University of Oslo, University of Trento, Swansea University and University of Marburg.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded [here](#).

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For further information please contact Andrew Miller: Tel: +32 2 743 11 59, + 32 473 748 785 email: andrew.miller@eua.be, or Stephanie Friedrich: +32 2 743 11 81, email: stephanie.friedrich@eua.be

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

Notes for editors

- More information on the MAUNIMO project is available here: <http://www.maunimo.be>
- *The Final Dissemination Conference of the MAUNIMO project, entitled 'A comprehensive policy vision for Europe's new mobility agenda' will take place at the University of Oslo from 4 to 5 September. The conference will present various testimonials of the participating universities who have utilised the mobility tool. In addition, an important dialogue will be held with key European policy makers on issues such as the role of universities in meeting and implementing European mobility targets; the challenges of data collection on mobility at institutional level; the need for strategy refinement and development at the institutional level regarding internationalisation and mobility; the proposed EU funding schemes for student, staff and researcher mobility under Europe 2020, in particular the European Commission's Erasmus for All proposal.