

# Brain drain and internationalisation: Can existing QA practices foster responsible internationalization and brain circulation in higher education?



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# Today's agenda

## 1. Introduction to brain drain in higher education (15 min)

## 2. Group work 1 (15 min)

Defining main factors contributing to brain drain from the participants' perspectives and identifying weak points that could reinforce brain drain.

## 1. Debriefing (10 min)

Gathering opinions and a short exchange of views between the groups.

## 1. Group work 2 (25 min, same groups)

Each group picks one/two brain drain reinforcing factors and tries to come up with a measure based on the ESGs that could help monitor/mitigate it.

## 1. Short discussion (20 min)

A rapporteur for each session has 3 minutes to present their findings and a floor is opened for discussion.

## 1. Conclusion

# Note

We would like to use the conclusions from this session to create a **written document** on how brain drain could be mitigated through existing QA practices.

The names of the participants, as well as their stakeholder status, will remain **anonymised** for all information collection, processing and publishing purposes.

If you feel uncomfortable sharing any information, please let the workshop organisers know.

**We thank you for deciding to participate in this session!**



# A preliminary glossary

## **Brain Drain (BD)**

Permanent emigration of skilled persons from one jurisdiction to another.

## **Brain Circulation (BC)**

The possibility for developing countries to draw on the skills, know-how and other forms of experience gained by their migrants - whether they have returned to their country of origin or not - and members of their diaspora.

## **Brain Gain (BG)**

The benefit to a country as a result of the immigration of a highly-qualified person.

## **Brain Waste (BW)**

A state when a qualification, education or skills are not recognized.

# Brain drain in scholarly literature

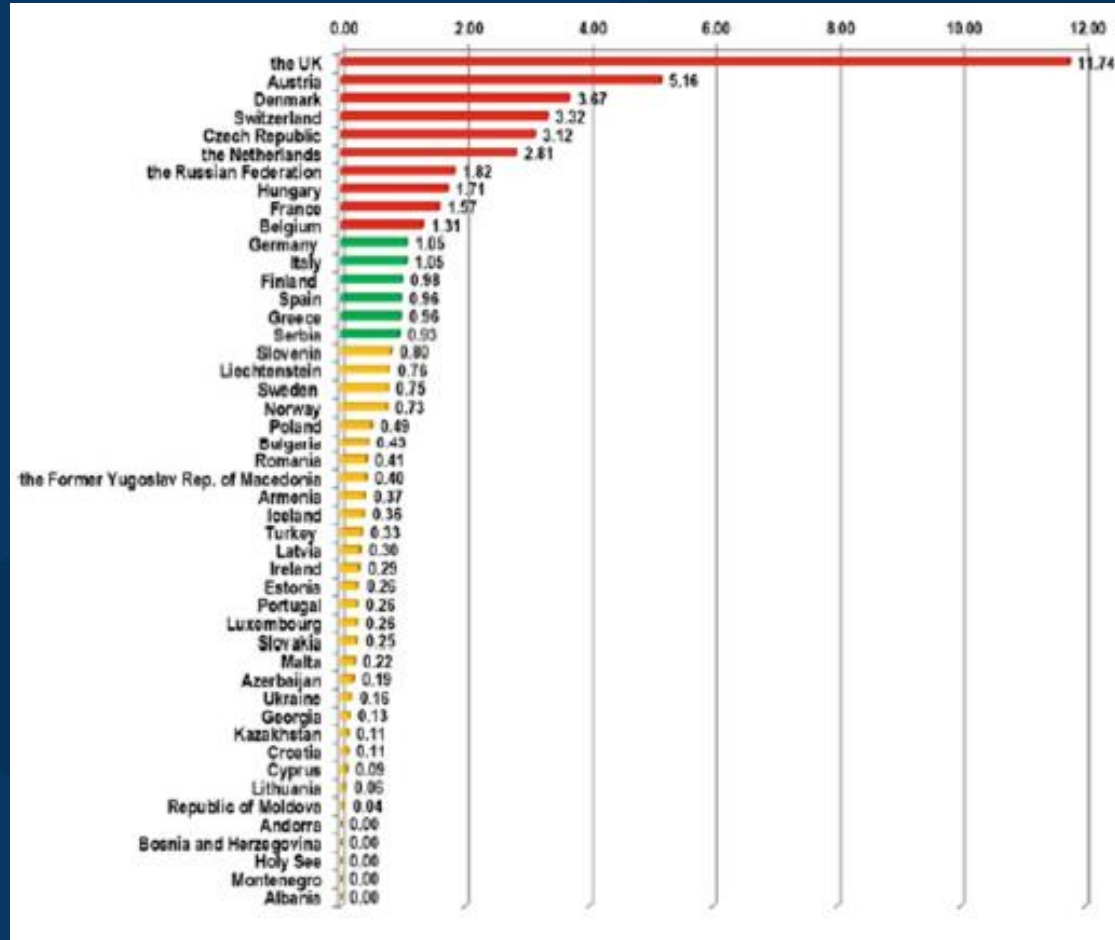
- BD is related to the economic inequalities within the **international division of labour**.
- **Technical push issues of BD**: immigration rules, taxation, science and technology policies, recognition of qualifications
- **Structural push issues of BD**: cultural and societal factors, structure of education and academic careers, language, openness to foreigners
- Effects: **fiscal loss of the investments in education**, reduced quality of services like health and education

See more: <https://esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Brain-Drain-final-report-ESC41-Google-Docs.pdf>



# Brain drain in the European Higher Education Area

- Red:** ratio unbalanced toward inflow (brain gain)
- Green:** balanced ratio (brain circulation)
- Yellow:** ratio unbalanced toward outflow (brain drain)



Intra-EHEA brain mobility in 2011, Source: Ferencz, 2015

# Brain drain in the European Higher Education Area

- Division in status and rights between **EU vs. non-EU students**;
- Students from linguistically and culturally similar system tend to move to study in systems with **good education, lower tuition fees, less barriers at the entrance and more generous student welfare**;
- **After 2008 crisis**: student BD from South and East toward North and West Europe.

See more: Giousmpasoglou, C., Koniordos, S., Brain Drain in Higher Education in Europe: Current Trends and Future Perspectives, in Giousmpasoglou, C., Marinakou, V., Paliktzoglou, V., Brain Drain in Higher Education: The Case of the Southern European Countries and Ireland, Nova Science Publishers, 2017.



# EU and BFUG positions on Brain Drain

- European Education Area first reference on student BD in the EU discourse;
- EU position = BFUG position: 'balanced mobility', meaning proportional incoming and outgoing mobility;
- 'Balanced mobility' period: 2007-2015;
- 'Upper hand' of the receiving countries in the discourse: reduce economic costs of the inflows



# EU and BFUG positions on Brain Drain

- [Bucharest Communiqué \(2012\)](#): intergovernmental solution to excessive inflows;
- [Yerevan Communiqué \(2015\)](#): 'portability of grants and loans' approach was introduced = tax on sending countries = this approach has failed as it did not conform to the Bologna commitments, it was difficult to implement and it did not contribute to lowering the impact of brain drain.

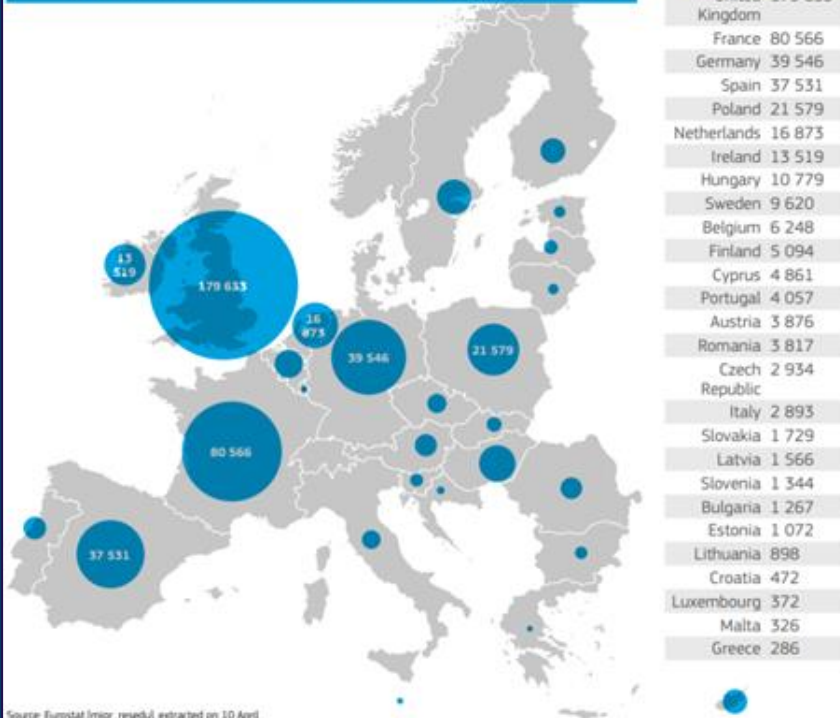
# Brain Circulation

- Term introduced in 1990s;
- Since the launch of Bologna declaration in 1999, **internationalisation** became one of the main focuses of HE;
- Relevant policy: [2015 European Agenda on Migration](#), Erasmus+ Programme- these policies further note the need for internationalisation in higher education through mobility schemes.
- One of the measures to assure brain circulation is the creation of the [European Research Area \(ERA\)](#).

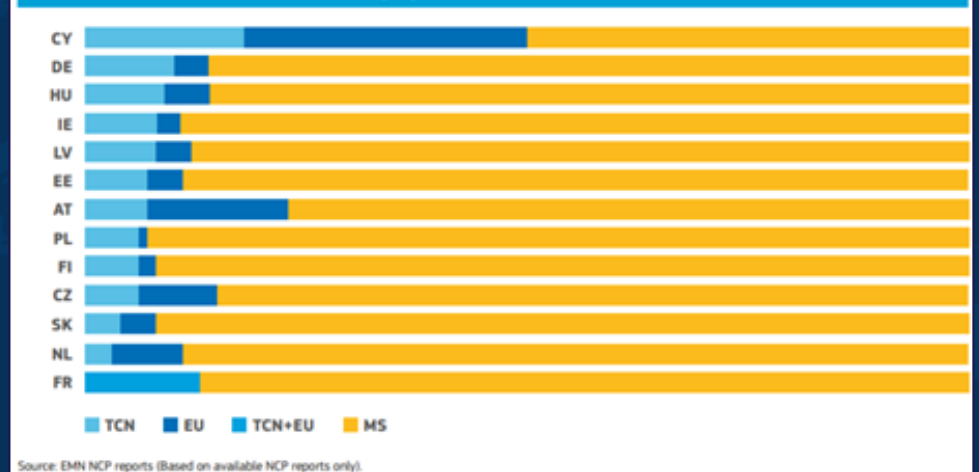
# Brain Circulation in numbers

- EMN Synthesis Report for the EMN Study 2018

**Figure 3: Number of first residence permits issued to third-country nationals for study reasons (2017)**



**Figure 4: Proportion of international students among Member States' student population 2017**



# Brain Circulation in numbers

## MAIN GOALS :

- Internationalisation in HE;
- Increased financing of HE;
- Contribution to the economic growth through producing highly skilled individuals;
- Tackling the needs and shortcomings in the labour market;
- Tackling demographic change.

## DIFFICULTIES:

- Retention of students post-graduation is difficult;
- Insufficient offer of English- taught classes;
- Lengthy and slow HEI application process;
- Lengthy and slow application process for residence permits or visas;
- Lack of scholarship or (affordable) housing opportunities for international students;
- Inability to fully immerse in the culture of another country.

# Internationalisation at HEIs

- Higher tuition fees for international students (even capped!)
- Career counselling and job- orientation services
- Bilateral and multilateral agreements -in support of Brain Mobility
- Mostly focused on enrollment and promotional procedures
- Lacking direct students` support services
- Good practices:
  - Malta, Spain and Czech Republic actively collaborate with immigration authorities
  - Additional financial support for vulnerable groups
  - Family reunification and family support for international students

## Governmental measures:

- Removing restrictions in the labour market for international students

# Connecting Brain Drain to QA

- Often national funding of HEIs is linked to the number of students, new and accredited programmes, as well as innovation and institutional success.
- QA involves constant quality enhancement, putting additional pressure on brain drain-affected countries to prove themselves against their past assessments.
- ESGs mention internationalisation as one of the growing areas of higher education.
- QA monitors the general quality of education, but it does not always strictly look at the sustainability of education.

# National Brain Circulation

- North–South and East–West gradient
- Countries with the highest values of subjects' moves also have the highest number of frequent movers
- Number of moves per person is also connected to changes in subjects' lives
- Regional upgrading

INSUFFICIENT DATA!

# Let's discuss the topic!



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# GROUP WORK 1- brainstorming- 15 min

- Defining main factors contributing to brain drain from the participants' perspectives and identifying weak points that could enforce brain drain.
1. DIVIDE YOURSELVES INTO DIVERSE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS OF 6-10 PEOPLE
  2. Write down on the flipchart brain drain contributing factors.
  3. Brainstorm within the team and try to identify 1-2 factors that trouble you, as a stakeholder group the most, and why?

**Think outside of the box!** These factors can stem from policy, but they can be environmental, social, cultural (...) aspects of higher education.

## GROUP WORK 2- mitigating brain drain - 25 min

1. REMAIN IN THE SAME WORKING GROUP AS BEFORE (except if you personally feel closer to another group's defined issues).
2. Choose one person to be a rapporteur for the session.
3. Split the flipchart into 2 parts for each selected brain drain contributing factor.
4. In one part, mention how you can implement current QA policy or practice to monitor or even mitigate brain drain in your surroundings.
5. In the other part, imagine how can your factor be mitigated/removed to stop brain drain through a new QA or higher education-related policy or practice.

Think of your past QA experiences and how the information you collect on the programmes/institutions could have been used to paint a picture of brain drain in that area/country.

## Short discussion - 20 min

1. Rapporteur of each of the groups has up to 3 min to present their group's perspective.
2. Engage with the other groups by asking them questions about their point of view.
3. Provide alternative solutions.

## Conclusion from the workshop organisers

Thank you for your active engagement and participation!

If you have any proposals or comments you want to share with us, please send them to [pegi.pavletic@esu-online.org](mailto:pegi.pavletic@esu-online.org) and [livteresa.muth@esu-online.org](mailto:livteresa.muth@esu-online.org).

