

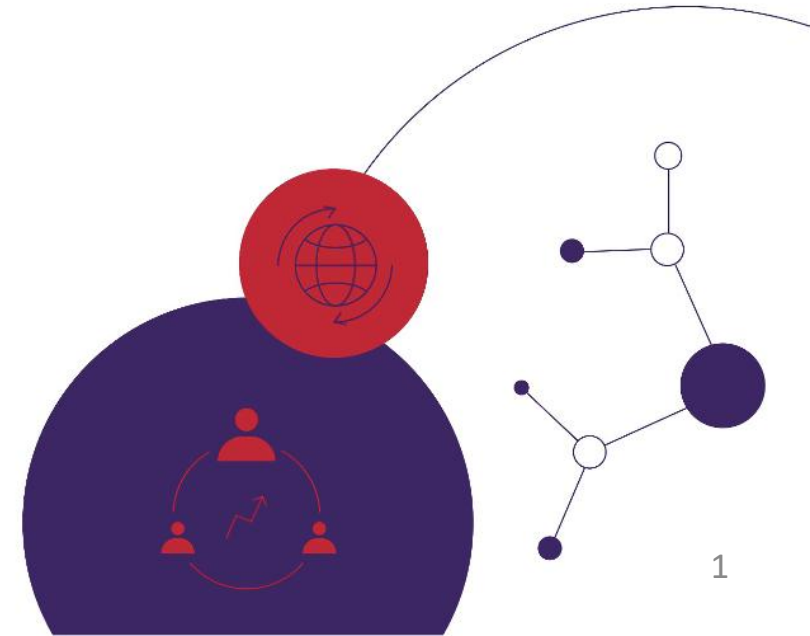
Financing mobility: managing the real costs for students and universities

EUA Funding Forum,
Brno, Czechia
16 October 2026

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



 **ESN**
Erasmus Student Network

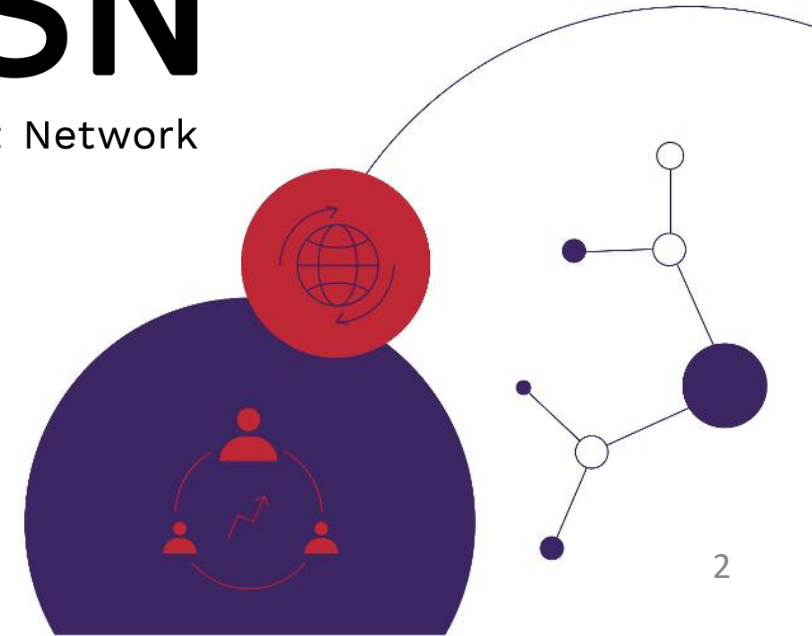


Who we are?

ACA – association of national bodies supporting and funding higher education internationalisation



ESN – Network of +500 local associations, connected to over 1000 HEI in +40 countries supporting over 350.000 students per year



14 October
2026

Student mobility types & funding arrangements

Credit mobility (e.g. Erasmus+)

- Study or traineeship abroad, typically 1-2 semesters in physical or blended format
- Costs of study: typically waived
- Costs of living: funded via EU, national or institutional grants + students' own contributions
- EU average grant $\cong$ EUR 500 per month
- EU organisational support for HEIs = EUR 400 per student (first 100); EUR 230 as of 101st student

Degree-seeking mobility

- Study abroad at Bachelor, Master's or PhD level
- Costs of study and living: funded fully or partially through EU, national or institutional scholarships, or students/parents' own resources
- Differences in tuition fees for EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA students across Europe

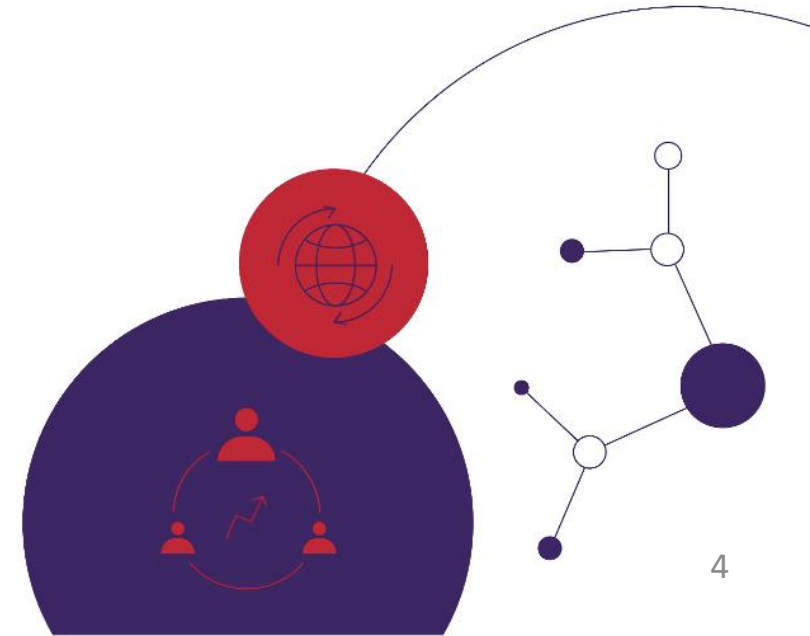


I. Key trends in student mobility funding

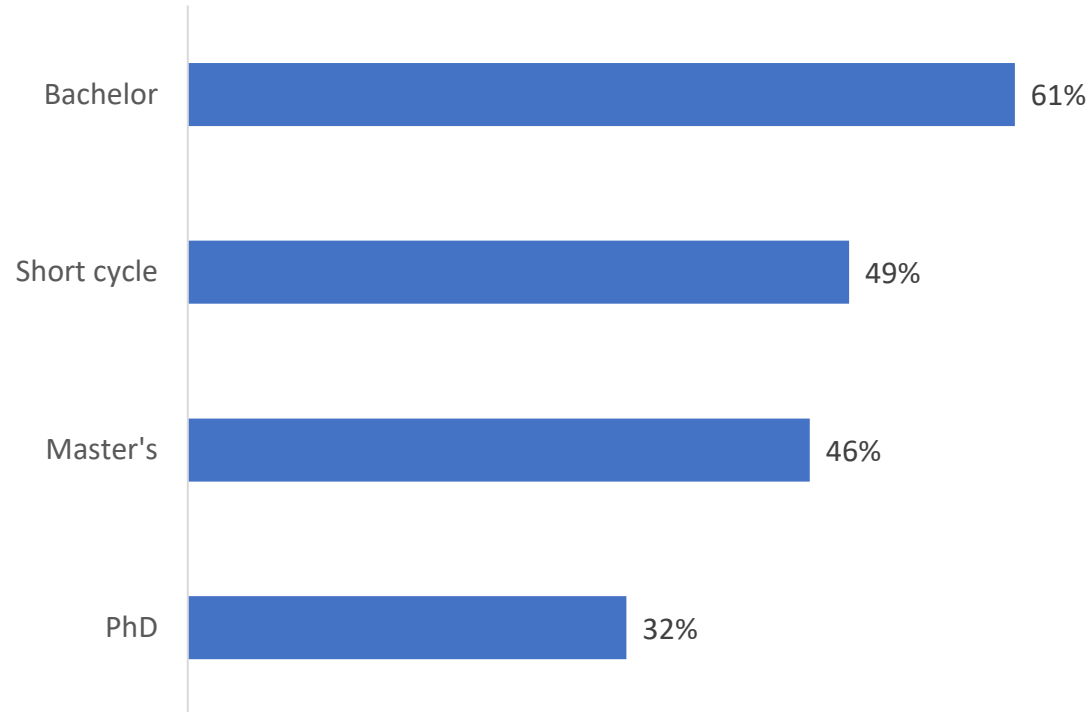
ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



 **ESN**
Erasmus Student Network



1. Erasmus+ remains the main source of funding for credit mobility, especially for lower levels of education & shorter formats



Source: Eurostat

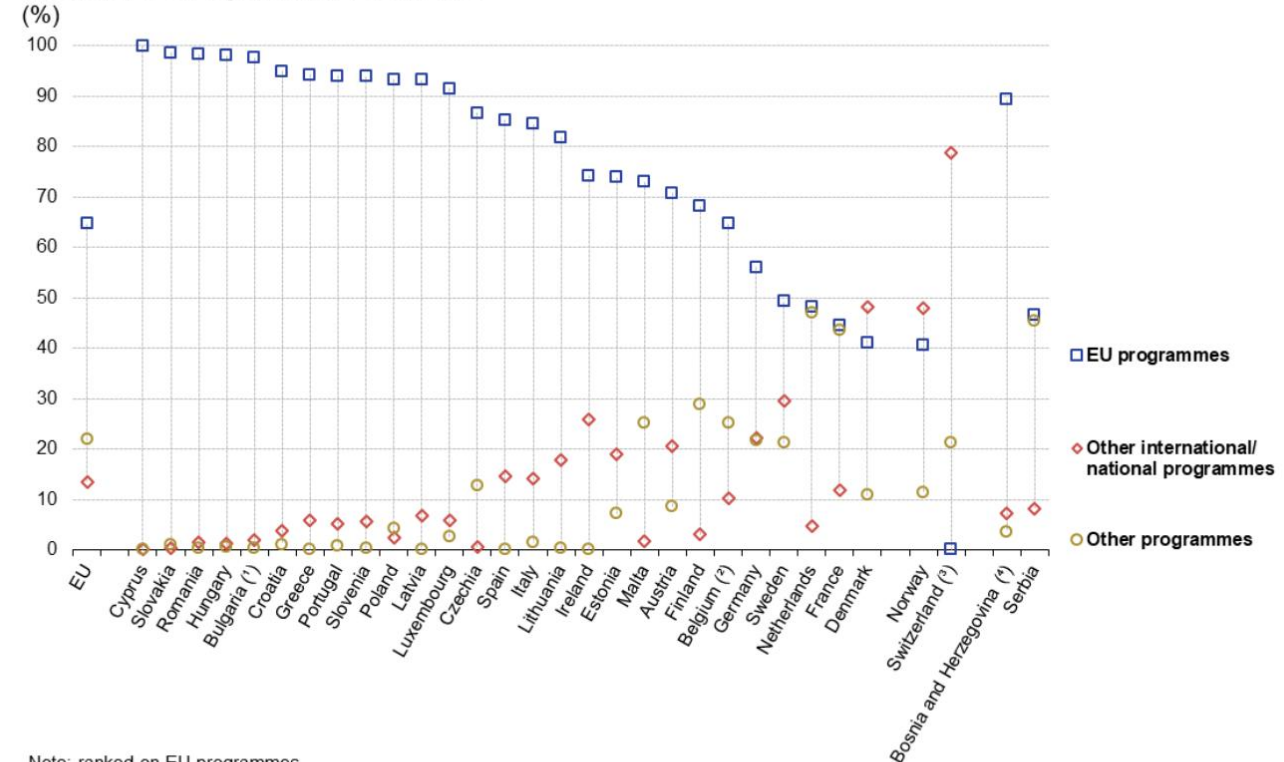
■ EU funded share (2021)

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



ESN
Erasmus Student Network

Distribution of type of mobility scheme among credit-mobile graduates (at least 3 months abroad for a study period and/or work placement) at bachelor's or equivalent level, 2024



Note: ranked on EU programmes.

(*) Estimates.

(*) Data refer only to the Flemish Community.

(*) 2022.

(*) 2023.

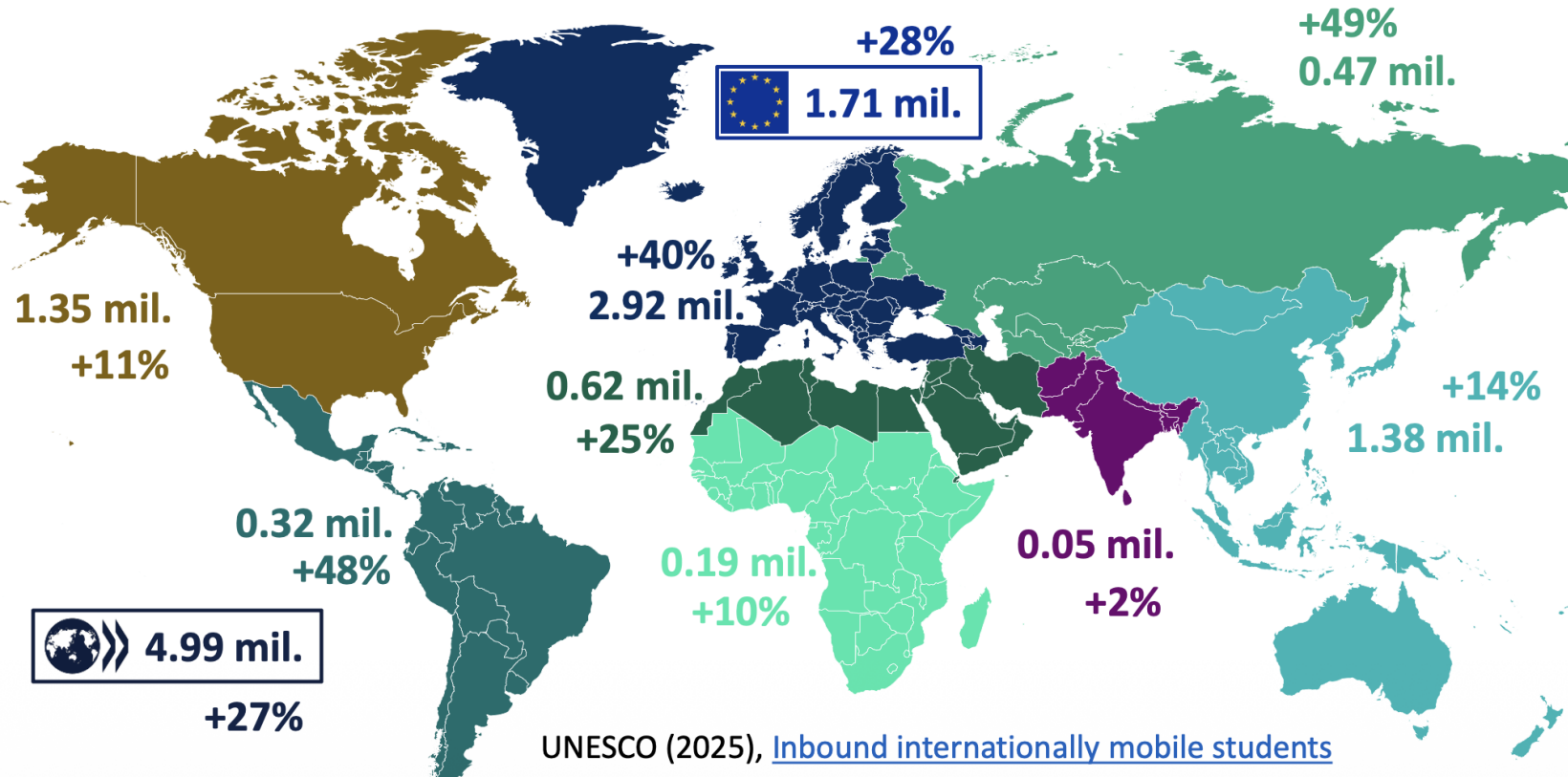
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_uoe_mobc01)

2. Degree-seeking student mobility expands in Europe



Trends in international student numbers over the last five years 2018-23

Strong growth in Europe, Central Asia (although data questions) and Latin America (from a low base)



UNESCO (2025), [Inbound internationally mobile students](#)

Source: OECD – Andreas Schleicher

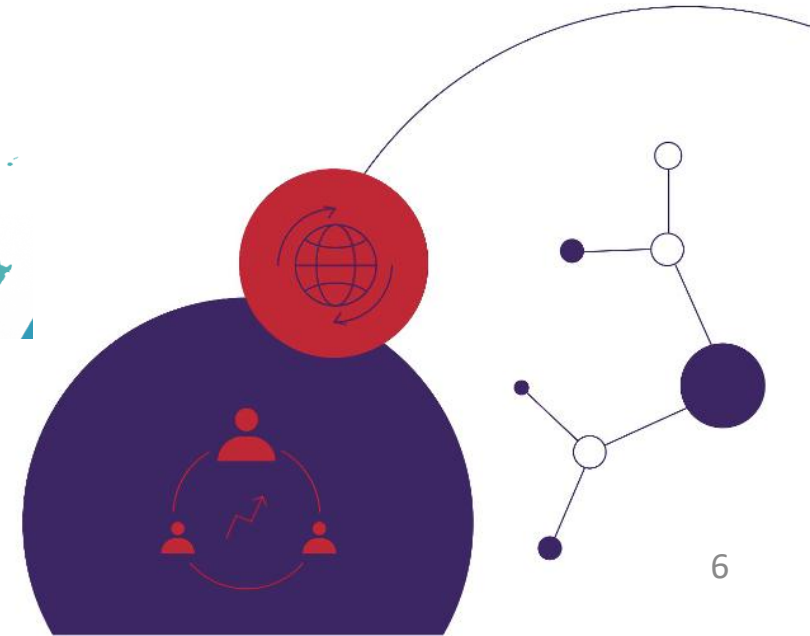
ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



ESN
Erasmus Student Network

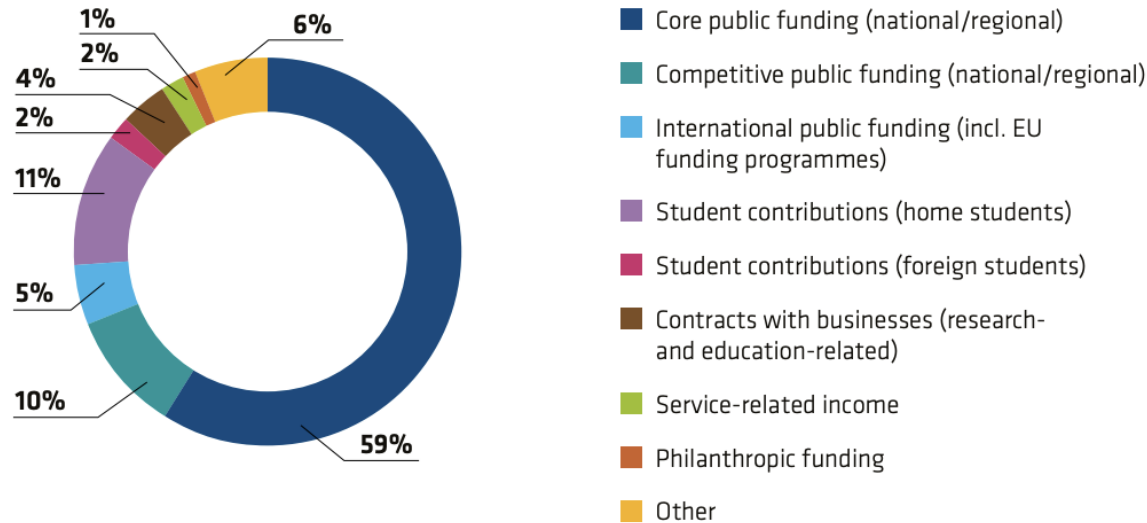


Increased expectations about possibilities to stay and labour market integration



3. Focus on tuition fees is getting stronger

Figure 1 - Average income structure - 2024



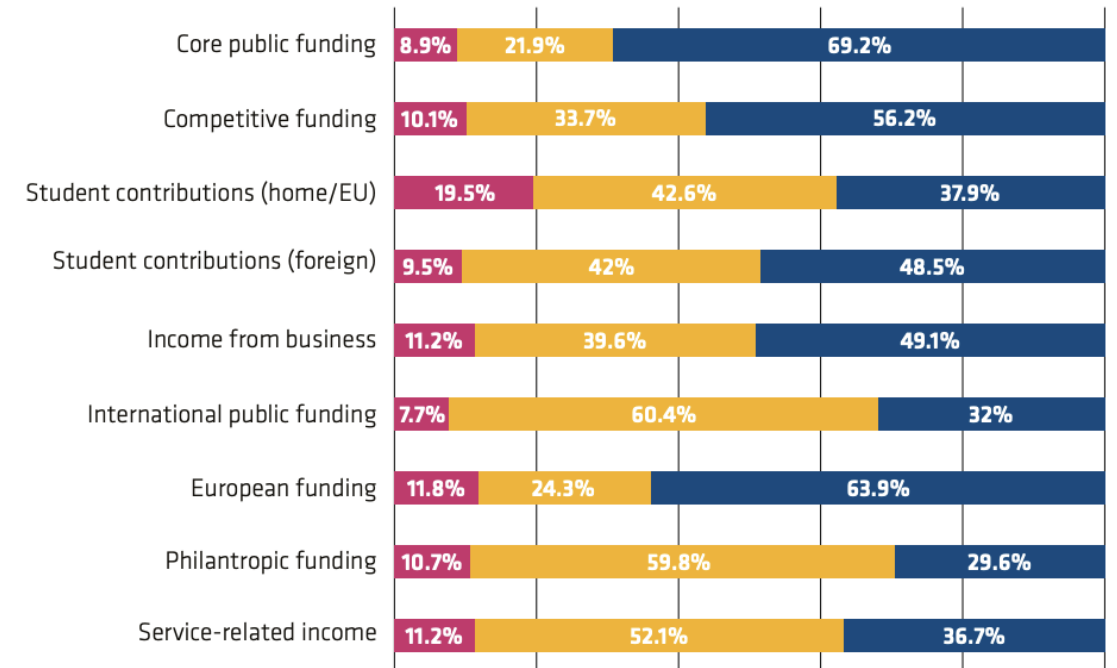
eua
EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITY
ASSOCIATION

Financially sustainable
universities

State of play and strategies for future
resilience

Authors: Enora Bennetot Pruvot, Thomas
Estermann and Nino Popkhadze
April 2025

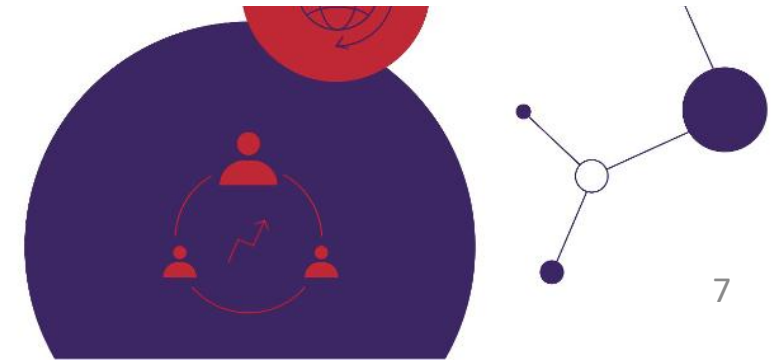
Figure 4 - Income evolution⁵



Decrease Stable Increase

Recent changes in France, Finland,
Norway, Belgium (Flanders),
Netherlands...

14 October
2026



4. Students increasingly work to fund their mobility costs (credit and degree)

59%

of students work during the academic semester
Eurostudent

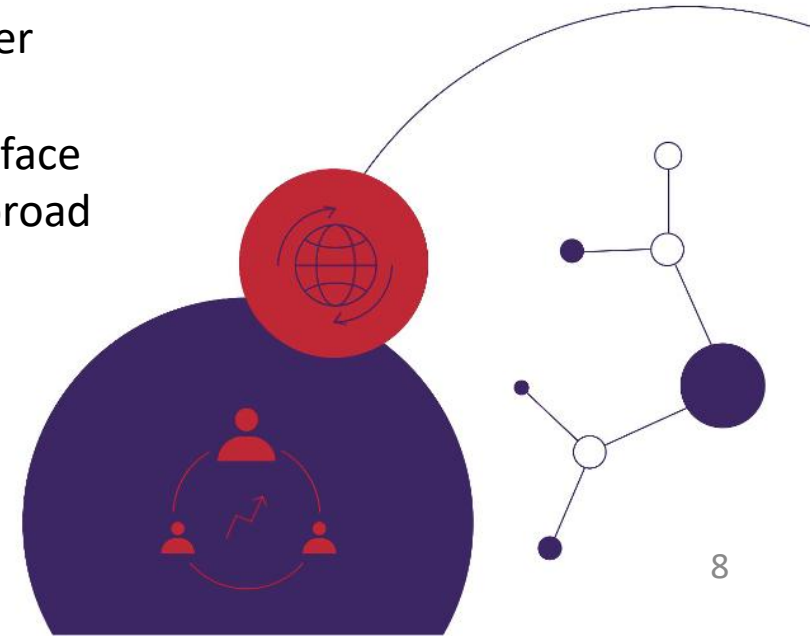
31%

of Full Degree Mobile Students work during their studies
ESNs survey

6%

of credit mobile students work during their mobility,
ESNs survey

- **Increasing trend:** Student employment has risen across most countries (EUROSTUDENT).
- **Financial necessity:** Students work not only to gain experience but also to cover living expenses and afford their studies.
- **Implications for mobility:** Students who depend on employment income may face additional barriers to participating in Erasmus+, transition to labour market abroad is limited.

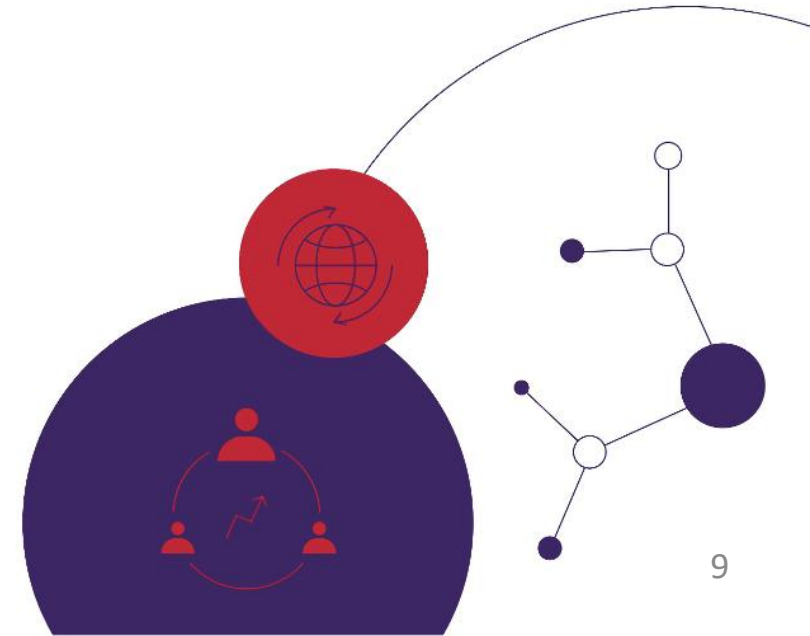


II. The student reality

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



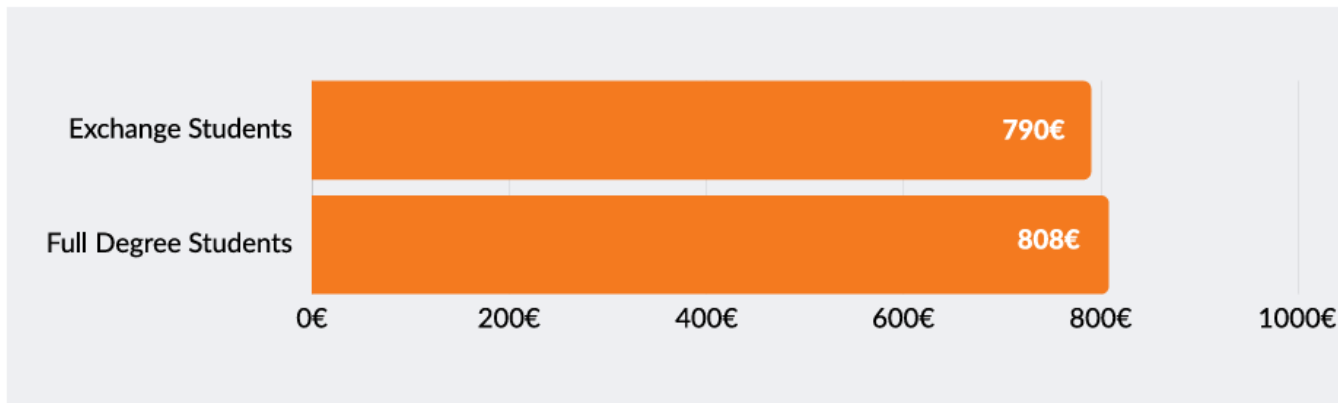
 **ESN**
Erasmus Student Network



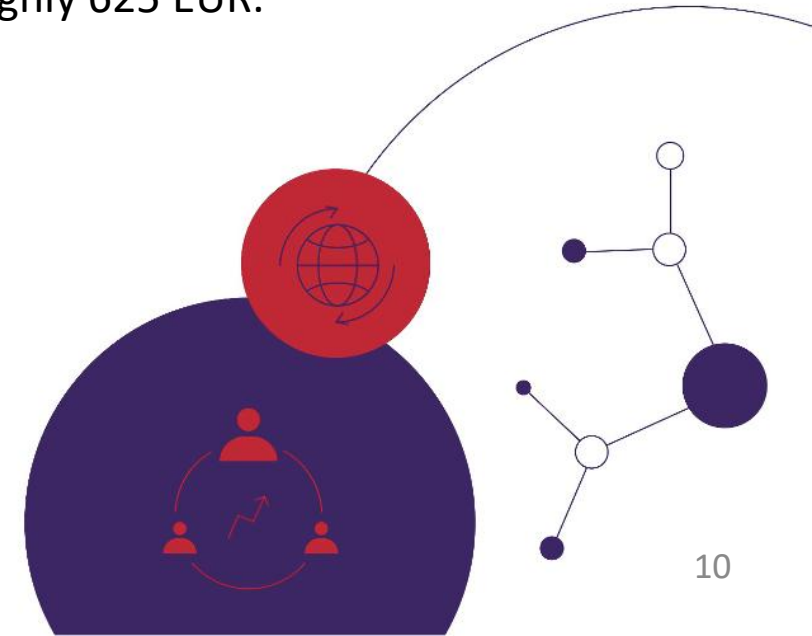
Trends in Cost of Living (CoL)

Figure 61

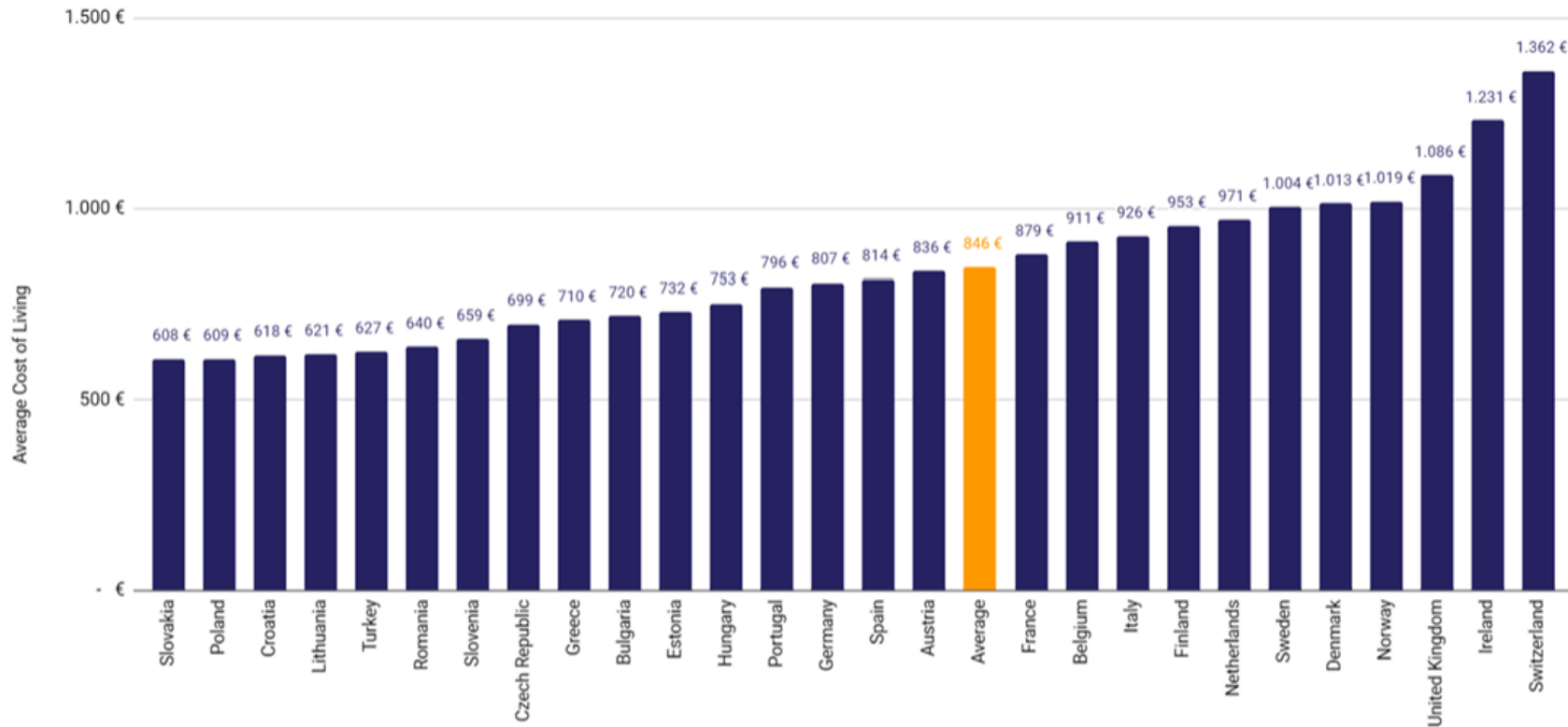
Average monthly costs of living for exchange students (N= 12,194) and international full-degree students (N= 1,601).



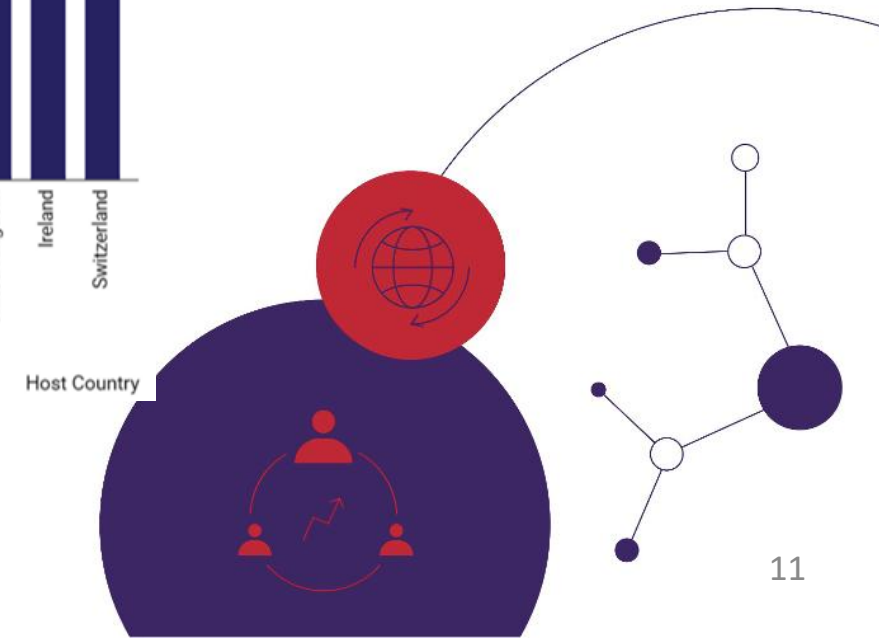
Average cost of living for Credit Mobility Students & Full Degree students increases every year; and has increased significantly since 2020 where the average student reportedly needed roughly 625 EUR.



Credit mobility / Erasmus+ students CoL



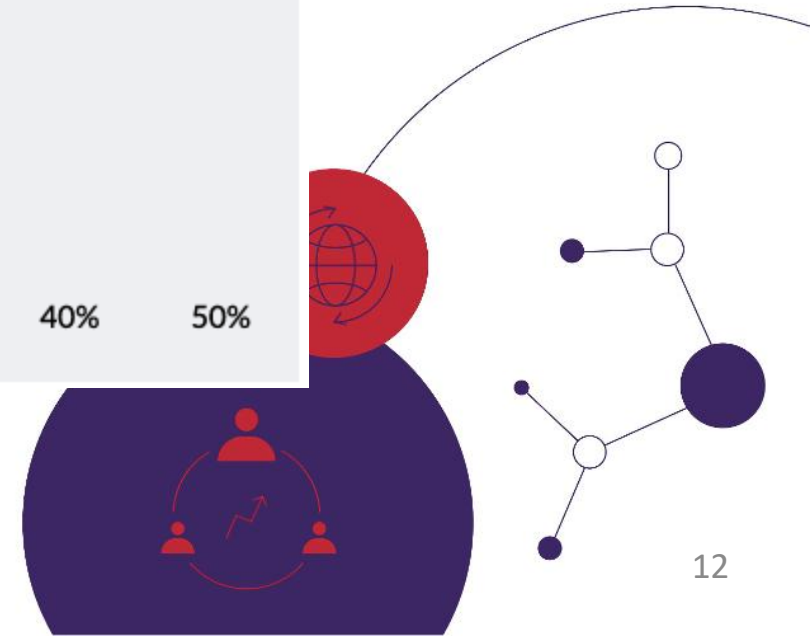
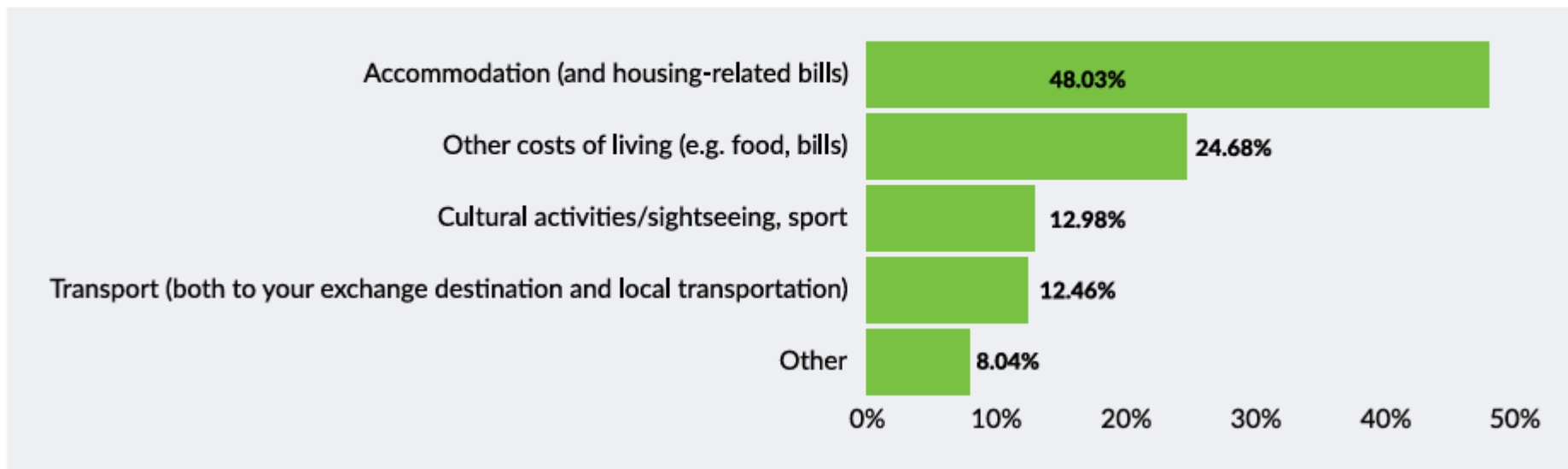
Average cost of living for Erasmus+ mobilities in the European Higher Education Area (Erasmus+ & UK & Switzerland): is higher on average, great diversity per country.



Main expenses

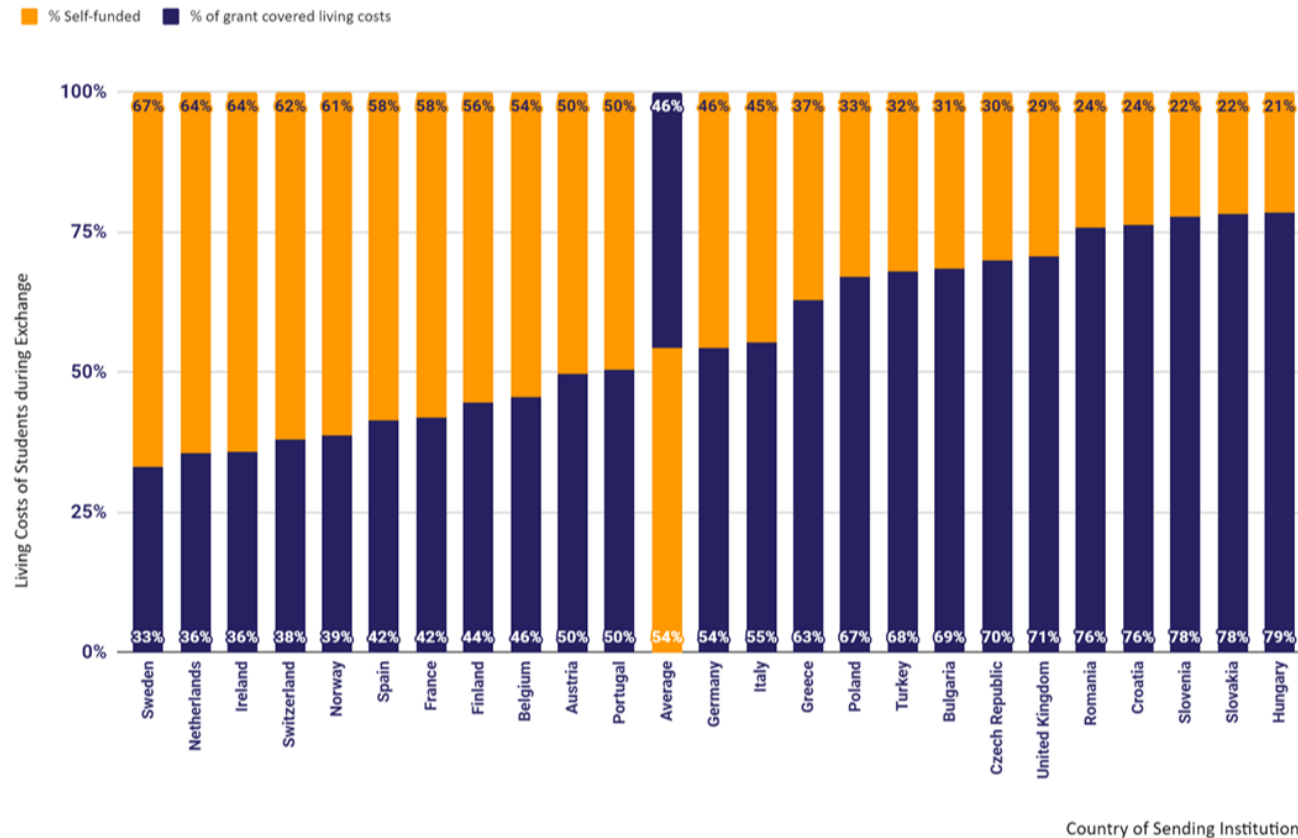
85% of their expenses are basic expenses such as accommodation (48%), other living costs such as food (24%) and Transportation (12h46)

Expenditure breakdown of exchange students (N= 12,276) across various categories during their exchange programme.



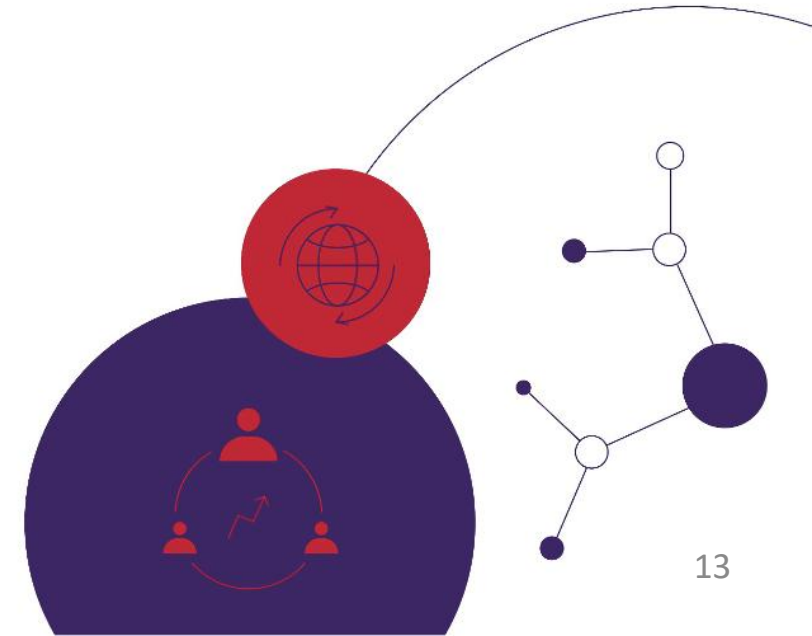
Scholarship coverage

Coverage of Living Costs by country of sending institution



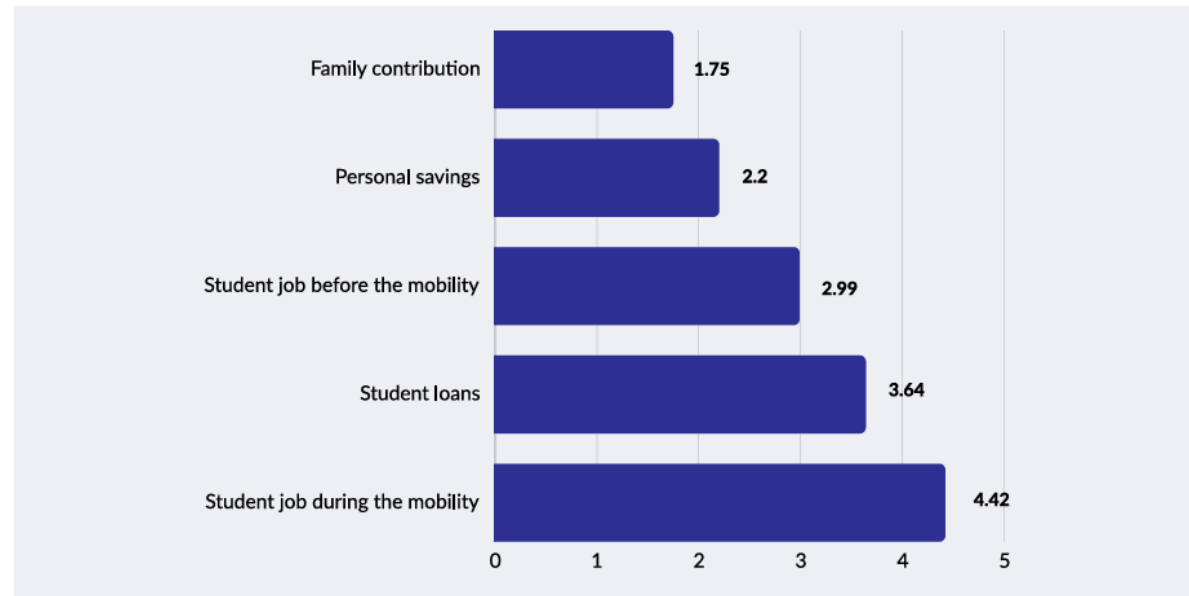
In the case of Erasmus+, students indicate that on average 54% of their costs are covered by the Erasmus+ Grant.

Differences of contribution from scholarships per sending countries are quite High.



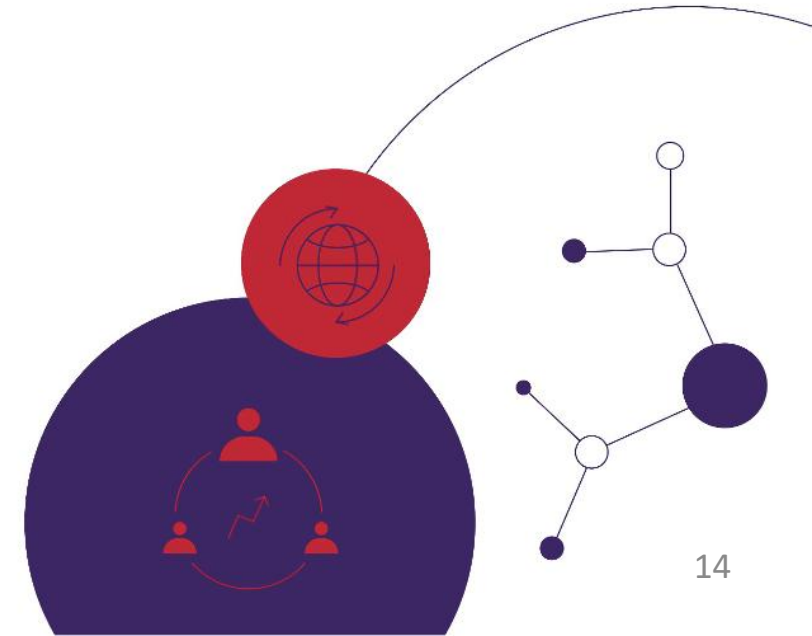
Co-funding – credit mobility students

Other source of funding used by exchange Students (N= 11,927).



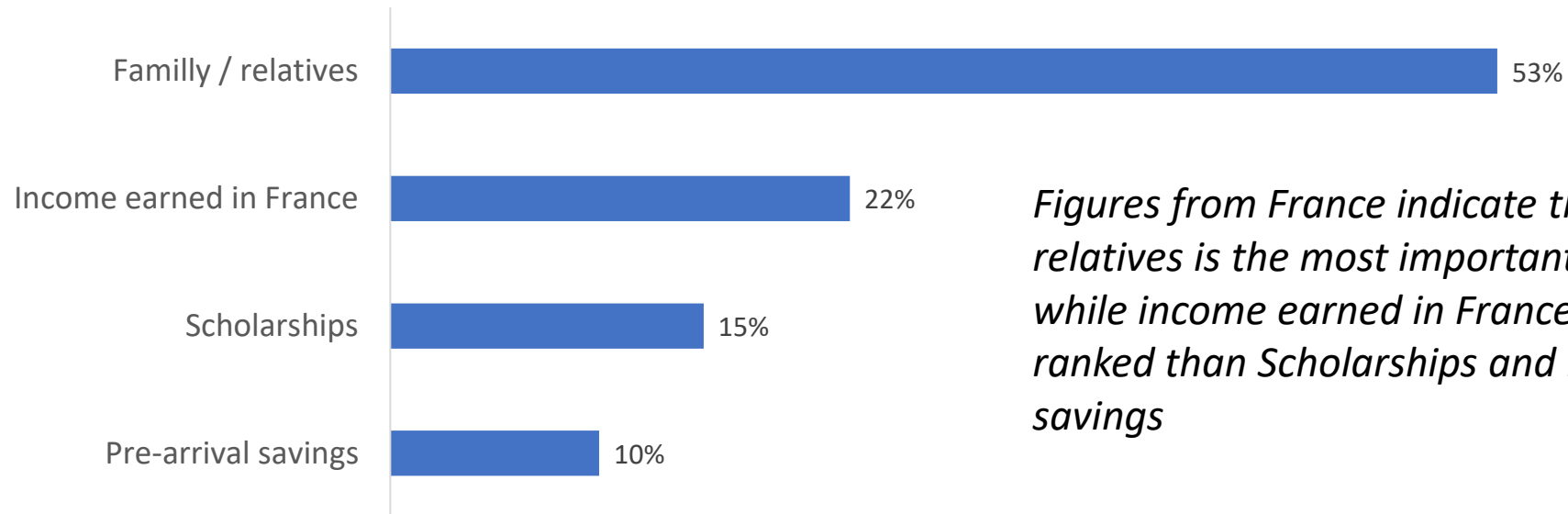
The majority of Credit Mobile students ranked family contributions most commonly to the mobility, combined with personal saving and student jobs before mobility.

During mobility is rarely mentioned.

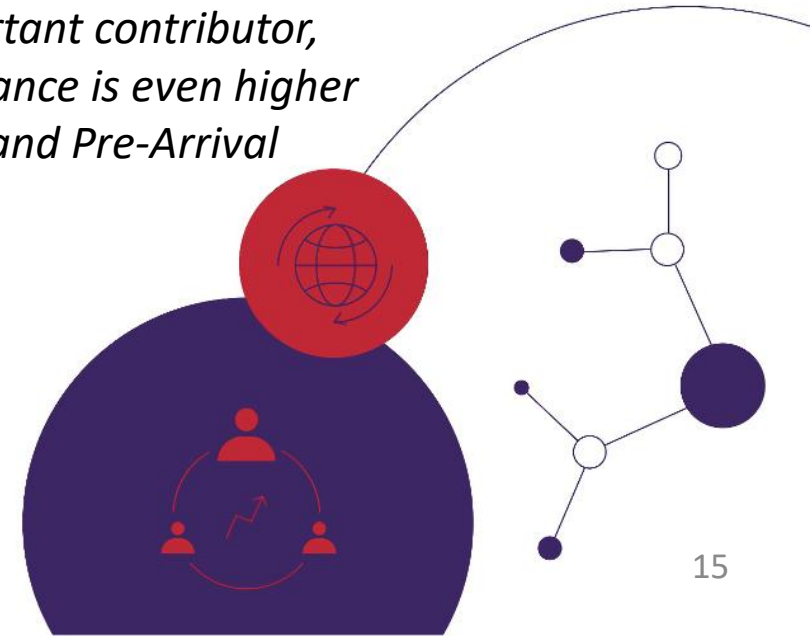


Co-funding – full degree students

Composition of international students' financial resources in France
% of total resources spent during their stay, 2022 (source: Campus France)



Figures from France indicate that Family & relatives is the most important contributor, while income earned in France is even higher ranked than Scholarships and Pre-Arrival savings

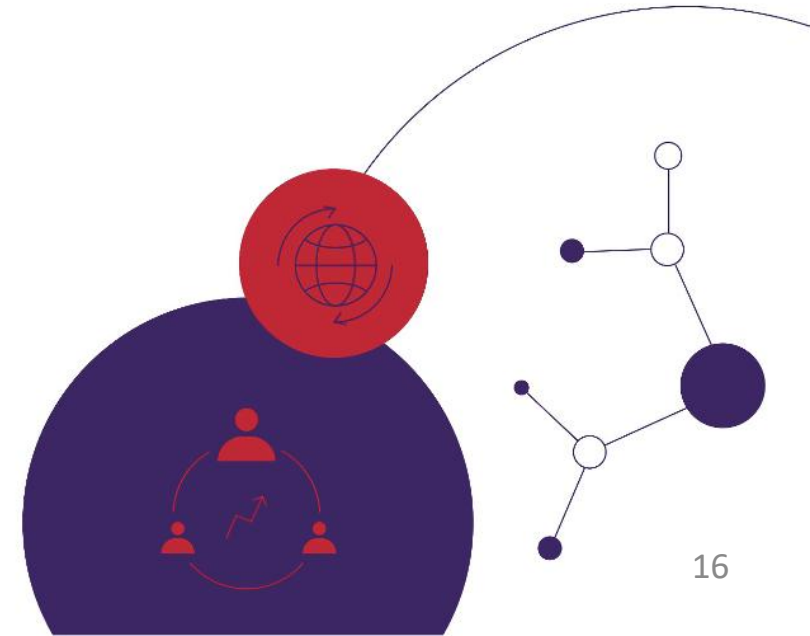


III. Economic impact analyses

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



 **ESN**
Erasmus Student Network



Degree-seeking mobility



Economic contribution of international students in the EU

Selected national evidence (measures are not directly comparable)



FRANCE



€1.35bn
net



Annual net estimate.
Campus France (2022).



GERMANY



€15.5bn
net



Projected lifetime net
public-finance contribution
of one entering cohort of
international students.
IW / DAAD (2025).



NETHERLANDS



€3.9-4.8bn
GDP impact



Modelled lifetime GDP
impact linked to international
student enrolment at five
universities. SEO / Nuffic (2025).



France and Germany report net estimates; the Netherlands reports GDP impact. These measures use different methods and should not be compared directly.

Erasmus+ mobility

Short-term economic effects arising during student mobility (KA131 – 2022 call) in Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, and Serbia

Expenditure-driven changes measured through

Gross value added (GVA)

Employment (full-time equivalent jobs)

Fiscal revenue (taxes and social contributions)

Reciprocal nature of mobility: incoming vs outgoing

Differences in mobility duration (short- vs long-term)

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ERASMUS+ STUDENT MOBILITY

Insights from Croatia, Germany, Hungary,
Portugal, and Serbia

AUTHORS:

Veronika Kupriyanova

Irina Ferencz

Model: Net economic effect (domestic demand)

Inflows

- New expenditure entering the domestic economy as a result of hosting incoming Erasmus+ students or receiving programme-related funds



Outflows

- Expenditure by outgoing students and their visitors that takes place outside their country of origin



Opportunity cost

- Domestic expenditure that would have occurred if a student had remained in their home country, but which is displaced abroad during mobility



Macro-economic effects

Use of I-O multipliers to calculate

- Gross value added (GVA)
- Employment effects (in FTE)
- Fiscal effects (taxes and social contributions)

Complementary qualitative assessment

How incoming & outgoing mobility patterns align with country's long-term economic and development strategies

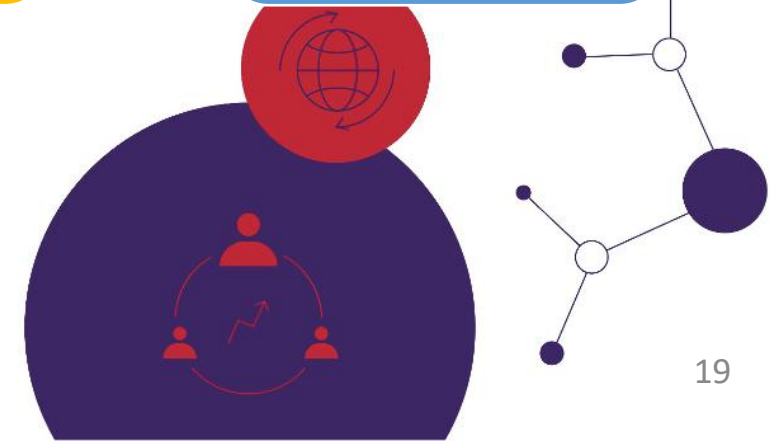


Table 1. Financial components of Erasmus+ student mobility

Model components

1. Personal expenditures
2. Relocation related expenditures
3. Visitor related expenditures
4. Programme related transfers



Inflows (new domestic demand)	Outflows - Actual (domestic funds spent abroad)	Counterfactual Components (domestic activity displaced by mobility)
I. Personal expenditures		
A. Living and study expenses of incoming students (short- and long-term)	F. Actual expenditure abroad by outgoing students (short- and long-term)	G. Foregone domestic expenditure of outgoing students (short- and long-term)
	H. Erasmus+ grants of outgoing students (EU-level transfer, recorded as a minus outflow)	
Net personal impact = A – (F – G – (–H))		
II. Relocation related expenditures		
B. Relocation expenses of incoming students (domestic share only)	I. Actual relocation costs of outgoing students (foreign share only)	J. Counterfactual domestic relocation costs (domestic travel between study and home city)
Net relocation impact = B – (I – J)		
III. Visitor related expenditures (long-term only)		
C. Visitor spending by friends or family visiting incoming students	K. Visitor spending abroad by friends or family of outgoing long-term students	L. Counterfactual domestic visitor spending (visits that would have taken place domestically)
Net visitor impact = C – (K – L)		
IV. Programme-related transfers		
D. Organisational Support (OS) to higher education institutions (gross inflow)	-	-
E. Management fees to National Agencies for Erasmus+ (share attributed to higher education)	-	-
Net programme-related impact = D + E		
Overall net economic balance = Σ (net personal + net relocation + net visitor + net programme-related impacts)		

Cost of living: longer-term mobility

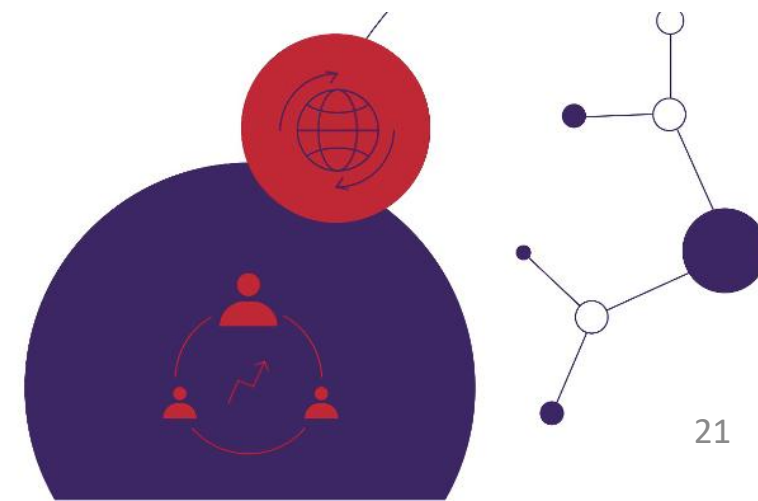
Table 2. Types of costs of living considered in the study

Type of cost	Eurostudent VIII	15 th edition of ESNsurvey	Present study
Accommodation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transportation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communication	Yes	No	Yes
Health (medicine, medical insurance)	Yes	No	Yes
Childcare	Yes	No	No
Debt payment	Yes	No	No
Social/leisure activities (going out, sports, books, music, fitness centre, theatre, cinema, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other living costs (clothing, toiletries, tobacco, pets, insurance [except medical insurance]) or alimony)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Study related costs (fees, social welfare contributions, learning materials, and other regular costs)	Yes	No	Yes
Fees paid to HEIs (tuition fees, registration fees, examination fees, and administrative fees)	Yes	No	No

- Substantial variation across the five countries
- Estimates for Serbia derived from Croatia & Hungary averages

Table 3. Share of students living without their parents

Country	Share of students living without their parents
Croatia	52%
Germany	71%
Hungary	65%
Portugal	48%
Serbia	59%



Consistent net positive economic effects despite differences in size, mobility volumes, economic structures, and cost-of-living levels

Table 50. Net effects – Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, and Serbia

Net effect	Croatia	Germany	Hungary	Portugal	Serbia
Total domestic demand (consumption) (EUR)	+11.493.302	+180.684.832	+23.353.210	+108.277.050	+2.314.086
Total domestic demand (consumption and transfers) (EUR)	+13.704.574	+195.604.807	+28.620.098	+115.267.188	+2.912.614
Type II Output (EUR)	+14.545.389	+132.282.859	+28.689.655	+99.902.902	+3.630.847
Type II GVA (EUR)	+6.858.617	+60.780.011	+11.426.598	+54.408.432	+1.459.917
Type II Jobs (FTE)	200	772	379	1085	92
Type II Fiscal (EUR)	+3.083.256	+29.544.638	+5.602.115	+23.871.224	+602.070

Implications at institutional level

=> Need for more strategic approaches to student mobility

- Opportunities to connect to local economy and R&I / business ecosystem
- Uneven attractiveness to international mobile students
- Structured efforts to improve support, services, and activities of value for international students



Ecosystem for Gaming Kortrijk

Kortrijk is widely recognised as **the hub of the Flemish gaming industry**. This ecosystem is built around a network of key players such as Hangar K, ForsVC, DAE Studios, Flanders Game Hub and other studios with roots in the region. Together they form a dynamic environment that stimulates innovation, entrepreneurship and international cooperation. The city of Kortrijk and Howest play a central role by providing space for fruitful interactions between academia, industry and policy makers. Howest is the driving force here with its Bachelor in Digital Arts and Entertainment, Master in Game Technology and the DAE Research group. Maintaining an ecosystem devoted to gaming is important for increasing employment in the sector and in the region.

Distribution of incoming students by region in Portugal (n=18.663)

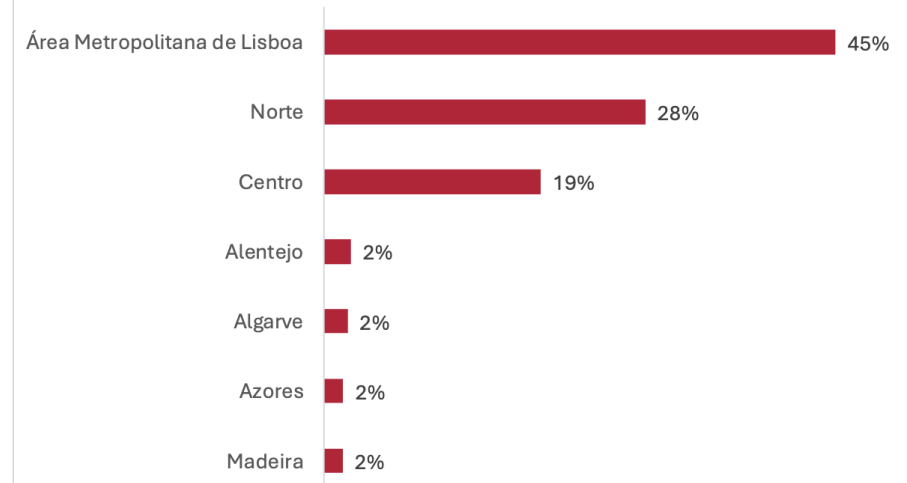


Figure 29. Distribution of incoming students by region (Portugal)

Thank you!

Veronika Kupriyanova
veronika.kupriyanova@aca-
secretariat.be

Wim Gabriels
director@esn.org

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



 **ESN**
Erasmus Student Network

