

WHAT DETERS STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING FROM ENROLMENT ABROAD? ¹

INTELLIGENCE BRIEF 2/2019

In view of the important role they will play in educating future generations, the Yerevan Communiqué (2015) defined students of education and teacher training as a relevant group with regard to cross-national student mobility. But what makes this group of students so different from the students in other fields of study? As the analyses in this Intelligence Brief demonstrate, enrolment abroad shares among students of education and teacher training are comparatively low across countries. Students of education and teacher training rate obstacles to enrolment abroad to be more deterring compared to the average across all students student and they differ from them in certain demographic and socio-economic aspects: they tend to be predominantly female, older than students in other fields of study, are more likely to have children, are more likely to be first generation students, and pursue paid jobs alongside studies in order to cover their living costs or to support others to a greater extent.

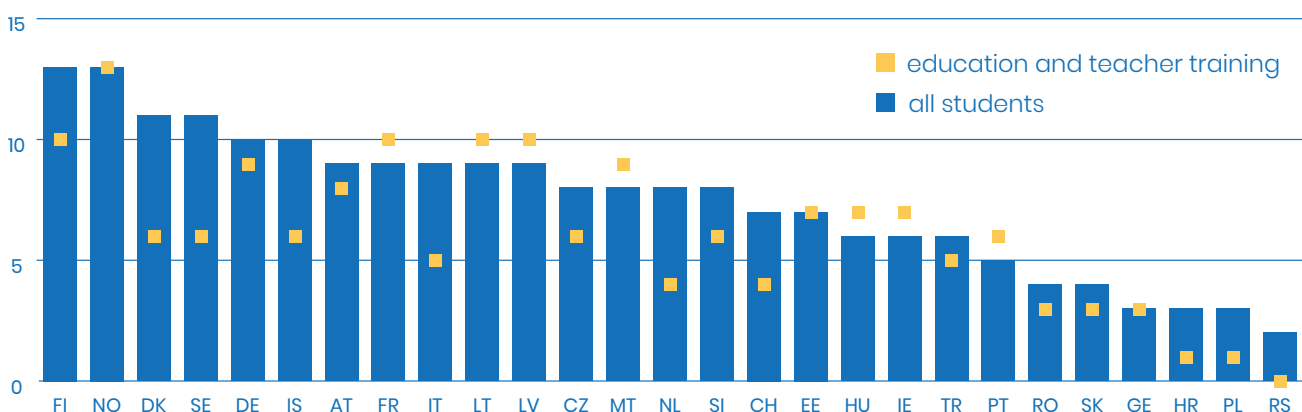
WHY ARE MOBILITY EXPERIENCES RELEVANT FOR STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING?

According to the OECD report on ‘Empowering and Enabling Teachers to Improve Equity and Outcomes for All’, teachers face the challenge of having to take into account “the increasing diversity in their classroom” (Gomendio, 2017:13). Several studies have investigated the relationship between international mobility experiences and personality development (Zimmermann & Neyer, 2013) and come to conclude that study related stays abroad enable graduates to work in intercultural teams, to increase problem solving skills, flexibility, self-confidence, and creativity (Di Pietro, 2015). Thus, mobility experiences of future educators and teachers are believed to foster skills that they need. Moreover, mobility experience might enable future teachers to function as a multiplier by positively influencing the attitude of pupils from diverse backgrounds towards international student mobility, thereby also counterbalancing social selectivity patterns of international student mobility (Ballowitz et al. 2014).

HOW MOBILE ARE STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING COMPARED TO STUDENTS IN OTHER FIELDS OF STUDY?

Previous analyses have demonstrated that students of teacher training and education are underrepresented compared to all students when it comes to short term enrolment abroad and that the largest degree of underrepresentation can be found in countries with a high overall share of students who have been enrolled abroad (Ballowitz et al. 2014). In fact, in around 75 % of sampled EUROSTUDENT VI countries, students of education and teacher training show lower enrolment shares compared to the average across all students (Figure 1). This finding is particularly surprising considering that female students – who are usually more mobile than their male peers (Hauschildt et al. 2015; 2018) – make up the majority of education and teacher training students.

Figure 1. Shares of all students and students of education and teacher training who have been enrolled abroad, share of students in %



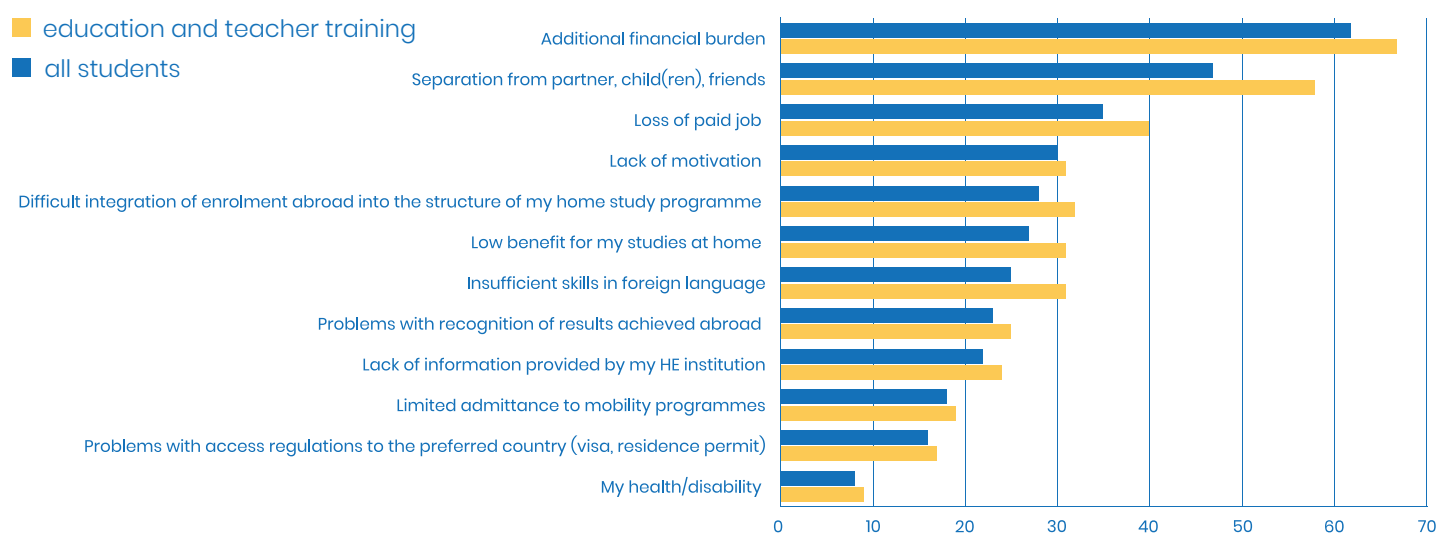
Data source: EUROSTUDENT VI, I.2. No data: differentiation by field of study: Albania.
EUROSTUDENT Question(s): 4.0 Have you ever been enrolled abroad since you first entered higher education in #country?
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: AL, DE, IE, IT, LV, RS.

WHAT ARE THE MOST PREVALENT OBSTACLES TO ENROLMENT ABROAD?

The perceived or factual additional financial burden² remains – as in previous rounds of EUROSTUDENT (Hauschildt et al., 2015) – the main obstacle to enrolment abroad, followed, in descending order of magnitude, by a reluctance to separate from partner, children, and friends, loss of a paid job, and a lack of motivation. Organisational difficulties such as difficult integration of enrolment abroad into the structure of the study programme and low benefits for

the studies at the domestic higher education institution are rated to be an obstacle to a lower extent; a quarter of students is concerned about own insufficient (foreign) language skills (Figure 2)³. This cross-national pattern of the relevance of different obstacles is, with some exceptions, reflected by the ones for the individual countries, although country-specific idiosyncrasies exist.⁴

Figure 2. Obstacles as perceived by students not planning to enrol abroad (all students and students in the field of education and teacher training)



Data source: EUROSTUDENT VI, I.20. No data: FR. Problems with access regulations to the preferred country (visa, residence permit): AT, DE. Limited admittance to mobility programmes: AT, CH, IE. Health/disability: AT, CH, DE. Loss of paid job, lack of motivation, difficult integration of enrolment abroad into the structure of my home study programme: IE.

Notes: Students assessed possible obstacles to studying abroad on a five-point scale ranging from "no obstacle" to "big obstacle". The figure shows how large a share of students considered certain aspects to be either (4) "quite a big" or (5) "big obstacle".

EUROSTUDENT Question(s): 4.7 To what extent are or were the following aspects an obstacle for enrolment abroad to you?
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: AT, CH, IT.

WHICH OBSTACLES FOR ENROLMENT ABROAD ARE MOST DETERRING FOR STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING?

Comparing students of education and teacher training to the whole student body, a clear pattern is visible: the responses of students in the field of education and teacher training generally reflect the same order of obstacles, with financial issues, as well as concerns about a separation from family and friends, at the top of the list. Most obstacles, however, are rated to be more deterring by students in the field of education and teacher training than by students of other fields of study (Figure 2). The largest differences between them of eleven percentage points can be found for the rating of the obstacle 'separation from partner, child(ren), friends'. Other obstacles with group differences

of equal to or larger than five percentage points are 'insufficient skills in foreign language' (six percentage points difference), and fear of the 'loss of a paid job' and the 'additional financial burden' (both five percentage points). Figure 2 shows that several obstacles seem to be especially hindering for students of education and teacher training, and these obstacles are related to students' living and working conditions. Thus, in the next step, the analyses focus on differences between the average across students and students of education and teacher training related to demographics, social background, as well as in employment related matters.

² Aiming to bring out factors that deter students from studying abroad, analyses refer to data for students who stated that they do not plan to enroll abroad. Students assessed possible obstacles to studying abroad on a five-point scale ranging from "no obstacle" to "big obstacle". The figure shows how large a share of students considered certain aspects to be either (4) "quite a big" or (5) "big obstacle".

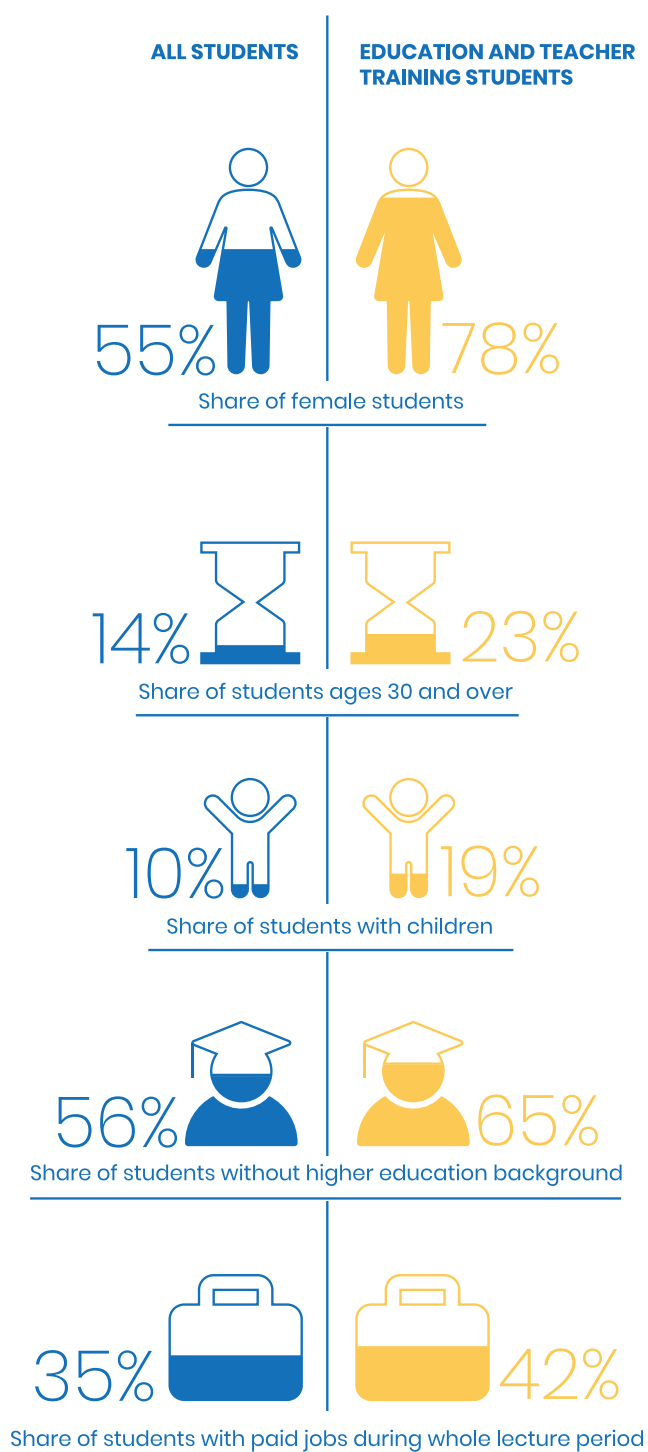
³ For a detailed discussion of these results, please refer to Chapter B10 and Figure B10.8 in Hauschildt et al. 2018.

⁴ Table B10.5 (Hauschildt et al 2018:242) details the rating of the obstacles per country.

STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING TEND TO BE OLDER THAN THE AVERAGE STUDENT

Looking at demographics, age is an important predictor for the probability of having been enrolled abroad and in almost all EUROSTUDENT countries: the least mobile students in this respect are the very young (under 22 years) and the oldest (30 years and over)⁵. The infographic displays the shares of students ages 30 years and older for students of education and teacher training and for all students. In almost 90 % of sampled EUROSTUDENT countries, the share of students' ages 30 years and older is higher

Infographic 1. Differences in the characteristics between all students and education and teacher training students, share of students in %



for students in the field of education and teacher training. Large differences of around 20 and up 34 percentage points can be found in Estonia, Iceland, and Romania. In line with this, above average (14%) shares of students of education and teacher training are delayed transition students (19%), hence students that have had a transition period of more than 24 month between secondary school and higher education⁶. The share of delayed transitions students is the largest compared across fields of study and across countries, although national variations exist⁷.

STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE PARENTS

Student parents are known to be less internationally mobile compared to their peers without children. In around 90 % of EUROSTUDENT countries, larger shares of students in the field of education and teacher training have children; in comparison to the average across all students (see infographic). Differences based on students' field of study are especially pronounced in Estonia, Iceland, and Romania, where the differences in shares between students of education and teacher training and all students are larger than 20 percentage points.

LARGER SHARES OF FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS AMONG STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

As the analyses in the latest and previous EUROSTUDENT reports (Hauschildt et.al, 2015; 2018) as well as several other studies have demonstrated, access to mobility schemes and the motivation to engage in study-related activities abroad are dependent on parental higher education background (Bargel 2006; Beerkens et al. 2016; Finger, 2013; Lörz & Krawietz, 2011; Middendorff et al. 2013; Netz & Finger 2016; Neumeyer & Pietrzyk, 2016; Lörz et al. 2016, Key et al. 2017). The same patterns can be found across EUROSTUDENT countries, where the shares of students who have been enrolled abroad are larger among students with higher education background than among students without higher education background (Hauschildt et.al, 2018: 226 [Figure B10.2]). The pattern is stable over time (Hauschildt et.al, 2018:227 [Figure B10.3]) and across countries. Looking at the shares of students without higher education background in the field of education and teacher training and comparing them to the whole student body, the shares of students without higher education background are larger compared to those of the overall student body in over 80 % of sampled EUROSTUDENT countries. Especially large differences of 20 percentage points and more between the average across all fields of study and students of education and teacher training are evident in Switzerland, Germany, and Romania.

⁵ See EUROSTUDENT data on shares of student who have been enrolled abroad.

⁶ For more results on delayed transition students please refer to Chapter B3 in Hauschildt et al. 2018 and to the intelligence brief 4/2018 on the plurality of transitions (Haugas, 2018).

⁷ See Table B3.1 (Hauschildt et al. 2018:84).

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IS LOWER AMONG STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

Students' foreign language skills are related to educational background. Previous studies have pointed out that students from higher educated parents perceive themselves to be better prepared for studying abroad due to better school grades, their confidence to succeed in higher education, and foreign language skills. In 81 % of the EUROSTUDENT countries for which data is available, the shares of students who master only one (including the native) language (very) well are higher for students in the field of education and teacher training. In line with this, the shares of students who state that they possess (very) good skills in two and more languages (incl. native language) are larger for the average across all fields of study compared to students in the field of education and teacher training⁸.

STUDENTS OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING MORE OFTEN WORK TO AFFORD STUDIES AND SUPPORT OTHERS

Among the biggest obstacles to enrolment abroad for students of education and teacher training is the fear of the loss of a paid job and indeed, in 70 % of sampled EUROSTUDENT countries, the shares of students with paid jobs during the whole lecture period are larger among these students compared to all students (infographic). Taking the findings of the latest EUROSTUDENT report into account (Hauschildt et al, 2018:145 [Table B6.3]), this group of students also has the highest median income from current paid jobs, which composes a larger share of their total overall income compared to all students. Hence, especially students of education and teacher training rely on self-earned income to finance studies and to cover living costs. Unsurprisingly, students of education and teacher training more often state that their motives to work are to cover living costs (in 68 % of countries), that they could not afford to be a student without paid jobs (in 65% of sampled countries) and agree (totally) that they are in need of paid jobs to be able support others. In more than 80 % of countries larger shares for students of education and teacher training state this compared to the average across all students.

SUMMARY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Due to demographics, social background, their pathways into higher education and their employment situation, students of education and teacher training encounter obstacles to international mobility to a greater extent compared to all students. This also holds true for the additional financial burden associated with a stay abroad, and the fear to lose paid jobs should they go abroad. Thus, ensuring that sufficient financial support is available to all types of students can be crucial in widening access to student mobility for students of education and teacher training. Due to the large shares of first generation, delayed transition and student parents within the student body of education and teacher training students, special support schemes targeted at first generation, older and parent students might enhance overall mobility rates for these students. However, such support schemes for student parents should not only focus on monetary support, but also provide assistance in finding accommodation and child care facilities abroad. The possibility to complete several shorter study visits abroad and accumulate these might also motivate more students to go abroad since they might shy away from committing themselves to spend a full semester abroad.

Further central aspects are organisational provisions for the integration of enrolment periods abroad into domestic study structures. As Figure 2 shows, organisational obstacles are also rated to be more deterring to students in the field of education and teacher training. They see low benefits of an enrolment abroad for their studies and a difficult integration of it into the structure of the domestic study programme. Efforts to re-design the curriculum of teacher training students in order to increase flexibility and cross-national comparability might be needed to enable teacher training students to benefit from study related stays abroad as much as students in other fields of study do.

The introduction of mandatory mobility phases into the national curricula of students of teacher training, however, might have unintended consequences for the achievement of policy goals related to equal access opportunities since the shares of 'first generation students' are especially high in the field of education and teacher training. It is a balancing act between opening windows of opportunity for mobility phases and closing doors to groups of students who have just begun to reap the benefits of higher education.

⁸ However, causality between higher education background and foreign language proficiency is not straightforward as foreign language proficiency can be both a prerequisite and an outcome of enrolment periods abroad (see Hauschildt et al. 2015). With regard to language proficiency as an outcome, the benefits of becoming proficient in a foreign language as a result of a studying abroad experience are higher for individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds (Sorrenti, 2017).

⁹ Data on more than one language can be downloaded from the EUROSTUDENT database .

¹⁰ Calculated for students with regular paid jobs during the entire lecture period.

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ABOUT EUROSTUDENT

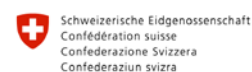
The EUROSTUDENT project collates comparable student survey data on the social dimension of European higher education, collecting data on a wide range of topics, e.g. the socio-economic background, living conditions, and temporary international mobility of students. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. The data presented here stem from the sixth round of the EUROSTUDENT project (2016–2018).

The comparative report [“Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe”](#) (2018) provides insight into many other questions related to students’ characteristics as well as other aspects of student life in Europe. Furthermore, the [EUROSTUDENT database](#) allows users to explore country data by topic area and in comparison between countries. Also visit www.eurostudent.eu for more information and results.

Country abbreviations

AT = Austria	FR = France	LT = Lithuania	RO = Romania
CH = Switzerland	GE = Georgia	LV = Latvia	RS = Serbia
CZ = the Czech Republic	HR = Croatia	MT = Malta	SE = Sweden
DE = Germany	HU = Hungary	NL = the Netherlands	SI = Slovenia
DK = Denmark	IE = Ireland	NO = Norway	SK = Slovakia
EE = Estonia	IS = Iceland	PL = Poland	TR = Turkey
FI = Finland	IT = Italy	PT = Portugal	

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