

Mobility Scoreboard

Higher Education Background Report

Eurydice Report





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INTRODUCTION

Transnational mobility for learning and training is often a major experience in the life of individuals. It helps people grow professionally and academically, broadens their social networks, and develops intercultural and linguistic skills, all of which have positive repercussions on their employability (European Commission, 2014). Students' mobility also impacts on education systems and individual educational institutions, pushing them to have a more international outlook, widening their reach, and improving their quality overall.

Despite the added value of learner mobility (and the opportunities available), the path towards free movement of students, researchers and trainees is still obstructed by several obstacles, including issues related to the portability of grants and loans, the recognition of qualifications and credits, the accessibility and relevance of information and guidance, or linguistic skills. These call for a structural systemic reform to ease participation in, and access to, mobility.

The European Commission addressed these issues in the Communication 'Youth on the Move' (European Commission, 2010). It called for action and, among other initiatives, proposed the creation of a methodological framework known as 'Mobility Scoreboard' to monitor progress in this area.

Following up on this Communication, the Council of the European Union adopted a Recommendation ⁽¹⁾ to Member States and the European Commission aimed at promoting, and removing obstacles to learner mobility and, additionally, to supporting work by the European Commission to create such a methodological framework. Moreover, in November 2011, Member States agreed on a benchmark of at least 20 % of higher education graduates having had a period of study or training abroad, and 6 % for vocational education and training students, both to be reached by 2020 ⁽²⁾.

The Eurydice Network was charged with developing options for the Mobility Scoreboard in higher education, while Cedefop has been undertaking a similar exercise concerning vocational education and training. The preparatory study for a higher education Mobility Scoreboard was published in 2013 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013). This study identified, through a thorough consultation process involving experts from Member States as well as the European Commission, five thematic areas for monitoring: information and guidance, foreign language preparation, portability of grants and loans, support provided to students with low socio-economic background, and recognition of learning outcomes. These areas allow a multi-level analysis of the Recommendation and the display of composite indicators.

This report follows the path laid by the feasibility study and is the first edition that allows progress in these areas to be monitored.

Some areas of the Council Recommendation are not covered by this report or have been integrated in one of the above themes. Motivation of learners, administrative and institutional issues, and partnerships are not included in the scoreboard due to the unavailability of consistent and comparable data. On the other hand, the involvement of multipliers is integrated under the heading on information and guidance, and some aspects of mobility funding are dealt within the section on portability of grants and loans. This approach enables the collection of consistent and reliable data on the indicators analysed in this report.

Moreover, based on the experience gained with the feasibility study in 2013 and taking into account the evolution of the policy framework, some of the indicators have been enlarged in focus with the aim of better reflecting the different dimensions of the Recommendation. Specifically, the section on

(1) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011.

(2) Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility, OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 31.

foreign language competences are considered up to the end of upper secondary education and include vocational education and training; and the recognition of learning outcomes, in addition to credit transfer, embraces also the automatic recognition of qualifications. This latter dimension is based on the recommendations of the EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition (2014). On the other hand, the scope of information and guidance has been narrowed to outward mobility.

The information in this report relates primarily to outward mobility for higher education students, reflecting the core focus of Eurydice expertise, as well as the content of the Council Recommendation. As far as the language preparation thematic area is concerned, the report examines the language learning provision from pre-primary education to the end of upper secondary education, including vocational paths that give direct access to higher education.

The reference year is 2015/16, and the geographical coverage includes all 28 EU Member States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey.

Structure of the report

The report is divided into five thematic chapters with their corresponding scoreboard indicator(s), and two statistical appendices. Each chapter is dedicated to one specific area: information and guidance, foreign language preparation, portability of grants and loans, support provided to students with low socio-economic background, and recognition of learning outcomes, which includes both credit transfer and the automatic recognition of qualifications.

Each thematic area is dealt with in two ways. First of all, each chapter provides an analysis of individual issues defining the area, allowing the reader to grasp differences between education systems on single items. In addition, each aspect is displayed graphically through maps providing an overview at European level and revealing geographical patterns.

Secondly, at the end of each chapter, the individual aspects are aggregated into a composite scoreboard indicator combining the different variables shown on the maps into pre-defined categories. Each category is coded with a colour ranging from 'dark green', when all criteria are fully met, to 'red', applied when none of the elements under scrutiny exist. Five out of six indicators use three additional intermediate categories: 'light green', indicating that most aspects appear in the system; 'yellow', when only some aspects are implemented; and 'orange' for systems that fulfil only a limited part of the criteria analysed. The indicator on support provided to students with low socio-economic background does not include the orange category. A full description of each indicator and its categories is included at the end of each chapter. All indicators are displayed through maps. This format enables the performance of individual countries to be clearly identified as well as providing a European-level overview. In some cases, it can also reveal broader patterns across borders.

The report also contains two statistical appendices providing an overview on current trends in degree and credit mobility based on available data. Indicators on degree mobility have been computed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) on the basis of Eurostat data (Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo, 2015). The reference year is 2012/13. As for credit mobility, Eurostat statistics on credit mobility are not yet available. Therefore figures presented here relate to students participating in the Erasmus+ programme. The reference year in this case is 2013/14.

CHAPTER 1: INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

1.1. Introduction

For the individual learner, engaging in a transnational mobility experience involves a decision-making process encompassing questions such as where to go, which competences are needed, what will be learned, and how the experience and learning outcomes will be taken into account in the national or other European contexts. Moreover, participants need information on very practical issues, such as how to find accommodation, which services are accessible in the hosting institution, and the administrative steps that need to be taken. Given the diversity of systems and environments across Europe, as well as procedures and opportunities provided at national and institutional level, the accessibility, transparency and quality of information and guidance becomes crucial (King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010).

Thus, it is not surprising that information and guidance on learning mobility is one of the pillars of the Council Recommendation ⁽¹⁾. Member States are invited to improve in this area by making information easily accessible, tailored to the needs of specific groups of learners and individuals, maximising the involvement of existing networks, and exploring 'new, creative and interactive ways to disseminate information, communicate and exchange with young people and all other stakeholders' ⁽²⁾.

Moreover, the Council Recommendation recognises the positive role of multipliers in enhancing the visibility of information, as well as the value of peer-to-peer guidance, and encourages Member States to use 'teachers, trainers, families, youth workers and young people who have participated in a mobility experience to inspire and motivate young people to become mobile' ⁽³⁾.

Taking into account the spirit of the recommendation and the concrete pathways it provides, scoreboard indicator 1 examines the extent to which central authorities have taken steps in the direction of accessible, transparent and tailored information and guidance on learning mobility opportunities.

1.2. Background analysis

The analysis that follows focuses on four aspects of the recommendation: 1) the approach adopted by central-level authorities towards information and guidance; 2) the existence of centralised web portals that specifically deal with information and guidance; 3) the delivery of personalised services and their evaluation and monitoring; 4) the involvement of multipliers. All four items focus exclusively on outward mobility, assessing support in this area to potentially mobile students.

Central-level authority approaches to information and guidance for outward mobility

Most countries have framed information and guidance on outward learner mobility within broader strategies dealing with the internationalisation of higher education institutions, mobility at large, or the educational profile of learners. In some systems such strategies are supplemented or replaced by specific large-scale initiatives. A third approach, adopted by many central authorities, consists in delegating the task of providing information and guidance to an external organisation. This can be part of the strategy on information and guidance or replace it altogether. The following analysis considers all approaches.

(1) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/4.

(2) Ibid.

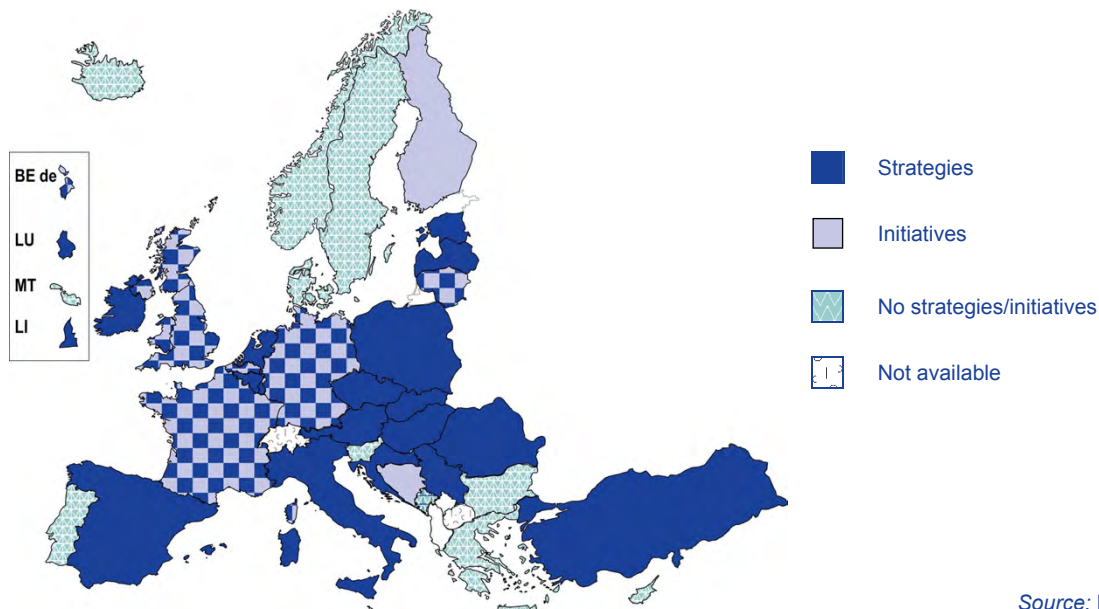
(3) Ibid.

Strategies and initiatives

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the systems that have adopted strategies towards information and guidance, or developed large-scale initiatives. Strategy is conceived here as a plan or method of approach developed by the national or regional government, in an effort to achieve successfully an overall goal or objective. A strategy does not necessarily specify concrete actions. Initiatives, on the other hand, are made of concrete policy measures, adopted by the national or regional government, to implement a strategy or explore a policy domain.

Strategies developed by central-level authorities provide the framework within which information and guidance activities are conceived. They also set the tone and direction of such activities, usually identify actors and objectives, consider funding, and in some cases provide concrete quantitative targets. However, informing and guiding learners is often a minor aspect of such broad, overarching frameworks.

Figure 1.1: Existence of central-level strategies and large-scale initiatives that include information and guidance for outward learner mobility, 2015/16



In ten education systems (Belgium (Flemish Community), the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, and Poland), the internationalisation of higher education institutions is the driving force towards more and better information and guidance for learners. However, although specific actions are conceived for outward mobility, the main focus of most of these strategies is to enhance the international attractiveness of the national higher education system. The exceptions among these systems are Belgium (Flemish Community) and Germany, where the strategy has a very strong outward mobility dimension. On the other hand, in Denmark and Finland, the strategies on the internationalisation of higher education institutions have been recently dismissed.

In Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein, and Turkey, information and guidance is part of a larger strategy focused on mobility itself. In Belgium (German-speaking Community), France, Liechtenstein and Turkey, the strategy is however limited to the work plan of National Agencies managing the Erasmus+ programme, offering therefore a limited scope for information and guidance directly targeting the learner. The United Kingdom is probably the only country where the strategy is exclusively conceived for outward mobility,

which could be a consequence of the very low numbers of students going abroad to study ⁽⁴⁾. It includes a number of specific objectives such as promoting the benefits of study and work abroad, the removal of barriers, and capacity building to facilitate outward mobility. In addition, Scotland has developed a separate approach aimed at developing a highly skilled and multilingual population, and offers further funding for short-term mobility.

In Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and Serbia, mobility is framed within the broader strategy for educational development and/or lifelong learning opportunities. In this perspective, the emphasis is more on the development of skills and competences of individuals as well as on the development of the services offered by educational providers to individuals.

In addition to strategies, ten education systems have in place large-scale initiatives specifically focusing on mobility. These take the form of campaigns and dissemination activities (Belgium (German-speaking and Flemish Communities), Germany, Lithuania and the United Kingdom), or support of information networks (France and Finland). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, while there is no national strategy, the initiative aims generally at the support of a more international outlook, both of learners and institutions, and specifically targets the international mobility of students. In France, since 2013, the permanent Committee for European and international youth mobility (*Comité permanent de la mobilité européenne et internationale des jeunes*), composed of central and local level public authorities as well as other stakeholders in the field of international mobility, has boosted the visibility and provision of information and guidance both at national and local level.

Delegation of information and guidance to external bodies

An additional approach, adopted by many countries, is to delegate the provision of information and guidance for outward mobility to a central, independent, and external body. This approach can substitute the first two or be complementary to them.

It should be noted that all countries have a National Agency entrusted with the management of programmes such as Erasmus+ or other European funded initiatives. Such organisations are excluded in this analysis when they are mostly focused on the management of the programmes, provide information that is either partial (limited to European Union funding), or predominantly directed to organisations rather than individuals, or because the guidance dimension is missing. Similarly, organisations providing information and guidance exclusively to incoming students are excluded.

As shown in Figure 1.2, 20 education systems have a delegated body that provides information and guidance for outward mobility.

These organisations usually have the broader mandate of supporting the internationalisation of higher education and the development of international mobility cooperation. They provide information on different kinds of mobility schemes, both within and outside Europe, publicly-funded or sustained by private initiatives. In addition, they can provide support on the recognition of qualifications and credits, as well as information on the educational environments and systems in other countries. Three countries (Greece, Sweden and Norway) delegate the provision of information and guidance to a central independent and external body without having a national strategy or large-scale initiatives. The State Scholarship Foundation ⁽⁵⁾ in Greece manages also scholarships that are not aimed at mobility, while the Swedish Council for Higher Education ⁽⁶⁾ generally manages scholarships for outward

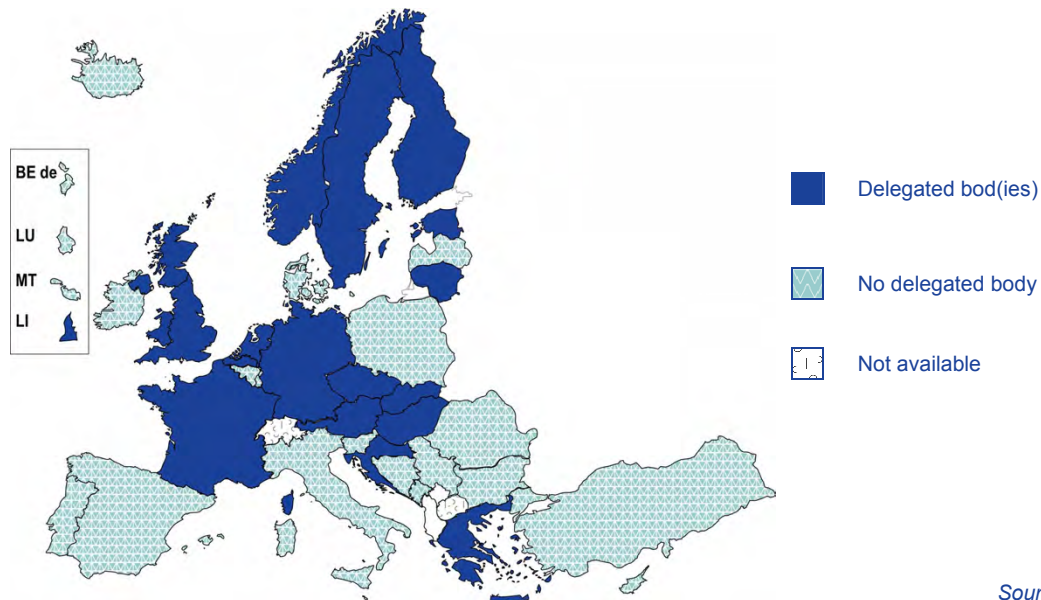
⁽⁴⁾ See Appendix I and II.

⁽⁵⁾ See: <http://www.iky.gr>

⁽⁶⁾ See: <https://www.uhr.se/start/>

mobility learners at all levels of education. The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education ⁽⁷⁾ focuses on higher education.

Figure 1.2: Existence of delegated body(ies) providing information and guidance services to individuals on outward learning mobility, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Web portals

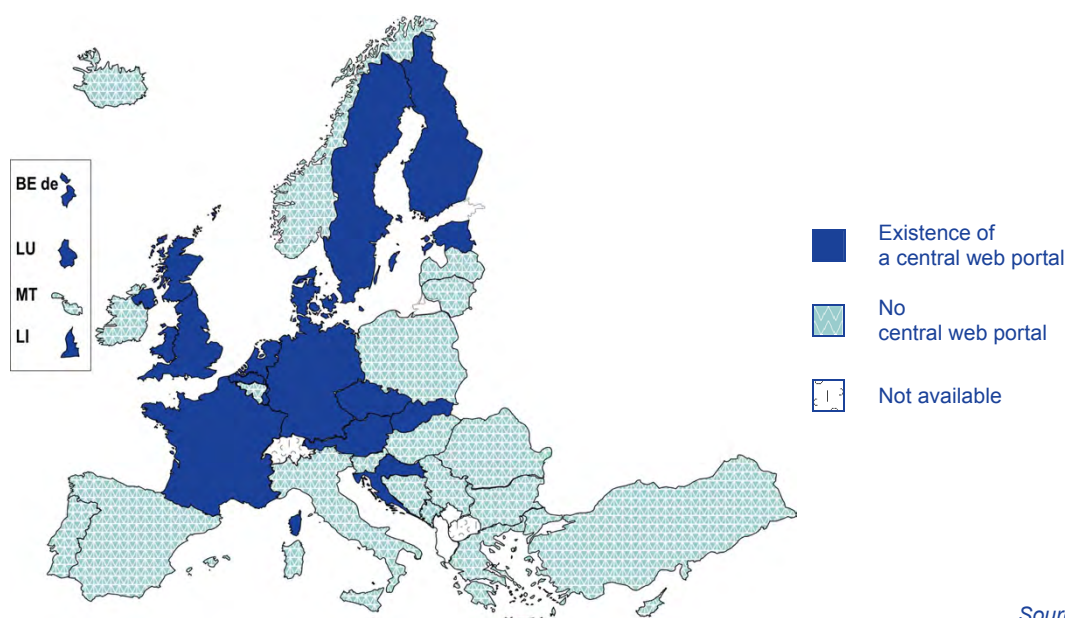
The use of the Internet as a key route for providing information and guidance to learners is explicitly mentioned in the Council Recommendation. Posting on the Internet, however, does not inevitably mean that the information provided is more accessible, clearer, and comprehensive. In some of the countries under analysis, for example, the information is dispersed on higher education institutions' websites, which have different approaches, outlooks, and provide partial views on the opportunities for learning mobility. In other cases, websites are managed by the National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme with information directed to organisations rather than individuals and/or limited to European Union initiatives. Finally, in a number of cases, the information provided is only of a very general nature such as descriptions of education systems, costs of living in other countries, listings of higher education institutions, etc.

For this reason, despite the richness and value of such information, four aspects have been considered key to comply with the indicator: 1) the web portal is mainly dedicated to mobility with specific information on outward mobility; 2) it provides concrete information on different scholarships (not limited to European programmes), such as duration, eligibility of candidates, countries for which the scholarships are available, the level of studies, etc.; 3) it guides on the modalities for applying for the scholarships or provides concrete contact points; 4) there is reasonable centralisation of the information avoiding the need for end-users to browse through innumerable institutions' websites to understand what is available to them. In addition, some of the portals provide information on the country of destination specifically tailored for learners, such as accommodation for students, recognition of credits and qualifications, language courses, etc. Although this information raises the quality of the guidance and information provided over the internet, it is not considered a requirement for the indicator.

⁽⁷⁾ See: <http://siu.no/>

As a result, 19 education systems provide internet-based information that fall in the above mentioned categories (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Existence of central web portal(s) providing information and guidance for outward learning mobility, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Interestingly, in some cases, such as Austria⁽⁸⁾ and Croatia⁽⁹⁾, the information can be filtered according to a number of categories that correspond to the user's interests or characteristics, such as level of studies, country of destination, duration of the scholarship, etc. The practical information on the German web portal⁽¹⁰⁾ is organised in five sections which deal with all aspects of the mobility experience: planning, preparing, financing, looking for accommodation, and life in the country of destination. The Go International⁽¹¹⁾ web portal developed in the United Kingdom provides guidance on all sorts of funding for studying and working abroad as well as information on the latest policies, research, statistics, and case studies.

Provision, monitoring and evaluation of personalised services

Guidance is often translated into practical support provided to individuals in a personalised way, taking into account personal circumstances, such as objectives, socio-economic conditions, disabilities, etc. Personalised services can be provided through counselling by dedicated staff both face-to-face and online, and span from assistance in administrative procedures, including financial aspects, to rarer but equally important tailored guidance to students with disabilities.

All education systems except Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey provide such services, and the most common way to deliver them is through the international offices of the higher education institutions. In 13 education systems (Germany, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Finland, the four systems in the United Kingdom and Liechtenstein), a publicly-funded centre, agency or body is also charged to provide assistance to individual learners.

⁽⁸⁾ See: <http://www.grants.at/>

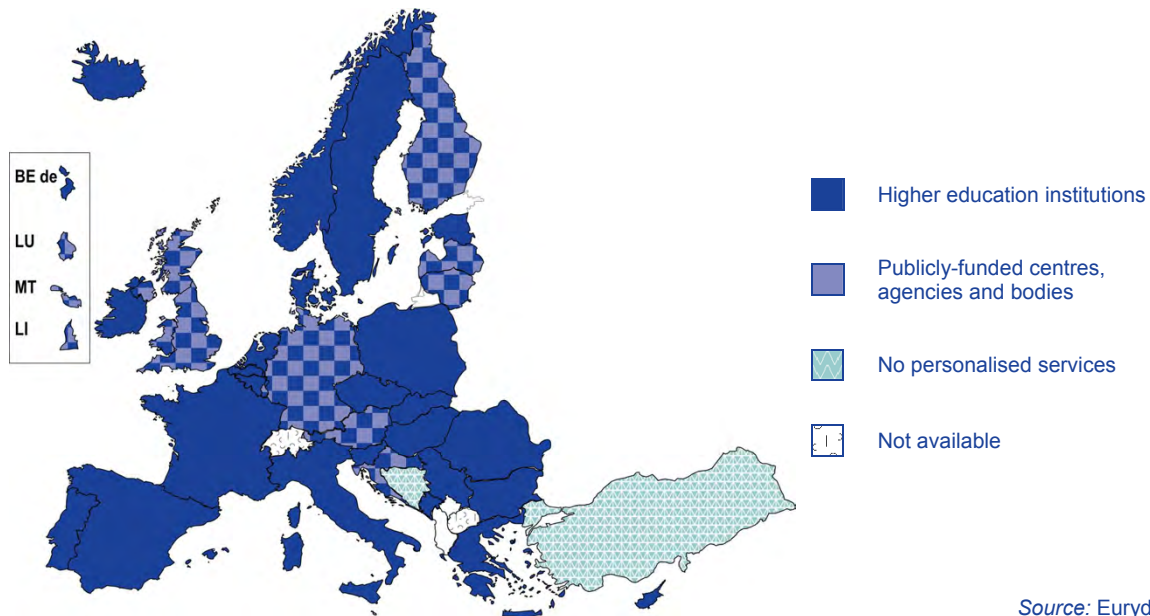
⁽⁹⁾ See: <http://www.stipendije.info/>

⁽¹⁰⁾ See: <http://www.studieren-weltweit.de>

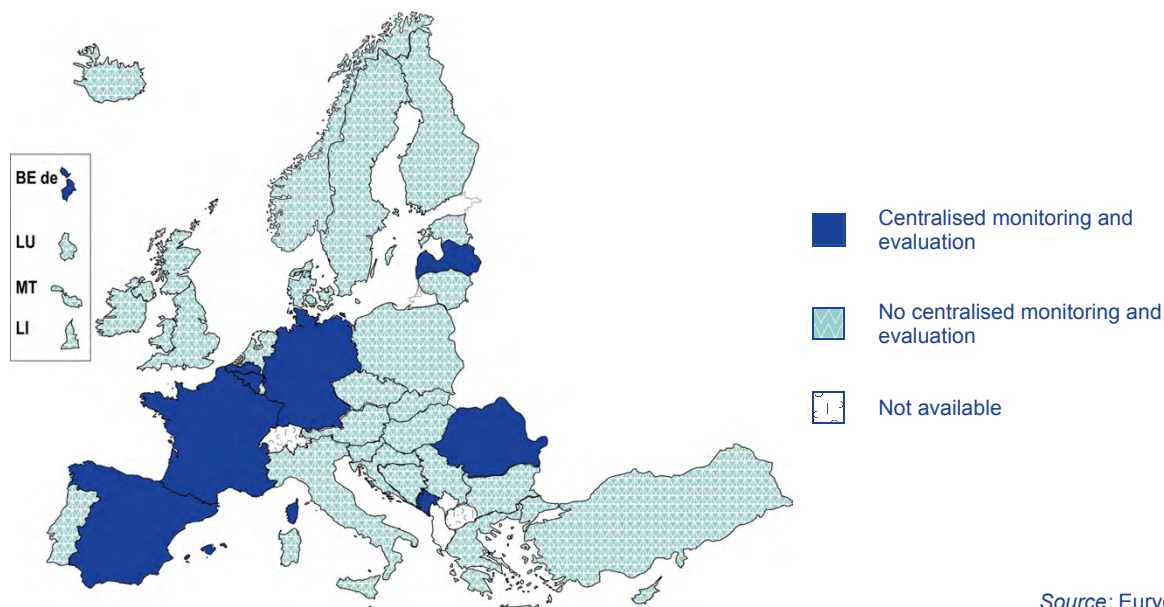
⁽¹¹⁾ See: <http://go.international.ac.uk/>

The approach of delegating to higher education institutions the provision of personalised services ensures proximity and contextualisation between the user and the service provider. However, the resulting fragmentation can lead to unequal opportunities and quality standards for the user, with institutions having more resources offering better services.

Figure 1.4: Typology of institutions providing personalised services to learners for outward mobility, 2015/16



This potential risk could be avoided by centralised regular monitoring and evaluation of the services offered to learners. Figure 1.5 shows that only a handful of systems (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Latvia, Romania and Montenegro) have in place an evaluation system that specifically looks at the quality of personalised services. With the exception of Germany and Latvia, it is the national agency for quality in higher education that performs this task with specific indicators aimed at capturing and evaluating the quality of personalised services. In Germany, all scholarship holders spending more than three months abroad evaluate the services of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) via a web tool delegated to provide information and guidance.

Figure 1.5: Existence of a centralised monitoring and evaluation system for personalised services, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice.

Involvement of multipliers

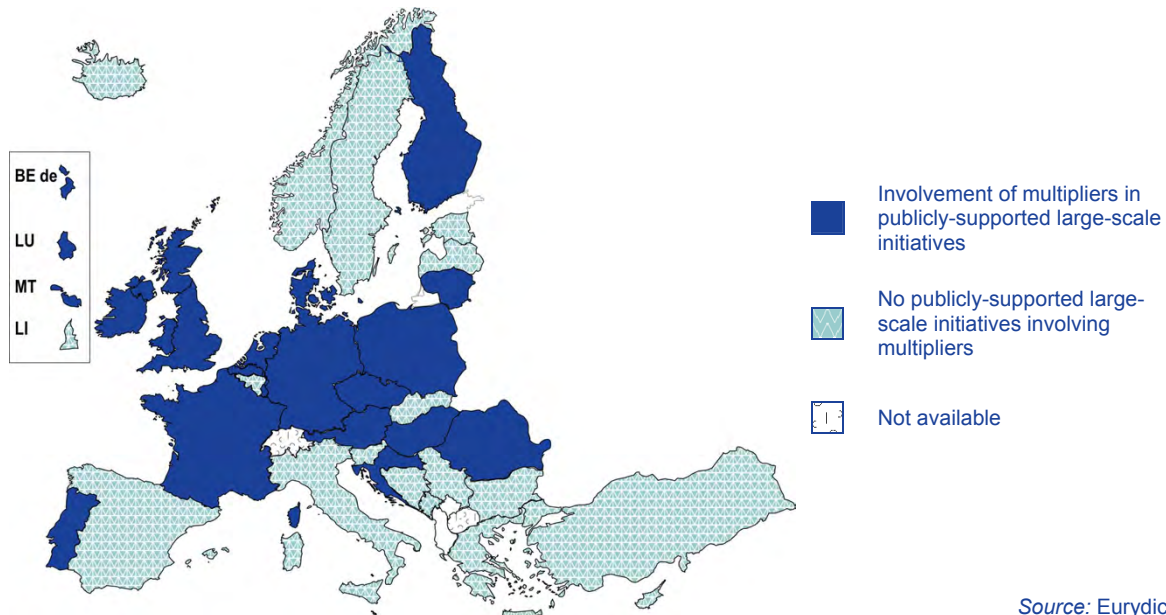
The role of multipliers – considered here as individuals who have had learning experiences abroad or who have been indirectly involved in it (teachers, families, etc.) – is central to the development of a mobility culture. The involvement of peers and actors connected to concrete experiences of mobility can motivate students to embark on this experience and provide valuable information and guidance to the individual learner. In many countries, their involvement in dissemination activities is left to the autonomy of higher education institutions.

However, in some countries, multipliers are involved also in publicly-supported large-scale initiatives (see Figure 1.6). In most cases, this takes place during national fairs or information days on mobility, or through testimonials available in centralised websites captured in videos, blogs, and articles.

In Denmark, a number of videos are available on the web portal dedicated to outward mobility ⁽¹²⁾ both from students and famous people witnessing their experience and providing practical tips. In Ireland, every year between September and December, learners who have participated in transnational mobility visit their secondary school to talk about their experience and raise awareness of mobility programmes. The initiative is supported by a partnership between the Erasmus National Agency (ENA), the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI). In Luxembourg, the ACEL (*Association des cercles étudiants luxembourgeois*) and the UNEL (*Union nationale des étudiants luxembourgeois*) take part in the organisation of events involving multipliers both in the yearly student fair and in information days in schools.

⁽¹²⁾ See: www.gribverden.dk

Figure 1.6: Involvement of multipliers in publicly-supported large-scale initiatives, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

1.3. Scoreboard indicator

The scoreboard indicator is based on four elements related to information and guidance as well as the role of multipliers in the Council Recommendation:

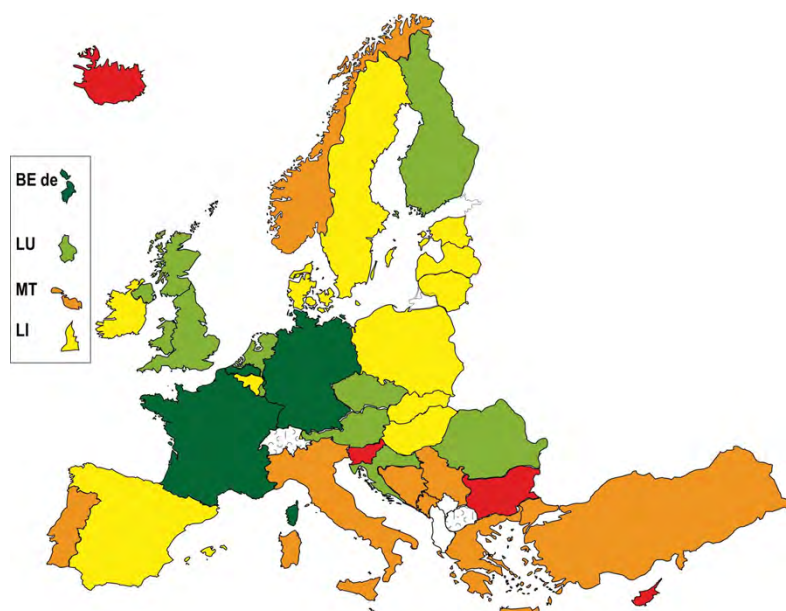
- 1) the existence of an overarching strategy on mobility issued by the central-level authority that sets the direction for providing information and guidance, or the development of publicly-supported large-scale initiatives aimed at informing and guiding learners, or the existence of a delegated-body that has a mandate to provide information and guidance to learners (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2);
- 2) the existence of centralised publicly-supported web portal(s) largely devoted to learning mobility. These will be dedicated to outward mobility but can include information for incoming learners (see Figure 1.3);
- 3) the existence of publicly-supported personalised services providing counselling, guidance and information, with established mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5);
- 4) the involvement of multipliers under publicly-supported large-scale initiatives of information and guidance on learning mobility (see Figure 1.6).

The scoreboard indicator is built on five coloured categories: dark green indicates that all four elements considered are fulfilled, while red applies when none of the elements under scrutiny exist. The remaining three categories (light green, yellow, and orange) are intermediate.

The available information shows that only Belgium (German-speaking and Flemish Communities), Germany, and France comply with all the criteria, while four countries fall in the red zone (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia and Iceland) not meeting any of the criteria under scrutiny.

Eleven systems fulfil three out of the four criteria and are shown in light green. With the exception of Romania, all these systems lack a central approach to evaluation and monitoring of personalised services. Romania, while complying with this criterion, does not have a central web portal.

Figure 1.7: Scoreboard indicator 1: Information and guidance on learner mobility, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Scoreboard indicator categories:

	All four of the following elements regarding information and guidance on learning mobility are covered: • existence of an overarching strategy on mobility issued by the central-level authority that sets the direction for providing information and guidance, or the development of publicly-supported large-scale initiatives aimed at informing and guiding learners, or the existence of a delegated-body that has a mandate to provide information and guidance to learners; • centralised, publicly-supported web portal(s) for learning mobility (outgoing mobility specifically or outgoing and incoming mobility together); • publicly-supported personalised services providing counselling, guidance and information, with established mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation; • involvement of multipliers under publicly-supported large-scale initiatives of information and guidance on learning mobility.
	Three out of four elements regarding information and guidance on learning mobility are covered.
	Two out of four elements regarding information and guidance on learning mobility are covered.
	One out of four elements regarding information and guidance on learning mobility is covered.
	None of the four elements regarding information and guidance on learning mobility is covered.
	Not available.

Twelve education systems, most of which are grouped in north-eastern Europe, fall in the yellow category, complying with two out of the four criteria. Nine out of the twelve systems do not carry out evaluation and monitoring of personalised services in addition to another criterion: Estonia, Slovakia Sweden and Liechtenstein do not involve multipliers in publicly-supported large-scale initiatives; Ireland, Lithuania, Hungary and Poland do not have a centralised web portal for outward mobility; and Denmark does not have an overarching strategy, nation-wide initiatives, or a delegated body with specific functions in the area of information and guidance to learners. The three education systems in this category that assess the quality of personalised services are Belgium (French Community), Spain and Latvia, which however do not involve multipliers and do not have a central web portal.

Nine systems, most of them in the Mediterranean area, fulfil only one of the four criteria considered for this scoreboard. Greece, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Serbia and Turkey have in place a national strategy or initiative or delegated body for information and guidance on outward mobility, but fail on all other criteria. Malta and Portugal involve multipliers, while Montenegro has in place a system for the evaluation of personalised services. None of them have a centralised, dedicated web portal.

1.4. Conclusion

Almost all education systems have a nation-wide strategy that includes elements of information and guidance, have developed initiatives that enhance the visibility and accessibility of outward mobility opportunities, or have delegated this task to dedicated external and independent bodies.

However, less than half have centralised web-portals that provide practical information and guidance on the available scholarships and how to access them, and only half of the systems involve multipliers in publicly-supported large-scale initiatives. Moreover, in most systems, guidance to the learner through personalised services is provided by higher education institutions, making the quality of information and guidance dependent on the strategy, resources, and interest of the individual institutions themselves.

Although the role of higher education institutions is beneficial in terms of proximity of the information and guidance services, exclusive reliance on it also risks making information and guidance fragmented. Furthermore, provision of services by higher education institutions presents significant challenges in terms of quality assurance. Indeed, only in nine systems is there a mechanism in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of personalised services.

CHAPTER 2: FOREIGN LANGUAGE PREPARATION

2.1. Introduction

Learning languages is at the heart of mobility experiences. Those benefiting from mobility periods extensively report on the improvement of their foreign language proficiency (European Commission, 2014). On the other hand, in several European countries, a large proportion of students regard their insufficient skills in foreign languages as an important obstacle deterring them from going abroad (Hauschildt et al. 2015, p. 196).

The Council Recommendation also acknowledges the importance of language learning 'starting at early stages of education', and urges Member States to provide 'quality linguistic and cultural preparation for mobility in both general and vocational education' ⁽¹⁾. In this context, the Recommendation also draws attention to the use of innovative teaching methods ('including those based on ICTs') and the development of 'basic digital competences' ⁽²⁾. While this second aspect of preparing pupils for learning mobility is also essential, scoreboard indicator 2 focuses exclusively on foreign language preparation, emphasising its crucial role in equipping students with the skills necessary for experiencing learning mobility.

2.2. Background analysis

The indicator on foreign language preparation looks at national approaches to compulsory foreign language learning in schools, from pre-primary level until the end of upper secondary education. More specifically, it focuses on the *duration* of compulsory foreign language learning available to all pupils in full-time education, including both general and vocational education.

In 2002, the Barcelona European Council ⁽³⁾ called for action 'to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age'. This goal is based on the premises that it is desirable for all pupils to spend as long as possible in foreign language learning, and to have the opportunity to learn a second foreign language at school for as long as possible. Though many factors influence language proficiency (teaching methods, teachers' and pupils' motivation, pupils' socio-economic background, informal language learning opportunities available to pupils, etc.), evidence indeed suggests that starting to learn foreign languages at an early age, as well as learning a larger number of foreign languages are related to higher levels of language proficiency (European Commission 2012, p. 11).

On this basis, this chapter analyses two aspects related to the duration of language learning: 1) the total length of compulsory foreign language learning for all pupils; and 2) the length of the period when pupils have to learn at least two different foreign languages at the same time. The total length of compulsory foreign language learning is calculated from the beginning of pre-primary education until the end of upper secondary education. In most countries, this period goes beyond the end of compulsory education. In these cases, foreign language learning is nevertheless regarded as 'compulsory' if it is required for all participating pupils.

⁽¹⁾ Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/3.

⁽²⁾ Ibid.

⁽³⁾ Barcelona European Council 15-16 March 2002, Presidency Conclusions, p. 19.

Educational authorities most often only regulate the number of compulsory foreign languages in each school year, and the actual choice of foreign languages often depends on schools or on the pupils themselves. This means that while education authorities may decide to make the instruction of one foreign language compulsory for all pupils all through primary to secondary education, this does not necessarily mean that pupils will learn only one foreign language until the end of their upper secondary education: they might learn multiple foreign languages for shorter periods of time. Due to this common freedom of choice, comparative administrative information on the teaching of two (or more) foreign languages can only be obtained through looking at periods when pupils have to learn these languages simultaneously. Therefore, in the current analysis, such periods are used as a proxy for the compulsory teaching of at least two foreign languages at school.

Since the focus of the scoreboard is on outward mobility in higher education, the indicator concentrates only on educational pathways or tracks *giving direct access to higher education*. Specifically, it examines minimum requirements on language teaching in 1) general education until the end of upper secondary level, and in 2) upper secondary vocational programmes allowing direct access to higher education ⁽⁴⁾.

In vocational education, the indicator is based on information on the most representative programmes. This means that programmes or pathways delivered in institutions dedicated to very specific fields (e.g. fine arts and performing arts) are not considered. In addition, adult education programmes, programmes falling under special needs education, or pathways with a very small number of pupils are not included.

Total length of compulsory foreign language teaching

As indicated above, the first important factor to be considered is the total length of compulsory foreign language teaching, from pre-primary to upper secondary level, in general education and in vocational education and training (VET).

The figures reflect the minimum requirements established by education authorities. This means the minimum length of compulsory language learning for all pupils: some pupils might learn foreign languages for a longer period of time. However, the figure does not reflect variations within systems, for example where there are different requirements for pupils following different pathways.

It is also important to note that, when comparing countries, learning languages for the same number of years does not mean having the same exposure to foreign languages, as the teaching hours can vary widely (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016). Nevertheless, the total length of compulsory foreign language teaching is a good proxy for assessing how early language teaching begins and to some extent for its continuity.

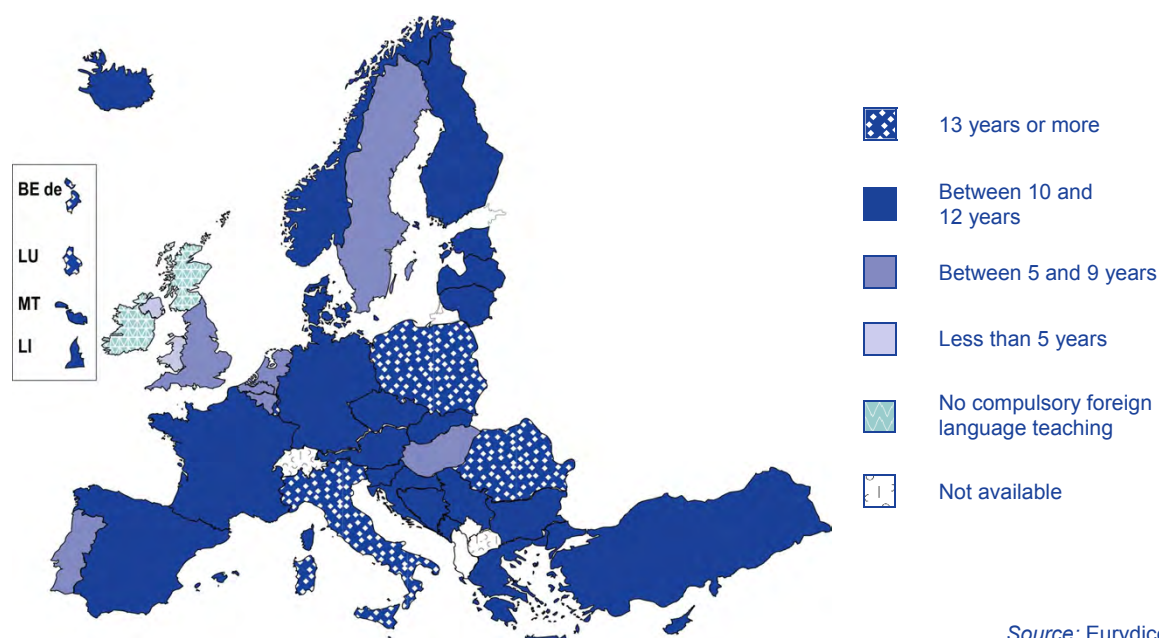
Figure 2.1 shows the total length of compulsory foreign language teaching in general education. In more than half of the education systems covered in this report (24), pupils in general education have to learn foreign languages for 10 to 12 years (see Figure 2.1). Learning foreign languages is compulsory for a longer period of time only in five education systems: for 15 years in Belgium (German-speaking Community), and for 13 years in Italy, Luxembourg, Poland and Romania.

Compulsory foreign language teaching lasts between 5 and 9 years in seven systems, while less than 5 years are required to be devoted to foreign languages in two (both in the United Kingdom, Wales

⁽⁴⁾ Typically, these programmes have the ISCED-P code '354'. See the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011 for more details (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012).

and Northern Ireland). There is no compulsory foreign language teaching in Ireland – as neither Irish nor English are considered as foreign languages – and the United Kingdom (Scotland), where there is no statutory curriculum.

Figure 2.1: Total length of compulsory foreign language teaching in general education (ISCED 0 to 3), 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): In the Brussels-Capital Region and in the communes with a special linguistic regime: the total length of compulsory foreign language teaching is 10 years.

Estonia and Sweden: Schools can decide when to start foreign language teaching between the ages of 7 and 9 (Estonia) and 7 and 10 (Sweden). The figure calculates with the latest possible starting age.

United Kingdom (SCT): There is no statutory curriculum in Scotland. Scottish local authorities have the autonomy to devise their own curricular models based around the central tenets of the *Curriculum for Excellence*, within which the study of at least one modern language until the end of the third year of secondary school (approx. age 15) is an entitlement for all pupils. The Scottish government is currently promoting a language policy model aimed at ensuring that young people learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

Information indicates that the total length of compulsory foreign language teaching is similar for pupils in VET and in general education. Regarding VET pupils, the total length of compulsory foreign language learning is calculated based on the assumption that they attend general education at pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels, and enter a vocational pathway at upper secondary level. Thus, differences between general and VET pupils lie in the differences between programmes *at upper secondary level*.

In four education systems (Denmark, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands), the length of compulsory foreign language learning is shorter for pupils in VET tracks due to different requirements (see Figure 2.3). In the Netherlands, there is no national curriculum for VET; and in Denmark, Germany and Spain, foreign languages are not compulsory for VET pupils. For this reason, in these countries, pupils in VET tracks are required to learn foreign languages for two or three years less than their peers in general education.

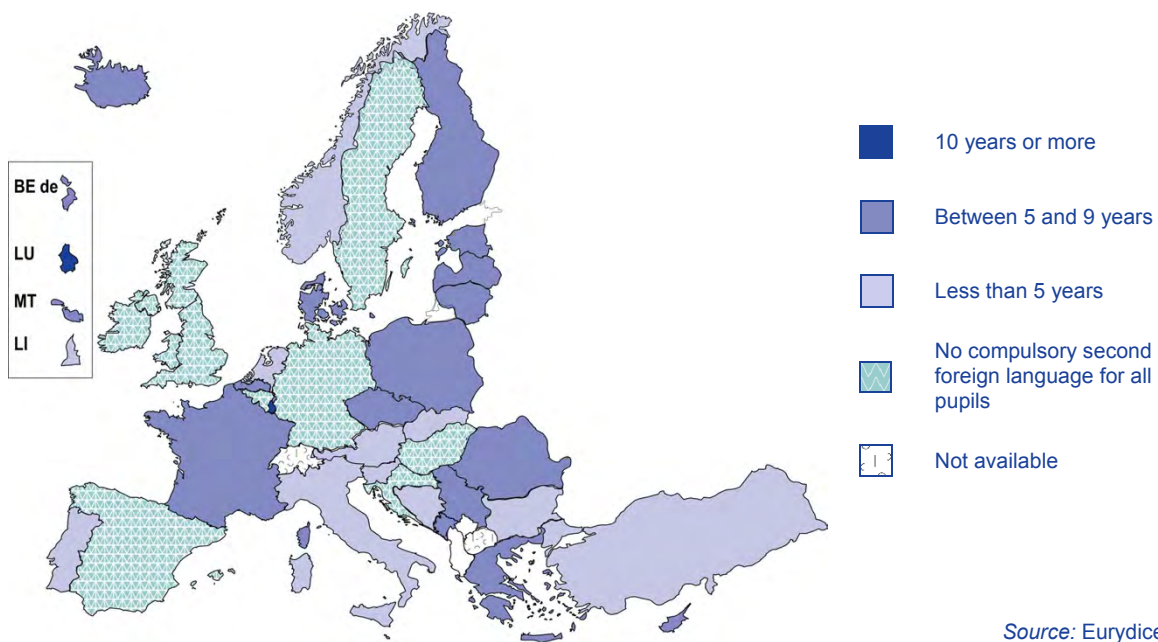
In addition, in some countries, due to differences in the official length of general and vocational education programmes, VET pupils are required to learn foreign languages one year longer (e.g. in Latvia and Poland) or less (e.g. in Austria) than pupils in general education.

Length of period with two foreign languages

The second important aspect of compulsory foreign language learning is the length of the period when pupils are required to learn two (or more) foreign languages at the same time. In general education (see Figure 2.2), pupils need to learn at least two foreign languages at the same time for five years or more in 18 education systems. Out of these 18, Luxembourg stands out, where pupils in general education have to learn at least two foreign languages simultaneously for 12 years. In an additional 11 education systems, pupils are still required to learn at least two foreign languages, though the length of the period when these languages are required to be taught at the same time is less than five years. This means that education systems making at least two foreign languages compulsory for pupils in general education are in a clear majority.

In addition to Ireland and the United Kingdom (Scotland), learning two foreign languages simultaneously is not required for all pupils in general education in nine education systems: Belgium (French Community), Germany, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Figure 2.2: Length of period with at least two compulsory foreign languages in general education (ISCED 0 to 3), 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific notes

Estonia: Schools can decide when to start teaching a second foreign language between the ages of 10 and 12. The figure calculates with the latest possible starting age.

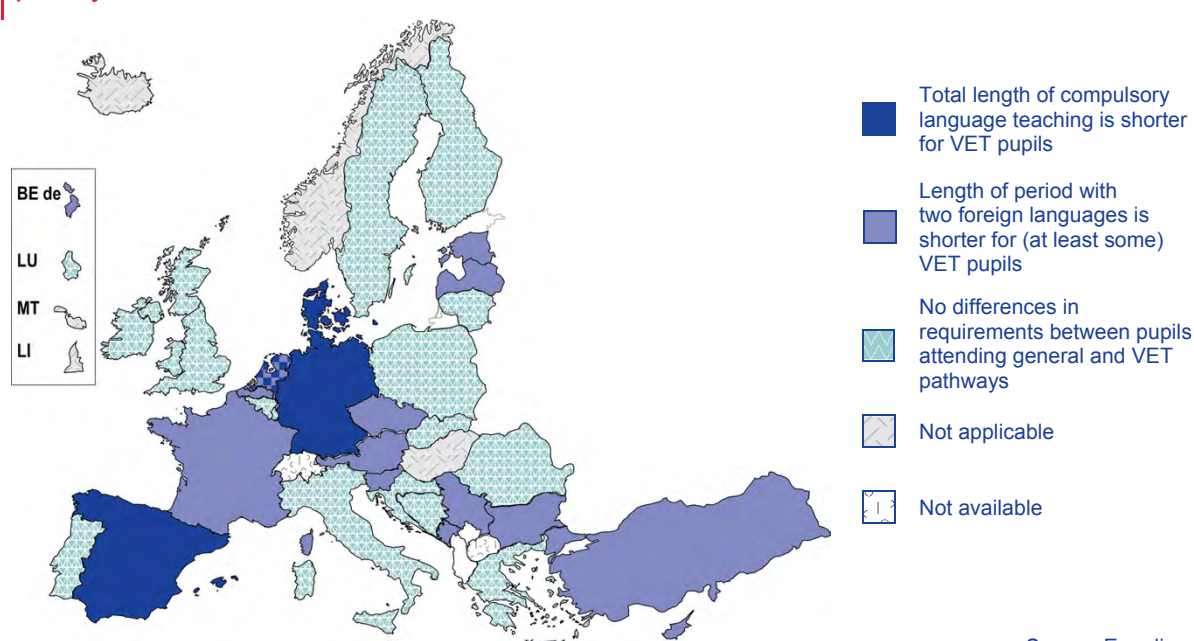
Slovakia: Since September 2015, according to the updated State Educational Programme, pupils have to learn two foreign languages at the same time during a period of 4 years instead of the previously required 8. In the school year 2015/16, the new curriculum is implemented in the first grade of ISCED level 2. Other pupils follow the old curriculum and still learn two compulsory foreign languages at the same time for at least 8 years.

Differences in the length of period with at least two compulsory foreign languages between pupils attending general education and VET pathways are again calculated for the overall language learning period from pre-primary to upper secondary level. Figure 2.3 shows that such differences are much more pronounced than in the case of the overall length of compulsory foreign language teaching. In 14 education systems, at least some pupils entering VET tracks end up learning two languages

simultaneously for a shorter period of time than their peers in general education (two to four years less, depending on the length of upper secondary education), or not at all.

In these 14 education systems, while learning two foreign languages at the same time is compulsory in upper secondary level general education, the same requirements do not apply to VET pupils, or only to some of them. As a result, in Austria, Slovenia and Turkey, at least some VET pupils never have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously. On the other hand, in Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Cyprus, Latvia, the Netherlands, Montenegro and Serbia, all pupils are required to learn two foreign languages for a short period of less than 5 years *before* upper secondary education, thus before they enter the VET pathway (while some might continue doing so also at upper secondary level).

Figure 2.3: Differences between compulsory foreign language teaching for pupils attending general and VET pathways, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

Differences are calculated for the overall language learning period. Regarding VET pupils, both the total length of compulsory foreign language learning and the length of period with two foreign languages are calculated based on the assumption that they attend general education at pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels, and enter a vocational pathway at upper secondary level. The figure only considers VET tracks giving direct access to higher education and fulfilling all the selection criteria described above.

The figure only considers the overlapping years of general and vocational education. Therefore, differences stemming from the diverse lengths of the programmes are not taken into account (e.g. when VET pathways are one year longer or shorter than the general track). In addition, only requirements regarding the first two foreign languages are considered.

Country-specific notes

Hungary, Malta, Iceland and Norway: No VET tracks according to definition.

Liechtenstein: The large majority of VET pupils attend vocational schools in Switzerland.

There are no differences between requirements for foreign language instruction in general and vocational education in slightly less than half of the education systems. There are five types of education systems within this group:

- systems where at least two foreign languages are simultaneously compulsory at upper secondary level in both general and vocational education (this is the case in Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Finland);

- systems where the teaching of two foreign languages is compulsory at the same time for all pupils only at lower levels of education, and at upper secondary level, the compulsory minimum for all pupils is to learn one foreign language (in Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- systems where two foreign languages are never compulsory simultaneously for pupils, and pupils in both general and vocational education have to learn one foreign language also at upper secondary level (in Belgium (French Community), Croatia and Sweden);
- systems where two foreign languages are never compulsory simultaneously for pupils, and neither pupils in general nor those in vocational education have to learn foreign languages at upper secondary level (in the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)); and finally
- systems where there is no compulsory foreign language teaching (in Ireland and the United Kingdom (Scotland)).

2.3. Scoreboard indicator

Scoreboard indicator 2 shows the above information in the form of a composite indicator, considering:

- 1) the total length of compulsory foreign language teaching from pre-primary to upper secondary level (see Figure 2.1);
- 2) the length of the period when two foreign languages are compulsory simultaneously (see Figure 2.2); and
- 3) differences between requirements for pupils in general education and in vocational education and training (see Figure 2.3).

The third point is important to keep in mind since pupils from both pathways can in principle enter the same higher education programmes, and therefore should have the same opportunities for linguistic preparation for learning mobility. Such a consideration also reflects the Council Recommendation, which draws attention to the importance of 'quality linguistic and cultural preparation for mobility *in both general and vocational education*' ⁽⁵⁾.

Since there are only small differences between pupils in general education and VET in terms of the overall length of compulsory language teaching, the indicator does not distinguish between the different pathways in this respect. This means that along this dimension, an education system can fall into the highest possible category if the overall length of compulsory language teaching lasts for 10 years or more for pupils in *both* general education and VET.

Regarding the length of the period when two foreign languages are simultaneously compulsory, the categories along this dimension take into account differences between pupils in general and vocational education (see the description below for the detailed categories and the assigned colours).

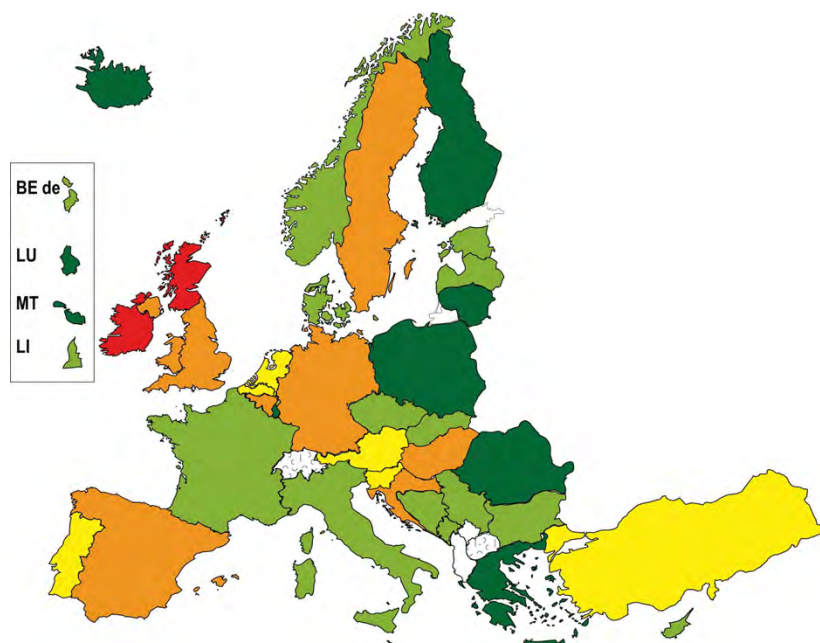
For the education systems that do not have VET pathways according to the definition applied in this chapter (Hungary, Malta, Iceland and Norway) and for Liechtenstein, only the situation of pupils in general education is considered for the selection of the scoreboard indicator category.

All dimensions considered, as Figure 2.4 shows, the distribution of countries is relatively balanced along the categories between 'dark green' and 'orange'. There are eight education systems in the

⁽⁵⁾ Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/3, emphasis added.

highest, 'dark green' category: Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Finland and Iceland. These are the countries where all pupils (in both general and vocational education) have to learn foreign languages for 10 years or more, and at least two languages are compulsory at the same time for all of them for five years or more.

Figure 2.4: Scoreboard indicator 2: Preparation of opportunities for learning mobility – foreign language skills, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Scoreboard indicator categories:

	Total compulsory foreign language teaching lasts for 10 years or more for all pupils.
	Pupils in both general and vocational education have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously for at least 5 years.
	Total compulsory foreign language teaching lasts for 10 years or more for all pupils.
	Pupils in both general and vocational education have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously, but at least part of the pupils has to do so for less than 5 years.
	OR
	Total compulsory foreign language teaching lasts for less than 10 years for all pupils.
	Pupils in both general and vocational education have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously for at least 5 years.
	Total compulsory foreign language teaching lasts for 10 years or more for all pupils.
	Pupils in general tracks have to learn at least two foreign languages, but at least some VET pupils never have to learn two foreign languages at the same time.
	OR
	Total compulsory foreign language teaching lasts for less than 10 years for all pupils.
	Pupils in both general and vocational education have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously, but at least part of the pupils has to do so for less than 5 years.
	Only one foreign language is compulsory for all pupils.
	No compulsory foreign language teaching.
	Not available.

In the category 'light green' (15 education systems), two languages are compulsory for all pupils for at least a short period of time. Most education systems in this group make foreign language learning compulsory for all pupils for 10 years or more, but the length of the period with two simultaneously compulsory foreign languages is less than five years either for all pupils (in Bulgaria, Italy, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein and Norway), or for at least some pupils in vocational education (in Belgium (German-speaking Community), the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Montenegro and Serbia). In Denmark, on the other hand, while not all pupils are required to learn foreign languages for 10 years or more – due to the fact that language learning is not compulsory in VET tracks – the length of the period when pupils have to learn two foreign languages at the same time is five years.

In the 'yellow' category (six education systems), either the overall length of foreign language teaching is relatively shorter (less than 10 years) with all pupils learning two foreign languages for at least a short period of time (in Belgium (Flemish Community), the Netherlands and Portugal), or the total length of compulsory language teaching is 10 years or longer for all, but at least some VET pupils never have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously. This latter situation is the case in Austria, Slovenia and Turkey.

In the nine education systems coloured 'orange' – Belgium (French Community), Germany, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) – learning two foreign languages at the same time is not a requirement for all pupils.

Finally, two education systems have the colour 'red': Ireland and the United Kingdom (Scotland), as there is no compulsory foreign language teaching in these systems.

2.4. Conclusion

Learning foreign languages is a key condition of mobility. The findings of this chapter demonstrate that foreign language learning is compulsory for at least a short period of time in the large majority of European countries.

Moreover, in most education systems, pupils do not have to learn multiple foreign languages at the same time for a longer period of time. Except for a few exceptional school years, the majority of countries follow a 'one foreign language at a time' approach throughout primary and secondary education.

In addition, pupils in vocational education are required to learn foreign languages for shorter periods of time in many countries. In most cases, this means that the period during which pupils have to learn (at least) two foreign languages at the same time is shorter for VET pupils than for their peers in general education. This might be a source of concern, given that pupils from both groups are potentially able to enter the same higher education programmes, and therefore should have the same opportunities for linguistic preparation for learning mobility.

CHAPTER 3: PORTABILITY OF GRANTS AND LOANS

3.1. Introduction

The lack of (sufficient) funding is one of the biggest obstacles to mobility (Hauschildt et al., 2015). At European level, the issue is tackled through mobility grants and loans, provided mainly by the Erasmus+ programme ⁽¹⁾. In parallel to providing direct financial support, European policy invites Member States to examine their domestic support ⁽²⁾, looking, in particular, at 'the portability of grants, loans and appropriate access to relevant benefits, in order to facilitate the learning mobility of young people' ⁽³⁾.

When considering higher education, the question behind the portability concept is 'whether students who study in a higher education institution in another country can use their domestic grant or loan under the same conditions as at a home institution' (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a, p. 250). Scoreboard indicator 3 therefore examines the extent to which European higher education systems offer such a possibility.

3.2. Background analysis

Scoreboard indicator 3 concentrates on the portability of domestic support within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), i.e. the possibility for students to take domestic grants and/or loans to another EHEA system. However, besides examining the conditions for portability, this section covers a wide range of issues in order to provide a background for a better understanding of portability. In particular, beyond portability, the section looks at beneficiaries of domestic support, i.e. the proportion of students receiving public grants and/or loans. Indeed, countries can allow students to take grants and/or loans abroad without restrictions, but if only a marginal proportion of students receive this public support, such full portability might not be a significant factor in promoting mobility. Moreover, the section provides information on financial support dedicated to mobility, i.e. support that is given on top of public grants and/or loans, specifically for the purpose of mobility. This information is complementary to the issue of portability, and is given to provide a full picture of mobility support in European countries.

Grants

The provision of public grants is the most widespread form of public support. Figure 3.1 indicates the proportion of students receiving a grant or a scholarship, meaning a public financial support that does not need to be paid back ⁽⁴⁾.

The figure distinguishes between four broad levels of public support: low (0-14.9 %), medium (15-49.9 %), high (50-89.9 %) and universal (90-100 %). It presents information for 1st and 2nd cycle students together, as not all countries were able to provide data for each cycle separately (nevertheless, noteworthy reported differences have been signposted).

The figure points to a rather clear geographical pattern, showing that four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) together with Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and the

(1) The Erasmus+ Master loan (targeting Master's degree mobility) is a new action that was introduced in 2015, as a scheme additional to Erasmus grants.

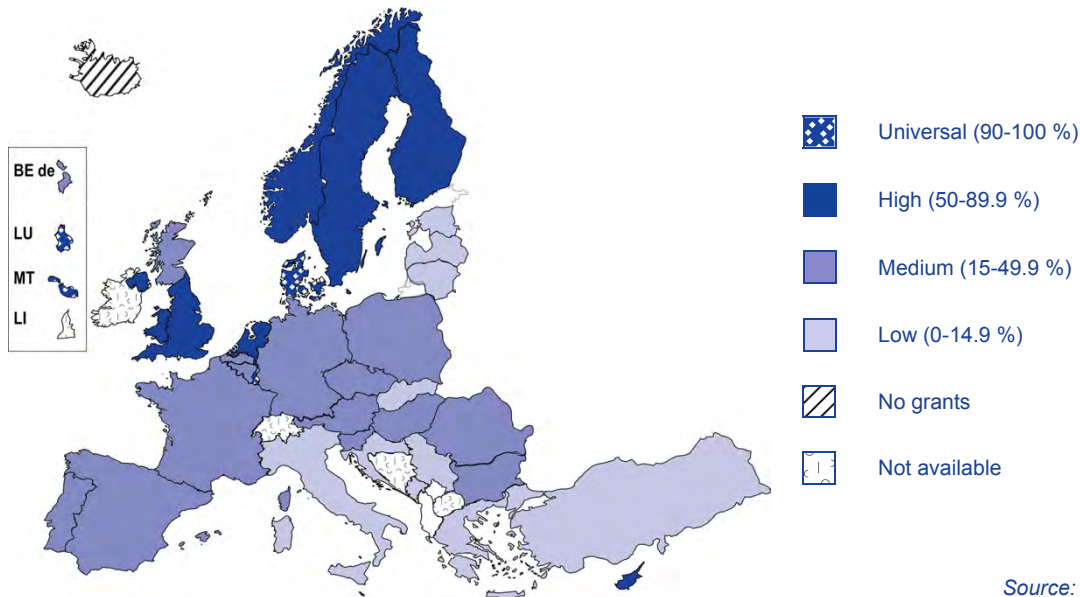
(2) The term 'domestic support' refers to financial support issued by authorities in the home country. For further details on higher education support schemes in Europe, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2015b).

(3) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/4.

(4) Only grants that are entirely covered by public funds are considered (grants that combine public and private funding are not taken into account).

United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) provide high or universal public grant support. While there might be differences in terms of grant beneficiaries between the 1st and the 2nd cycle, these generally do not exceed 10 percentage points (e.g. Denmark: 92 % and 82 % for the 1st cycle and the 2nd cycle respectively; Finland: 71 % and 68 %; Norway: 51 % and 58 %). Exceptions to this pattern are the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Malta, where the support for 1st cycle students is, respectively, high and universal, but there is no standard support package for 2nd cycle students.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of students receiving a public grant, 1st and 2nd cycle, 2015/16



Explanatory notes

The figure is based on data referring to the academic year 2015/16. If a country was not able to provide data for this academic year, older data was considered.

Countries where the 1st and the 2nd cycle differ in terms of the proportion of grant beneficiaries are represented by the 1st cycle. Countries with several grant schemes that were not able to provide aggregated data for all schemes, are represented by the scheme with the highest proportion of beneficiaries. Combined grants/loans systems are treated on an equal footing with grants.

Country-specific notes

Netherlands: From 1 September 2015, the major grant scheme – 'basic grant' – has been abolished and replaced by publicly subsidised loans. The figure refers to data from 2014, i.e. to the situation that preceded the reform.

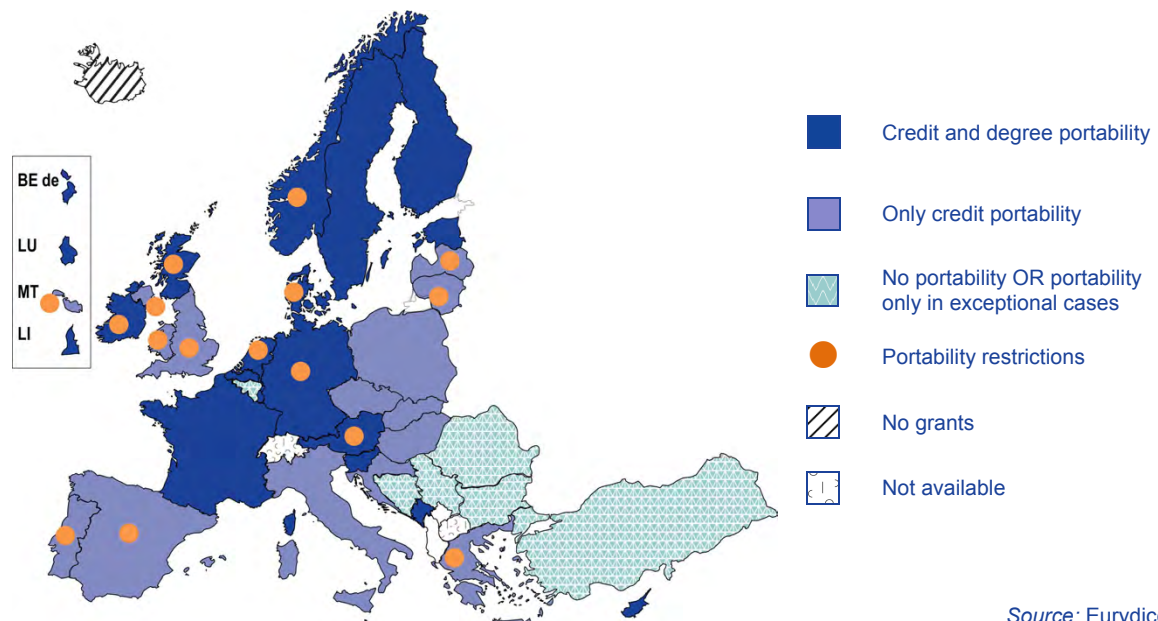
United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR): Data refers to the proportion of grant beneficiaries among applicants for grants and/or loans. Starting from 2016/17, England will offer no grants and student financial support will take the form of loans.

Around a half of all systems considered appear in the medium-support category, meaning that between 15 % and half of all students benefit from public grants or scholarships. However, it must be noted that some systems appear in this group only in relation to the 1st cycle, while in the 2nd cycle, less than 15 % of students benefit from public grants. This applies, for instance, to the United Kingdom (Scotland) with 42 % of students benefiting from public grants in the 1st cycle, but no standard public support package for 2nd cycle students. Moreover, the figure considers grants and combined grants/loans schemes on an equal footing, meaning, for instance, that Germany is represented by its grants/loans scheme 'BAföG', taken by approximately 25 % of students, whereas only around 3-4 % of students benefit from full grants.

Finally, six countries situated predominantly in south-eastern Europe (Greece, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey), the three Baltic States and Slovakia provide public grants to less than 15 % of their student population. Iceland, with no national public grant scheme, is in a standalone category.

Figure 3.2 moves to the core topic of this chapter, showing the main characteristics of portability in the case of grants. It distinguishes between credit portability (i.e. portability for short-term study visits in the framework of a home country programme) and degree portability (i.e. portability for an entire degree course). Moreover, the figure provides details on portability restrictions, meaning additional requirements that students and/or the chosen study programme abroad need to fulfil for the grant to be portable. Such restrictions include, for example, the definition of countries where students can take their grants (e.g. portability within the European Economic Area only) or limits on the time spent abroad. The most severe restriction is when students can only take their grants abroad to study if no equivalent programme is available in the home country. Since this means that portability is allowed only in exceptional cases, countries applying this condition are represented by the same colour as those having 'no portability'.

Figure 3.2: Portability of public grants, 1st and 2nd cycle, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

The figure focuses on portability within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Countries with several grant schemes that follow different portability patterns have been placed in the category that matches their grant scheme(s) with a higher degree of portability, unless the scheme in question concerns a significantly lower proportion of students compared to the scheme characterised by a lower degree of portability.

When the category 'credit and degree portability' is combined with the category 'portability restrictions' it means that there are restrictions related either to both types of portability (i.e. credit **and** degree) or to one type only (i.e. credit **or** degree).

The figure shows that several countries situated in south-eastern Europe – namely Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey – apply the most restrictive policies in terms of grant portability. In general, students from these countries cannot use their domestic grants when studying abroad, be it for a short period of time (credit mobility) or a longer period (degree mobility). The French Community of Belgium also appears in the same category, as grants are portable only in the case of programmes for which no equivalent programmes are available in the Community.

For around a half of all systems considered, portability of grants is limited to credit mobility, i.e. when students move abroad for a short period of time (e.g. a semester or an academic year), in the framework of their home country programme. Some higher education systems apply portability restrictions, limiting, in particular, the portability of grants to programme exchanges within recognised schemes such as Erasmus (e.g. Greece, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and the United Kingdom –

England, Wales and Northern Ireland ⁽⁵⁾). A specific situation can be observed in Malta, where the universal support package for all 1st cycle students is only portable for credit mobility and with restrictions, whereas grants for 2nd cycle students are fully portable without restrictions, yet, allocated only in exceptional cases (studies towards regulated professions).

Finally, there are countries where grants are portable for short mobility periods (credit mobility) as well as for longer periods, i.e. when the student intends to get a full degree abroad. This category includes higher education systems with various profiles, ranging from small systems where students commonly follow their studies abroad (e.g. the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein), to large systems, such as Germany and France. Most countries offering grants that are portable for credit as well as degree mobility are situated in northern and north-western Europe. However, as the figure shows, some of these countries apply portability restrictions. For example, Germany limits degree portability of grants to the EU countries and to Switzerland, whereas the United Kingdom (Scotland) applies even stricter criteria, limiting its pilot degree portability scheme to a small number of selected higher education institutions in the EU. Ireland provides a further example of portability restrictions, limiting credit portability to mobility explicitly required by home programmes and degree portability to the EU countries.

Regarding degree portability, Austria represents a specific case: students who meet predefined country criteria (mobility towards countries of the European Economic Area or Switzerland) can receive a degree mobility grant under the same conditions as domestic grants for studies at Austrian higher education institutions. Therefore, the situation of Austria is comparable to countries where grants are portable for credit as well as degree mobility, yet, with some restrictions related to geography (i.e. mobility only towards certain countries).

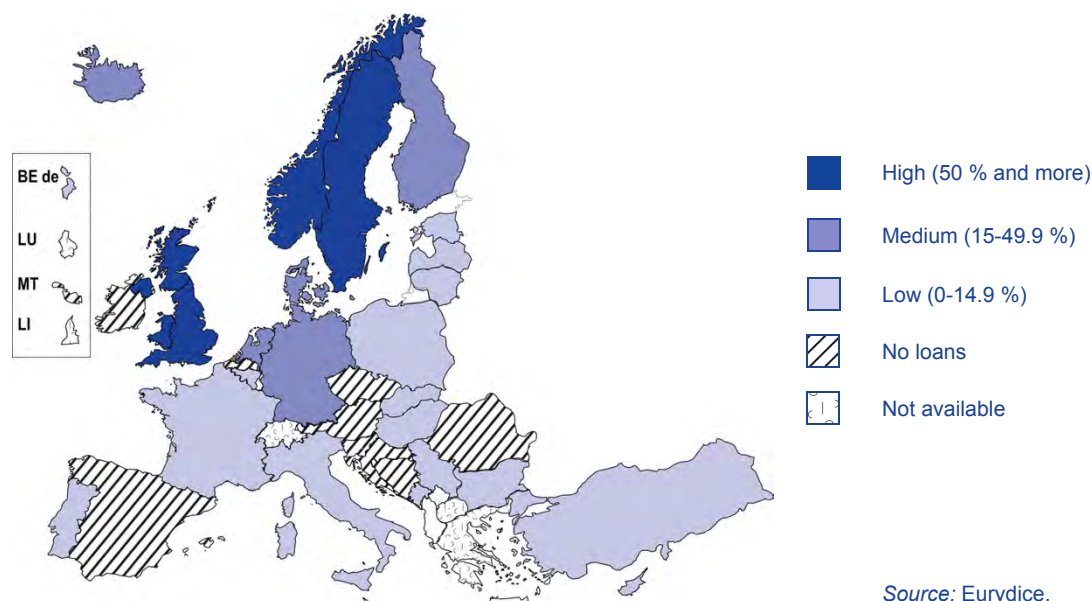
Loans

Figure 3.3 moves to another type of support, depicting the existence of publicly-subsidised loans and the proportion of students who take out loans. The latter aspect is covered by three broad categories: low (0-14.9 %), medium (15-49.9 %) and high (50 % and more). Similarly to grants, the proportions refer to 1st and 2nd cycle students together.

The comparison between public grants and loans – i.e. Figures 3.1 and 3.3 – indicates that grants are a more common type of public support than loans. Indeed, while there is only one country with no regular grant package (Iceland), several systems fall under this category in relation to loans. Moreover, among systems where publicly-subsidised loans exist, most fall under the low take-up category (0-14.9 %), with some indicating less than one 1 % of beneficiaries (the French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia).

At the other end of the spectrum is the United Kingdom where, depending on the system (i.e. England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland), between 72 % and 95 % of 1st cycle students take out loans (no standard loan package in the 2nd cycle), followed by Norway with 68 % of loan beneficiaries in the 1st cycle and 71 % in the 2nd cycle and Sweden with 52 % of loan beneficiaries in both cycles. Three Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Iceland) together with Germany (combined grants/loans system) and the Netherlands are also in the medium category.

⁽⁵⁾ The same restrictions also apply to Scotland. However, this higher education system is not reported among those limiting portability of grants to credit mobility as it conducts a degree portability pilot with a small group of selected institutions in the EU.

Figure 3.3: Proportion of students taking publicly-subsidised loans, 1st and 2nd cycle, 2015/16**Explanatory notes**

The figure is based on data referring to the academic year 2015/16. If a country was not able to provide data for this academic year, older data was considered.

Countries where the 1st and the 2nd cycle differ in terms of the proportion of loan beneficiaries are represented by the 1st cycle. Countries with several loan schemes that were not able to provide aggregated data for all schemes, are represented by the scheme with the highest proportion of beneficiaries. Combined grants/loans systems are treated on an equal footing with loans.

Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr, BE de), France, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia: The proportion of grant beneficiaries among students is below 1 %.

Netherlands: From 1 September 2015, publicly subsidised loans have replaced public grants. The figure refers to data from 2014, i.e. to the situation that preceded the reform.

Figure 3.4 examines whether publicly-subsidised loans are portable and, if yes, whether there are any specific portability-related requirements. Information is structured along the same lines as was in the case of grants, meaning that the figure distinguishes between credit and degree portability, and identifies countries with portability restrictions.

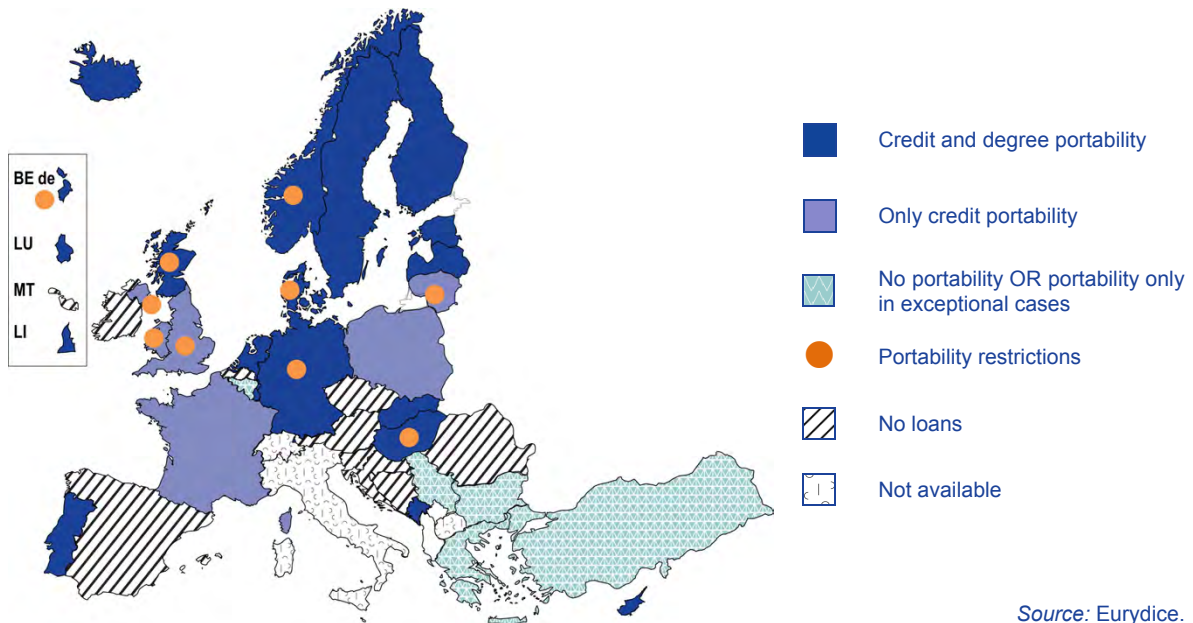
In general, countries that offer publicly-subsidised loans allow at least a certain degree of portability. Exceptions to this pattern are Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Turkey, where students cannot benefit from their loans if they study abroad, be it for a short period (credit mobility) or a longer period (degree mobility). As with grants, the French Community of Belgium allows portability only in exceptional cases, when there is no equivalent programme within the Community.

Among systems where loans are portable, some limit portability to credit mobility, and, among these systems, some apply even stricter limitations. For example, in Lithuania and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), loans are only portable if the mobility falls under recognised exchange schemes such as Erasmus.

Most systems that offer publicly-subsidised loans allow both credit and degree portability. While the overall geographical pattern is very similar to the portability of grants, some countries with limited grant portability – in particular Hungary, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia – are more flexible when it comes to portability of publicly-subsidised loans (i.e. loans are portable – with or without restrictions – for credit as well as degree mobility, whereas grants are only portable for credit mobility). However, as Figure 3.3 shows, the proportion of loan beneficiaries in all these countries is low. Iceland is another

noteworthy case, as although there is no standard grant package, publicly-subsidised loans are portable with no restrictions.

Figure 3.4: Portability of publicly-subsidised loans, 1st and 2nd cycle, 2015/16



Explanatory notes

The figure focuses on portability within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Countries with several loan schemes that follow different portability patterns have been placed in the category that matches their loan scheme(s) with a higher degree of portability, unless the scheme in question concerns a significantly lower proportion of students compared to the scheme characterised by a lower degree of portability.

When the category 'credit and degree portability' is combined with the category 'portability restrictions' it means that there are restrictions related either to both types of portability (i.e. credit **and** degree) or to one type only (i.e. credit **or** degree).

Additional mobility support

While the previous sections concentrated on available domestic support and its portability, it is also necessary to consider available support dedicated specifically to mobility, i.e. financial means available only to mobile students. These resources may be provided in addition to portable support or, where portable support is not available, instead of it.

Additional mobility support exists in almost all European countries, the only exceptions being Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Serbia. However, the nature of additional support varies greatly from one country to another: the support takes different forms, uses different resources and aims at different categories of students or types of mobility. This topic is therefore not covered by a dedicated figure.

A key question to consider in relation to additional support is the way the support is targeted, i.e. whether its attribution follows merit-based or need-based criteria. While the boundaries between these concepts are not always clear-cut, there are some clusters of national approaches. For example, some countries target their specific mobility support at postgraduate students (master, doctoral and/or postdoctoral level), considering mainly study and research excellence (i.e. merit-based approach). This characterises mobility support in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Turkey. At the other end of the spectrum are systems that provide mobility support on a less selective basis, offering it to all or almost all mobile students, or at least to all students who are in need of additional support. This approach can be observed in northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) as well as in countries such

as Germany, France and Austria. In Norway, for instance, 70 % of all mobile students benefit from a grant covering travel and tuition expenses. In Germany, all students eligible for standard need-based support (i.e. grants/loans scheme 'BAföG') are also eligible for additional mobility support to cover travel expenses, study fees and living costs.

One type of additional support that can be found in a number of higher education systems – including the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) – is the 'Erasmus top-up grant', which provides supplementary resources to students participating in credit mobility within the Erasmus+ programme. Depending on the system, the attribution of this grant follows either a need-based logic (e.g. the Flemish Community of Belgium and the United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or merit-based criteria (e.g. Spain and Lithuania). There are also systems (e.g. Slovenia), where central-level documents only define general administrative criteria (such as upper age limit), while further criteria of the Erasmus top-up grant attribution are defined by individual higher education institutions.

What also characterises the picture of additional mobility support in Europe is a range of bilateral and multilateral agreements either between European countries or between European countries and countries outside Europe. Some major European multilateral schemes are the Nordplus Higher Education Programme (mobility programme on bachelor and master levels for the Nordic and Baltic countries), the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies – CEEPUS (scheme providing support for the participation in joint programmes in the central European region) and the Visegrad scholarships (supporting Masters and post-Masters students in the Visegrad Group countries i.e. the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as in the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries ⁽⁶⁾).

Finally, it must be noted that while support dedicated to mobility commonly takes the form of a grant, it can also be provided in the form of publicly-subsidised loans. In the United Kingdom (England), for instance, students who are mobile for a full academic year (credit mobility) are eligible to take out a special loan to cover the lower rate of tuition fees which their home institution is allowed to charge during the mobility period. In Finland and Sweden, mobile students can take out loans that are higher than standard loans offered to all students.

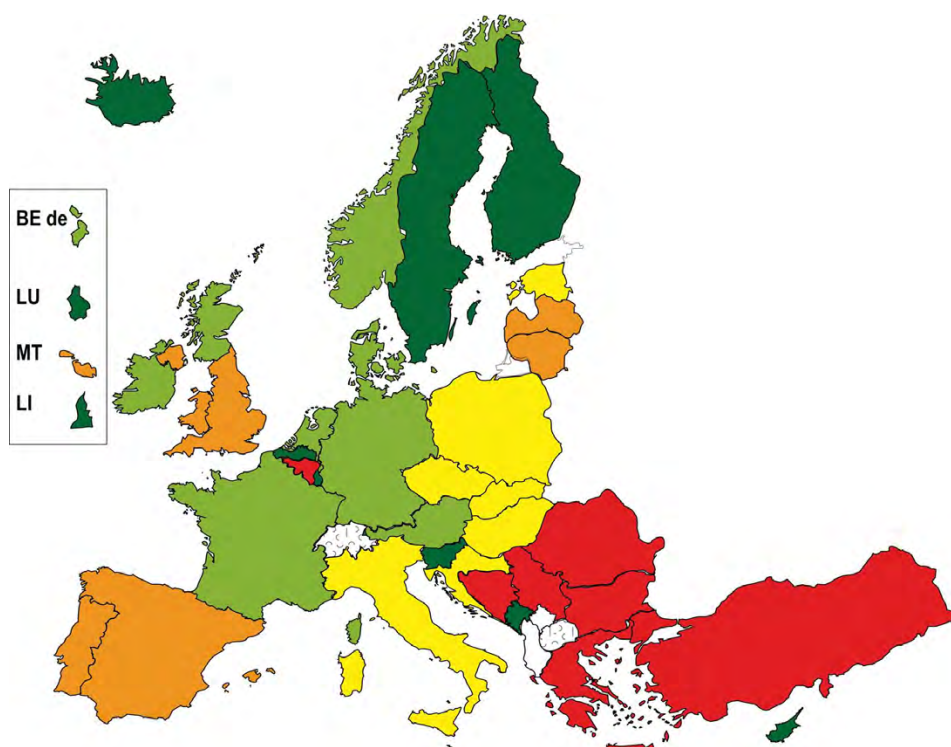
3.3. Scoreboard indicator

Scoreboard indicator 3 brings together some of the elements presented in the previous section and puts countries' existing schemes into pre-defined categories. As mentioned previously (see Section 3.2.), the indicator concentrates on the portability of domestic grants and loans, meaning that additional support dedicated specifically to mobility is not taken into account. Furthermore, the indicator does not include information on the actual amount of portable support or the proportion of beneficiaries among the student population. Countries with substantial differences between the 1st and the 2nd cycle – e.g. universal support in the 1st cycle, limited support in the 2nd cycle – are represented by the 1st cycle.

The indicator is based on a five-colour scheme where 'dark green' represents full portability of all available domestic student support (this means that there are equivalent requirements for receiving public grants and/or taking loans if students study in the home country or abroad) and 'red' signifies no portability. Higher education systems applying the requirement that public financial support can be

taken abroad only if no equivalent programme is available in the home country also belong to the 'red' category, as the portability of student support is only possible under exceptional circumstances. There are three transitional categories between 'dark green' and 'red'. The first of them – 'light green' – refers to systems where domestic support can be taken abroad for credit as well as degree mobility, yet, with some restrictions (e.g. the definition of countries where students can take their grants or limits on the time spent abroad). The two following categories – 'yellow' and 'orange' – cover systems that limit the portability of all or most domestic support measures to credit mobility, the distinguishing feature between the two categories being the presence or absence of portability restrictions.

Figure 3.5: Scoreboard indicator 3: Portability of domestic public grants and publicly-subsidised loans, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Scoreboard indicator categories:

	Full portability across the EHEA of all available domestic student support measures – grants and/or loans – for credit and degree mobility. Equivalent requirements for public grants and/or loans if students study in the home country or abroad.
	Portability of available domestic student support measures – grants and/or loans – for credit and degree mobility, but with some restrictions related to geography (country limitations), and/or types of programme, and/or field of study or time.
	Credit portability, without restrictions. No degree portability OR not all major support measures with degree portability.
	Credit portability but with some restrictions related to geography (country limitations), and/or types of programme, and/or field of study or time. No degree portability OR not all major support measures with degree portability
	No portability: public grants and/or loans are only provided if students study in the home country or in exceptional cases (no equivalent programme is available in the home country).
	Not available.

⁽⁶⁾ The Eastern Partnership refers to six eastern European countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Following the above categorisation, the indicator shows that unrestricted portability of all domestic support for credit as well as degree mobility ('dark green') exists only in nine higher education systems, namely three Nordic systems (Finland, Sweden and Iceland), the Flemish Community of Belgium, Cyprus, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Montenegro. However, it should be recalled that while offering fully portable domestic support, these systems differ substantially with respect to the proportion of support beneficiaries (see Figures 3.1 and 3.3). While in some of them at least half of all students benefit from a certain form of domestic financial support (Finland, Sweden, Cyprus and Luxembourg), the proportion of beneficiaries in other systems is more limited. Moreover, the systems in question differ in terms of the type of support that is offered to the student population. Indeed, while some provide grants as well as loans, other focus only on one modality of support (see the two above-mentioned figures). In this respect, Iceland has a rather specific position, providing no standard grant package, yet offering fully portable loans.

Nine higher education systems – the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Norway – also offer portable support for credit as well as degree mobility, yet, applying various restrictions ('light green'). As discussed previously, these are mainly related to geography (i.e. mobility only towards certain countries) and time spent abroad.

Seven systems – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – limit the portability of their domestic support to credit mobility, generally with no restrictions ('yellow'). It is noteworthy that some of these systems – Hungary and Slovakia – provide publicly-subsidised loans that are portable for credit as well as degree mobility; yet, the portability of grants is limited to credit mobility. The flexibility is even higher in Estonia, where loans as well as one need-based grant are fully portable, but the portability of other grants is limited to credit mobility.

Eight higher education systems corresponding to six countries – Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal and most parts of the United Kingdom – apply various restrictions to credit mobility ('orange'). Among them, Latvia and Portugal offer fully portable loans, yet, the portability of grants is limited to credit mobility with restrictions.

Finally, seven higher education systems – the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey – provide domestic support with no portability or allow portability only under exceptional circumstances, when there is no equivalent programme in the home system ('red'). Greece has a specific position in this group, allowing the credit portability of grants (with restrictions), but providing no possibility for the portability of loans.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the portability of domestic financial support as a key aspect of student mobility. Indeed, students considering study abroad – be it for a short period of time (credit mobility) or to complete a full degree (degree mobility) – may base their decision on whether financial support available for studying in their home country can be used when moving to another country.

The reporting shows that only nine higher education systems offer unrestricted portability of all domestic support for credit as well as degree mobility, whereby students can benefit from available domestic support regardless of the type of mobility (short-term or long-term) and the country in which they study. Quite close to the 'full portability' group is a group of nine systems applying some portability restrictions (e.g. mobility only towards certain countries), yet, allowing credit as well as degree portability for all major domestic support schemes. From a geographical perspective, countries

with fully portable domestic support and those applying minor portability restrictions are mainly situated in northern and north-western Europe. At the other end of the spectrum are seven higher education systems, situated mainly in south-eastern Europe, providing domestic support with no portability or limiting portability to exceptional cases. Fifteen systems are situated between these two situations, allowing credit portability either without restrictions (seven systems mainly in central Europe) or with restrictions (eight systems situated in different parts of Europe). The relatively high number of systems in the latter category indicates that credit portability is a modality easier to implement compared to degree portability. Another noteworthy aspect is the tendency to offer more portability in the case of loans than in the case of grants. Indeed, in some systems, loans are portable for credit as well as degree mobility, whereas the portability of grants is limited to credit mobility.

Overall, the analysis suggests that around half of all European higher education systems allow credit as well as degree portability of their domestic financial support (though some restrictions may apply). Moreover, the data points to a rather clear geographical pattern, in particular a contrast between northern and north-western Europe with a high degree of portability, and south-eastern Europe with low to non-existent portability.

CHAPTER 4: MOBILITY SUPPORT PROVIDED TO STUDENTS WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

4.1. Introduction

Not all students have equal chances to experience learning mobility, and thus to benefit from all its advantages. Evidence shows that students with low socio-economic background or students with disabilities are less likely to participate in mobility programmes (Hauschildt et al., 2015; King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010; Souto Otero, 2008), further deepening their already disadvantaged position among their peers.

In order to improve the current situation, the Council Recommendation encourages Member States to 'provide disadvantaged learners, who may be deprived of opportunities for learning mobility, with targeted information on available programmes and support tailored to their specific needs' ⁽¹⁾. Scoreboard indicator 4 therefore looks at whether such support is available in European countries.

4.2. Background analysis

Definitions of disadvantaged learners vary widely across education systems. Some countries target students with disabilities, some do not. Some define disadvantage based on ethnicity, while others use migrant status as a criterion. However, the most common element for defining disadvantage is to link it to students' low socio-economic background. Therefore, for the purposes of comparability, this indicator focuses on students with a low socio-economic background. The definition of this low socio-economic background, however, varies from country to country.

The indicator on the mobility support provided to this group of disadvantaged learners is built on three main aspects: 1) the existence of national targets regarding the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes; 2) comprehensive monitoring of the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes; and 3) financial support in the form of public grants provided to students with low socio-economic background to participate in mobility programmes. These aspects are discussed in turn.

National targets

Quantitative national targets signal a strong political commitment towards increasing the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes. However, so far, only one education system has set such a target. The Flemish Community of Belgium is aiming for 33 % of mobile students to come from under-represented groups by 2020 (defined as students receiving a grant (low socio-economic status), students with a (part-time) job, and students with a disability) (Government of Flanders/Department of Education and Training 2013, p. 64).

Monitoring participation

In order to be able to provide adequate support for students with low socio-economic background, policy-makers need information on whether different groups of students can – and do – participate proportionally in mobility programmes. Such information can be obtained through monitoring relevant characteristics of the student population participating in mobility.

All countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme are required to monitor mobile students participating in this specific programme. For this reason, this section concentrates on practices *going*

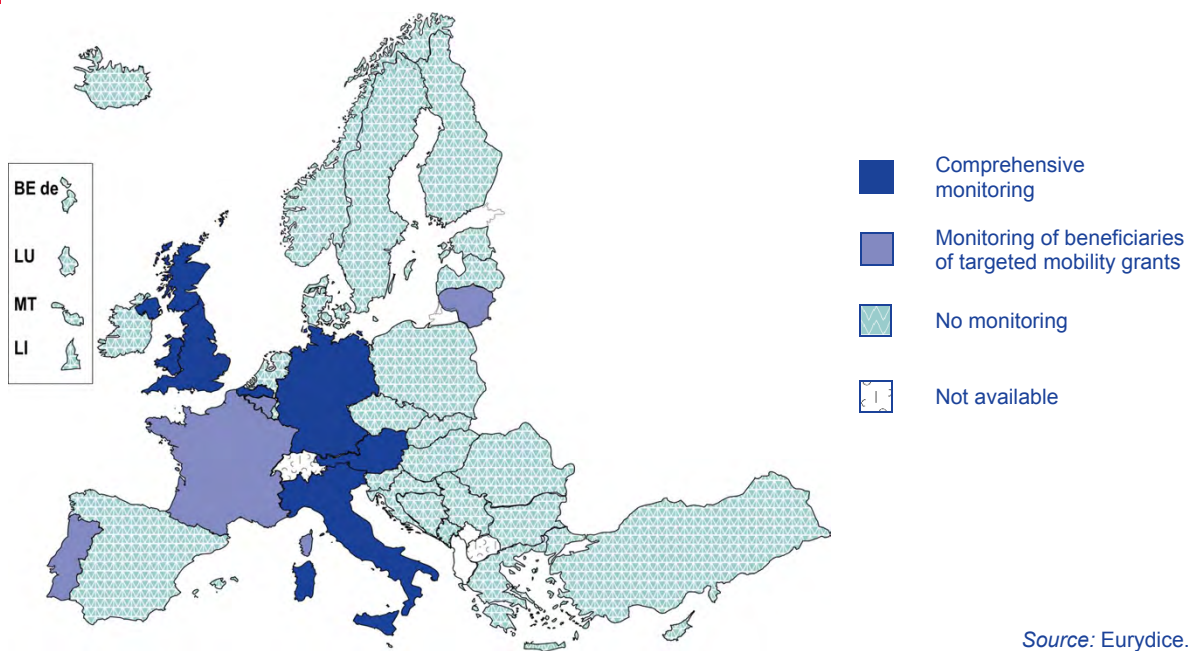
⁽¹⁾ Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/4.

beyond this obligation, and looks into the monitoring of participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes more widely.

Figure 4.1 distinguishes between two types of monitoring practices beyond the compulsory Erasmus+ monitoring. First, four education systems monitor the mobility participation of students receiving targeted grants for mobility purposes (see next section). These systems (the French Community of Belgium, France, Lithuania and Portugal) have information on the participation of students with low socio-economic background in *some mobility programmes* other than Erasmus+ (i.e. in those linked to the specific mobility grants), but not in all of them.

Second, as the figure depicts, eight education systems (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Italy, Austria and the four education systems of the United Kingdom) monitor the overall participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes. This is labelled as comprehensive monitoring, since it aims at having a comprehensive picture on the participation of disadvantaged students in *all mobility programmes*. In Germany and Austria, student surveys are conducted every three years ⁽²⁾, while in Italy and the United Kingdom, information on mobile students is included in the annual data collection of statistical offices ⁽³⁾.

Figure 4.1: Monitoring the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

⁽²⁾ See <http://www.sozialerhebung.de/sozialerhebung/documents/englisch> for Germany, and <http://www.sozialerhebung.at/index.php/en/> for Austria (accessed 20 June 2016). In addition, in Germany, the joint mobility report of the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD) and the *Deutsche Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung* (DZHW) is also published every two years (for the latest report, see Woisch and Willige, 2015).

⁽³⁾ In Italy, the statistical office collects data on mobile students distinguishing between grant holders and non-grant holders. Given that grants are awarded based on need-based criteria, this provides information on mobile students by socio-economic background. In the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Statistics Agency collects data on mobile students by ethnicity, socio-economic background and gender. For details, see the 'Go International' website: <http://go.international.ac.uk/student-profiles-and-identities> (accessed 3 February 2016).

Financial support

Financial support is essential for enabling students with low socio-economic background to participate in international mobility. Given the financial difficulties faced by this target group, the mobility support considered here is restricted to non-repayable forms of public support: *public grants* ⁽⁴⁾. When providing such grants to students with low socio-economic background, two main models exist in Europe.

In the first model, students with low socio-economic background receive *targeted support* that is only available to them. Such targeted support can take the form of either specific mobility grants (provided specifically for mobility purposes, in addition to domestic support ⁽⁵⁾), or need-based domestic grants that are portable, at least for credit mobility.

The second model is based on the so-called *mainstreaming approach*. According to this model, countries provide portable grants to the majority (more than 50 %) of students (see Figure 3.1 for the proportion of students receiving grants). In this case, students with low socio-economic background are not targeted specifically (though the exact sum of grants might be determined by need-based criteria), but their support is ensured by the holistic approach towards grant provision. In other words, the logic behind this approach is that if all (or at least the majority of) students receive grants – thus grant provision is 'mainstream' – then the support of those in need is ensured without them being specifically targeted by education authorities.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the prevalence of these different forms of financial support in European education systems. In most cases, countries follow similar approaches in the 1st and the 2nd cycle; however, in case of differences, the figure represents the financial support provided to 1st cycle students (see Chapter 3 for details).

As the figure shows, providing targeted support to students with low socio-economic background is far more widespread than the mainstreaming approach. In addition, among the two forms of targeted financial support, need-based portable grants are more common: they exist in 23 education systems. In 11 education systems, students with low socio-economic background receive specific mobility support on top of their domestic portable grants. In the French Community of Belgium, given the strong restrictions on portability (see Chapter 3), students with low socio-economic background are primarily supported through additional mobility support schemes.

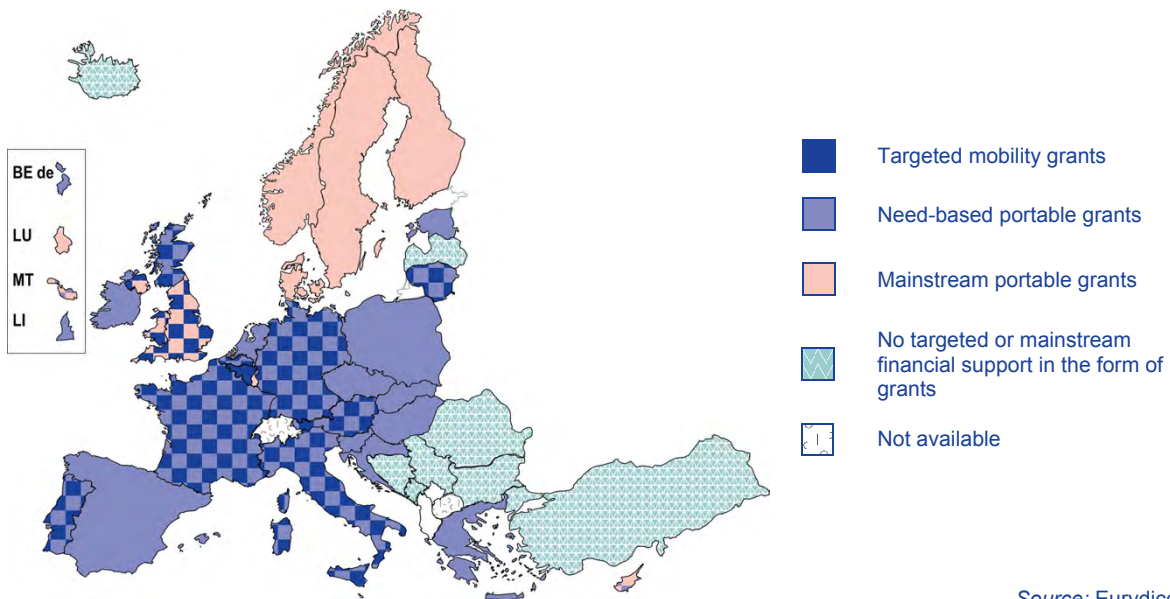
A small minority of countries follow exclusively the mainstreaming approach: four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) and Luxembourg. Cyprus and Malta provide a combination of mainstream and need-based portable grants, while the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) makes targeted mobility grants available on top of its mainstream portable grants.

Non-repayable financial support for mobility purposes is not available to students in eight education systems, predominantly in south-eastern Europe. These countries have neither targeted mobility grants, nor portable need-based grants. This latter implies that either their grants are portable, but are primarily merit-based (as is the case for Latvia and Montenegro), or their grants are not portable, irrespective of the awarding criteria (see also Chapter 3). There are no public grants in Iceland.

⁽⁴⁾ For more details on financial support, see Chapter 3, as well as European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2015b).

⁽⁵⁾ The term 'domestic support' refers to financial support issued by authorities in the home country.

Figure 4.2: Financial support in the form of public grants provided to students with low socio-economic background for mobility purposes, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific note

Netherlands: From 1 September 2015, only the need-based supplementary grants are available to new students. Students who started their studies before 1 September 2015 receive mainstream grants, with supplementary grants given to those with low parental income.

4.3. Scoreboard indicator

Scoreboard indicator 4 applies four scales from 'dark green' to 'red'. A country should have the following elements of mobility support in place to be in the 'dark green' category:

- 1) defined national targets regarding the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes;
- 2) comprehensive monitoring of the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes (see Figure 4.1); and
- 3) financial support given to students with low socio-economic background, either based on the targeting or the mainstreaming model (see Figure 4.2).

The intermediate steps between 'dark green' and 'red' (no support provided to students with low socio-economic background) are described in the scoreboard indicator below.

Only comprehensive monitoring systems qualify for the indicator. Through these monitoring systems, education authorities can get a general picture on the overall participation of students with low socio-economic background in all mobility programmes. Countries having monitoring systems limited to particular mobility programmes or to beneficiaries of targeted mobility grants are regarded as not having a comprehensive monitoring system in place.

Both financial support models described above are taken into consideration. In the *targeting model*, students with low socio-economic background should receive targeted financial support to participate in mobility programmes. Such targeted support can take the form of either specific mobility grants or need-based portable grants (or both). Following the *mainstreaming model*, a country should provide mainstream portable grants to more than 50 % of students.

Figure 4.3: Scoreboard indicator 4: Mobility support provided to students with low socio-economic background, 2015/16



All of the following elements of support are present:

1. National target on the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes.
2. Comprehensive monitoring of the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes.
3. Financial support provided to learners with low socio-economic background in the form of:
 - Targeted specific mobility grants
OR
 - Portable targeted grants
OR
 - Mainstream portable grants provided to more than 50 % of students.

There is no national target on the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes. However, the following elements are present:

1. Financial support provided to learners with low socio-economic background in the form of:
 - Targeted specific mobility grants
 - OR
 - Portable targeted grants

	OR • Mainstream portable grants provided to more than 50 % of students. 2. Comprehensive monitoring of the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes.
	There is no national target on the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes, and neither is there comprehensive monitoring of the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes beyond what is required within the Erasmus+ programme. However, financial support is provided to learners with low socio-economic background in the form of: • Targeted specific mobility grants OR • Portable targeted grants OR • Mainstream portable grants provided to more than 50 % of students.
	No support provided to students with low socio-economic background outside the Erasmus+ programme.
	Not available.

In addition to the Flemish Community of Belgium, seven education systems monitor the mobility participation of disadvantaged students. They are depicted in the figure using the 'light green' colour. More than half (24) of all participating education systems are marked in 'yellow': they provide financial mobility support to students with low socio-economic background, but they do not monitor the effect of such financial support on the participation of disadvantaged learners.

Finally, eight education systems do not provide support to students with low socio-economic background according to the above definitions. Latvia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia have a primarily merit-based grant system, while need-based grants are not portable in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. There are no public grants in Iceland.

4.4. Conclusion

Students with low socio-economic background are less likely to participate in mobility programmes than their peers. Therefore, countries need to make specific efforts to facilitate the mobility of this group of more disadvantaged students. Indicator 4 of the Mobility Scoreboard shows that financial support for mobility purposes is available to students with low socio-economic background in the majority of education systems, mainly in the form of portable need-based grants. A few countries make their mainstream grants portable for mobility, while targeted grants provided specifically for mobility purposes are available in around a quarter of the education systems covered. On the other hand, there are eight education systems – predominantly in south-eastern Europe – where the mobility of students with low socio-economic background is not supported financially.

In addition, only a handful of countries (eight education systems in five countries) monitor systematically the mobility participation of students by socio-economic background. This means that the majority of countries do not have information on whether disadvantaged students can participate proportionally in mobility programmes. Similarly, while general mobility targets are widely adopted, only one education system – the Flemish Community of Belgium – has set a specific quantitative target for the mobility participation of students with low socio-economic background. This signals a lack of clear political commitment in most European countries towards facilitating the mobility participation of students with low socio-economic background.

CHAPTER 5: RECOGNITION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

5.1. Introduction

For any mobile or potentially mobile learner, it is essential that credits earned and qualifications gained will be recognised in the home and other countries. Recognition is therefore a principle that has to be made operational and fully effective if mobility and exchange are to underpin European higher education. If higher education systems fail to meet these recognition objectives, all internationalisation efforts are undermined.

This is the reason why a number of legal instruments and tools have been developed within the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to support better recognition practice. For example, the Lisbon Recognition Convention is a Council of Europe/UNESCO convention providing a common and binding legal basis for recognition across countries in Europe; the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualifications systems in Europe; the Diploma Supplement is a transparency instrument that is part of the European Union's Europass Decision⁽¹⁾. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a credit system based on learning outcomes and workload, designed to make it easier for students to move between different countries as well as for higher education institutions to design effective programmes.

The 2011 Council Recommendation also stresses the importance of implementation and use of European instruments which facilitate the transfer and validation of the learning outcomes of mobility experiences between Member States⁽²⁾.

This chapter focuses on progress with regard to national recognition practice. A distinction is drawn between credit mobility – where the learning outcomes of a period in a foreign country are to be recognised – and degree mobility, where it is a qualification that needs to be recognised in order for the learner to continue studies or access the labour market.

Section 5.2 focuses on recognition of learning outcomes with regard to credit mobility, underpinning Scorecard Indicator 5. Section 5.3 focuses on recognition of qualifications in the context of degree mobility, and supports Scorecard Indicator 6.

5.2. Recognition of learning outcomes

5.2.1. Background analysis

For the recognition of learning outcomes within credit mobility, the figures in this report focus on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), a tool that has been developed to fulfil a central role in designing, measuring and evaluating learning outcomes. Research shows that it is widely used around Europe, but not always in a coherent way, with considerable variation in how workload and learning outcomes should be combined (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015a, p. 69). Efforts have been made in recent years to ensure more consistent use of ECTS, and in particular a new Users Guide was published by the European Commission in 2015 (European Commission, 2015a) and adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education in Europe at the

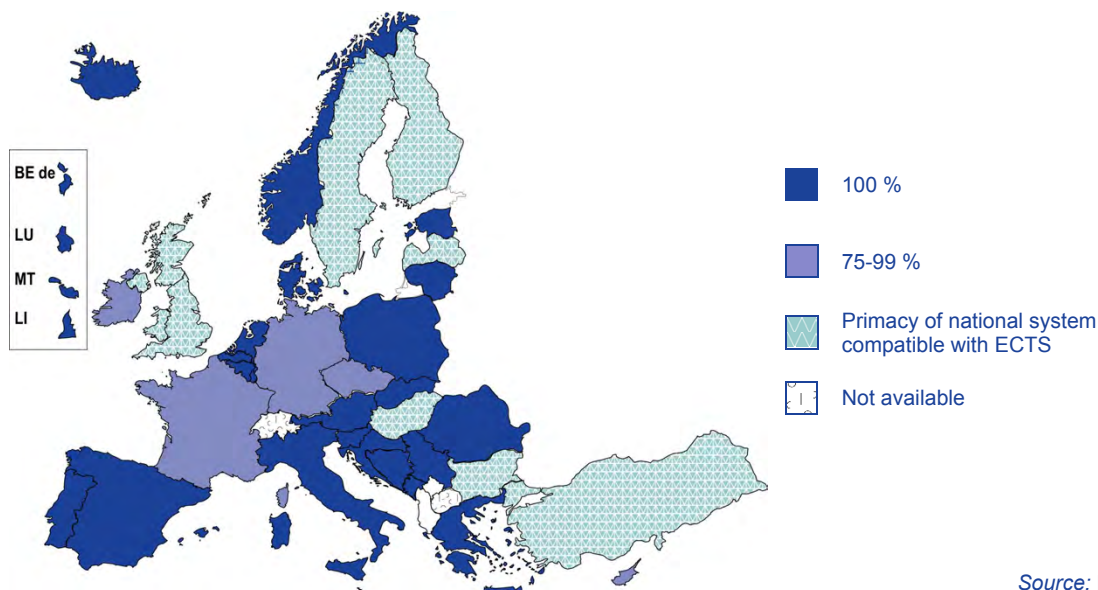
(1) Further information can be found at: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home>

(2) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, C199/4.

Yerevan Conference in May 2015 ⁽³⁾. Through this adoption, Ministers and therefore higher education systems have recognised ECTS as a tool of the EHEA, and are therefore committed to using the system correctly.

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of higher education institutions that are using the ECTS system. There is relatively little range in the key, as there are no systems reporting fewer than 75 % of their higher education institutions using ECTS. However, there are a number of systems that use the ECTS system in conjunction with a national credit system, and in these cases it is assumed that the national system has priority – for example in national legislation or in guiding quality assurance agencies on correct implementation.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of higher education institutions using ECTS, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

The figure confirms that in the majority of higher education systems (25), all institutions are using ECTS, while in a further five systems the vast majority of the institutions use ECTS. However, there are ten systems where a national credit system operates in conjunction with ECTS. Although these national and European systems may be sufficiently similar for conversion of credits to be easily made, there may be aspects of the use of national credits which differ from the agreements on how ECTS should operate, and each of these systems will have differing degrees of ECTS compatibility. For example, in the United Kingdom (Scotland), the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is fully compatible with ECTS.

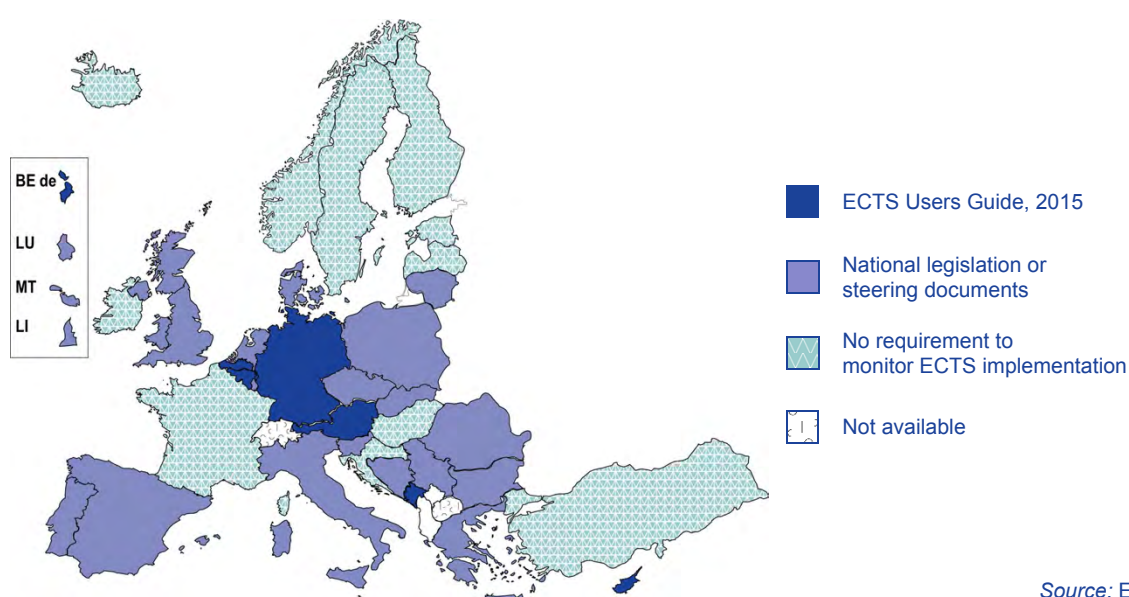
One main difficulty with assessing the use of ECTS is that implementation depends to a great extent on the actions of autonomous higher education institutions. The challenge for this report is to look at national-level responsibility and the support and incentives provided to institutions to use ECTS correctly. Thus, the scoreboard indicator that has been developed focuses on monitoring systems – particularly the role of external quality assurance agencies – and whether or not there is a systematic approach to monitoring the implementation of ECTS and the key issues identified in the ECTS Users Guide (European Commission, 2015a). Monitoring is thus understood as systematic evaluation of the implementation of ECTS during quality assurance processes. The figures below offer a picture of two main issues: the reference texts from which quality assurance agencies evaluate ECTS usage, and the key aspects of implementation that are specifically evaluated.

⁽³⁾ Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015.

Reference documents for quality assurance

Figure 5.2 focuses on the reference documents used as a basis for evaluation of ECTS implementation in higher education institutions by quality assurance agencies. In order to ensure coherent implementation, the objective for national systems is to base themselves on the 2015 edition of the ECTS Users Guide. This is indeed the commitment made by Ministers in adopting the Guide at the Yerevan Conference in May 2015. However, as information has been collected only half a year after the Yerevan Conference, there has been little time to translate the policy commitment into action.

Figure 5.2: Basis for quality assurance evaluation of ECTS implementation in higher education, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

At this stage, seven systems state that their quality assurance agencies use the 2015 edition of the ECTS Users Guide as the basis for their work.

Many countries, however, have embedded the ECTS system in national higher education legislation, and indeed 20 systems state that legislation provides the framework for quality assurance systems to operate. In these cases, there is now a need for countries to review their legislation to ensure that all provisions remain up-to-date. Some countries confirm that this process has already taken place. In other cases, such legal reviews may take more time. In the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), if degree awarding bodies use credit, it must either be ECTS or the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) which articulates with ECTS. In Wales, all degree awarding bodies have agreed to use the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), which also articulates with ECTS.

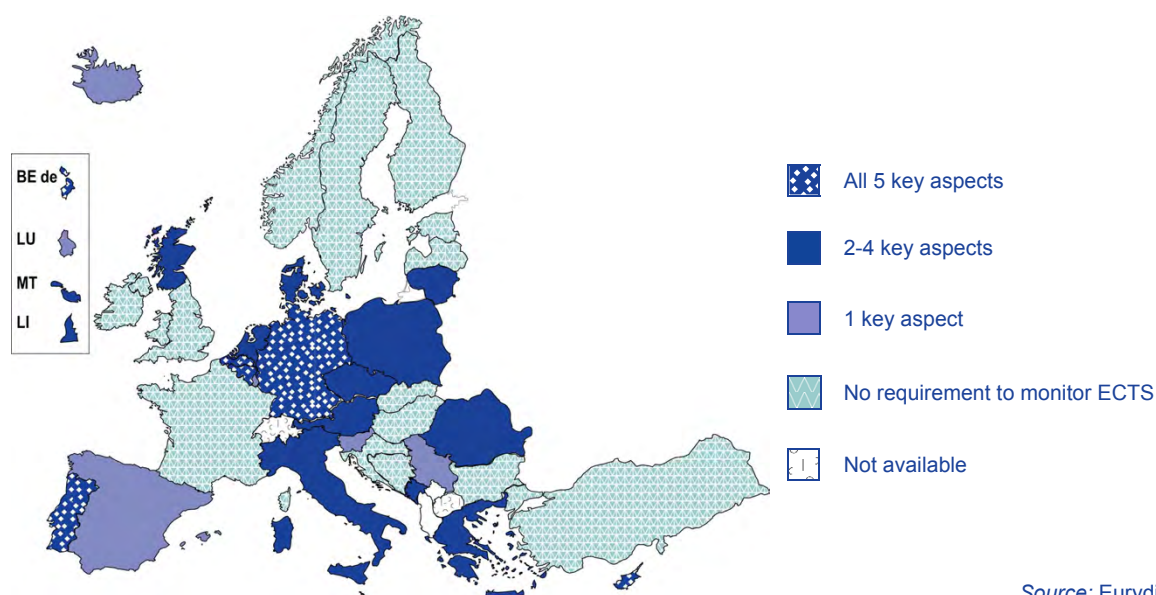
Eleven systems point out that there is no obligation for their quality assurance agencies to evaluate the use of ECTS. This may reflect a reality that national authorities are not prescriptive in setting the framework for quality assurance (in Estonia, Ireland, France, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey). Alternatively, it may be explained by the fact that a national credit system, rather than ECTS, is the object of evaluation (in Hungary, Latvia, Finland and Norway). For Sweden, although there is evaluation of the quality of programmes and courses, this does not include evaluation of the use of ECTS.

Monitoring key aspects of ECTS

Figure 5.3 focuses on the monitoring of key aspects of ECTS. Monitoring refers to systematic evaluation of how these aspects of the ECTS system are implemented. While there are other key features of the system that are relevant for programme design and delivery, and thus for the accumulation of credits within degree programmes, the issues considered here are those that are relevant for international credit mobility. They are highlighted in the 2015 edition of the ECTS Users' Guide, and countries reported specifically whether the following five issues are monitored during quality assurance procedures:

- ECTS credits are awarded on the basis of learning outcomes and student workload;
- ECTS supporting documents (course catalogue, learning agreement, transcript of records and work placement certificate) are used appropriately;
- All credits gained during a period of study abroad are transferred without delay and count towards the student's degree without any additional work by or assessment of the student;
- The higher education institution has an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with the problems of credit recognition;
- The higher education institution's statistical grade distribution tables in each field of study.

Figure 5.3: Monitoring of key aspects of ECTS for higher education learner mobility by quality assurance agencies, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Six systems reported that all of these aspects of the ECTS system are typically monitored during quality assurance evaluations. While this may not be a very high number; it is nevertheless encouraging that some quality assurance agencies pay attention to all aspects including grade distribution tables ⁽⁴⁾. Indeed, a recent European project, Egracons ⁽⁵⁾, found that relatively few higher education institutions are yet to adopt such an approach despite its potential advantages to ease grade conversion.

⁽⁴⁾ Grade distribution tables aim at a 'common understanding of the different grading systems in Europe (...) to enable an accurate interpretation of grades (or marks) given abroad, leading to a fair and manageable conversion of these grades to a local grade in the home institution'. More information on grade distribution tables can be found at: <http://egracons.eu/page/about>.

⁽⁵⁾ Information available at: <http://egracons.eu/page/about>

In 13 systems, between two and four of the key issues are routinely considered in quality assurance agencies, and it is grade distribution tables and appeals procedures which are less commonly examined. In a further five systems, only one of the issues would typically be monitored. This issue is normally that ECTS credits are awarded on the basis of learning outcomes and student workload (Spain, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Serbia) while for Iceland it is the appeals procedure in higher education institutions that is monitored.

Sixteen systems do not require any aspects of ECTS usage to be monitored by quality assurance agencies. This, however, does not signify that ECTS is ignored in quality assurance, but simply that it is not an obligatory aspect of evaluations. Moreover, in countries where there is primacy of a national credit system, aspects of the national system may be subject to external quality evaluation.

5.2.2. Scoreboard indicator

The picture from the figures above has been combined into a composite scoreboard indicator. The scoreboard indicator is based on the idea that external monitoring of key aspects of the implementation of ECTS is a positive feature of national practice. It is also constructed with the premise that quality assurance systems tend to focus on issues that are considered to be of central importance in the national context.

The indicator considers whether:

1. quality assurance agencies assess the implementation of ECTS on the basis of the 2015 ECTS Users' Guide (see Figure 5.2);
2. there is a requirement to address some or all of the key issues related to learner mobility (see Figure 5.3).

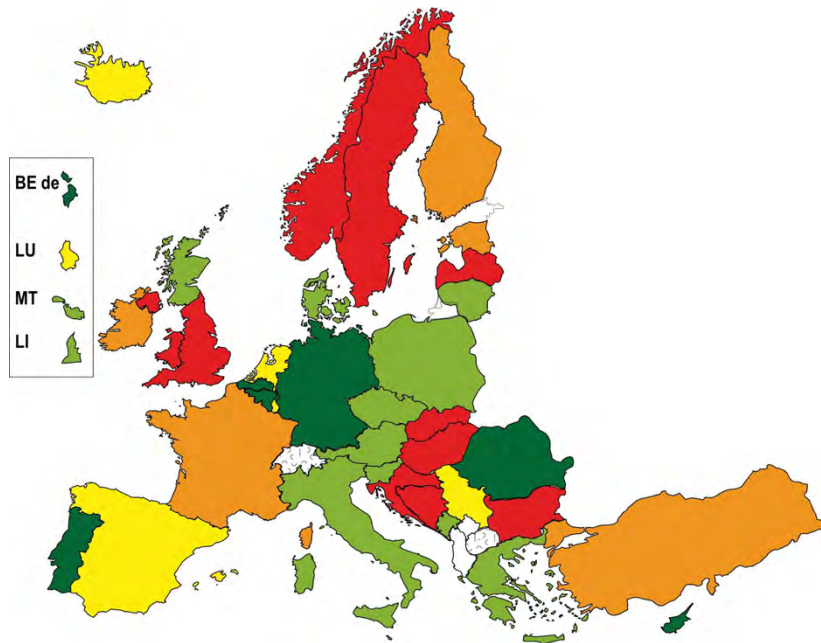
With regard to the aspect of whether or not the 2015 Users' Guide is used as a basis for quality assurance agencies to evaluate implementation, a broad interpretation of responses has been made, and systems where ECTS is embedded in national legislation are considered to use the Users' Guide as a reference. This interpretation respects the relatively short time lapse since the adoption of the Users' Guide in May 2015, and assumes that systems which have embedded ECTS in legislation will review and, where necessary, update their provisions.

It should also be recognised, however, that the indicator, by focusing on requirements placed on quality assurance systems, has a bias in favour of more prescriptive quality assurance regimes. In other words, systems that give autonomy to agencies and higher education institutions to determine the focus of evaluations will appear in lower categories than those where the focus of quality assurance evaluations is prescribed.

The scoreboard indicator 5 (see Figure 5.4), like the maps, shows quite a mixed picture, and confirms the evidence of the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a) that highlights patchy and inconsistent use of the ECTS system in Europe. Eleven higher education systems are to be found in the lowest category (red) and five in the orange category. This reflects the dual reality that systems may not use ECTS as a primary credit system, and that they may consider that it is not a high priority for quality assurance to evaluate if it is correctly used.

However, 24 higher education systems are located in the top three categories. In these cases, the quality assurance agencies evaluate how ECTS is implemented, and may focus on some or all of the key issues for learner mobility. Overall, these findings confirm that much needs to be done to improve the use of ECTS. The indicator could thus be a useful starting point to assess development in this field.

Figure 5.4: Scoreboard indicator 5: Recognition of learning outcomes through ECTS in higher education, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

Scoreboard indicator categories:

	The 2015 ECTS Users' Guide is used by external Quality Assurance agencies as the basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions. The following issues are monitored specifically: - ECTS credits are awarded on the basis of learning outcomes & student workload - ECTS supporting documents (Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Work Placement Certificate) are used appropriately - All credits gained during a period of study abroad – as agreed in the Learning Agreement and confirmed by the Transcript of Records – are transferred without delay and count towards the student's degree without any additional work by or assessment of the student. - The HEI has an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with problems of credit recognition - The HEI's statistical grade distribution tables in each field of study
	The 2015 ECTS Users' Guide is used by external Quality Assurance agencies as the basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions. Some but not all of the following issues are monitored specifically: - ECTS are awarded on the basis of learning outcomes & student workload - ECTS supporting documents (Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Work Placement Certificate) are used appropriately - All credits gained during a period of study abroad – as agreed in the Learning Agreement and confirmed by the Transcript of Records – are transferred without delay and count towards the student's degree without any additional work by or assessment of the student. - The HEI has an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with problems of credit recognition - The HEI's statistical grade distribution tables in each field of study
	The 2015 ECTS Users' Guide is used by external Quality Assurance agencies as the basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions. No specific issues regarding ECTS use are defined.
	The 2015 ECTS Users' Guide may in some cases be used by external Quality Assurance agencies as the basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in higher education institutions.
	The 2015 ECTS Users' Guide is not used by external Quality Assurance agencies as the basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in higher education institutions.
	Not available.

5.3. Recognition of qualifications

5.3.1. Background analysis

One of the hopes and expectations of the Bologna Process when it was launched in 1999 was that, through establishing convergent degree structures across Europe, it would become much easier for students to be mobile and study in different systems. A necessary condition for this to happen is not only that programmes and degrees are easily understandable, but also that qualifications are easily recognised. For the learner, recognition can potentially serve two purposes. The first is to enable access to the labour market, and in a European Union based on the free movement of goods, services and peoples, this is essential. The second purpose is to continue studies in another country, and it is this concept which is relevant in the context of the Mobility Scoreboard.

After a number of years of efforts to establish and develop a European Higher Education Area, the EHEA Ministers of higher education recognised that, despite many positive developments, smooth recognition of academic qualifications was not yet ensured, and that procedures for the academic recognition of qualifications were often lengthy and burdensome. This is the reason why, in 2012 in Bucharest, the Ministers of higher education across the EHEA committed themselves to the long-term objective of 'automatic recognition' of comparable academic degrees ⁽⁶⁾.

A Pathfinder Group was established to consider concretely how a roadmap towards automatic recognition could be advanced. Automatic recognition was understood by the Pathfinder Group as follows: 'Automatic recognition of a degree leads to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access)' (EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition, 2014).

This definition makes it quite clear that automatic recognition does not imply automatic admission to any specific programme, but rather that holders of a qualification giving access to a programme of study at the next level have the right to be considered for entry. The pathfinder group reached the conclusion that automatic recognition is a necessary pre-condition for large-scale academic mobility, and proposed a number of recommendations to ensure that qualifications from other EHEA countries are recognised on an equal level with domestic qualifications. Meanwhile, in the Yerevan Communiqué in May 2015 ⁽⁷⁾, Ministers made the commitment 'to ensure that qualifications from other EHEA countries are automatically recognized at the same level as relevant domestic qualifications'.

The recommendations of the Pathfinder Group have been used as the basis to develop indicators on this subject.

Recognition procedures

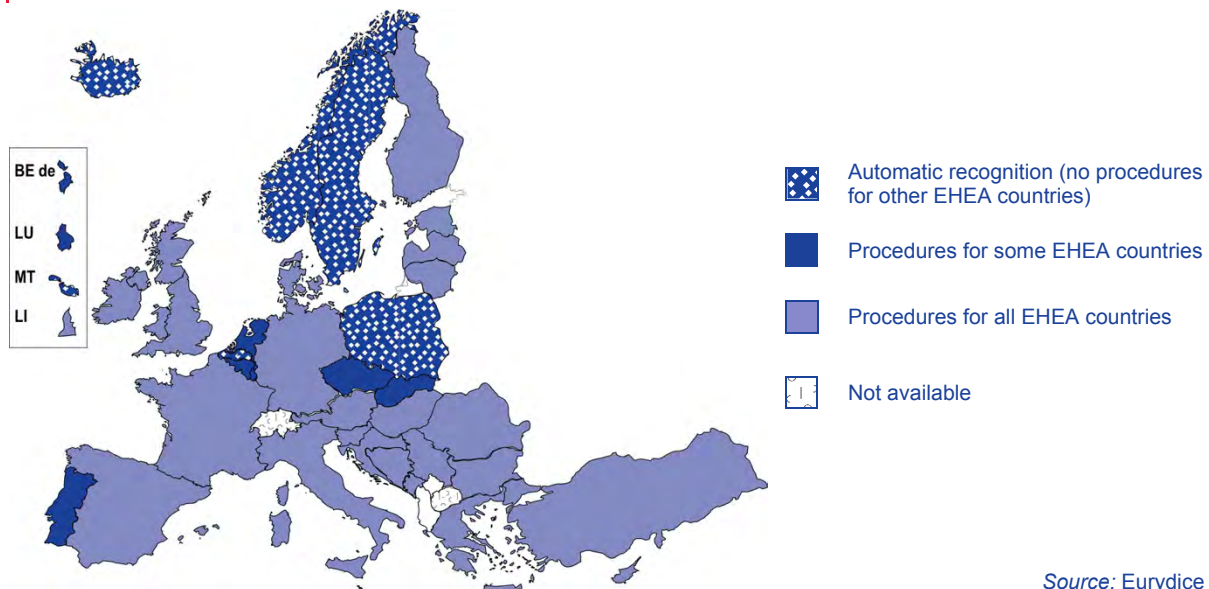
Figure 5.5 shows whether there are additional procedures in countries to recognise the level of qualifications of learners from other EHEA countries. Where there are no additional procedures, this means that there is automatic recognition of the level of qualification. However, where there are procedures, it means that there is no automatic acceptance that, for example, the holder of a first cycle degree qualification from one European country can assume that the qualification will be recognised as a first cycle degree in the destination country.

⁽⁶⁾ Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bucharest, 26-27 April 2012.

⁽⁷⁾ Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015.

The categories for this figure are based on those used in Figure 2.33 of the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report. Given the relatively short period between the two reporting exercises, considerable overlap would therefore be expected. While this is generally the case, some issues regarding automatic recognition at system level may depend to some extent on interpretation. For example, national legislation may state that all holders of qualifications at a certain level have the right to be considered for access to programmes at the next level. However, in practice higher education institutions have the responsibility for selecting particular students for programmes and may typically open up their own process of questioning the level of qualification – thus ignoring legislation. In such a case, a system could be considered to implement automatic recognition if legislation is considered and reality of recognition practice ignored. These issues are currently being explored further in the FAIR (Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition) ⁽⁸⁾ project which involves six countries and 23 higher education institutions, and runs until April 2017.

Figure 5.5: Recognition procedures for higher education qualifications from other EHEA countries, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice

The picture suggests that there have been developments towards automatic recognition of qualifications since the Yerevan Conference. Six systems (Belgium (Flemish community), Malta, Poland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway) report that they do not have any additional procedures in place, and therefore operate an automatic recognition system based on trust of the degrees issued in other EHEA countries. A further seven systems report that they have procedures for some countries only. In the BeNeLux countries, there is automatic mutual recognition of qualifications since an agreement between the Ministers in May 2015 ⁽⁹⁾, while Belgium (Flemish Community) has automatic recognition in place for all EHEA countries. The Czech Republic and Slovakia also have automatic recognition practices in place for some countries through bilateral agreements. In Portugal automatic recognition is in place for a defined list of countries and qualifications ⁽¹⁰⁾, while for others higher education institutions are responsible for recognition. For the 23 other countries, recognition procedures are required for holders of qualifications from all EHEA countries, although in some cases these should be

⁽⁸⁾ Further information can be found on the project website at: <https://www.epnuffic.nl/en/diploma-recognition/fair>

⁽⁹⁾ The agreement can be accessed at: http://www.benelux.int/files/2914/3201/9349/M20153_NL.doc.pdf

⁽¹⁰⁾ The list of countries and qualifications automatically recognised can be consulted here: http://www.dges.mec.pt/en/files/naric/academic_recognition/Decisions_DL341_2007_EN.pdf

very light. In Spain, for example, higher education institutions are required only to check whether the level of qualification is correct in order for it to be recognised.

In almost all systems, higher education institutions are involved in decision-making on recognition, usually with sole responsibility. This finding suggests that, for many countries, there is no meaningful distinction between recognition of the qualification level (a bachelor is a bachelor) and admission of individual students to particular programmes.

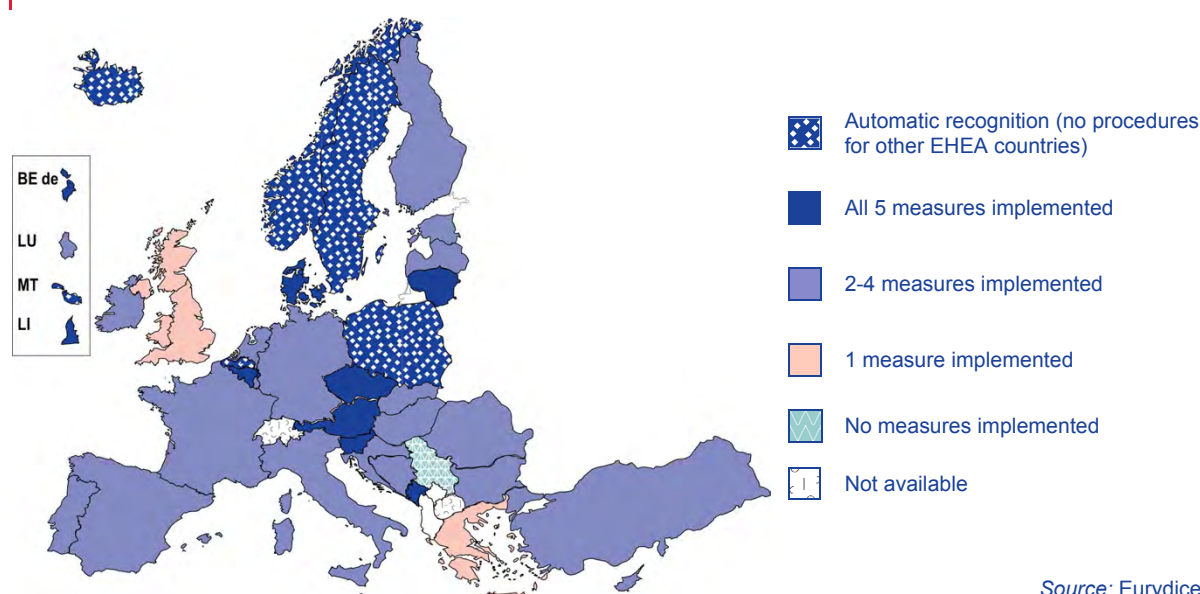
Steps towards automatic recognition

In addition to recommending countries to adopt specific legislation to facilitate automatic recognition, the Pathfinder Group report sets out the following smaller steps or measures to help move systems in the direction of easier recognition. These steps relate mostly to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region ⁽¹¹⁾, more commonly known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This Council of Europe/UNESCO convention provides a common and binding legal basis for recognition across countries in Europe. With the exception of Greece, it has been signed and ratified by all EU member states. The set of measures outlined by the Pathfinder Group aims to steer countries on a path towards automatic recognition through also strengthening the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The measures proposed are:

- National legislation has been reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) are respected;
- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other recognition bodies receive clear guidance on properly implementing the principles of the LRC;
- Recognition decisions are taken within a 4 month limit;
- Appeals procedures are in place, and decided within a clear and reasonable time limit;
- Recognition practice in HEIs is monitored by external Quality Assurance (QA).

The implementation of these measures is shown in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Agreed policy measures towards automatic recognition in higher education, 2015/16



Source: Eurydice.

⁽¹¹⁾ Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, ETS No.165, available at: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/165>

The countries with automatic recognition for all EHEA qualifications are considered as a separate category, as these measures are understood as steps on the road towards the goal of automatic recognition. There is then a group of nine higher education systems where all the measures are implemented, and where recognition practice is therefore well advanced.

A further 18 systems implement two to four of these measures. The measure where there is most progress to be made is the last one – that recognition practice is monitored by external quality assurance. This condition is fulfilled in only four of these systems (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany and Poland). On the other hand, the measure which is most commonly fulfilled is that a review of national legislation has been undertaken to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention are respected. This has been done in all countries in this group with the exceptions of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Spain and Luxembourg.

In the United Kingdom, responsibility for recognition is devolved to higher education institutions, but with clear guidance and advice. Greece is the only country that has not ratified the Lisbon Recognition Treaty, and with regard to these measures implements only timely decision-taking. Serbia is the only country reporting that none of the five measures are implemented.

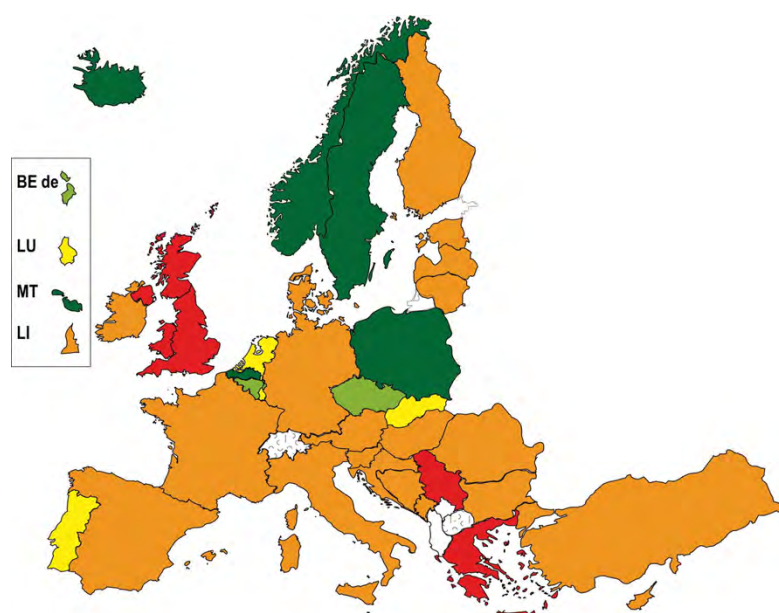
5.3.2. Scoreboard indicator

The information from these figures has been combined to produce a scorecard indicator. The indicator is based on progress towards automatic recognition of the qualification level. Thus for the green category, all higher education qualifications issued in other EHEA countries are recognised on an equal level with qualifications in the home country without any additional procedures in higher education institutions. Automatic recognition of some EHEA country qualifications is also a requirement for the light green and yellow categories. The distinction between these categories is based on how extensively they have implemented the other measures that can be considered as steps towards automatic recognition. These are the measures identified by the Pathfinder group:

- National legislation has been reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) are respected;
- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other recognition bodies receive clear guidance on properly implementing the principles of the LRC;
- Recognition decisions are taken within a 4 month limit;
- Appeals procedures are in place, and decided within a clear and reasonable time limit;
- Recognition practice in HEIs is monitored by external Quality Assurance (QA).

Countries where there are recognition procedures for all EHEA countries will inevitably find themselves in either the orange or the red categories. If they have implemented fewer than two of the steps towards automatic recognition they will be in the lowest category.

The indicator reveals that European countries are currently still far from a reality of automatic recognition. Indeed, 27 systems are in the orange and red zone indicating that there is no possibility for automatic recognition in their system. More positively, there are six systems that practice automatic recognition for all EHEA countries, and a further seven where automatic recognition concerns a subset of EHEA countries. It is also a positive finding that, among the countries where automatic recognition is not possible, the vast majority (21) have implemented at least two of the key measures of good practice in recognition.

Figure 5.7: Scoreboard indicator 6: Recognition of qualifications for learner mobility, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice.

Scoreboard indicator categories:

	All higher education qualifications issued in other EHEA countries are recognised on an equal level with qualifications in the home country without any additional procedures in higher education institutions.
	Automatic Recognition takes place with a subset of European countries For other countries, all of the following conditions apply to recognition practice: - National legislation has been reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) are respected - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other recognition bodies receive clear guidance on properly implementing the principles of the LRC - Recognition decisions are taken within a 4 month limit - Appeals procedures are in place, and decided within a clear and reasonable time limit - Recognition practice in HEIs is monitored by external Quality Assurance (QA)
	Automatic Recognition takes place with a subset of European countries For other countries, some but not all of the following conditions apply to recognition practice: - National legislation has been reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) are respected - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other recognition bodies receive clear guidance on properly implementing the principles of the LRC - Recognition decisions are taken within a 4 month limit - Appeals procedures are in place, and decided within a clear and reasonable time limit - Recognition practice in HEIs is monitored by external Quality Assurance (QA)
	There is no automatic recognition at system level. At least 2 of the following conditions apply to recognition practice: - National legislation has been reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) are respected - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other recognition bodies receive clear guidance on properly implementing the principles of the LRC - Recognition decisions are taken within a 4 month limit - Appeals procedures are in place, and decided within a clear and reasonable time limit - Recognition practice in HEIs is monitored by external Quality Assurance (QA)

	There is no automatic recognition at system level. Less than 2 of the conditions apply to recognition practice • National legislation has been reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) are respected • Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other recognition bodies receive clear guidance on properly implementing the principles of the LRC • Recognition decisions are taken within a 4 month limit • Appeals procedures are in place, and decided within a clear and reasonable time limit • Recognition practice in HEIs is monitored by external Quality Assurance (QA)
	Not available

5.4. Conclusion

Higher education cooperation in Europe has focused for several years on improving and simplifying recognition practice. European higher education policy has worked towards easier recognition, while ensuring that adequate safeguards are in place to ensure that the value of learning outcomes and qualifications is understood, and easily communicated. The Bologna process and European Commission programmes emphasise the importance of recognition, and have promoted developments to support progress in this area. Yet despite the policy attention, recognition problems still persist, and further action remains essential.

The topic of recognition has been treated in two separate parts in this report: recognition of learning outcomes, and recognition of qualifications.

Recognition of learning outcomes has been considered through recognition of ECTS credits. If the ECTS system is to have maximum impact as a tool to facilitate recognition, it has to be used in a harmonised way within institutions and across countries. The scoreboard indicator is based on the premise that there is a national responsibility to ensure that ECTS is used correctly, and that this responsibility can best be implemented through systematic quality assurance procedures, based on the guidelines outlined in the 2015 ECTS Users Guide.

The indicator reveals that there is room for improvement. In particular, almost one third of the systems report that the 2015 ECTS Users Guide is not used by external QA agencies as the basis to assess implementation of ECTS in higher education institutions. Meanwhile only seven systems are fully compliant with all criteria.

Recognition of qualifications has been addressed through an examination of the European policy priority of 'automatic recognition'. The goal is for the qualification level to be automatically recognised allowing students to access the next level of programmes in all European countries. Thus a first cycle or bachelor qualification will be recognised as a bachelor everywhere without the need for additional procedures, while a second cycle master programme that is acknowledged in one country will be treated as a master programme elsewhere.

Currently this form of automatic recognition practice exists in around one third of the education systems covered, although only six of them apply this practice throughout all EHEA countries. While it is encouraging to note that several countries report recent policy developments towards more automatic recognition practice, in the majority of systems, there are no possibilities for qualifications to be automatically recognised.

CONCLUSION

Following the 2011 Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on learning mobility of young people ⁽¹⁾, the Commission – in close cooperation with the Member States – has taken the initiative to create a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in promoting, and removing obstacles to, learning mobility. The present report falls within this framework, providing a mapping of the policy environment for the international mobility of higher education students ⁽²⁾. The outcome of the analysis – the higher education Mobility Scoreboard – includes six indicators in five thematic areas, corresponding to the five main chapters of the report: information and guidance, foreign language preparation, portability of grants and loans, support provided to students with low socio-economic background, and recognition – of both learning outcomes and qualifications.

These indicators reveal the diverse reality higher education students face regarding international mobility. Along the thematic areas, the differences between systems are substantial, marked by the different colours assigned to each country according to a five-colour scheme (dark green, light green, yellow, orange and red). Nevertheless, the distribution of countries along the five coloured categories varies significantly depending on the indicator (see Figure I).

Concerning information and guidance, most education systems converge in the middle (between light green and orange) while relatively few are in the top and bottom categories. Similar patterns can be seen for the indicator on support provided to students with low socio-economic background, where more than half of the education systems are in the yellow category. In contrast, the indicator on the recognition of learning outcomes through ECTS shows most education systems in the extremes: they either do relatively well, or do not apply most measures considered by the indicators.

The indicator on the recognition of qualifications reveals the greatest need for progress in most European countries: the majority of education systems are in the categories of orange and red in this case. In contrast, for the indicator on foreign language preparation, education systems fare relatively well, with more than half of them being in the two top categories. Nevertheless, quite a number of systems can be still found in the yellow and orange categories.

The distribution of education systems along the five coloured categories is relatively equal for the indicator on portability. In this case, there are similar numbers of systems in all the steps between no compliance and full compliance with the indicator, signalling relatively significant differences among education systems.

There are no education systems that fall within the two highest categories in all indicators, revealing that there are issues to consider and areas to improve in all countries. Nevertheless, the Flemish and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland all perform well overall. These systems are distinguished by the fact that they are in the dark green category for at least two indicators, and are never in the bottom categories for any indicator. Among them, the Flemish Community of Belgium stands out, as it is placed in the dark green category for five out of the six indicators.

At the other end of the spectrum, the overall performance of three countries – Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia – suggests significant need for development. Though all three are placed in the light green category for foreign language preparation, they are currently in the lowest (red) category for at least three indicators (Bulgaria for four).

(1) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011.

(2) The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) has undertaken complementary activities, namely the monitoring of measures promoting mobility in initial vocational education and training (VET).

Figure I: Mobility Scoreboard indicators in higher education, 2015/16

Countries	Indicator 1: Information and guidance on learning mobility	Indicator 2: Foreign language preparation	Indicator 3: Portability of public grants and loans	Indicator 4: Mobility support to students with low SES	Indicator 5: Recognition of learning outcomes through ECTS	Indicator 6: Recognition of qualifications for learner mobility
Belgium (BE fr)						
Belgium (BE de)						
Belgium (BE nl)						
Bulgaria						
Czech Republic						
Denmark						
Germany						
Estonia						
Ireland						
Greece						
Spain						
France						
Croatia						
Italy						
Cyprus						
Latvia						
Lithuania						
Luxembourg						
Hungary						
Malta						
Netherlands						
Austria						
Poland						
Portugal						
Romania						
Slovenia						
Slovakia						
Finland						
Sweden						
United Kingdom (ENG)						
United Kingdom (WLS)						
United Kingdom (NIR)						
United Kingdom (SCT)						
Bosnia and Herzegovina						
Switzerland	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Iceland						
Liechtenstein						
Montenegro						
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Norway						
Serbia						
Turkey						

Source: Eurydice.

Regarding the geographical distribution of performance, there is no clear pattern that holds for all dimensions. Nevertheless, for several indicators – information and guidance, the portability of grants and loans, and support provided to students with low socio-economic background – south-eastern European countries fare worse than other parts of Europe. Eastern European countries, however, perform better on foreign language preparation than countries in other parts of Europe. Indeed, most countries in the dark green category for this indicator are from Eastern Europe.

The current edition of the Mobility Scoreboard in higher education can only provide a snapshot of the policy environment in which learning mobility takes place. Updating these indicators in the future will allow policy-makers to evaluate progress towards more mobility-friendly policies in these areas.

GLOSSARY

Automatic recognition of qualifications: the automatic recognition of a degree should lead to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition, 2014).

Compulsory subject (language as a compulsory subject): language which is taught as one of the compulsory subjects in the curriculum laid down by the central (top-level) education authorities. All pupils must study this subject.

Country of origin: in outward mobility statistics, country or origin is used to identify the country assigned to a student when registering his or her provenance. In some countries, this is identified with the country where the upper secondary qualification was obtained or the country of prior education, while in others it is defined through citizenship or the country of last residence.

Credit accumulation: the accumulation of credits in ECTS is the process of collecting credits awarded for achieving the learning outcomes of educational components in formal contexts and for other learning activities carried out in informal and non-formal contexts. A student can accumulate credits in order to: 1) obtain qualifications, as required by the degree-awarding institution; and 2) document personal achievements for lifelong learning purposes.

Credit mobility: study abroad in the framework of a programme being followed in the home country (short-term study visits).

Credit transfer: is the process of having credits awarded in one context (programme, institution) recognised in another formal context for the purpose of obtaining a qualification. Credits awarded to students in one programme may be transferred from an institution to be accumulated in another programme offered by the same or another institution. Credit transfer is the key to successful study mobility. Institutions, faculties, departments may make agreements which guarantee automatic recognition and transfer of credits.

Cycles: the three sequential levels identified by the Bologna Process (first cycle, second cycle and third cycle), at which the three main kinds of qualification (bachelor's, master's, doctorate) associated with the process are awarded.

Degree mobility: whole-programme mobility where the student physically moves abroad for an entire degree course (ISCED levels 5 to 8) to obtain a tertiary-level qualification. Degree mobility can be quantified looking at degree mobile graduates or degree mobile students.

Degree mobile graduates: graduates whose qualification is obtained in a country different to the country of origin.

Degree mobile students: students enrolled in a degree programme in a country different from their country of origin – with the intention of graduating in that country of destination.

Domestic financial support: refers to financial support provided to students issued by authorities in the home country.

ECTS supporting documents: the use of ECTS credits is facilitated and quality enhanced by the supporting documents. These are Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Work Placement Certificate. For further details, please consult the ECTS Users Guide (European Commission, 2015).

Equivalency condition: when taking public financial support abroad, a requirement that no equivalent programme is available in the home country.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS): a student-centred credit system based on the student workload required to achieve specified learning outcomes. ECTS was originally set up in 1989 in order to facilitate the recognition of periods of study abroad. More recently, it has been developing into an accumulation system to be implemented in all programmes at institutional, regional, national and European levels. Further information can be obtained from the ECTS Users' Guide published by the European Commission (2015).

European Higher Education Area (EHEA): the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched along with the Bologna Process' decade anniversary, in March 2010, during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference. As the main objective of the Bologna Process since its inception in 1999, the EHEA was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. It currently covers 48 states. For more information, visit <http://www.ehea.info/>

External quality assurance: refers to the process of evaluation or audit of a higher education programme or institution undertaken by a specialised body outside the institution. Typically the body may be a quality assurance or accreditation agency, or an ad hoc panel of experts and peers constituted by the responsible Ministry. The evaluation will involve the collection of data, information and evidence for assessment against agreed standards.

Foreign language: a language viewed as 'foreign' (or modern) in the curriculum laid down by the central (or top-level) education authorities. This definition is an educationally based one and unrelated to the political status of languages. Thus certain languages regarded as regional or minority languages from a political perspective may be included in the curriculum as foreign languages. In the same way, certain ancient languages may be considered foreign languages in certain curricula.

Grant/scholarship: any public financial support that does not need to be paid back. Such financial support can be targeted (available only for a specific target group) or mainstream (available to all students). A domestic grant is a grant issued by the education authority of the home country.

Higher education institution: any institution providing services in the field of higher education, as defined by national law. This includes private and public higher education institutions, irrespective of the composition of funding and management bodies.

Incoming mobility: refers to students that move to a specified country in order to study.

Independent quality assurance agencies: quality assurance agencies that act independently of government and higher education institutions in evaluating the performance of institutions and/or programmes of higher education.

Initiative: concrete policy measure, adopted by the national/regional government, to implement a strategy or explore a policy domain.

Learning outcomes: learning outcomes are statements of what the individual knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. The achievement of learning outcomes has to be assessed through procedures based on clear and transparent criteria. Learning outcomes are attributed to individual educational components and to programmes as a whole. They are also used in European and national qualifications frameworks to describe the level of the individual qualification.

Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC): the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and adopted in 1997 in Lisbon. It aims to ensure that holders of a qualification from one European country have that qualification recognised in another. For more information, visit: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/LRC_en.asp

Loan: repayable financial aid. Student loan models may differ in many aspects, such as in their repayment plans, the level of subsidy, the expenses covered, eligibility rules, etc. A student loan is subsidised when the government bears a part of the costs. This can take the form of a government guarantee, when student loans are guaranteed or insured by the government against the risk of default and loss (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 43).

Merit-based student support: support given for academic, artistic, athletic, or other abilities (merit). 'Merit-based aid' stands in contrast to 'need-based aid' which is aid based solely on a student's financial need for assistance.

Multipliers: individuals who have had a learning experience abroad or who have been indirectly involved in it (teachers, families, etc.) and can inspire and motivate other individuals to be mobile as well ⁽¹⁾.

Need-based student support: support awarded on the basis of financial hardship. It is provided to students who depend on such support to pursue educational opportunities.

Outward mobility: refers to students that moved out of a country in order to study elsewhere.

Personalised services: information and guidance provided to individuals on a one-to-one basis addressing the specific needs of the individual. Personalised services can be provided through counselling services with dedicated staff both face-to-face and online.

Portability: the possibility to take the support available to students in their home country abroad for credit mobility (credit portability) or degree mobility (degree portability).

Recognised higher education institution: public, government-dependent private and private institutions in higher education that may issue recognised degrees to students. In the context of portability of student support, some countries issue lists of HEIs (by country) to which student support can be taken.

Socio-economic status: a combined economic and sociological measure of an individual's or a family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, or occupation. Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status (Koucký, Bartušek and Kovařovic 2009, pp. 14-16).

⁽¹⁾ See also Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on 'Youth on the move' – promoting the learning mobility of young people, OJ C199, 7.7.2011, p. 4.

Steering documents: different kinds of official documents containing guidelines, obligations and/or recommendations for education policy and institutions. They can refer to curriculum or programme content and the governance of education institutions. Several types of steering documents with different degrees of flexibility in their application can exist at the same time and at the same educational level.

Strategy: a plan or method of approach developed typically by the national/regional government, in an effort to achieve successfully an overall goal or objective. A strategy does not necessarily specify concrete actions.

Type of school and/or educational path: in some countries, pupils must choose an area of study among various possibilities at secondary level. In other words, they must choose specialised studies, such as literary or scientific studies, which are referred to as educational paths. In some countries, pupils must choose between different types of school, such as *Gymnasium*, *Realschule*, etc. in Germany, for example. These types of education are referred to as types of school.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I: Outward mobility rates

In order to contextualise the indicators of the Mobility Scoreboard, this appendix presents a statistical overview on outward mobility in higher education based on currently available data. Learning mobility depends on many factors – cultural, economic and social. Therefore, while the policy environment described by the scoreboard indicators can be supportive or remove obstacles, it will only partially influence mobility flows. A comparison between outward mobility rates well illustrates this point.

The indicators available mainly concern degree mobility. However, as shown below, data on degree mobility rates have only a partial coverage in terms of countries of destination or origin. In addition, comprehensive data on credit mobility is not yet available from Eurostat/UOE; therefore, only statistics on Erasmus+ student participation is included in this analysis. For these reasons, data presented in this Appendix should not be used to assess the performance of countries against the higher education learning mobility benchmark ⁽¹⁾.

Degree mobility

Outward degree mobility rates have been computed and elaborated by the Joint Research Centre based on Eurostat/UOE data (Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo, 2015).

Figures in this section show, firstly, the proportions of students that have graduated in the academic year 2012/13 in an education system other than their own (degree mobility rates of graduates, displayed in Figures A.1 and A.2), and secondly, the proportions of students enrolled in a higher education programme delivered by an institution located abroad (degree mobility rates of students, displayed in Figures A.3 and A.4) ⁽²⁾. The data is displayed by country of origin ⁽³⁾.

For both categories, the data is shown aggregating ISCED levels 5-8 (Figures A.1 and A.3) and providing the breakdown for ISCED levels 6, 7, and 8 (Figures A.2 and A.4). Data on ISCED level 5 (short-cycle studies) have been excluded from the latter figures due to their marginal weight in absolute numbers and the fewer countries reporting the figures for this level ⁽⁴⁾.

The outward degree mobility rates of graduates have been calculated for all 28 European Union Member States, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Norway. Besides European systems, destination countries include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Israel, New Zealand and Russia. The outward degree mobility rates of students are available additionally for Iceland, Liechtenstein and Turkey. However, non-European destination countries are limited to Japan in this case. The outward mobility indicators therefore provide only a partial picture given that important international destinations such as for example the United States of America, South Korea or Mexico are missing.

⁽¹⁾ Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility, OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 31.

⁽²⁾ For a detailed description of the methodology used to compute data and calculate percentages, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

⁽³⁾ The data collection for the academic year of reference 2012/13 allowed countries to use the national definition of country of origin, which can be considered as the country of prior education (DK, DE, LV, FI and CH), upper secondary diploma (BE, HR, NL, AT, PL, and IS), usual residence (EE, IE, ES, CY, LT, RO, SI, UK, LI and MK), prior residence (SE), or country of citizenship (BG, CZ, EL, FR, IT, LU, HU, MT, SK and TR). France and Turkey do not provide such definition for graduates. Portugal defines country of origin as upper secondary diploma for graduates and prior education for students. Norway defines country of origin as upper secondary diploma for graduates and usual residence for students. In the future, this notion will be harmonised as country of prior education. For more information, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

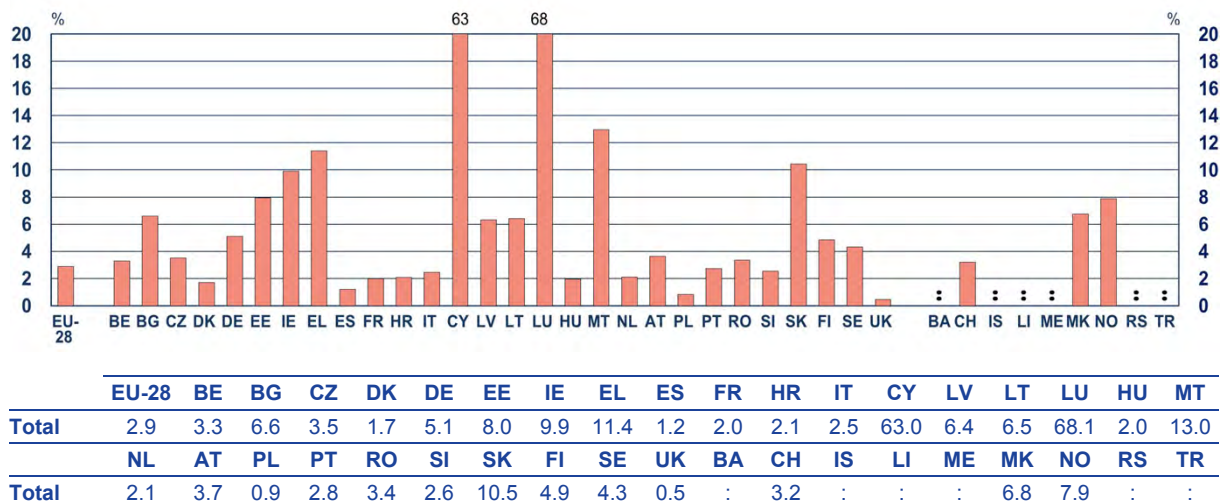
⁽⁴⁾ For a list of countries where ISCED level 5 data is not available and the impact on the overall data, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Degree mobility indicators are calculated based on data received from destination countries. However, even in the case of some European countries, such data is (partially) unavailable. For France, data of students graduating in their higher education institutions will become available only after December 2016. For Greece, data is missing for both European students graduated and enrolled (with the exception of ISCED 6) in its system. Finally, Slovakia has not provided data on the country of origin of students having graduated in its system. For these reasons, for mobility flows going towards these countries, figures are based on estimates ⁽⁵⁾.

Outward degree mobility rate of graduates

Figure A.1 shows the proportions of degree mobile graduates according to their country of origin. Seventeen countries have degree mobility rates below 5 % with the lowest being the United Kingdom (below 0.5 % of its students taking a degree in a different education system) followed closely by Poland with 0.9 %.

Figure A.1: Outward degree mobility rate – mobile tertiary education graduates as a percentage of graduates of the same country of origin, by country of origin, 2012/13



Source: Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Explanatory note

All figures for outward mobile graduates include estimates for outward mobile graduates to EL, FR and SK. For each country, outward mobility indicators are computed for the ISCED levels for which inward mobility indicators can be computed. Datasets for Eurostat/UOE data are *educ_uoe_mobg02* for mobile graduates (update considered: 16.11.2015); *educ_uoe_grad01* for total graduates in the country (update considered: 01.12.2015). For more details, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

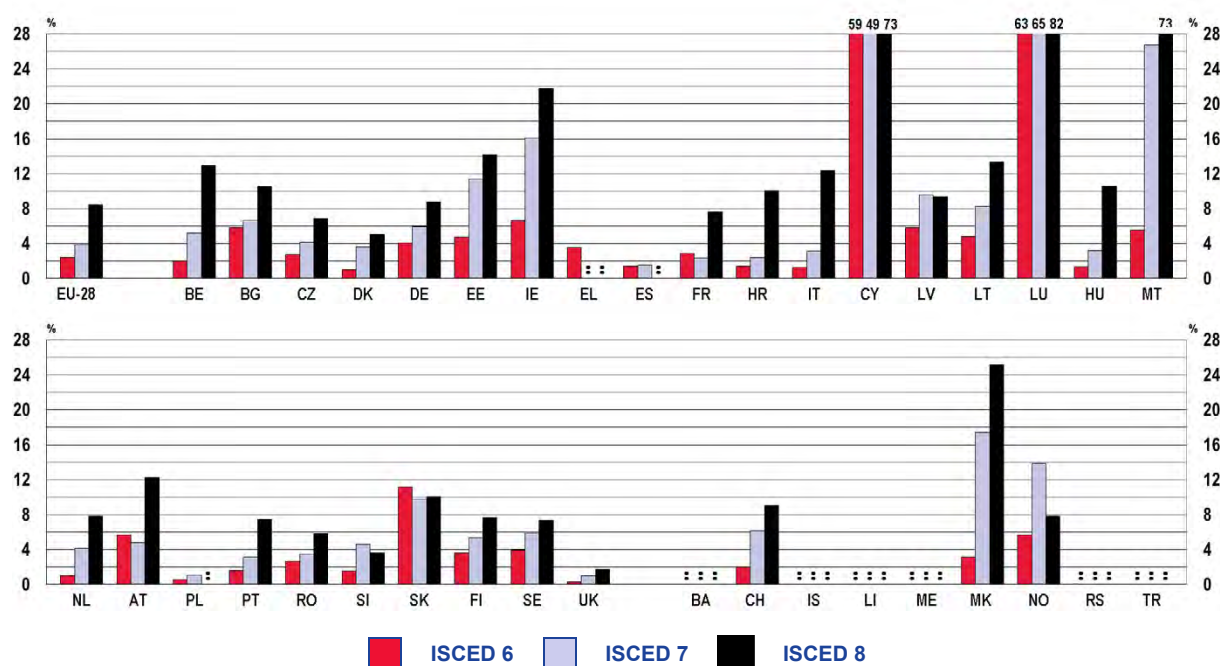
Eight countries are above 5 % but still below 10 % with Germany just over (5.1 %) and Ireland just under (9.9 %). The proportion of degree mobile graduates from Greece, Malta and Slovakia are above 10 %, while those from Cyprus and Luxembourg clearly stand out with percentages above 60. In these small countries, students may be encouraged to be mobile both by policy incentives but also by a lack of provision in certain areas – a factor that may push students to take degrees in other countries.

The proportions of degree mobile graduates by ISCED levels 6-8 (Figure A.2), calculated on the total number of graduates at each level, reveals that the higher the educational level, the larger the proportion of students graduating abroad. The indicator shows that at EU-28 level, while 8.5 % of doctoral students have taken their PhD abroad, only 4 % have taken a master degree in another

⁽⁵⁾ For a description of the methodology used to estimate the number of degree mobile graduates, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

country, and 2.4 % their bachelor. This pattern is consistent across almost all countries with the exception of Cyprus, Latvia, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Norway. However, while in Latvia, Slovenia, and Slovakia the difference is less than or around 1 percentage point, and in Cyprus and Austria there are slightly more bachelor than master graduates, in Norway ISCED level 7 degree mobile graduates outnumber both ISCED level 6 and 8.

Figure A.2: Outward degree mobility rate – mobile tertiary education graduates as a percentage of graduates of the same country of origin, by ISCED level and by country of origin, 2012/13



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT
ISCED 6	2.4	2.0	5.8	2.8	1.0	4.1	4.7	6.7	3.6	1.4	2.9	1.5	1.3	58.7	5.8	4.8	63.2	1.4	5.6
ISCED 7	3.9	5.2	6.7	4.1	3.6	6.0	11.4	16.1	:	1.6	2.4	2.4	3.2	49.5	9.6	8.3	64.5	3.2	26.8
ISCED 8	8.5	12.9	10.5	6.9	5.1	8.8	14.2	21.7	:	:	7.6	10.1	12.4	72.9	9.4	13.3	81.8	10.6	72.6
	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED 6	1.1	5.7	0.6	1.6	2.7	1.5	11.2	3.6	3.9	0.3	:	2.0	:	:	:	3.1	5.7	:	:
ISCED 7	4.2	4.8	1.1	3.2	3.5	4.6	9.8	5.4	5.9	1.0	:	6.2	:	:	:	17.4	13.8	:	:
ISCED 8	7.8	12.3	:	7.5	5.8	3.6	10.0	7.7	7.4	1.8	:	9.1	:	:	:	25.1	7.9	:	:

Source: Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Explanatory note

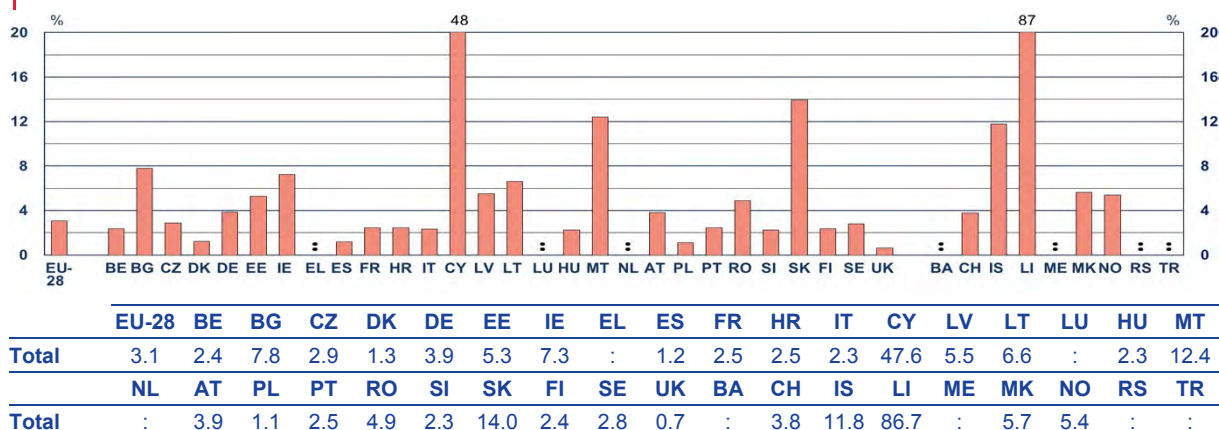
All figures for outward mobile graduates include estimates for outward mobile graduates to EL, FR and SK. For each country, outward mobility indicators are computed for the ISCED levels for which inward mobility indicators can be computed. Datasets for Eurostat/UOE data are *educ_uae_mobg02* for mobile graduates (update considered: 16.11.2015); *educ_uae_grad01* for total graduates in the country (update considered: 01.12.2015). For more details, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Share of tertiary students enrolled abroad

Figure A.3 shows the proportions of degree mobile students, i.e. students enrolled in a higher education programme in a country other than their country of origin. While at the level of EU-28 graduate and student degree mobility shows little difference, some countries perform differently. Eighteen countries are below 5 % with the United Kingdom the only country below 1 %. Poland is just above 1 % together with Denmark and Spain. Seven countries are between 5 % and 10 % and of these Estonia, Latvia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Norway are very close to the bottom end of the scale. Malta, Slovakia and Iceland fall in the range 10-15 %, while Cyprus and

Liechtenstein are at the top end of the scale. As for degree mobile graduates, the small size of the student population, the limited offer of the education system in these countries as well as policy incentives could be at the root of such high proportions of students enrolling in an institution located outside their country of origin.

Figure A.3: Share of tertiary students enrolled abroad (degree mobility), by country of origin, 2012/13



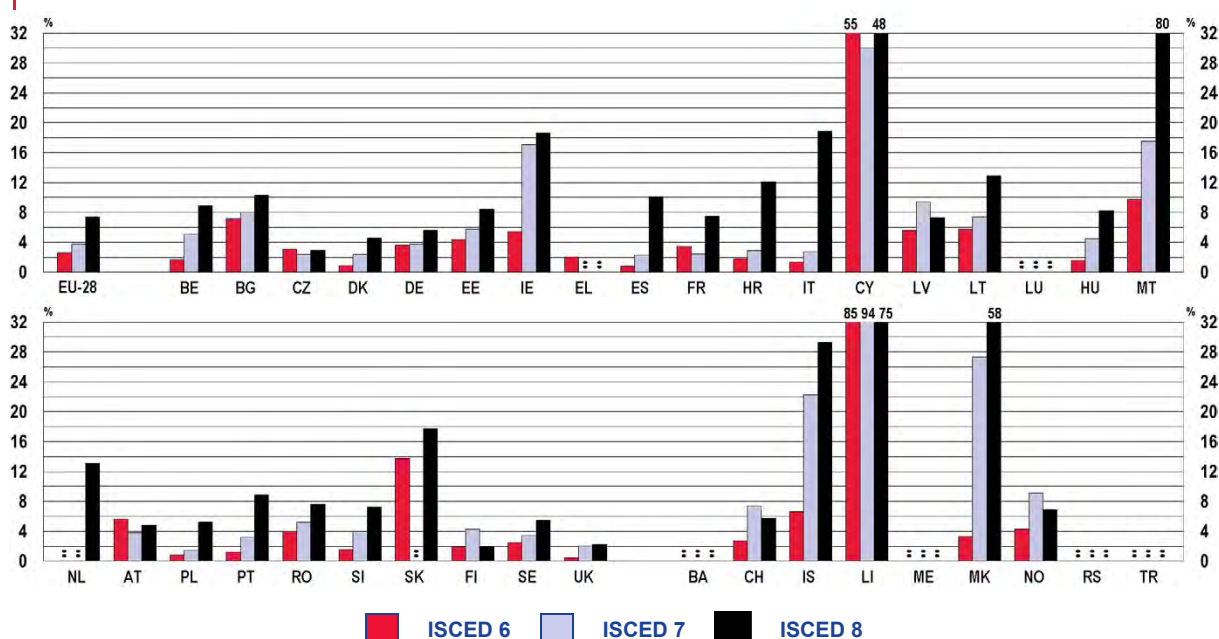
Source: Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Explanatory note

For each country, outward mobility indicators are computed for the ISCED levels for which inward mobility indicators can be computed. Datasets for Eurostat/UOE data are *educ_uoe_mobs02* for mobile students (update considered: 16.11.2015); *educ_uoe_enrt01* for total students enrolled in the country (update considered: 16.11.2015). For more details, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Looking at the breakdown by ISCED levels 6-8 (Figure A.4), the pattern is very similar to the one observed for the degree mobility of graduates, with a tendency both at EU-28 and country levels of higher proportions of mobile PhD students compared to the other levels. The Czech Republic, Cyprus, Latvia, Austria, Finland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Norway are the few exceptions.

Figure A.4: Share of tertiary students enrolled abroad (degree mobility) by ISCED level and by country of origin, 2012/13



Source: Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT
ISCED 6	2.6	1.7	7.2	3.1	0.9	3.6	4.4	5.5	2.0	0.8	3.4	1.8	1.3	55.5	5.6	5.8	:	1.6	9.7
ISCED 7	3.8	5.0	8.0	2.3	2.4	3.8	5.8	17.1	:	2.3	2.4	2.9	2.7	30.1	9.4	7.4	:	4.5	17.6
ISCED 8	7.4	8.9	10.3	2.9	4.5	5.6	8.4	18.6	:	10.1	7.5	12.1	18.9	48.4	7.3	12.9	:	8.3	80.4
	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED 6	:	5.6	0.8	1.2	4.0	1.5	13.8	1.9	2.5	0.4	:	2.8	6.6	84.8	:	3.3	4.3	:	:
ISCED 7	:	3.8	1.4	3.2	5.2	4.0	:	4.3	3.4	2.0	:	7.4	22.3	93.7	:	27.3	9.1	:	:
ISCED 8	13.2	4.9	5.3	8.9	7.7	7.3	17.7	1.9	5.5	2.3	:	5.8	29.3	75.0	:	57.9	6.9	:	:

Source: Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Explanatory note

For each country, outward mobility indicators are computed for the ISCED levels for which inward mobility indicators can be computed. Datasets for Eurostat/UOE data are *educ_uoe_mobs02* for mobile students (update considered: 16.11.2015); *educ_uoe_enrt01* for total students enrolled in the country (update considered: 01.12.2015). For more details, see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Finally, if we consider the rates of enrolled students as a proxy of the proportion of students that will graduate in the coming years in a system other than the one of origin, the trend reveals that at EU-28 level there is a substantial stagnation, both for general and intra-European mobility.

Erasmus student mobility

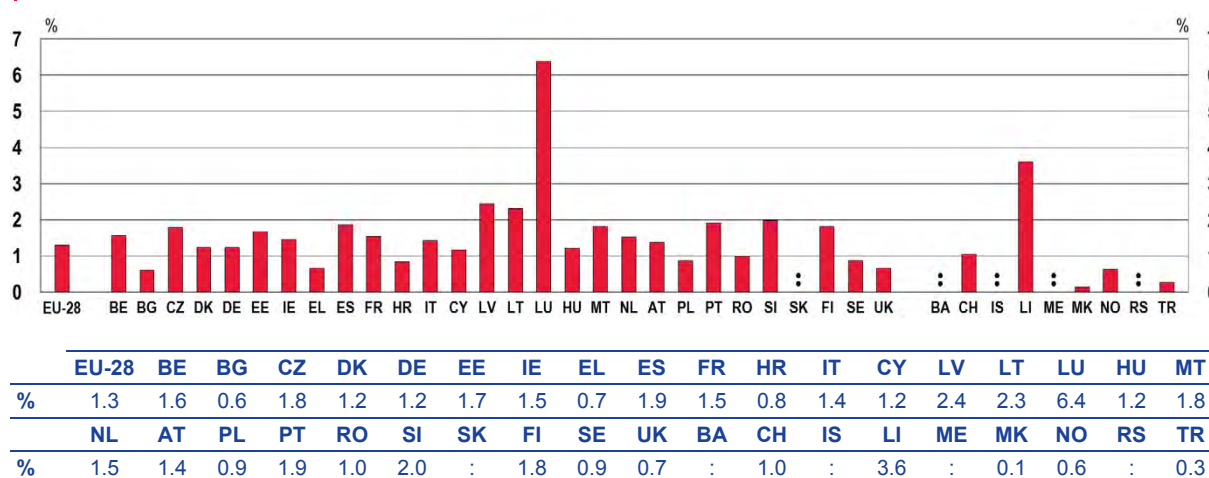
Currently, no comparative data is available to evaluate the full extent of credit mobility in European countries. Nevertheless, data on student participation in the Erasmus+ student mobility programme can give a partial picture on the extent of credit mobility in Europe. The Eurostudent survey reveals that credit mobility within the Erasmus+ programme is the dominant form of credit mobility in many European countries (Hauschildt et al., 2015). Nevertheless, it is also worth noticing that in some countries Erasmus student mobility represents a low share of the total credit mobility, for example in Sweden or Norway (Ibid.) ⁽⁶⁾.

Figure A.5 shows the proportion of students participating in the Erasmus programme. Data contains both study exchanges and traineeships, and concerns ISCED levels 5 to 8. Ratios are calculated on the basis of the number of students participating in the programme ⁽⁷⁾ (European Commission, 2015b) and the total number of students enrolled in higher education institutions for each given country (Eurostat/UOE).

⁽⁶⁾ In some geographical areas, mobility is facilitated also by other widespread programmes. One well known example is the NordPlus programme (<http://www.nordplusonline.org/>) that covers the Baltic and north-European countries. In addition, when the policy environment facilitates mobility, for example in those countries where there is full portability of grants and loans, the share of 'free movers' (credit mobile students who study abroad outside of the framework of a specific programme) can be substantial as well (see Chapter 3 for more details).

⁽⁷⁾ The data is provided by higher education institutions and validated by the 34 Erasmus+ National Agencies participating in the programme and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Figure A.5: Share of students participating in the Erasmus programme based on total enrolments, by country of home institution, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice, based on European Commission 2015b and Eurostat/UOE.

Explanatory note

Proportions calculated on the basis of the data provided in European Commission (2015b, p. 31), and Eurostat/UOE *educ_uoe_enrt02* (Last update: 12-04-2016).

The EU-28 average shows that only 1.3 % of the higher education student population participated in the year 2013/14 to a learning mobility experience within the framework of the Erasmus programme. This would mean that, on average, over the course of a (three year) first cycle programme 3.9 % of students would participate in Erasmus mobility, with 2.6 % more during the second cycle. Seventeen countries are above the EU-28 average with Luxembourg and Liechtenstein having the highest proportion of Erasmus students (6.4 and 3.6 % respectively) followed by Latvia and Lithuania above 2 %. Fifteen countries are below the EU-28 average with the lowest being the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Among the 28 Member States, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom have a rate of less than 1 %.

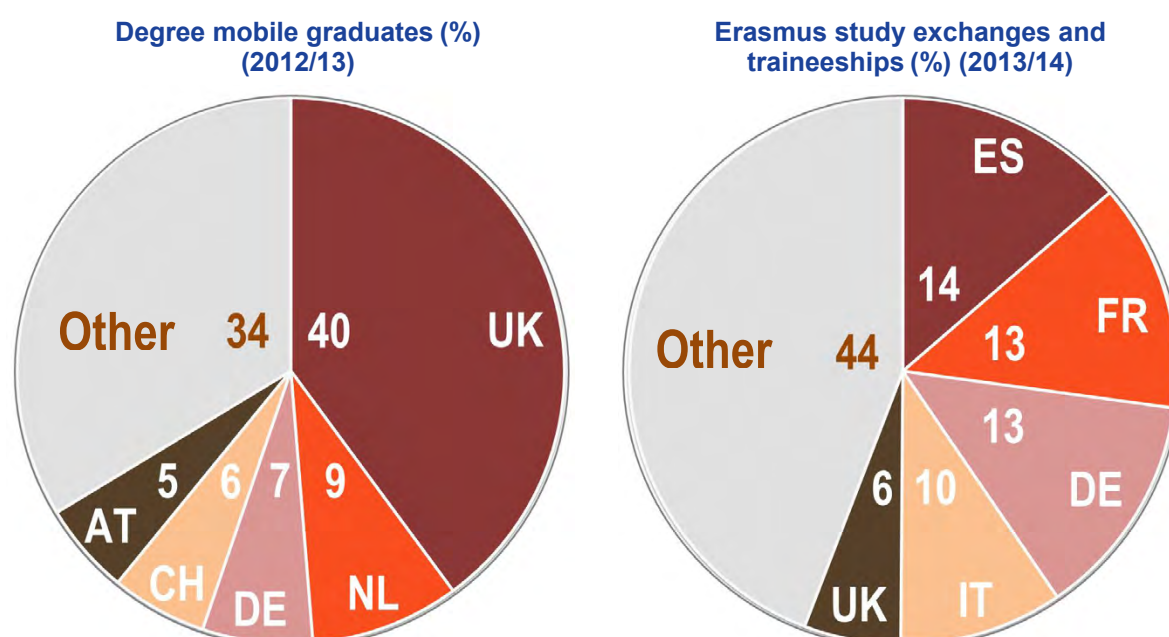
Appendix II: Main countries of origin and destination

This appendix displays data on the main destination countries for degree mobile graduates and Erasmus study exchanges and traineeship, as well as country-based figures on the main countries of origin and destination of degree mobile graduates for ISCED levels 5 to 8 ⁽⁵²⁾.

The aggregate data for degree mobile graduates (Figure A.6) shows that the top destination for students with origin in one of the European countries is by far the United Kingdom. This destination is chosen by slightly more than four times more graduates than the second highest destination country, the Netherlands, which is followed closely by Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Interestingly, the positions of the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland are highly influenced by the weight of German degree mobile graduates, amounting to 53 %, 58 %, and 38 % of their total incoming mobile graduates respectively.

The favourite destinations for degree mobile graduates are different from those of students in the Erasmus programme (Figure A.6). For Erasmus exchanges, the top destination is Spain, followed by Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom (European Commission, 2016).

Figure A.6: Main countries of destination for degree mobile graduates and Erasmus study exchanges and traineeship



Source: for degree mobile graduates: Eurydice, based on Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015); for Erasmus study exchanges and traineeships: European Commission (2016).

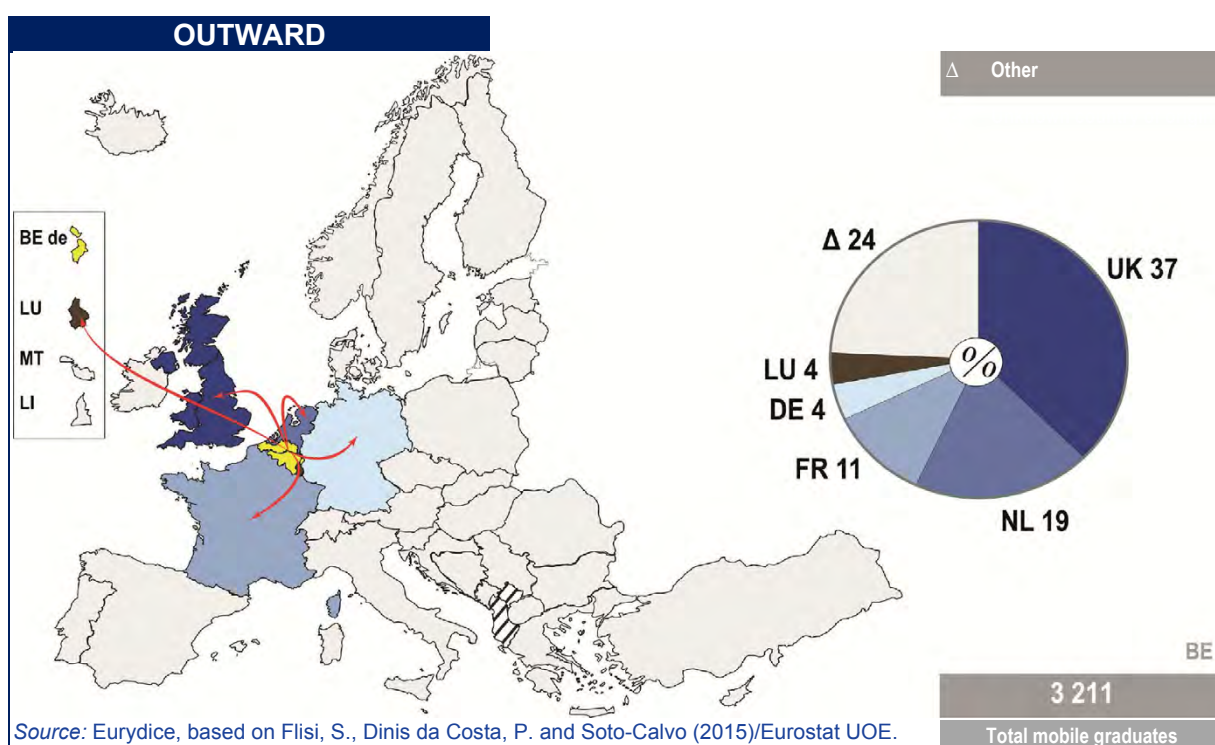
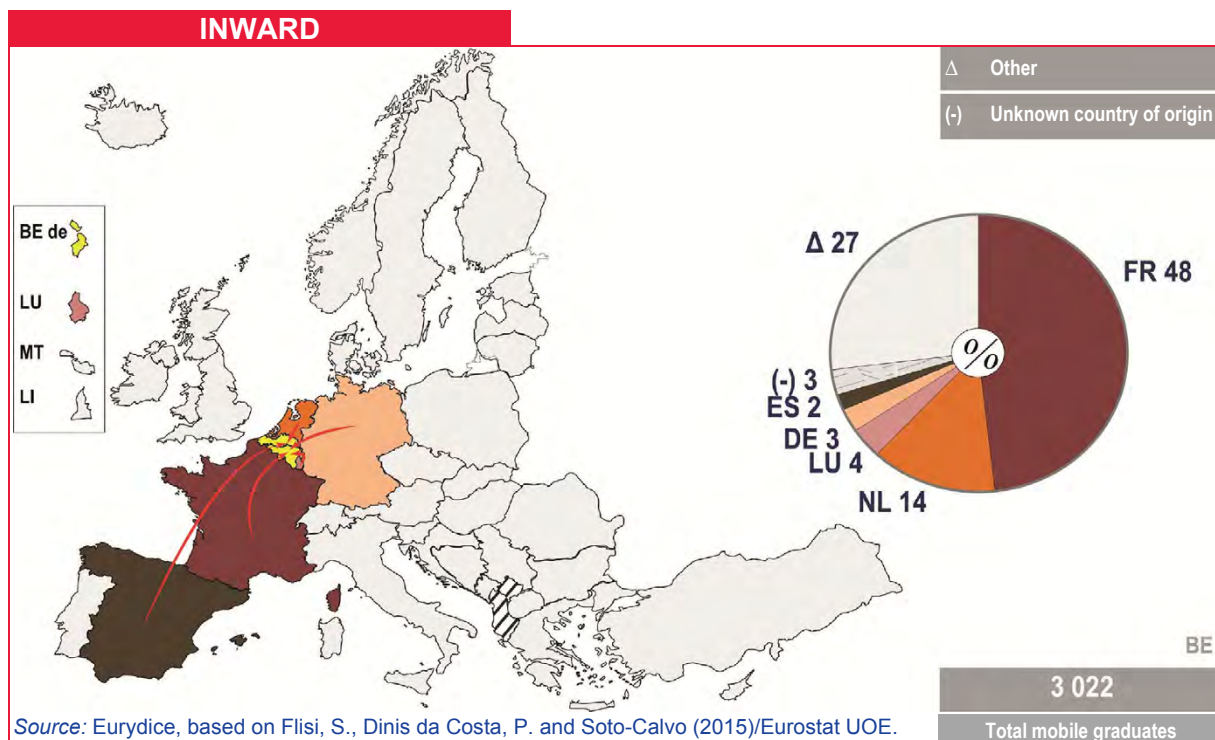
⁽⁵²⁾ Proportions are calculated on the basis of the data provided in 'Home/host country matrix for graduate mobility (2013) – ISCED 5-8', Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015), Annex, p. 2. Specifically, for inward mobility the total represents the EUR_CY row with the addition of data related to Turkey. For outward mobility, the total is taken from the column 'EUROPE'. Proportions are calculated taking the first five top countries of origin (inward mobility) or destination (outward mobility) and aggregating the remaining countries under the symbol Δ (Other). In some countries, the European origin of graduates is not always recorded accurately and therefore this results in a certain proportion of graduates whose country of origin is unknown. This affects only the inward mobility and is indicated in the graphs with the symbol (-). Estimates for inward mobility elaborated by Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015) for the country-based figures of Greece, France and Slovakia are not displayed. Data for inward degree mobile graduates is not available for Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. Data for outward degree mobile graduates is not available for Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. For more information, please see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

The analysis of the country-based figures shows that the degree mobility of graduates has a strong *regional* element often combined with a linguistic proximity, with most students choosing countries that share borders with their country of origin. For example, three of the five top provenances of students graduating in Germany are Austria (15 %), France (10 %) and Poland (10 %). Similarly, four of the five top destinations for German students graduating abroad are the Netherlands (26 %), Austria (18 %), Switzerland (12 %) and France (4 %). This pattern can be found in most countries. In some cases, the pattern is rather extreme. For example, 91 % of degree mobile graduates from Slovakia graduate in the Czech Republic; in the academic year 2012/13, 95 % of Irish students who have graduated abroad have done so in the United Kingdom; and in the same year, 84 % of foreign students having graduated in Greece were from Cyprus. There are very few exceptions to this pattern, such as Bulgaria and Latvia, where students appear not to be drawn to neighbouring countries for outward degree mobility. In contrast, linguistic and cultural proximity appear to influence students' choices less when choosing the destination in the Erasmus framework than in the case of degree mobility.

Degree mobile graduates within Europe: main countries of origin and destination, ISCED 5-8, 2013

Belgium	69	Austria	88
Bulgaria	70	Poland	89
Czech Republic	71	Portugal	90
Denmark	72	Romania	91
Germany	73	Slovenia	92
Estonia	74	Slovakia	93
Ireland	75	Finland	94
Greece	76	Sweden	95
Spain	77	United Kingdom	96
France	78	Bosnia and Herzegovina	97
Croatia	79	Switzerland	98
Italy	80	Iceland	99
Cyprus	81	Liechtenstein	100
Latvia	82	Montenegro	101
Lithuania	83	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	102
Luxembourg	84	Norway	103
Hungary	85	Serbia	104
Malta	86	Turkey	104
Netherlands	87		

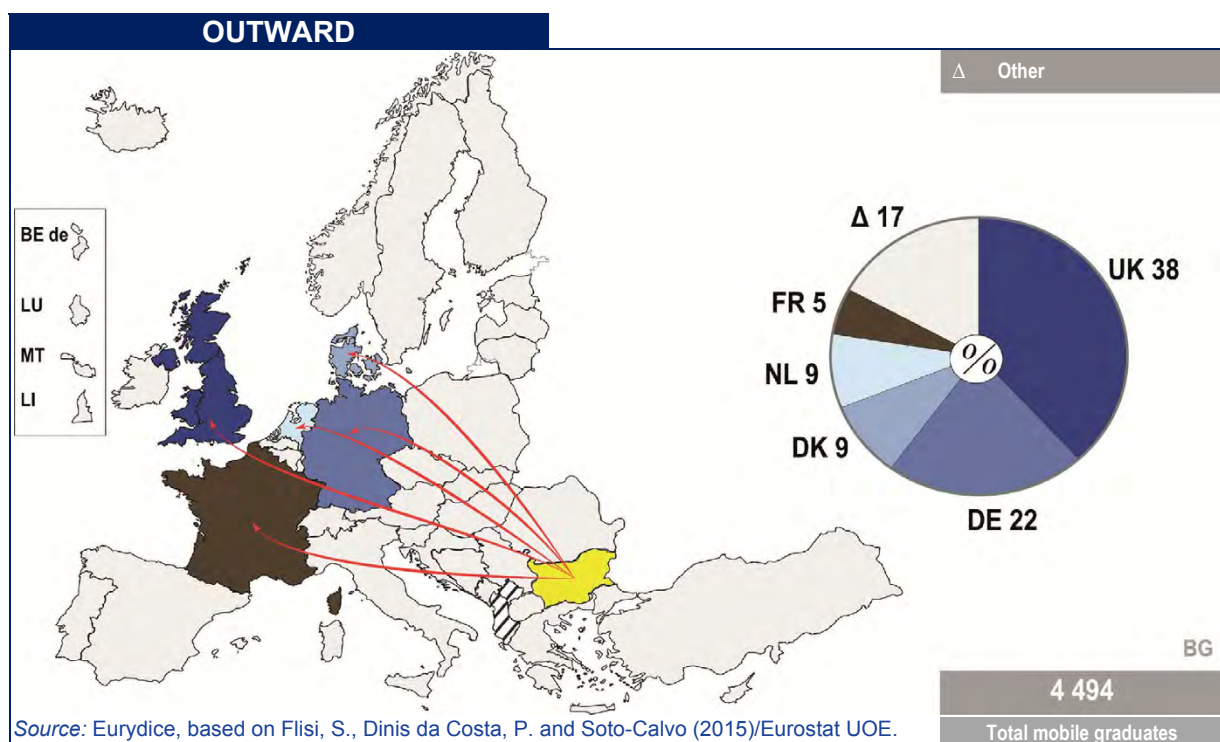
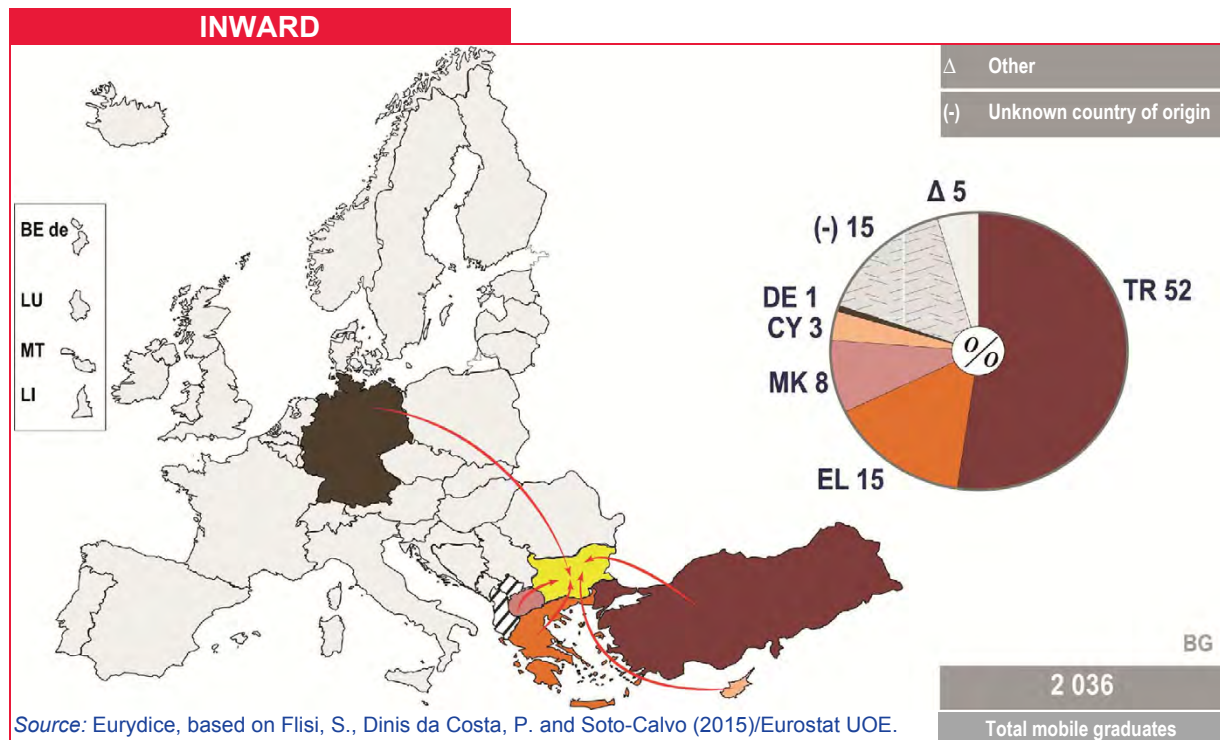
Belgium



Country-specific note

Data on ISCED level 5 not available for inward and outward; due to the structure of the Belgium education system split among the French, German-speaking and Flemish Communities, graduates graduating in a Community different from the one of origin are counted as inward mobility graduates and therefore appear in the outward statistics. These represent 15 % of inward mobility and 13.7 % of outward mobility. In order to keep coherence with the data displayed for other countries, these have been counted in the category 'Other'.

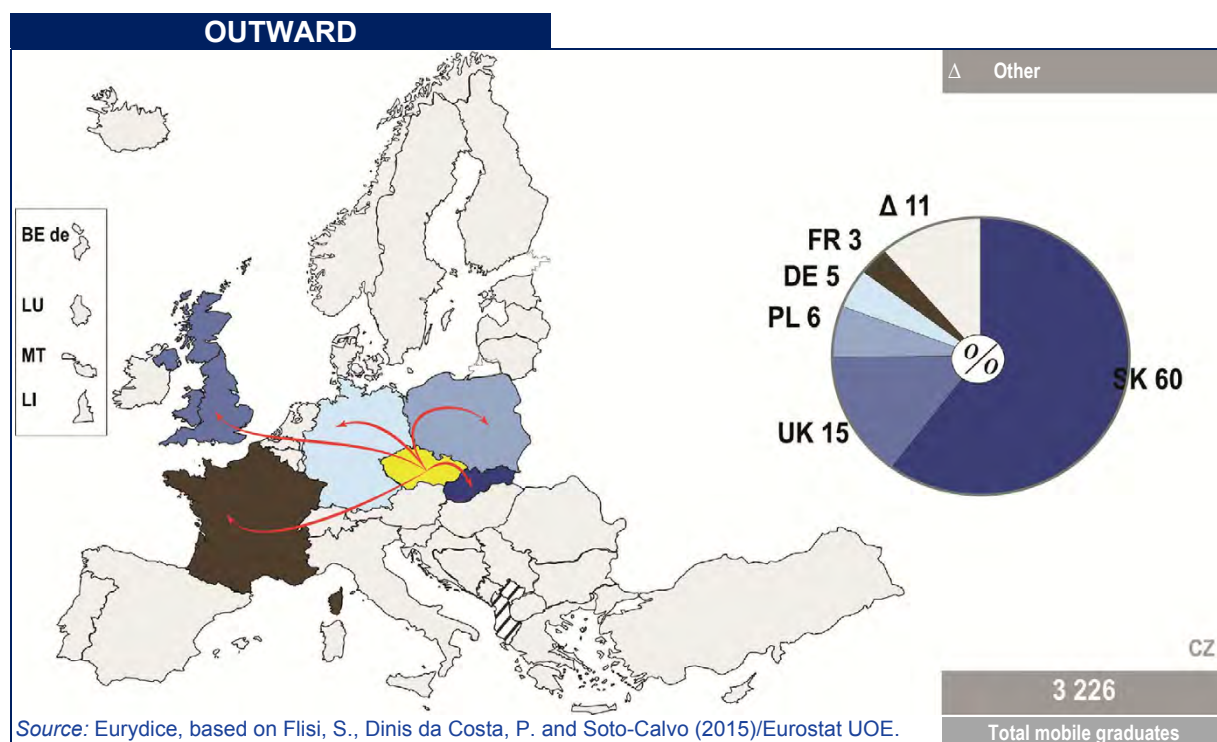
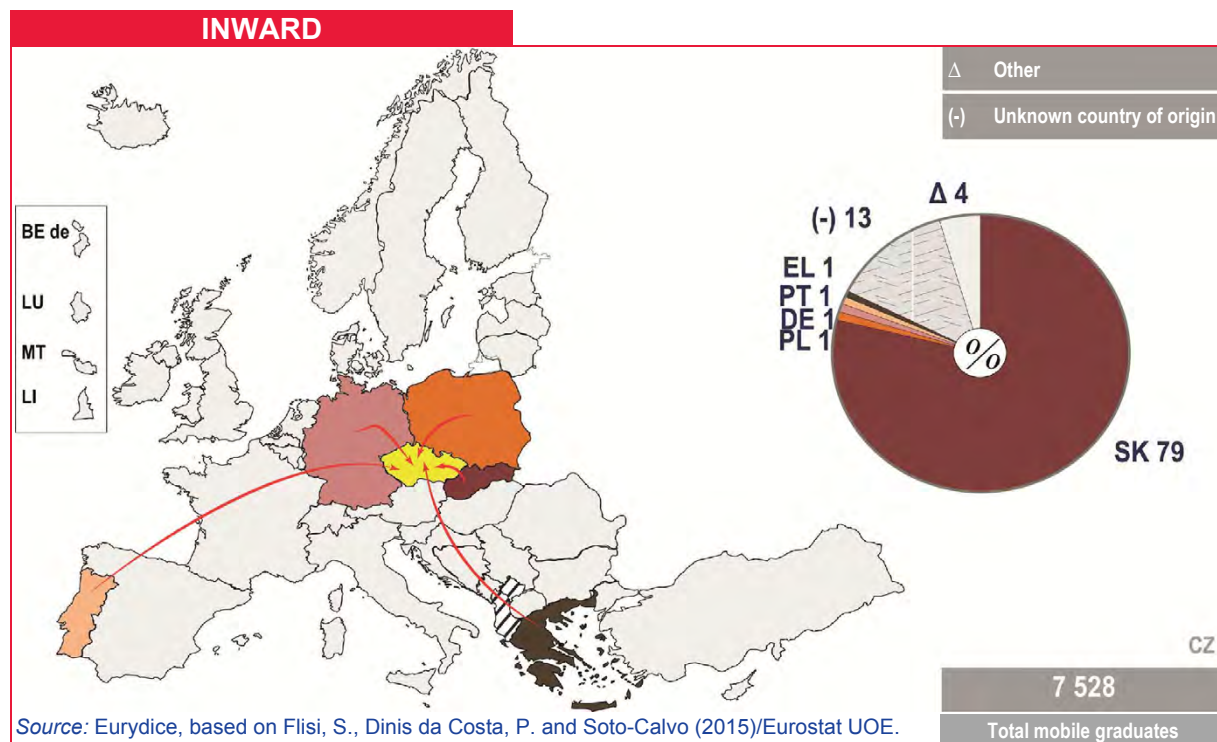
Bulgaria



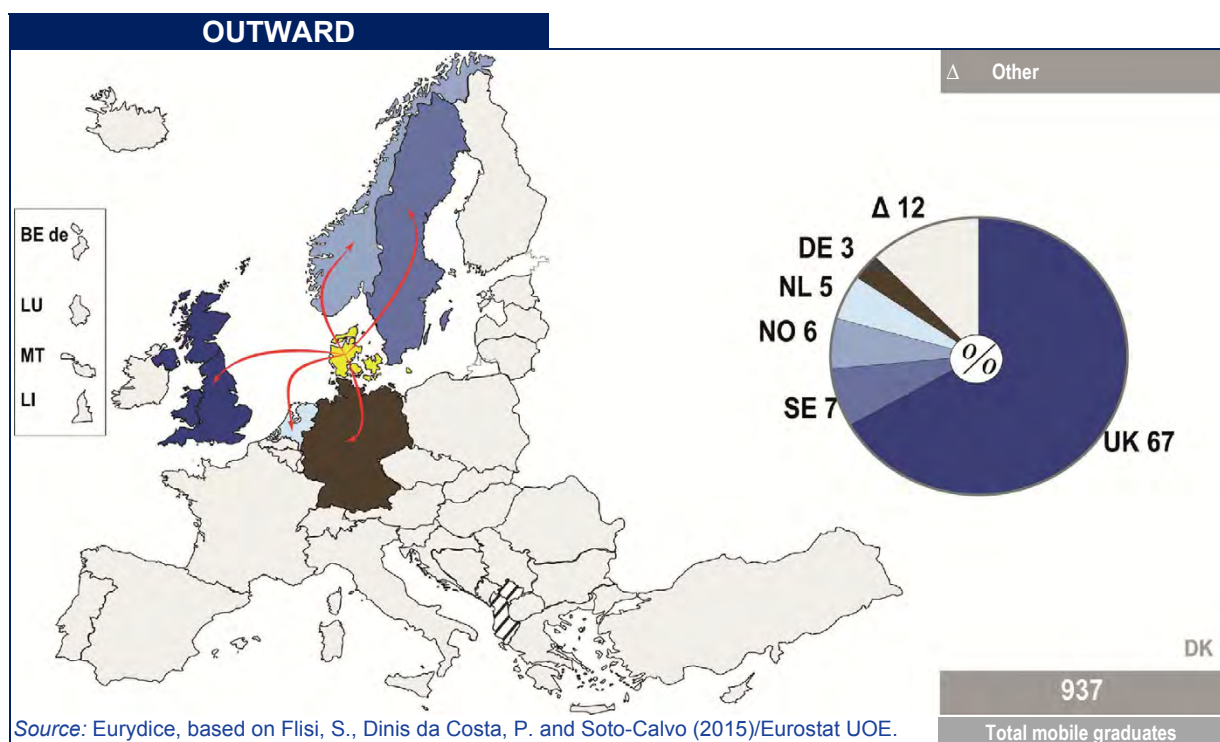
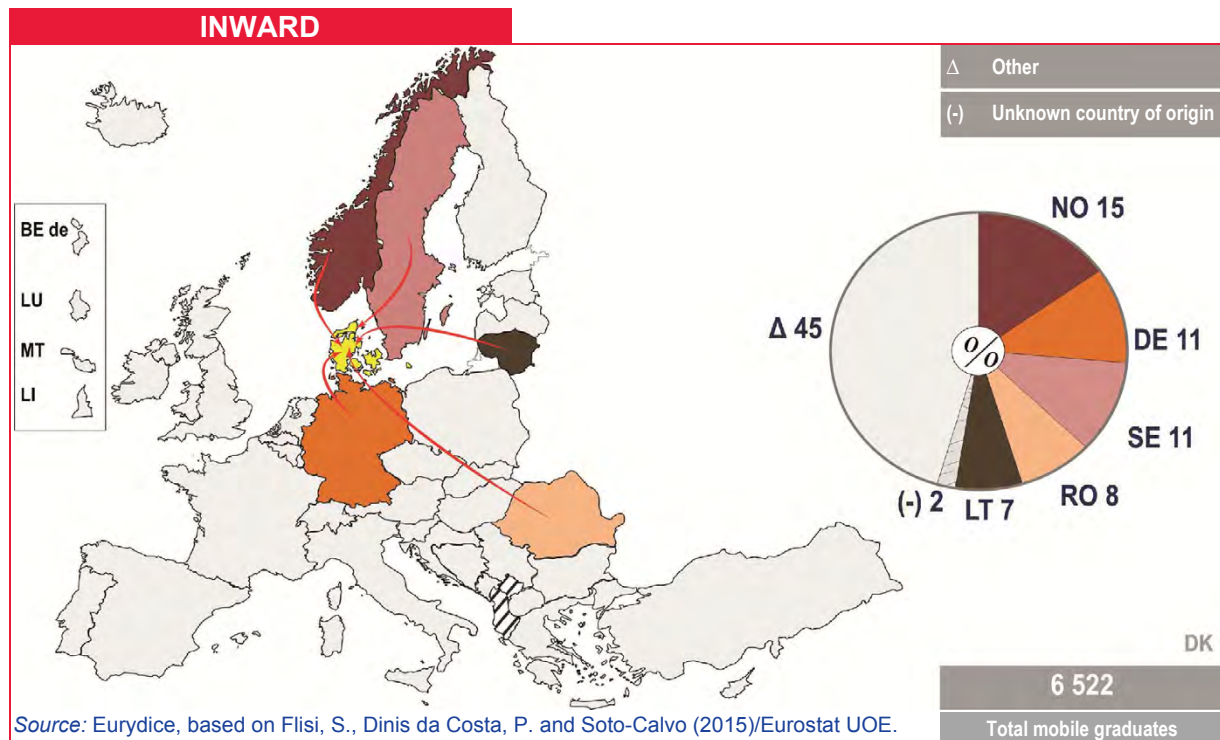
Country-specific note

Data on ISCED level 5 not applicable for inward and outward.

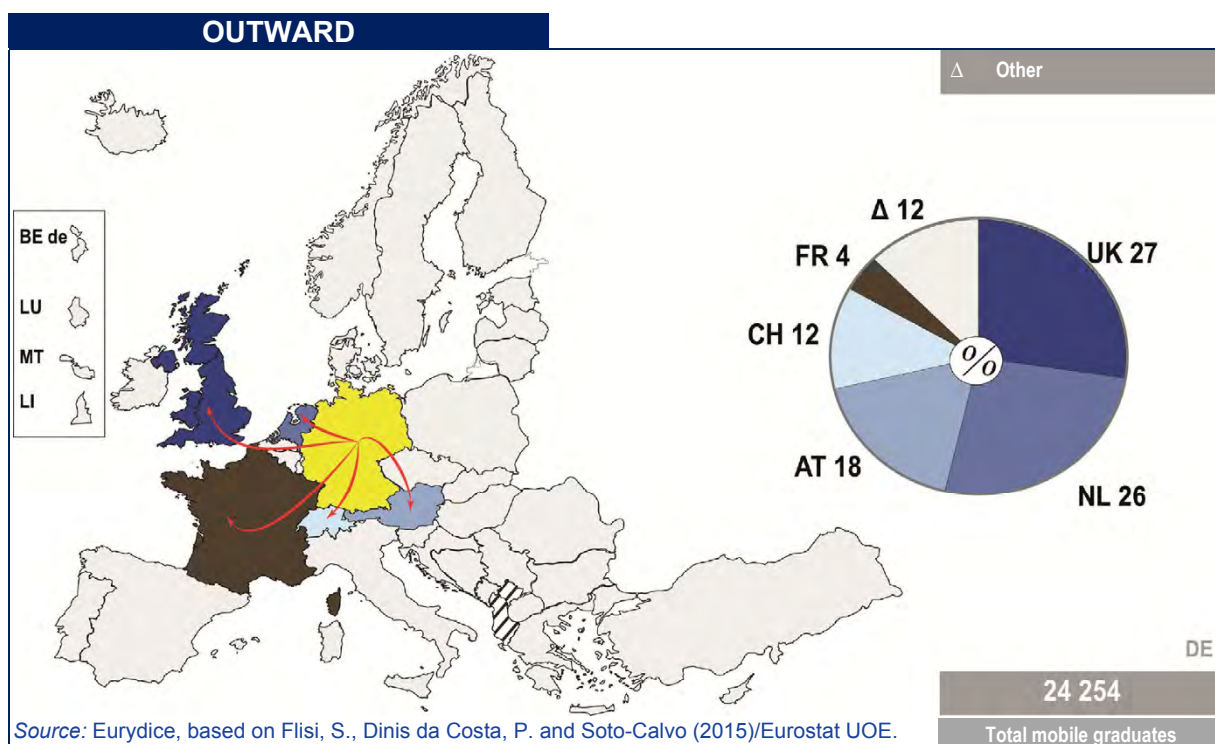
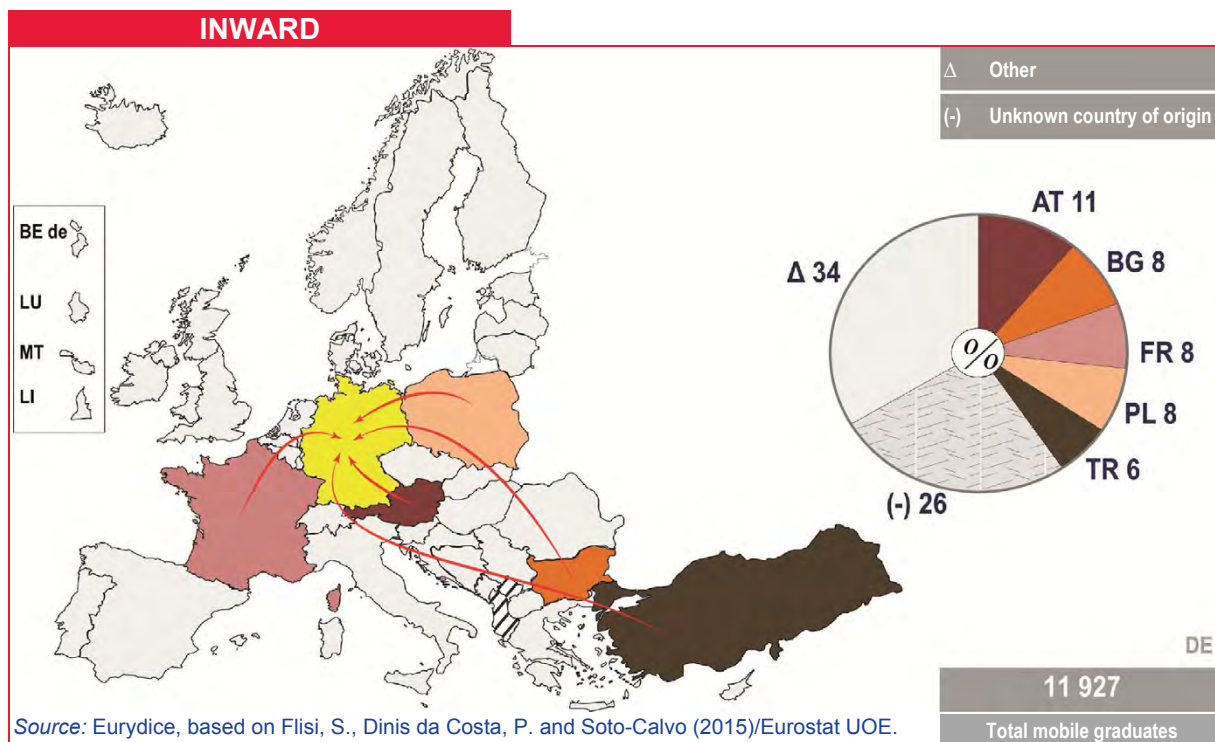
Czech Republic



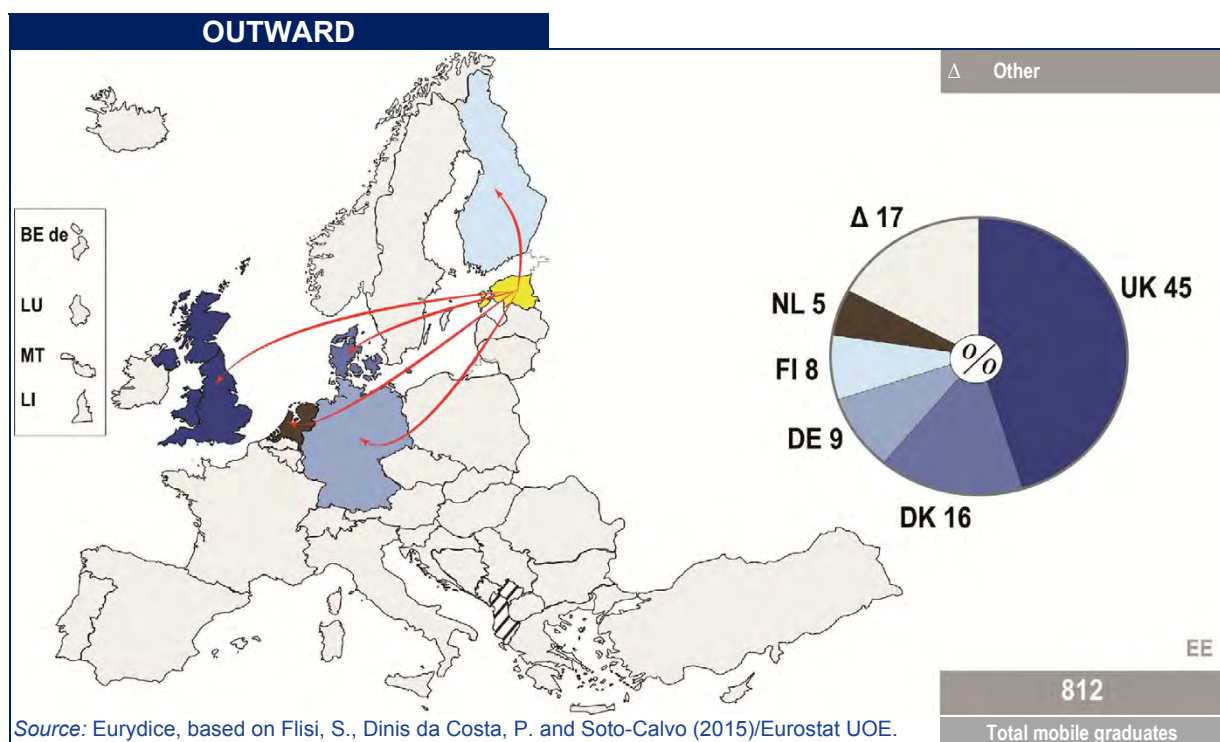
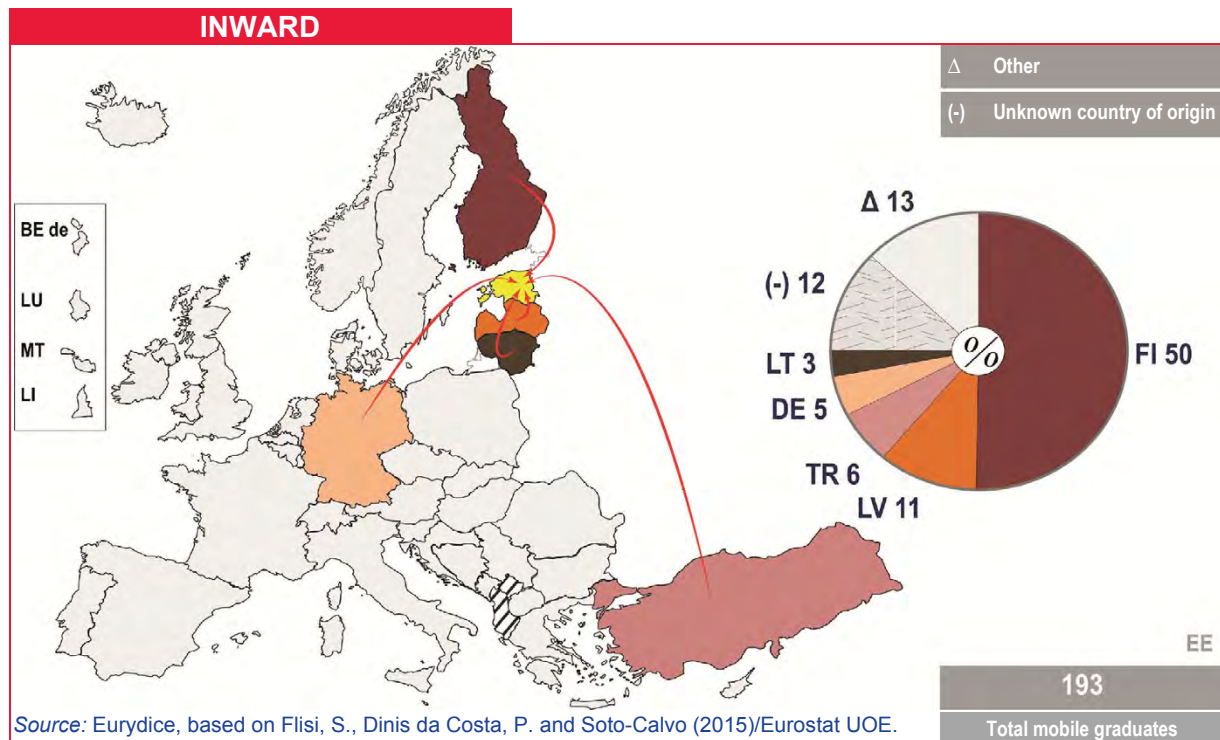
Denmark



Germany



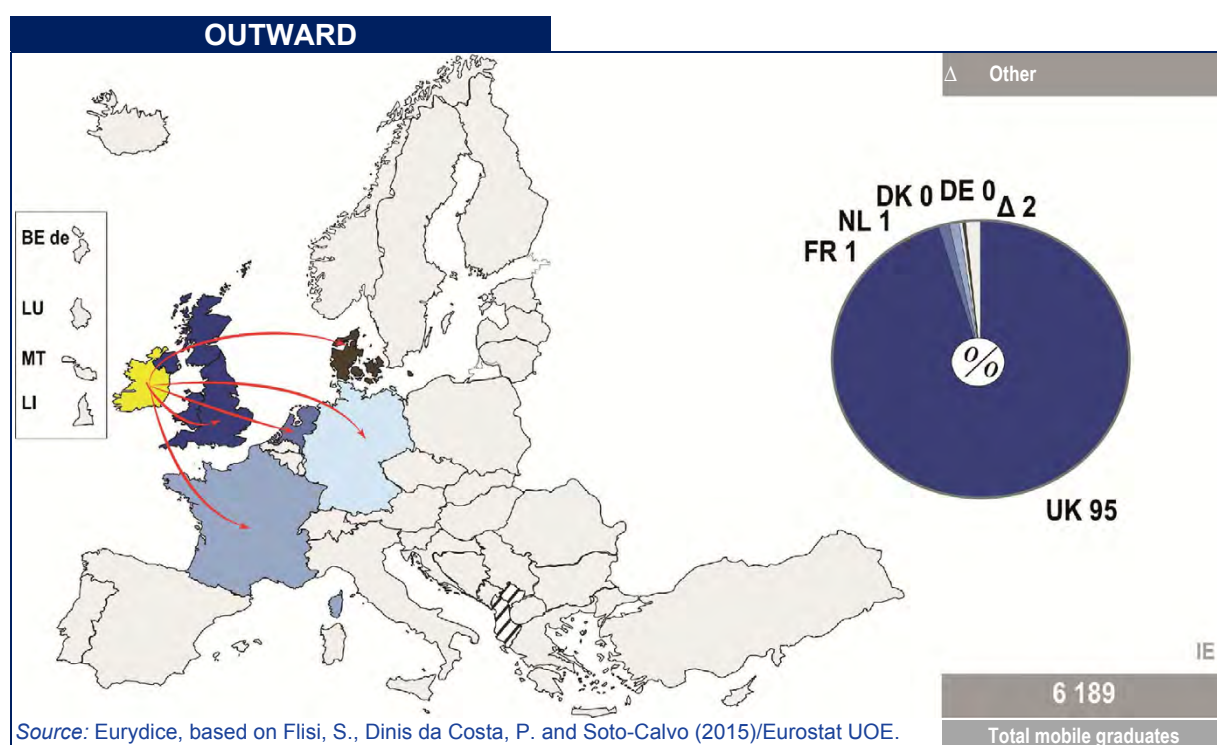
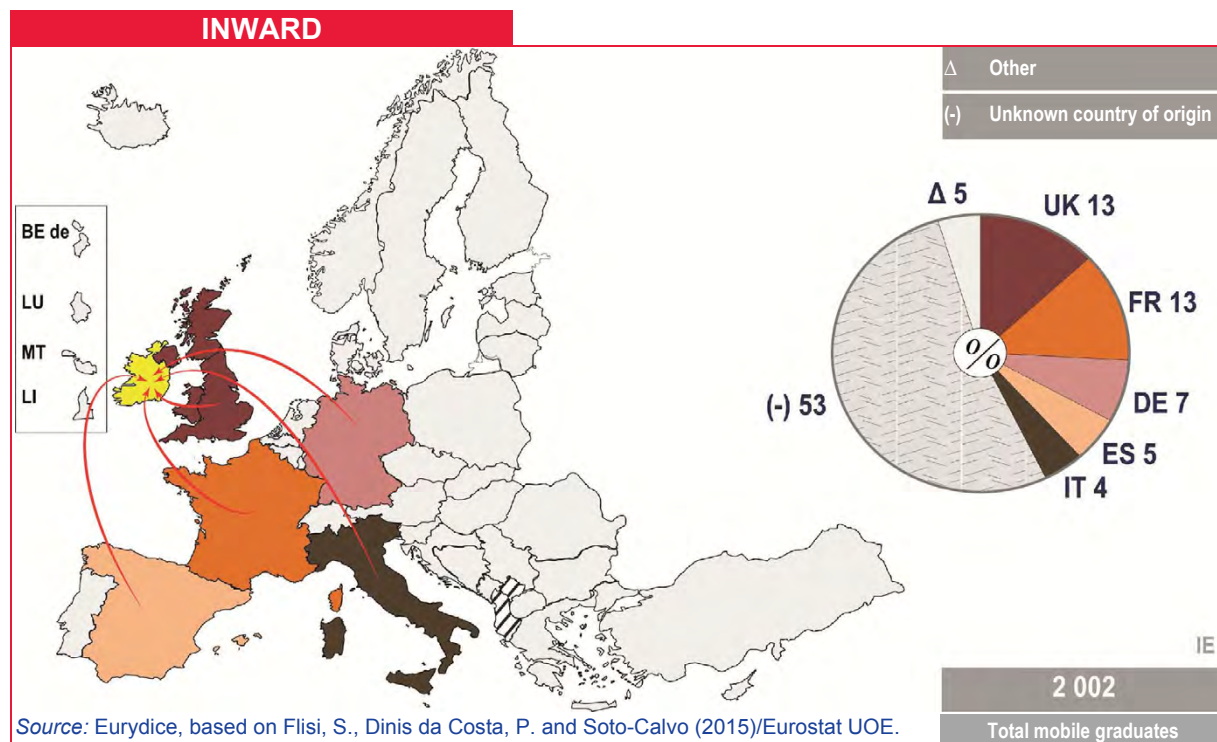
Estonia



Country note

Data on ISCED level 5 not applicable.

Ireland

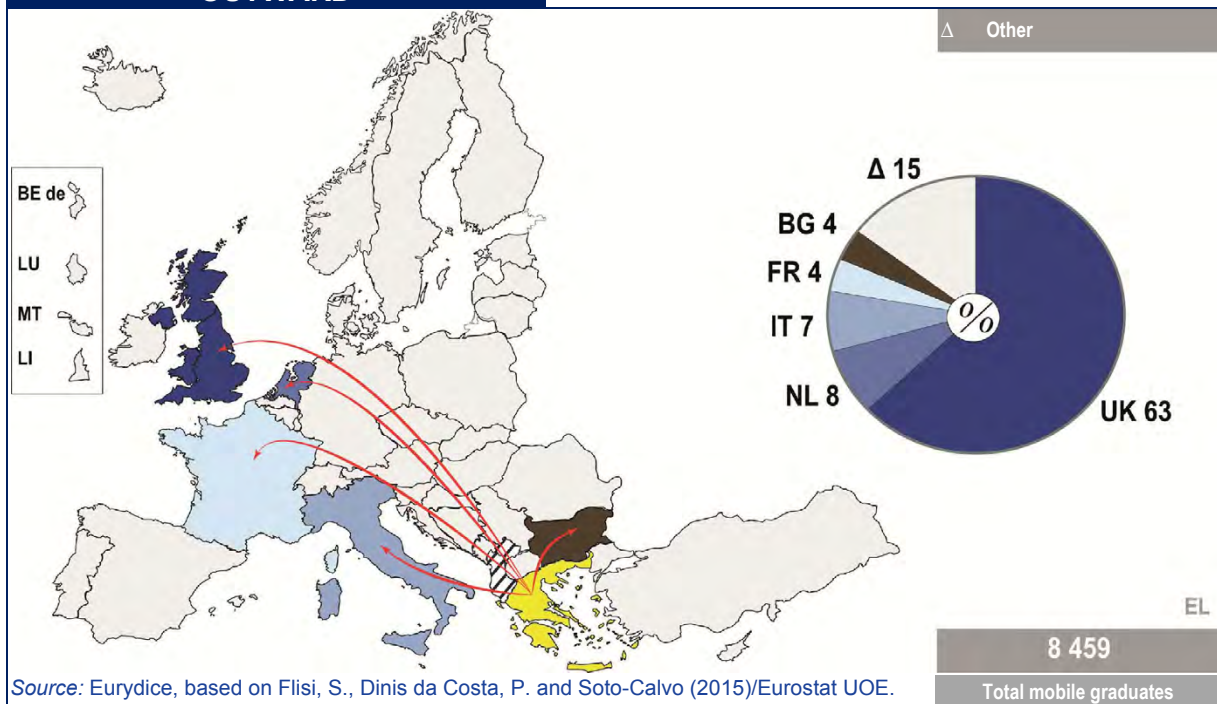


Greece

INWARD

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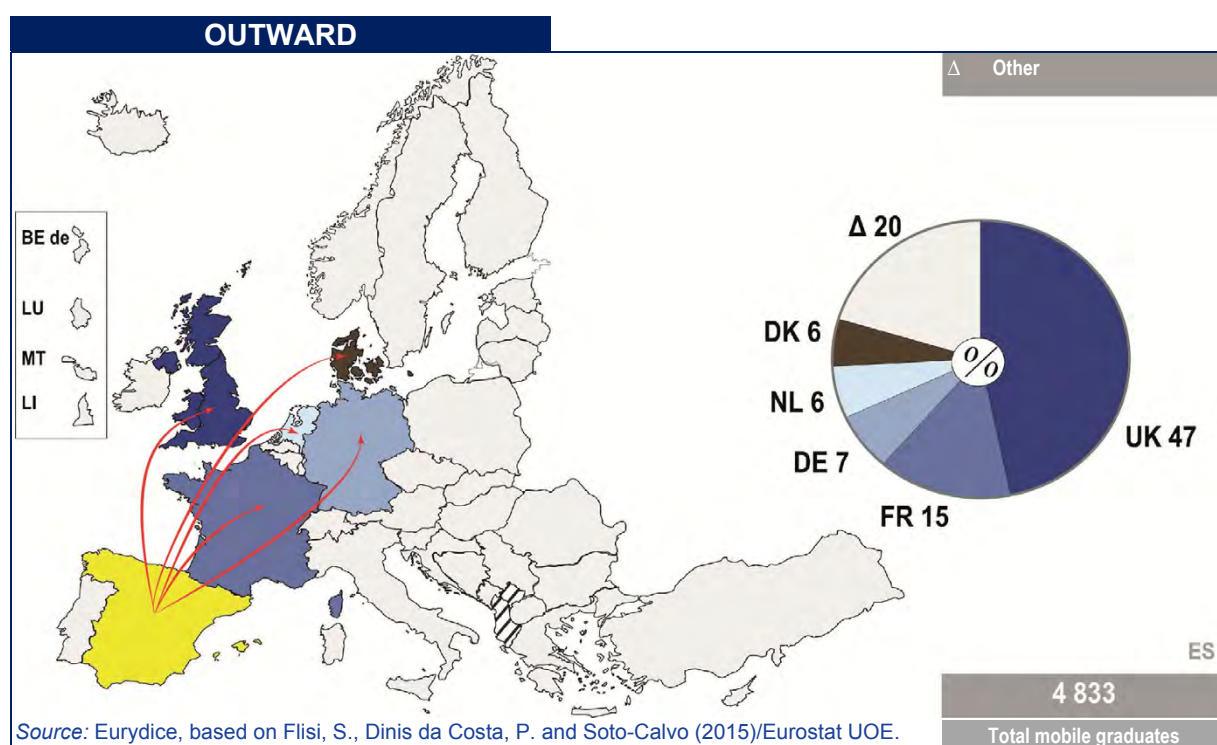
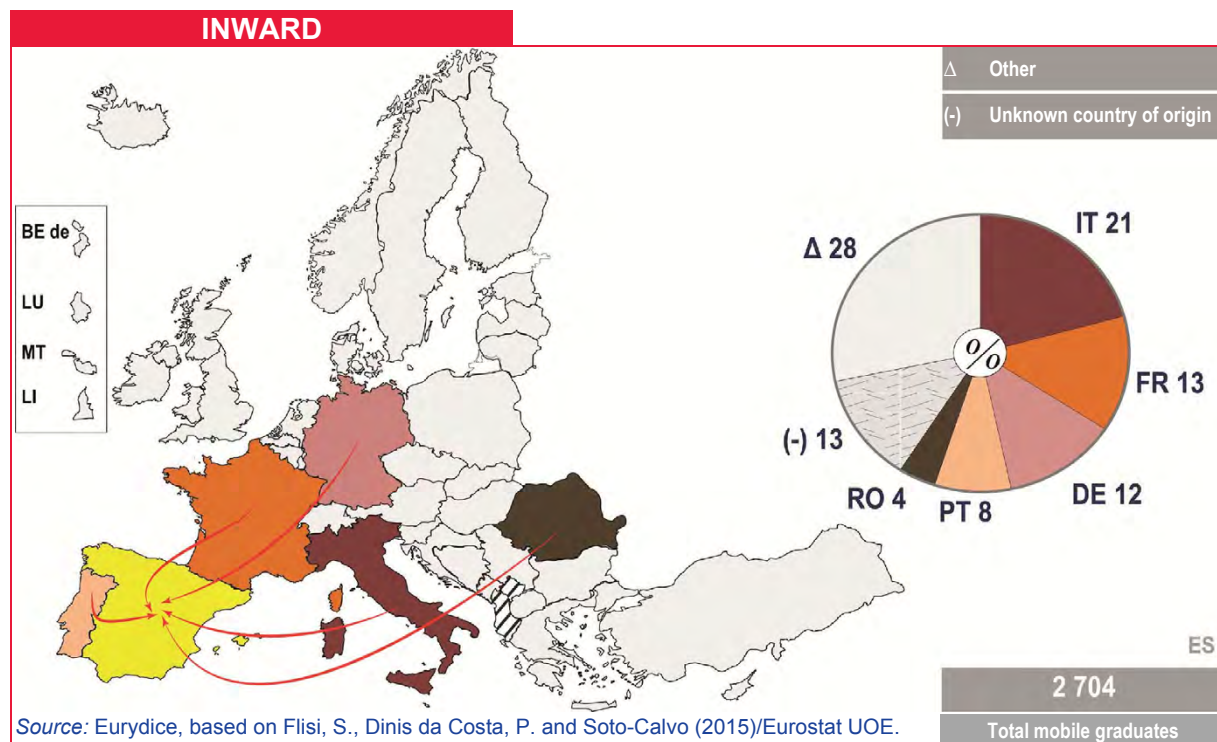
OUTWARD



Country-specific note

Data on ISCED level 5, 7 and 8 not available. Inward mobility based on estimates; see Flisi, Dinis da Costa and Soto-Calvo (2015).

Spain



Country-specific note

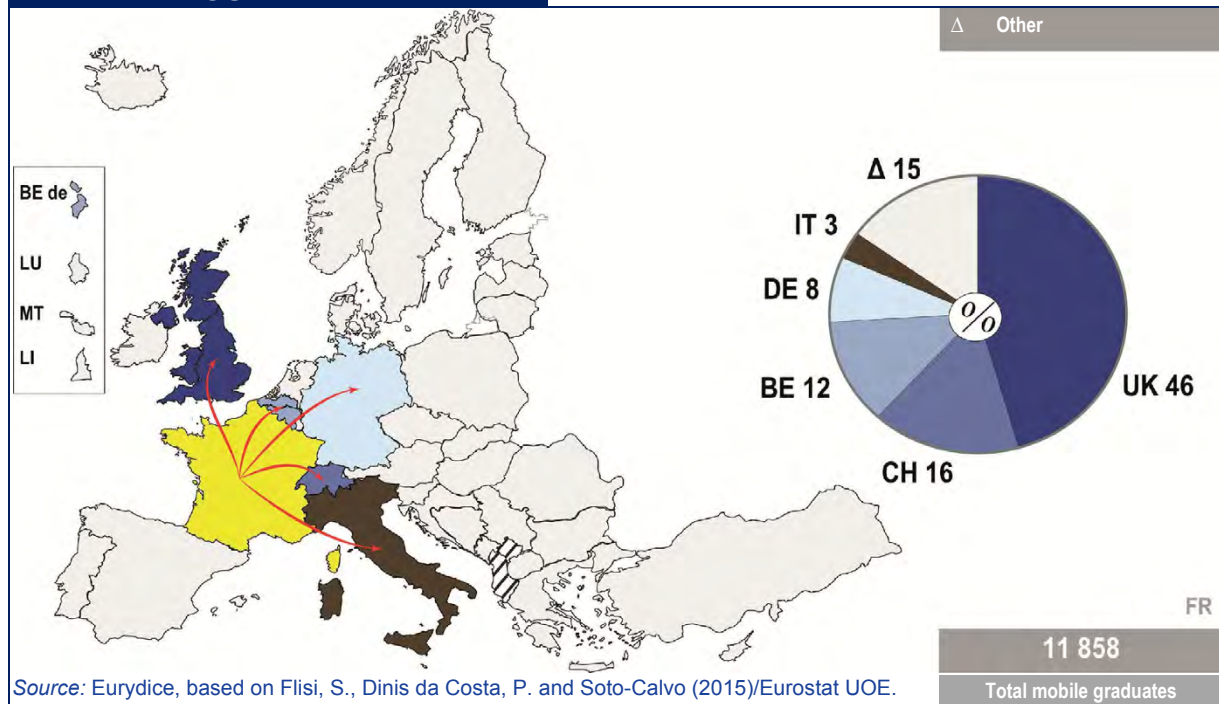
Data on ISCED level 5 and 8 not available.

France

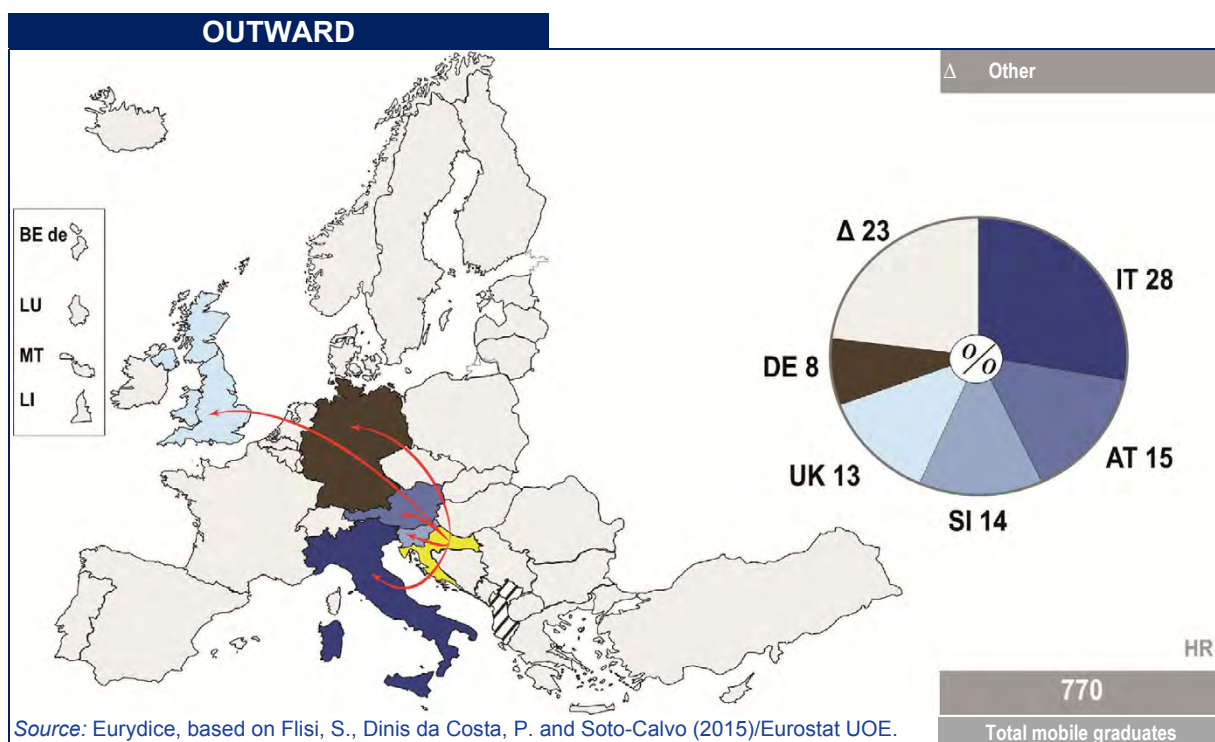
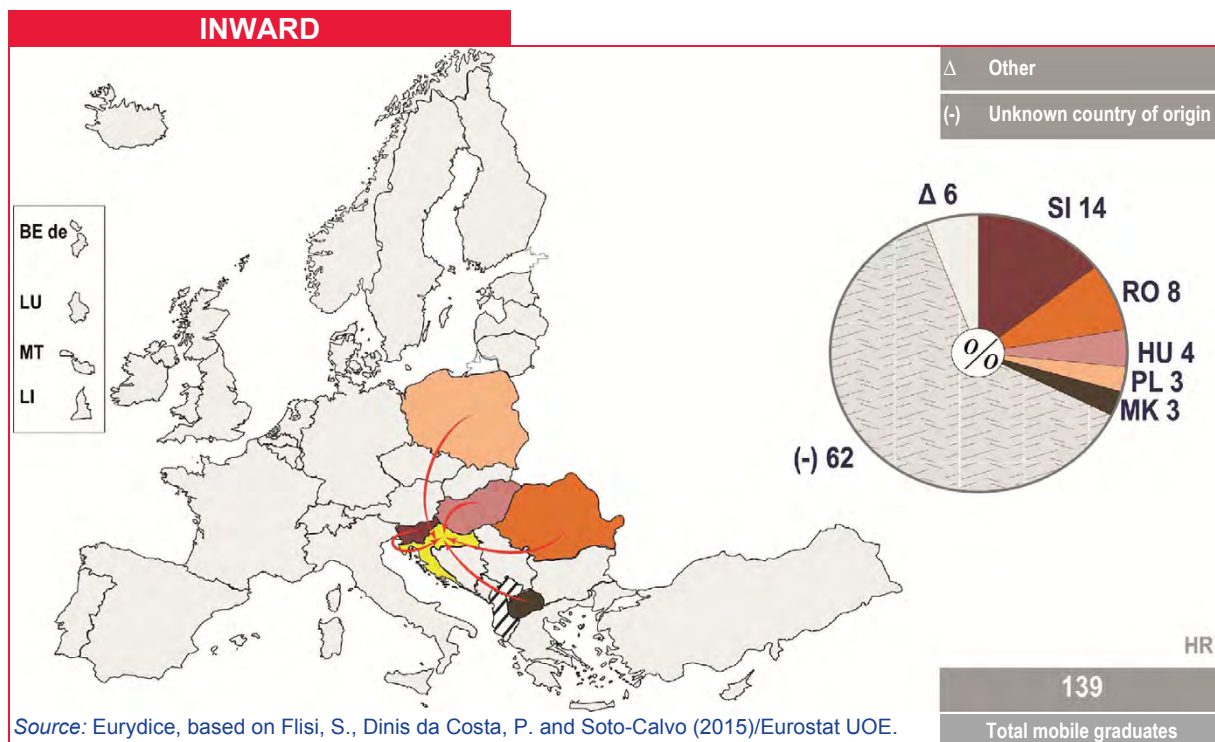
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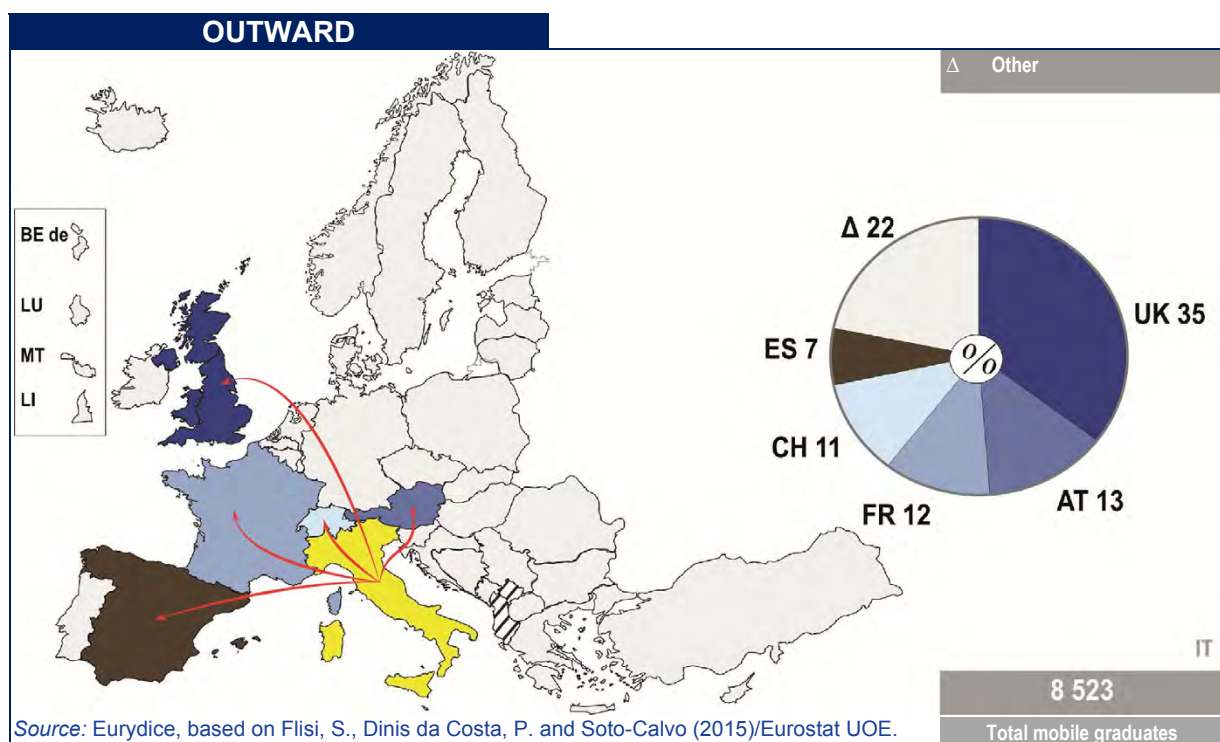
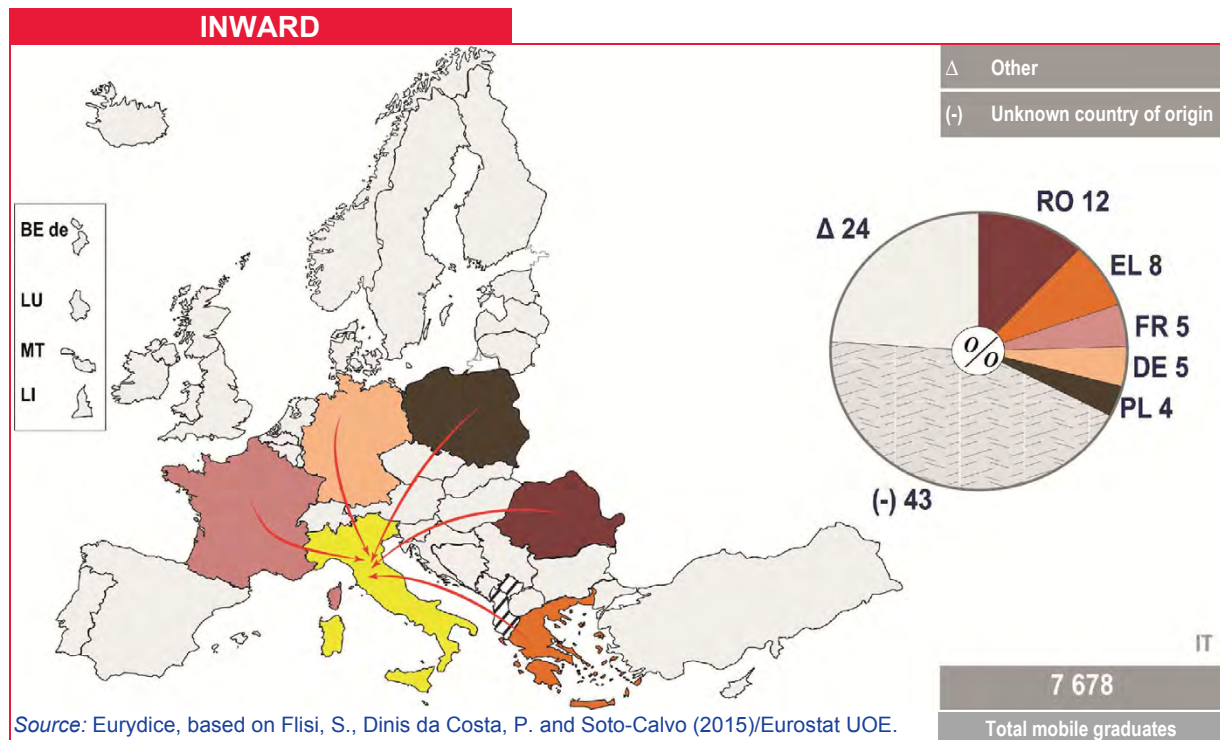
OUTWARD



Croatia



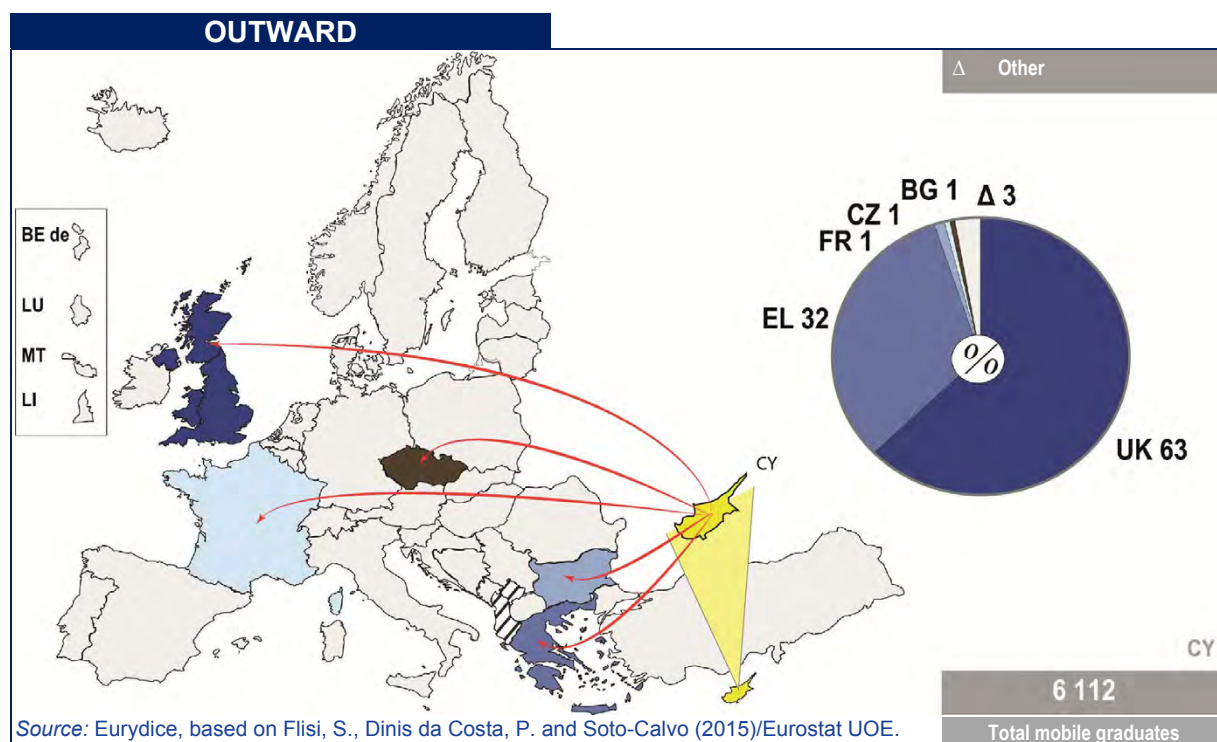
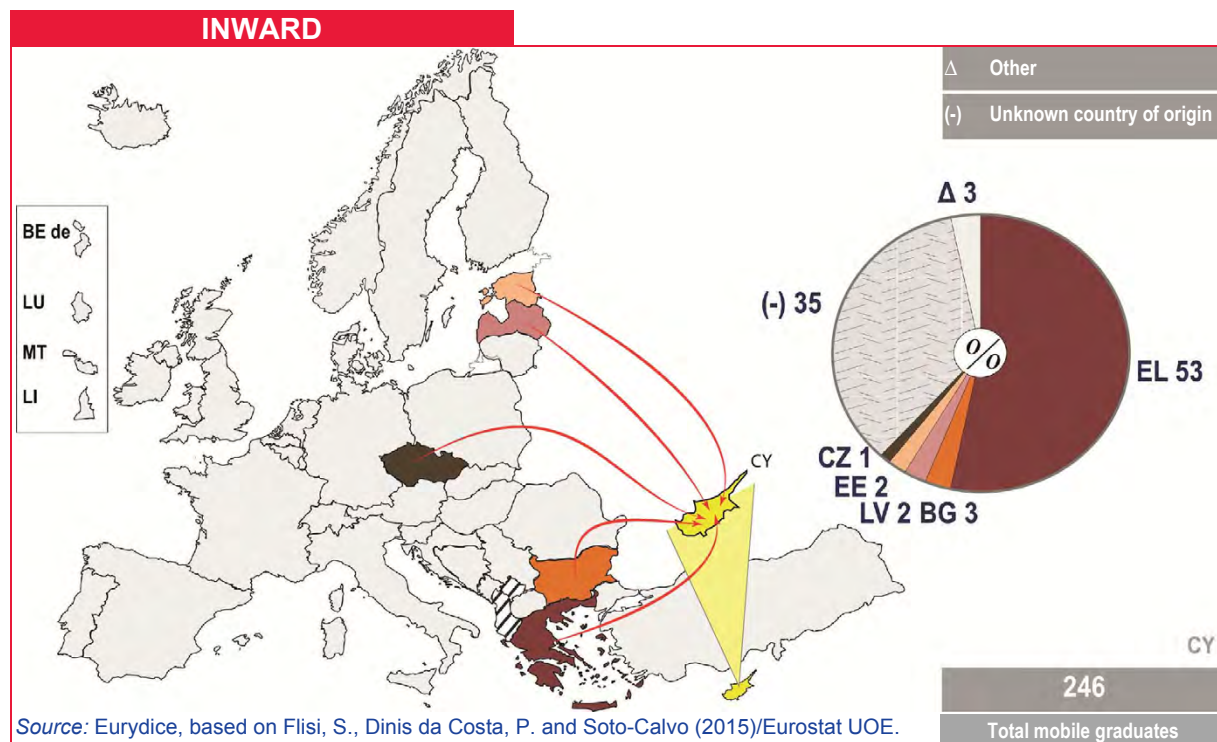
Italy



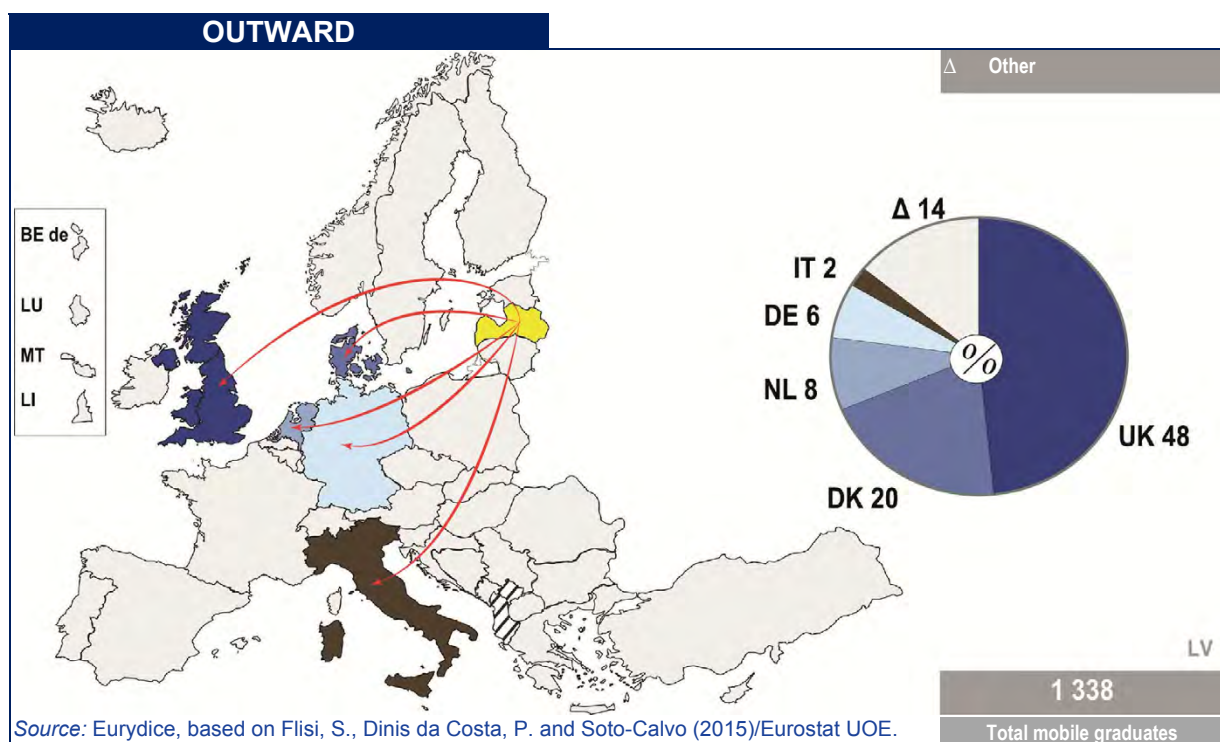
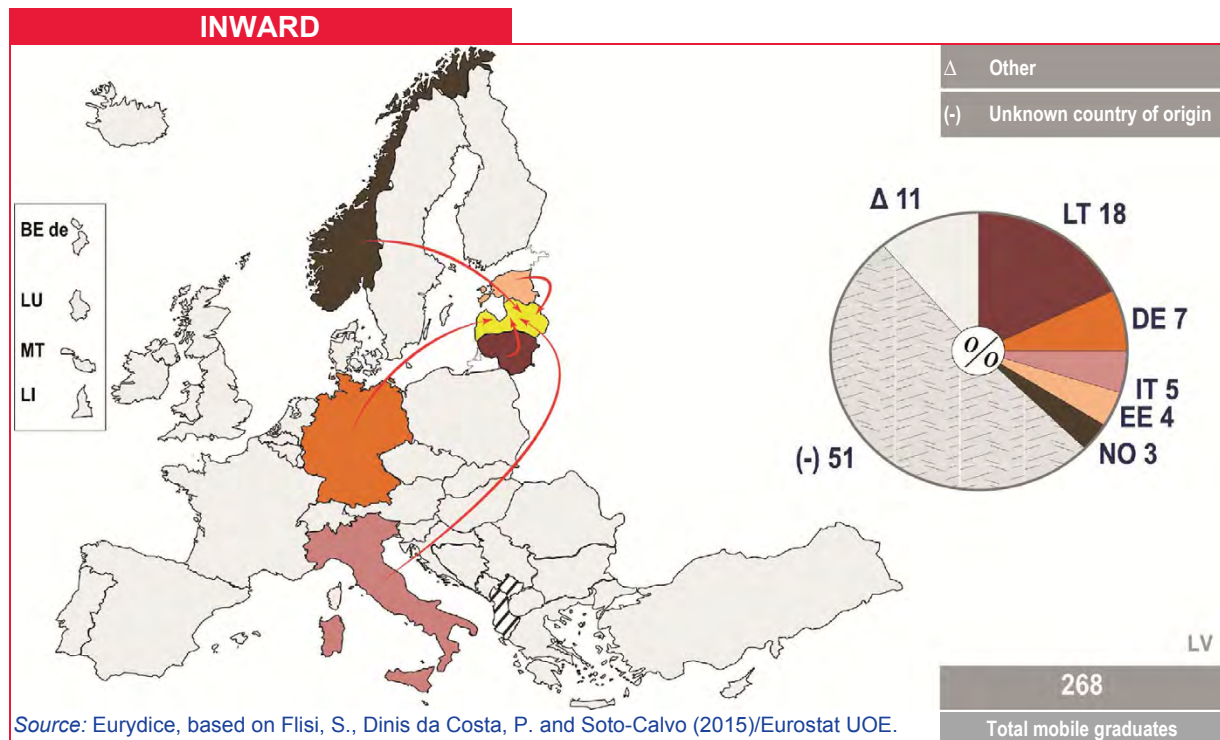
Country-specific note

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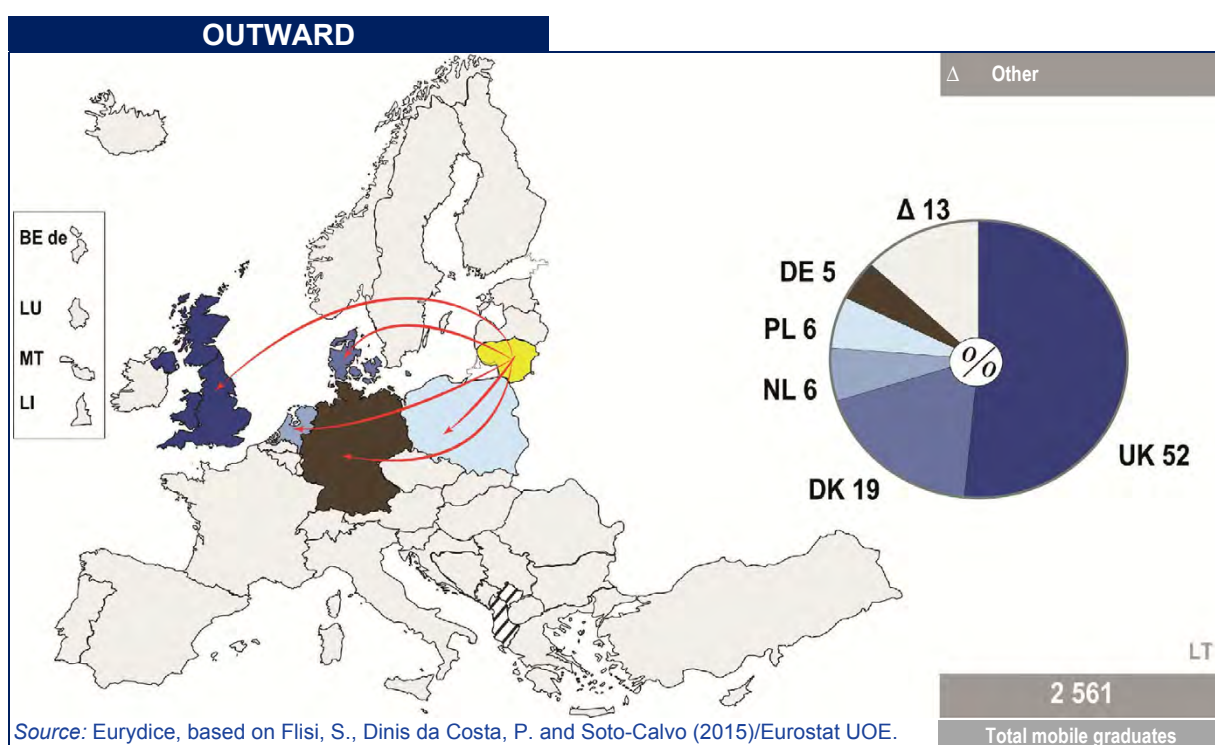
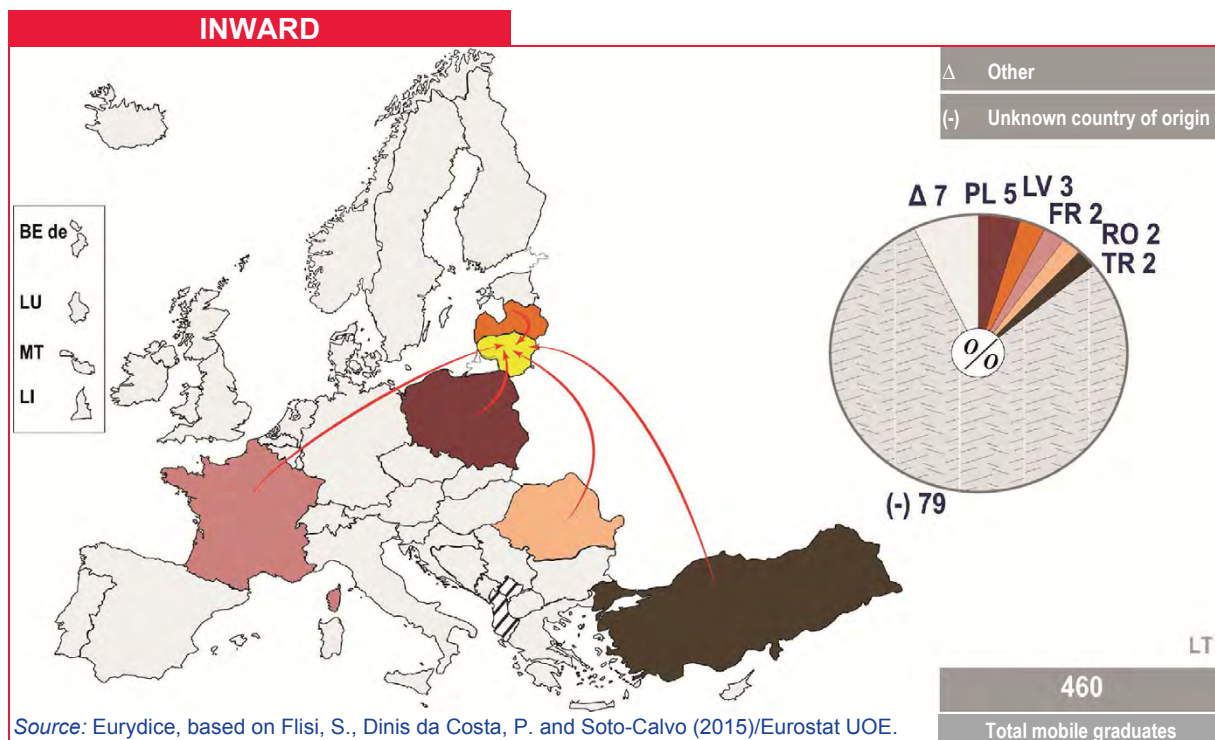
Cyprus



Latvia



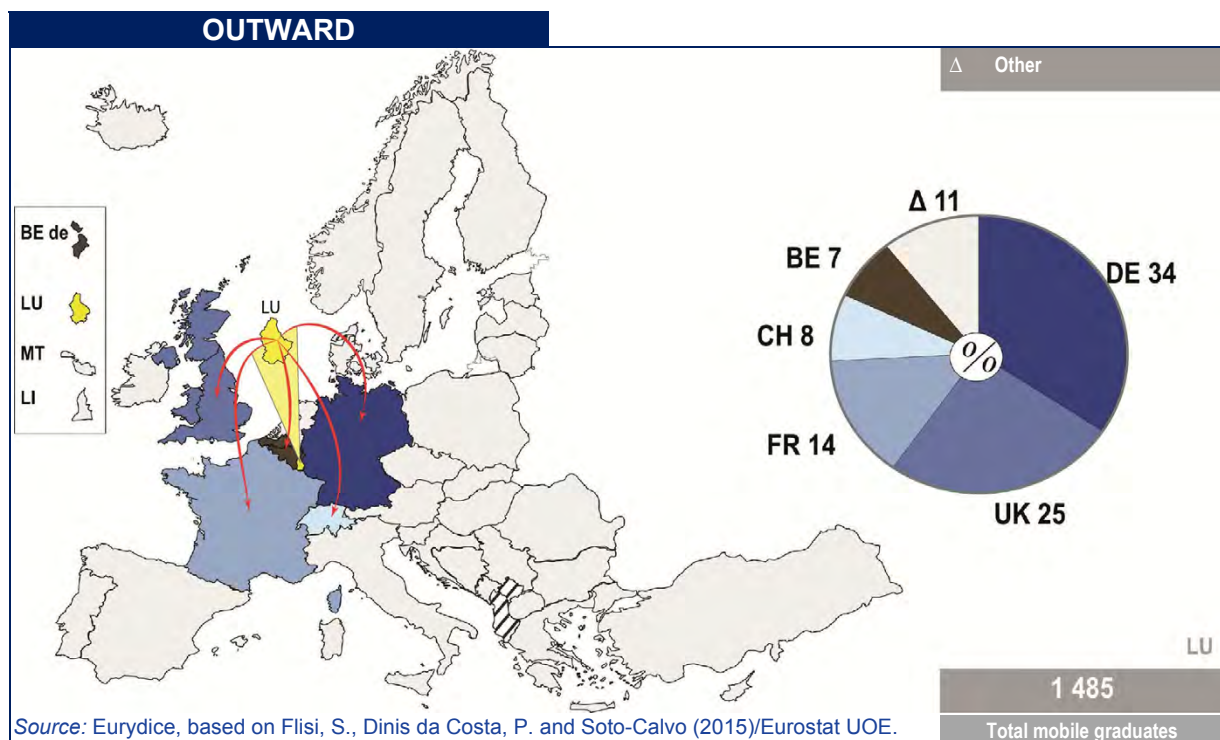
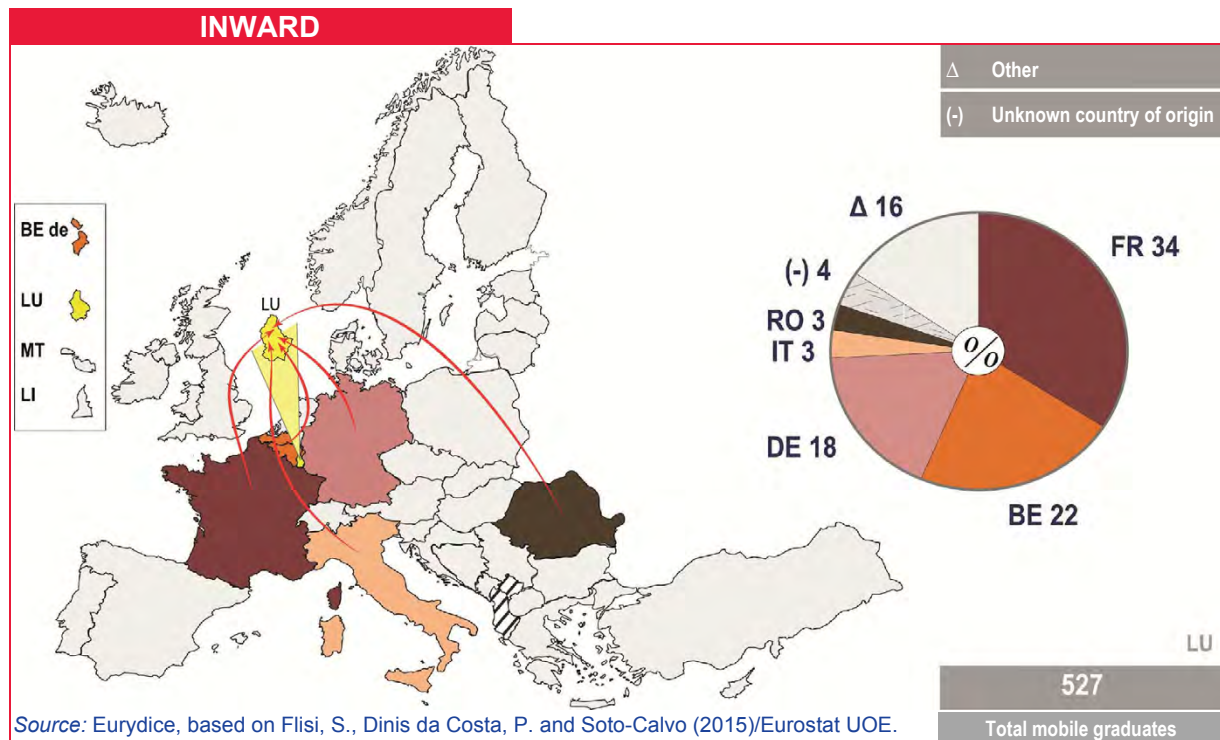
Lithuania



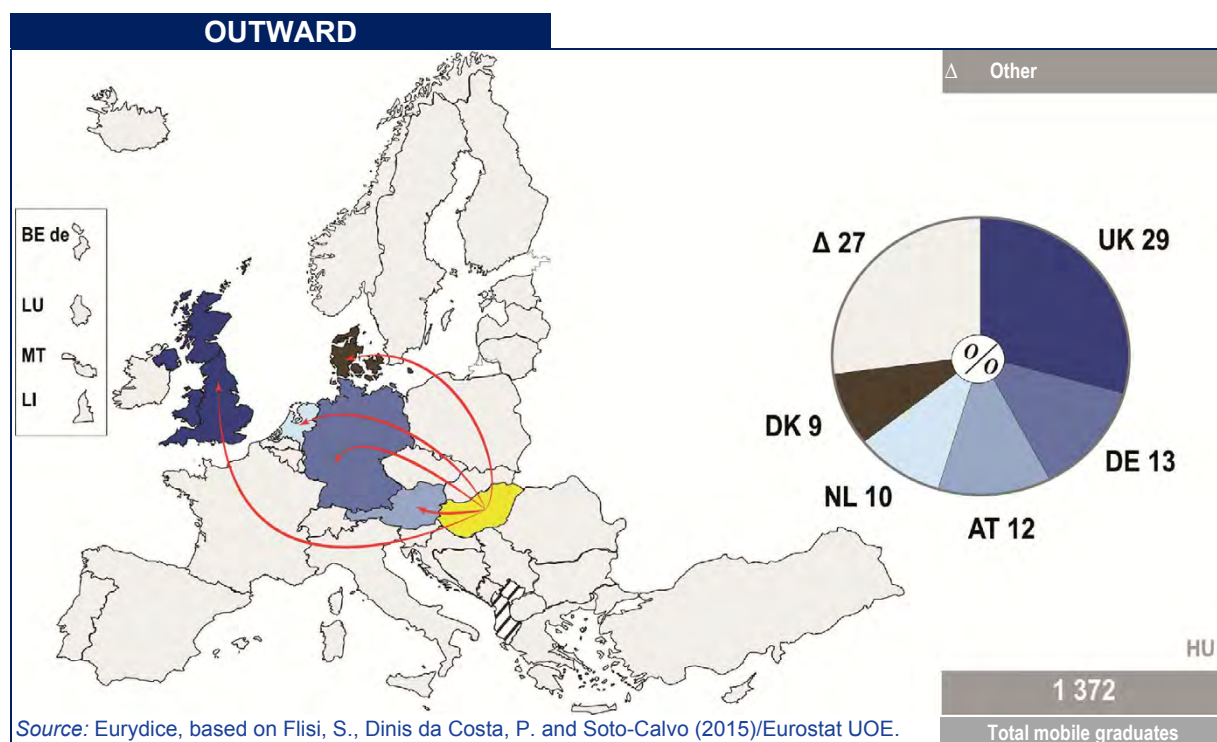
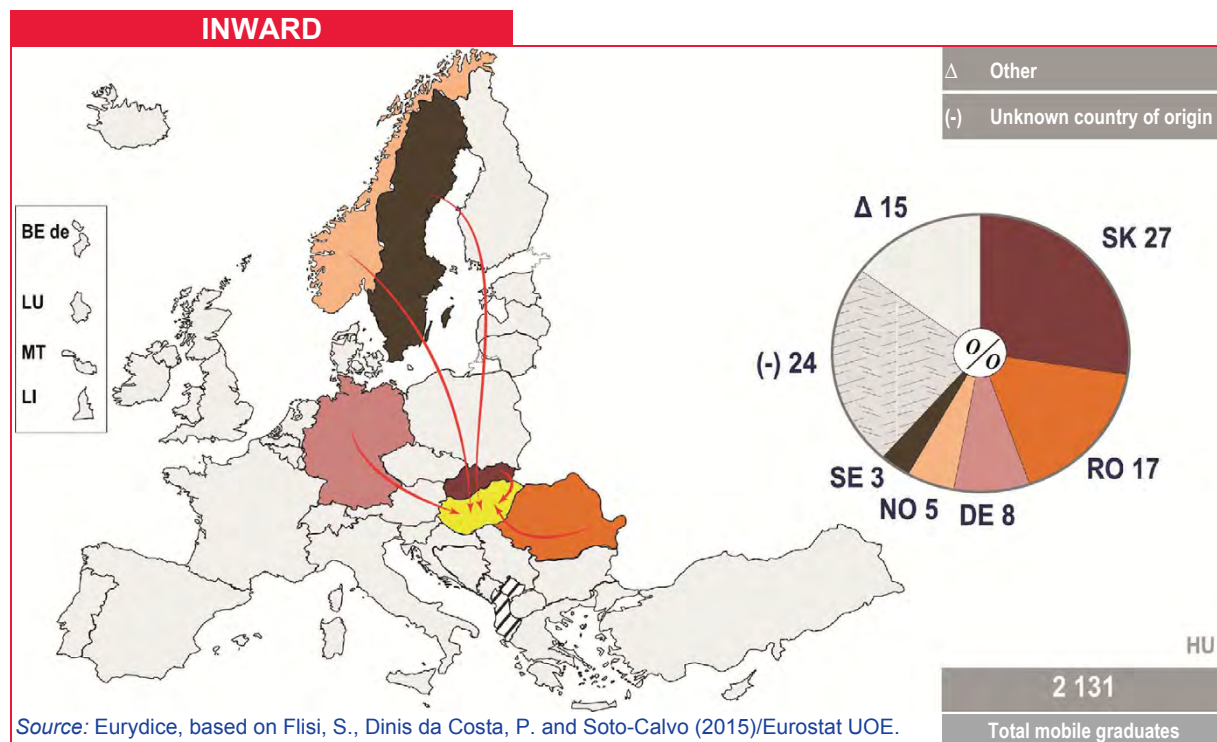
Country-specific note

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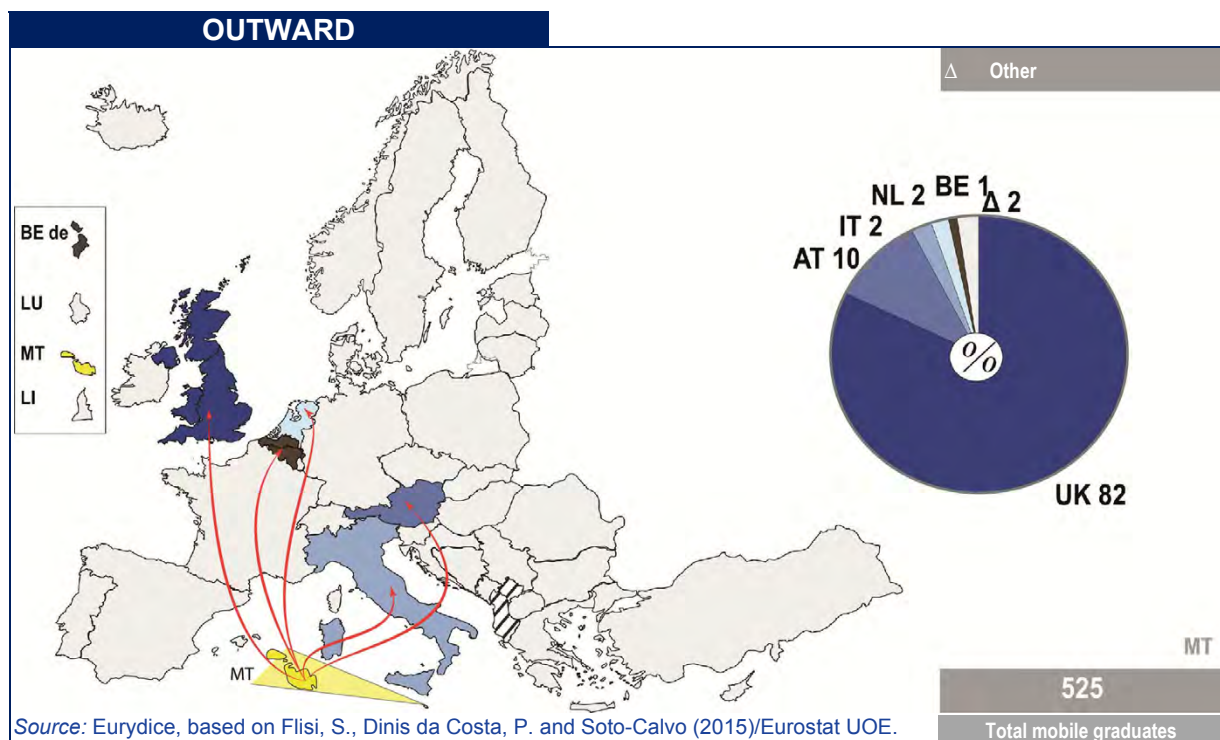
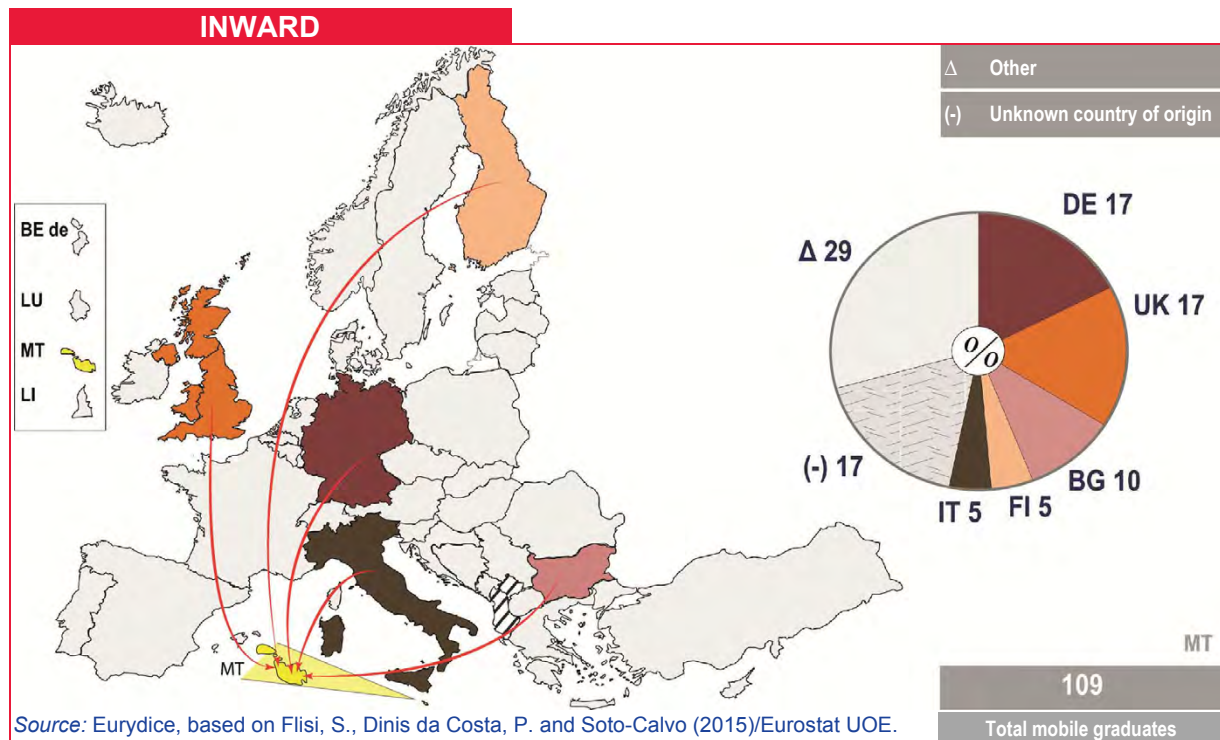
Luxembourg



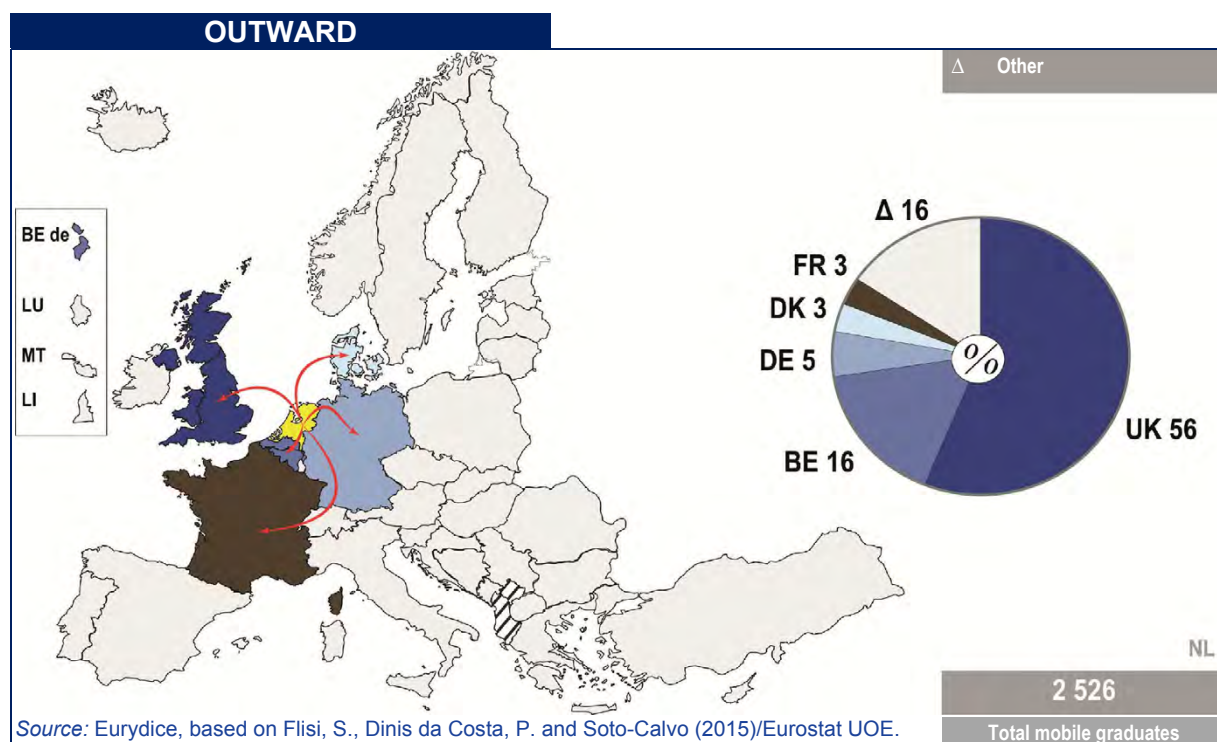
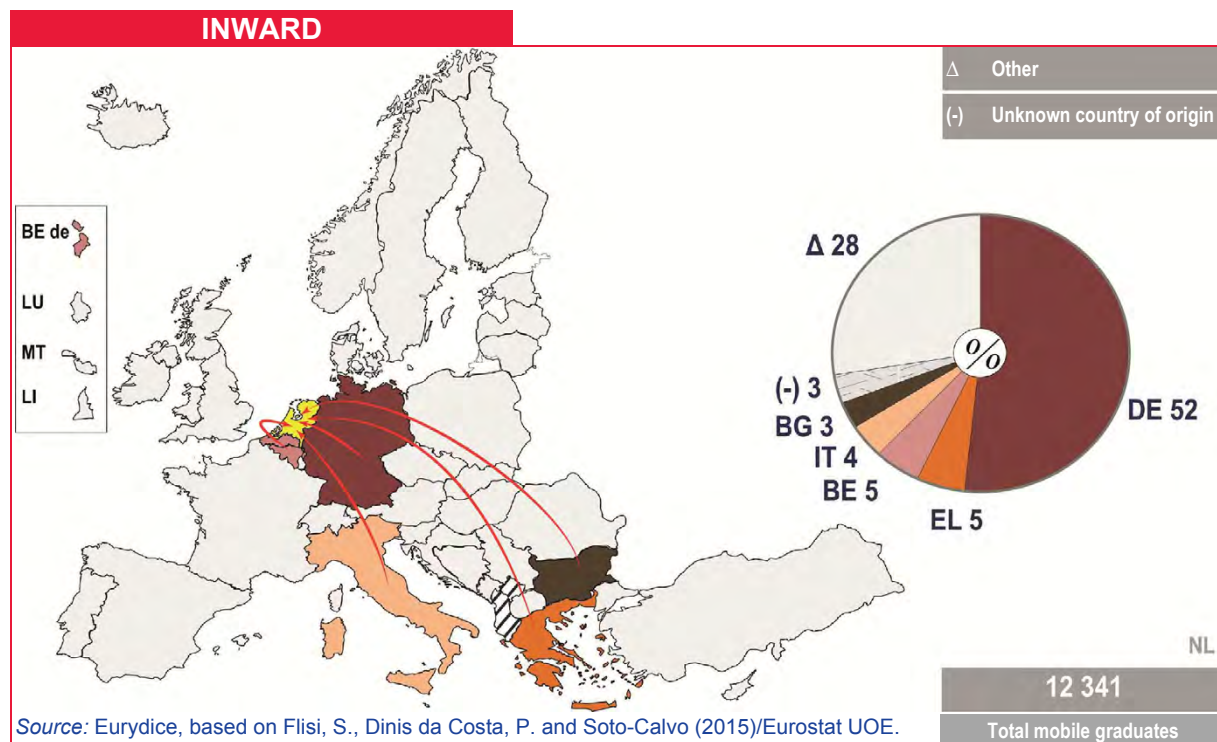
Hungary



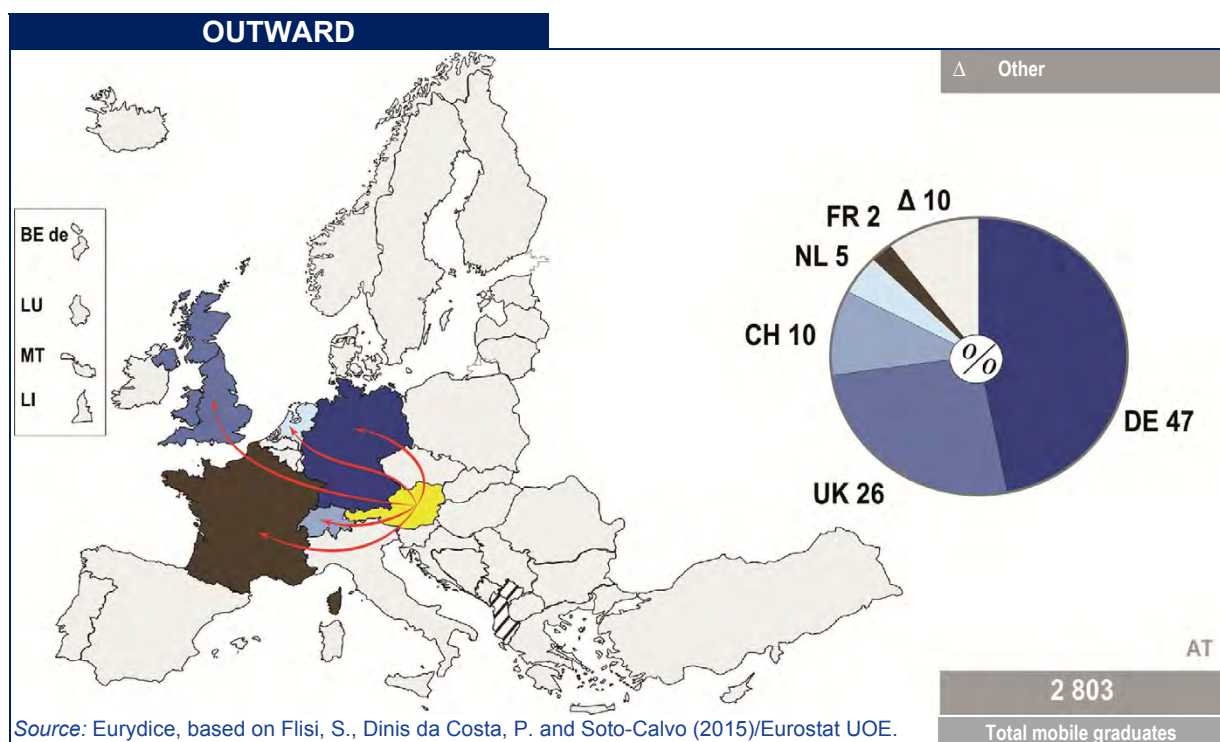
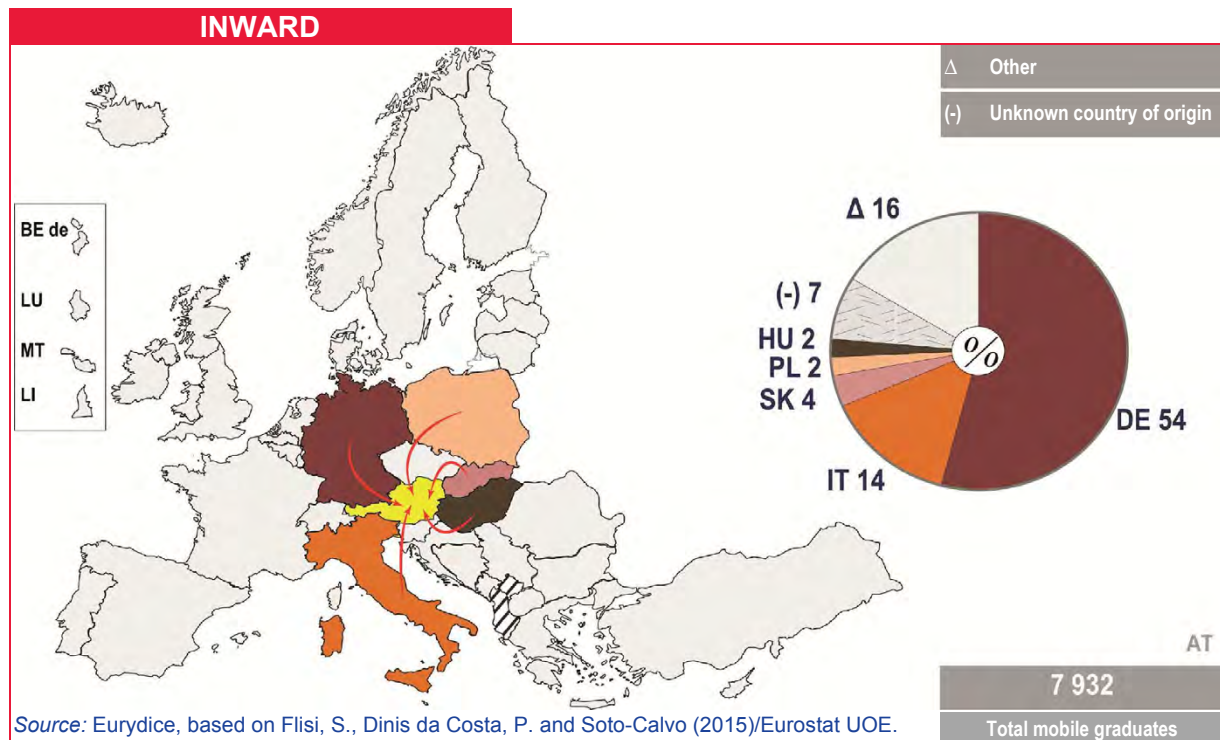
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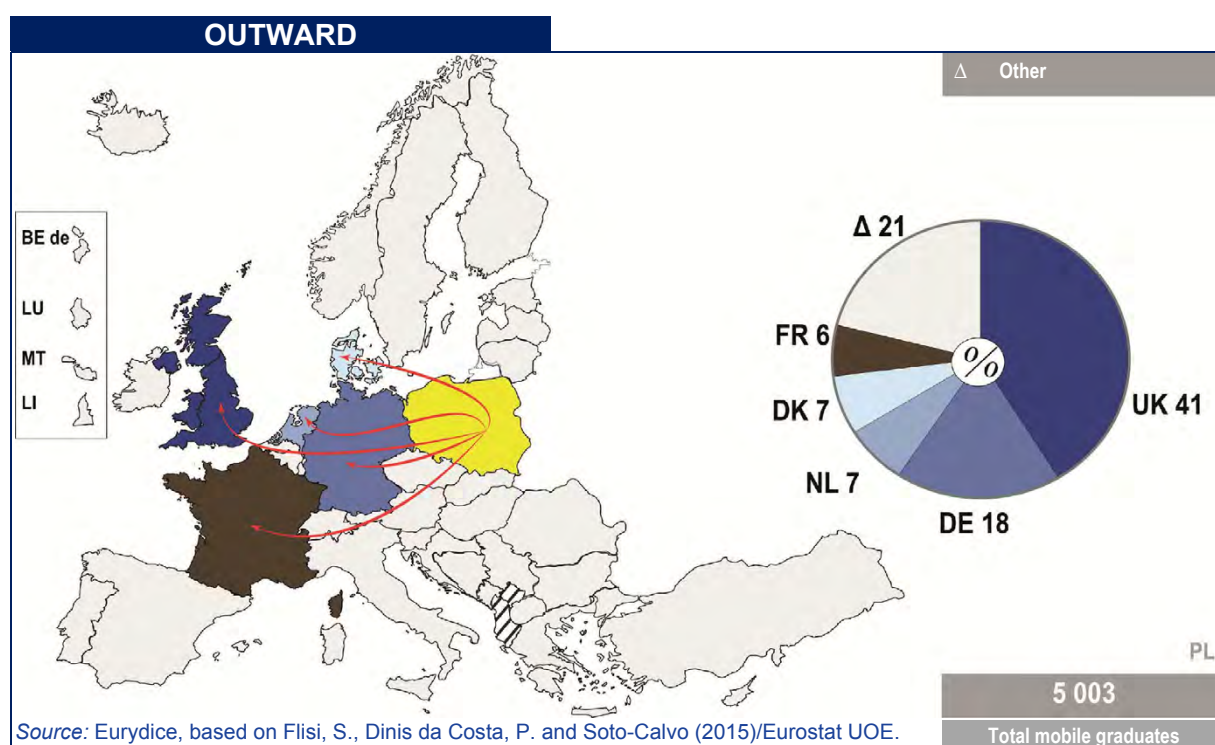
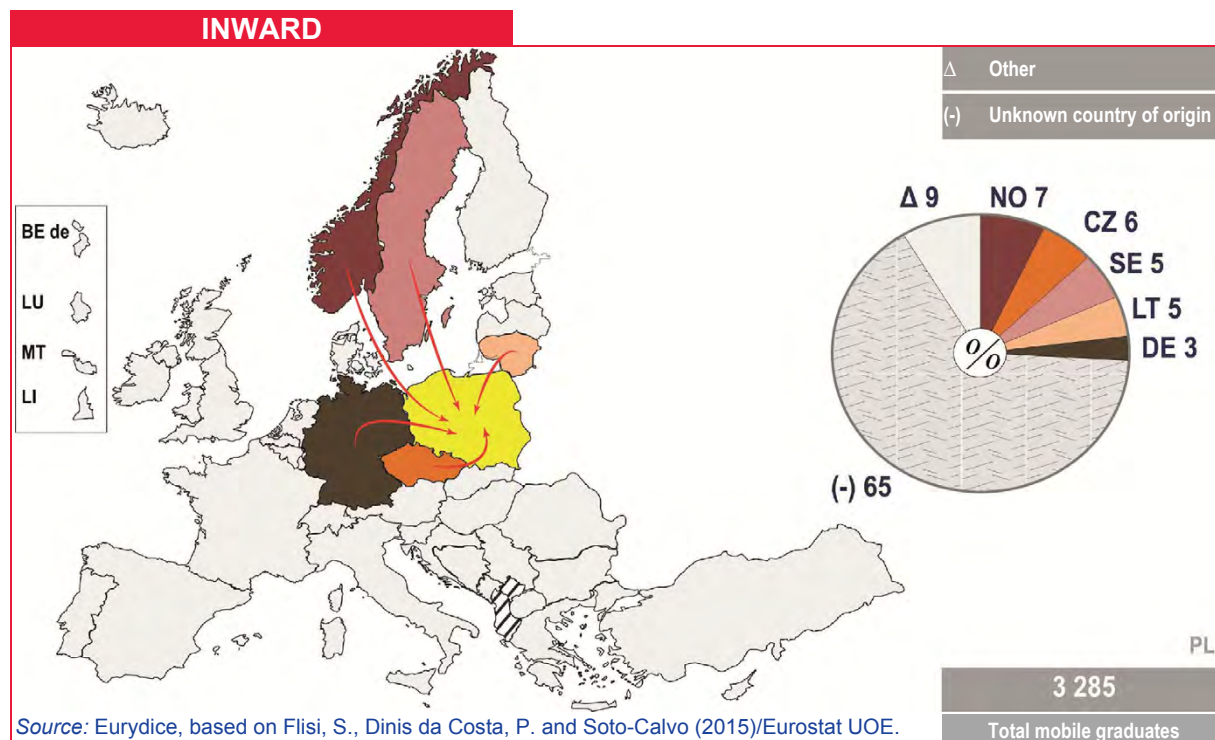
The Netherlands



Austria



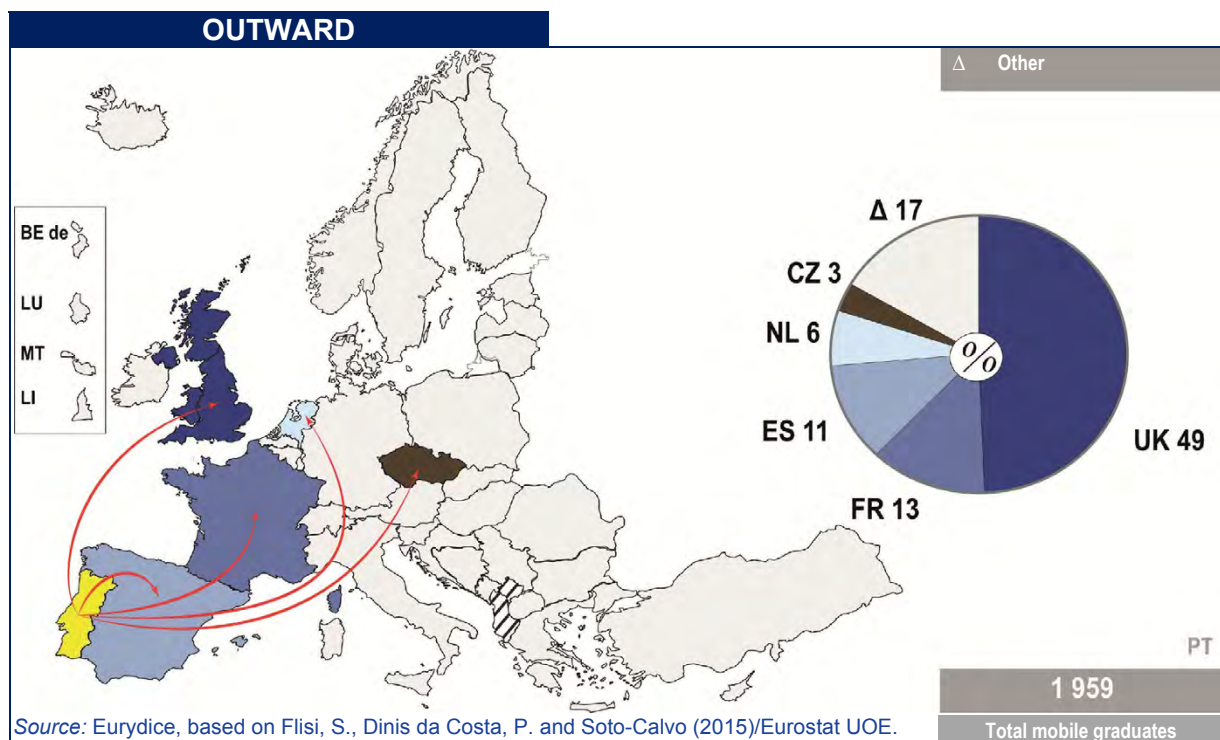
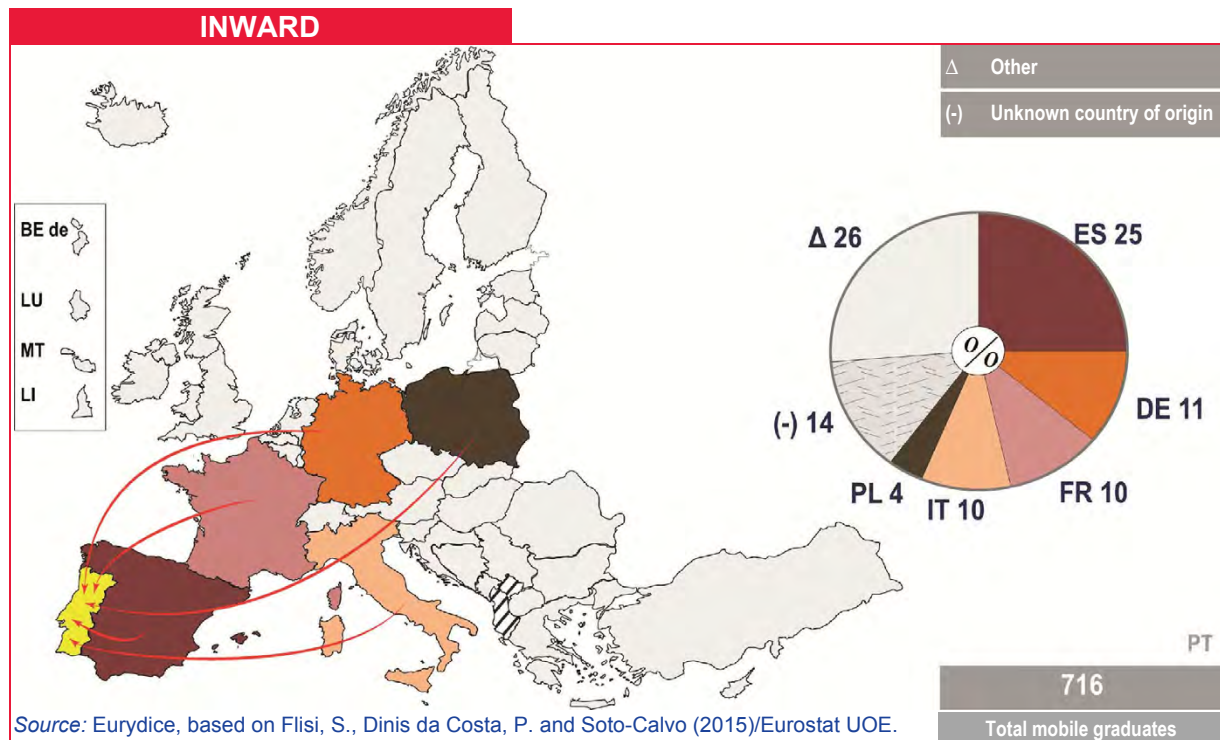
Poland



Country-specific note

Data on ISCED level 5 not applicable; data on ISCED level 8 not available

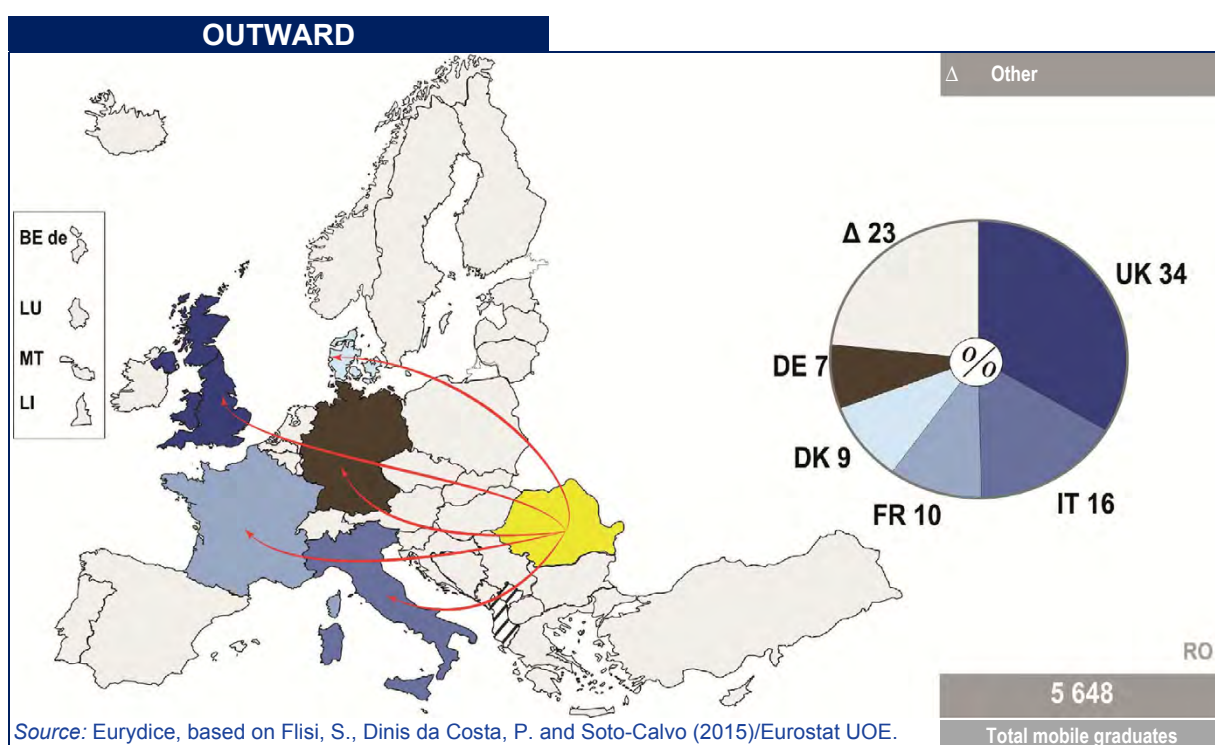
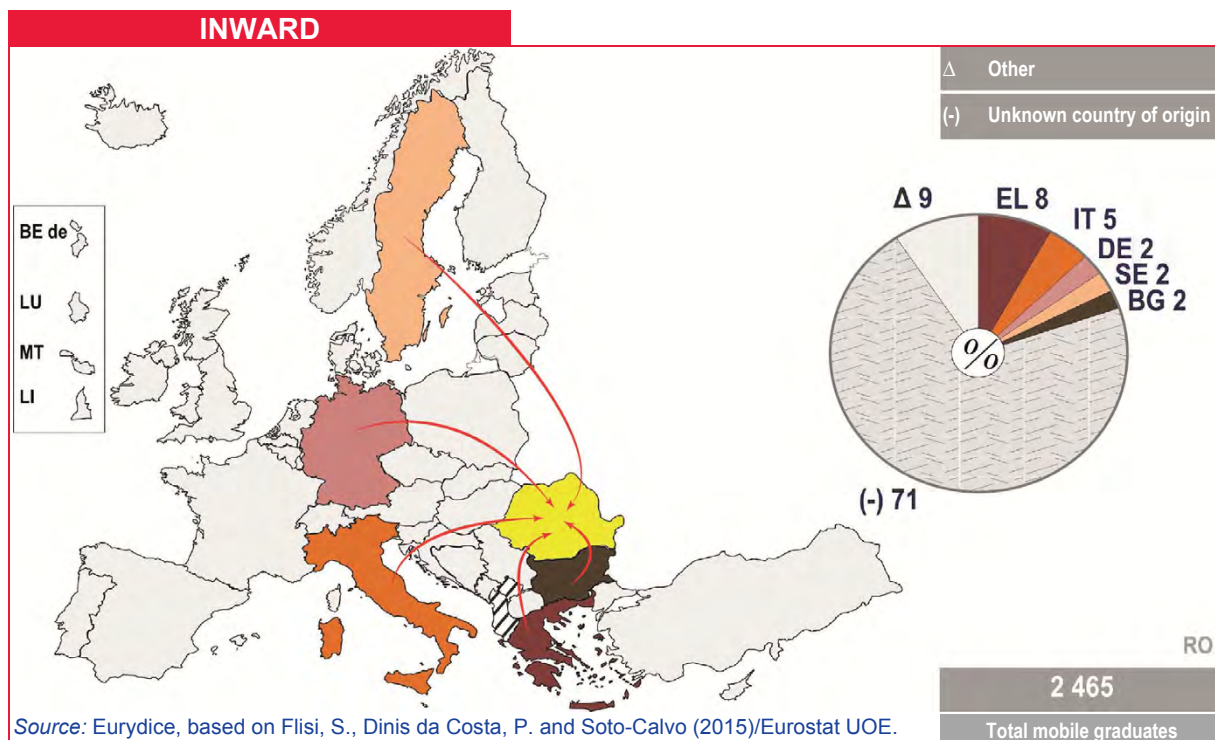
Portugal



Country-specific note

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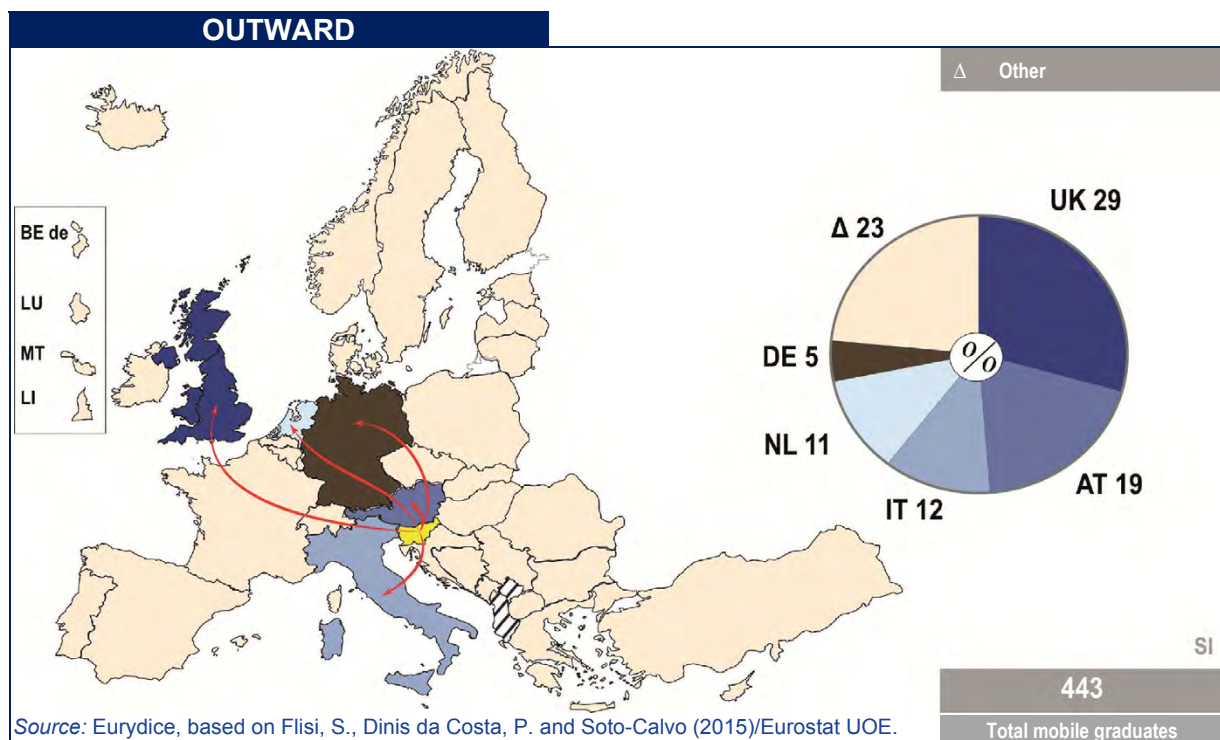
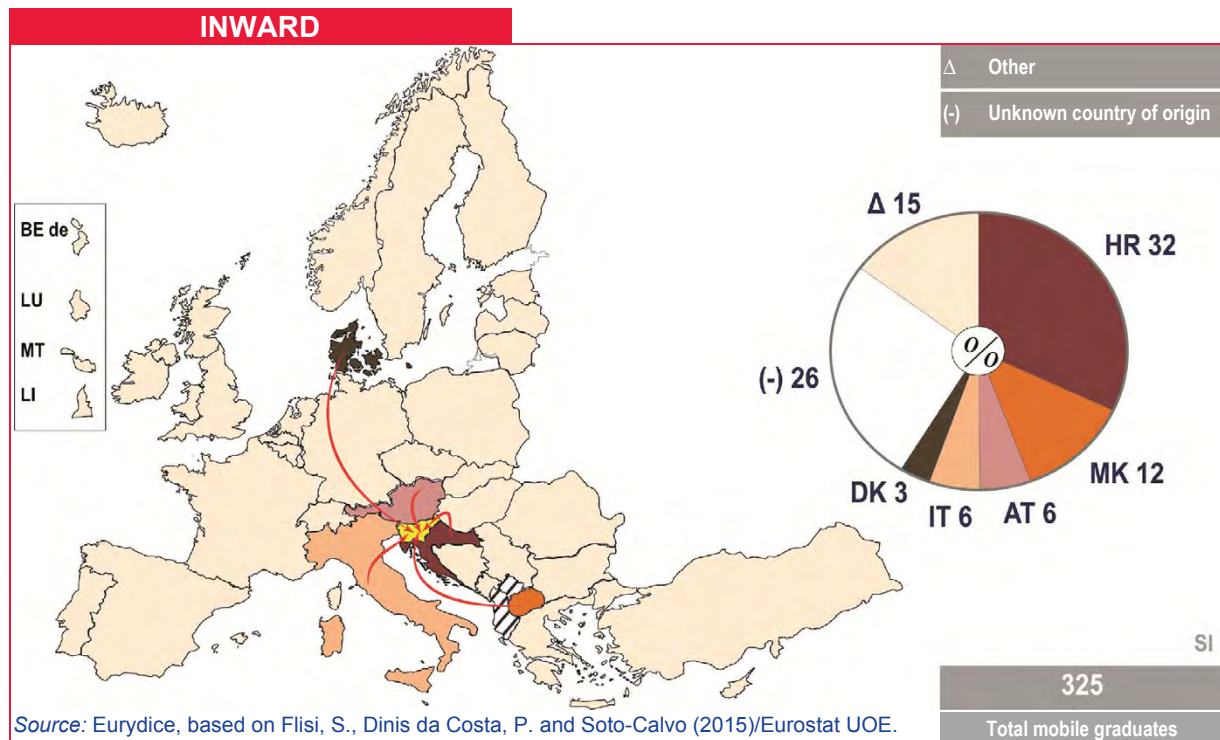
Romania



Country-specific note

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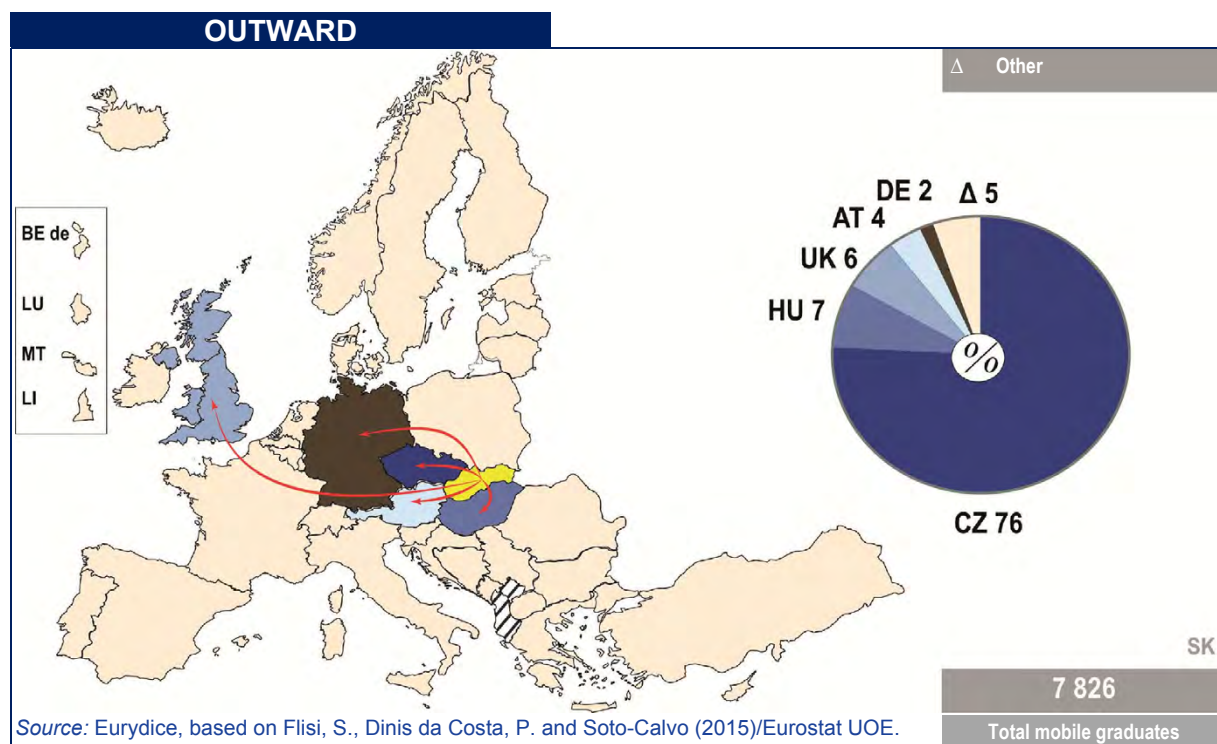
Slovenia



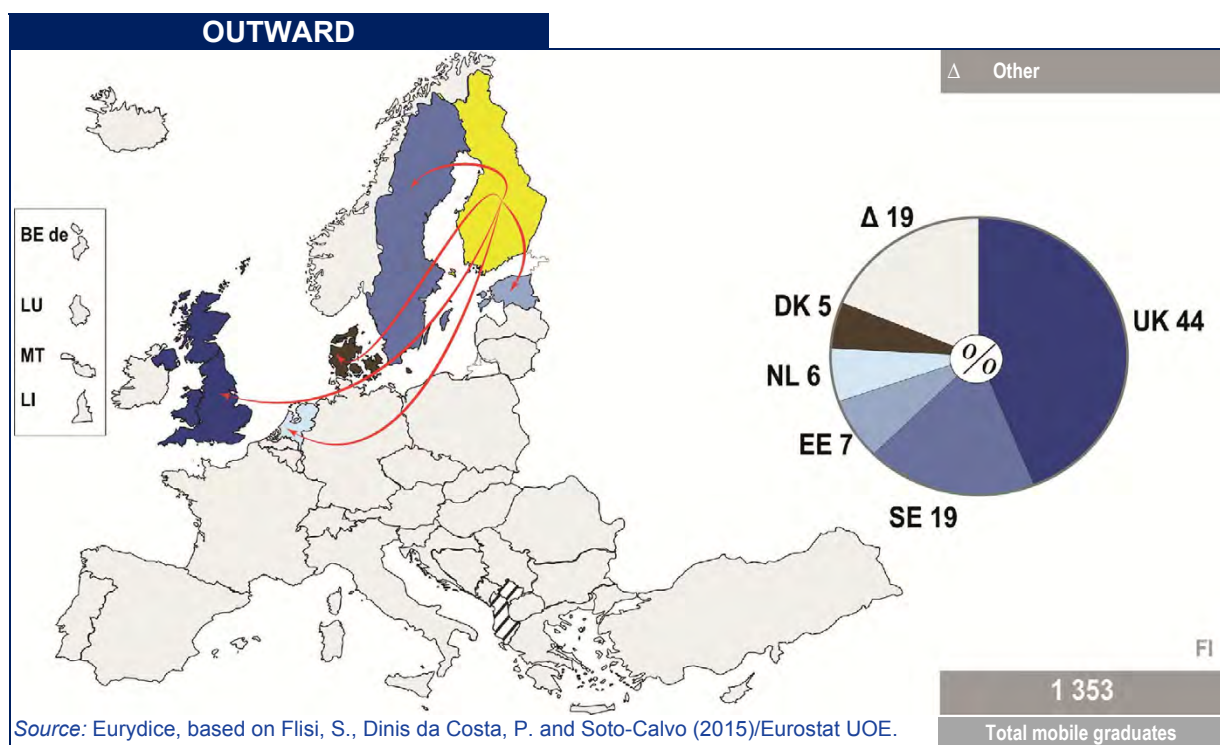
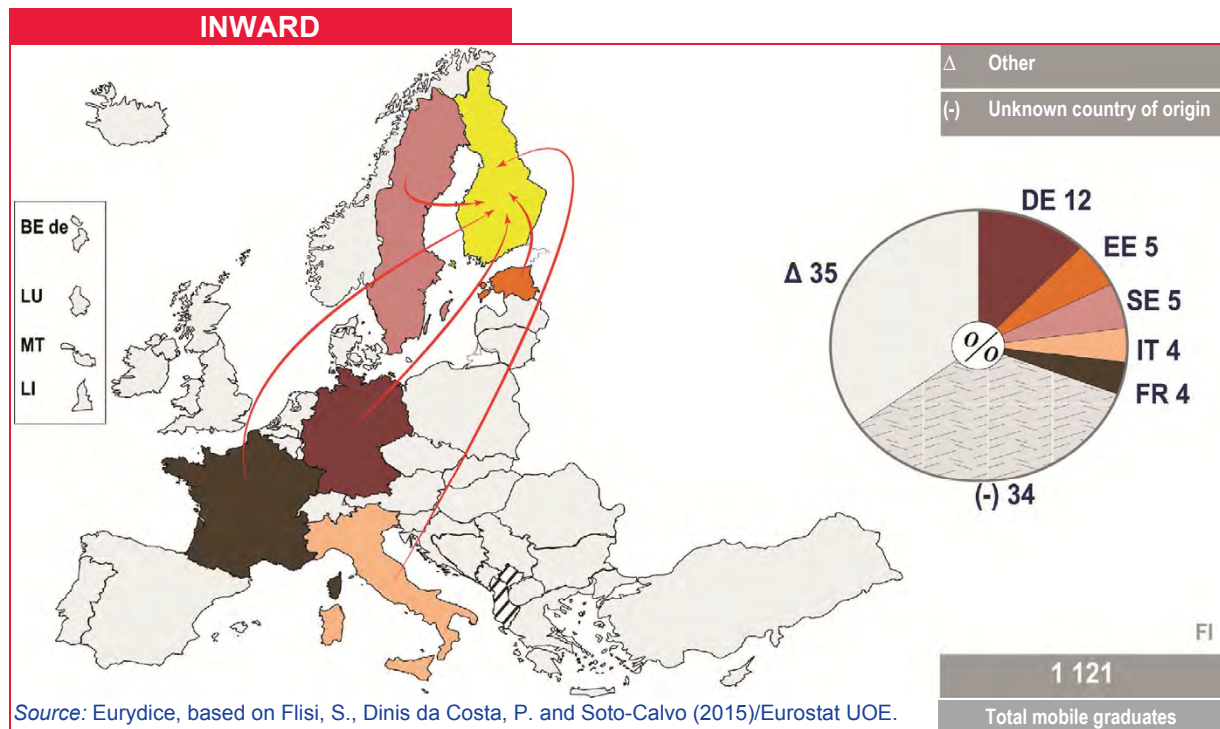
Slovakia

INWARD

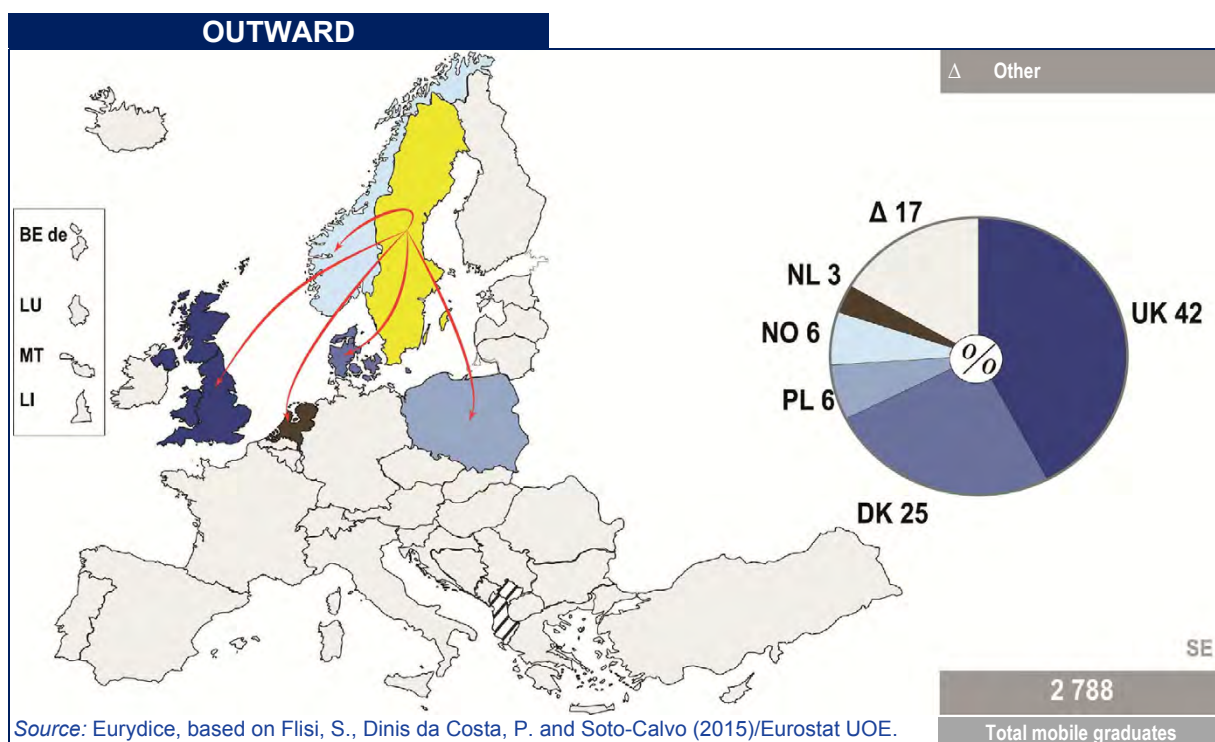
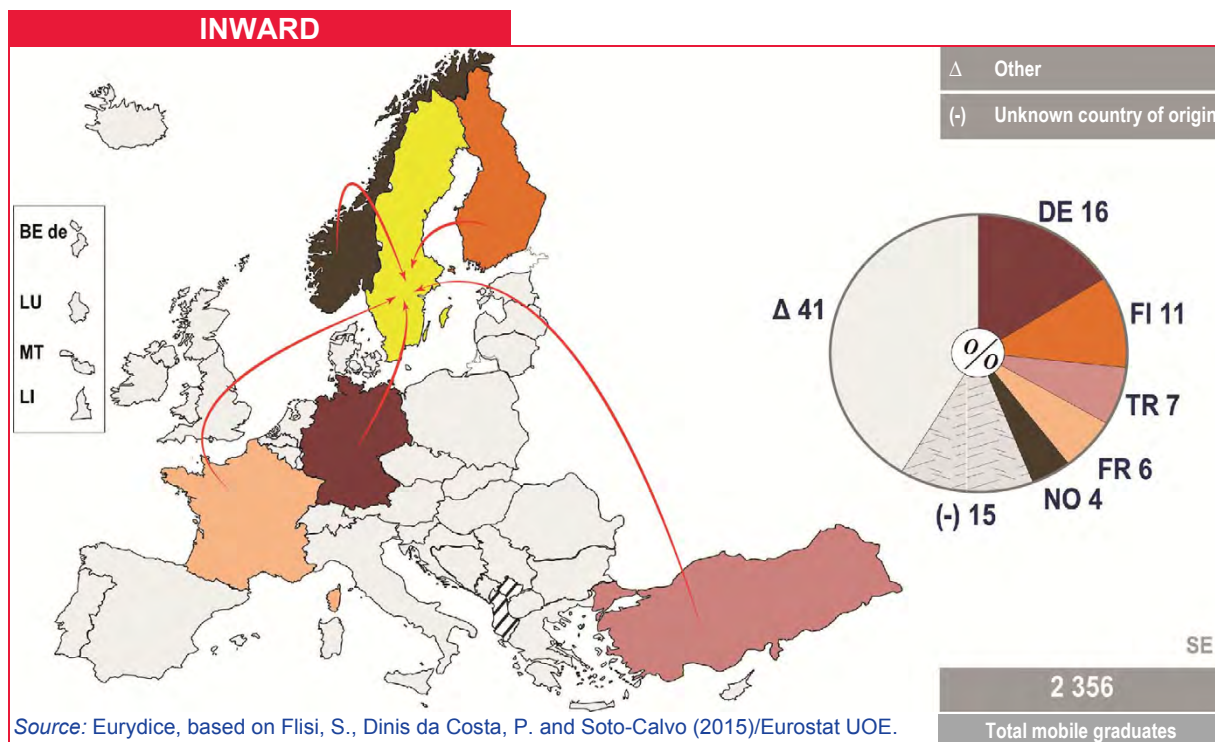
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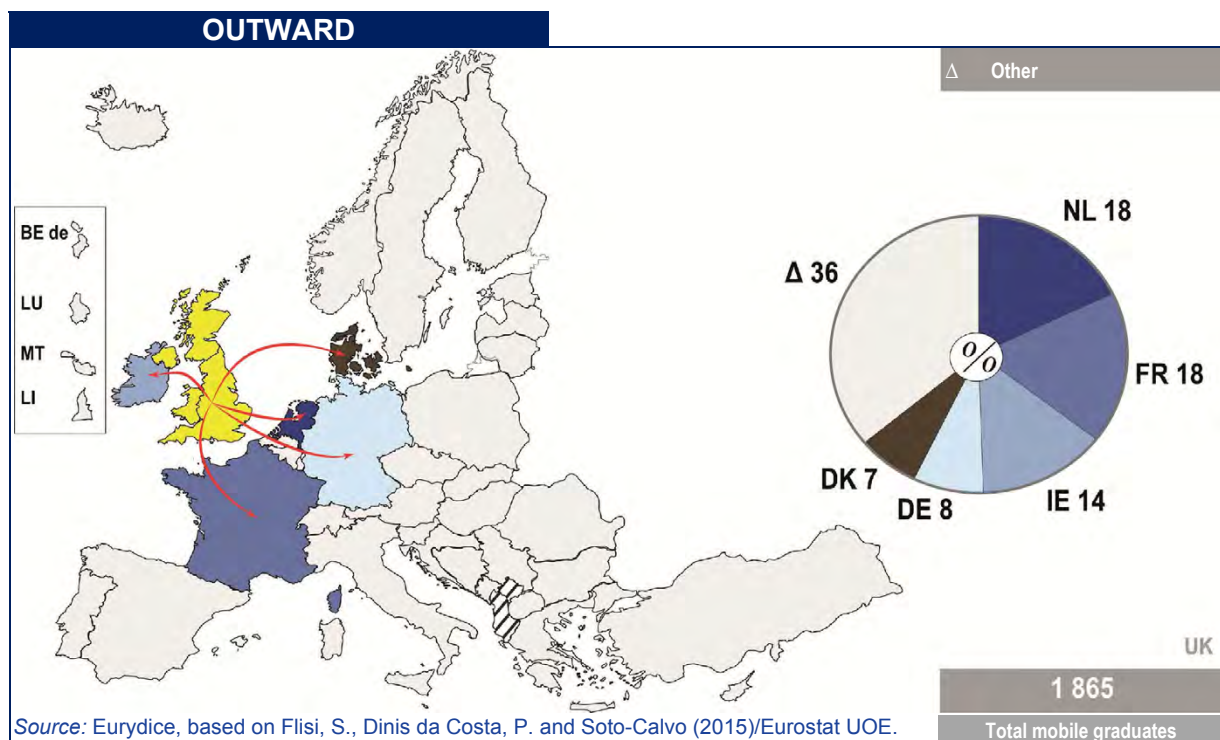
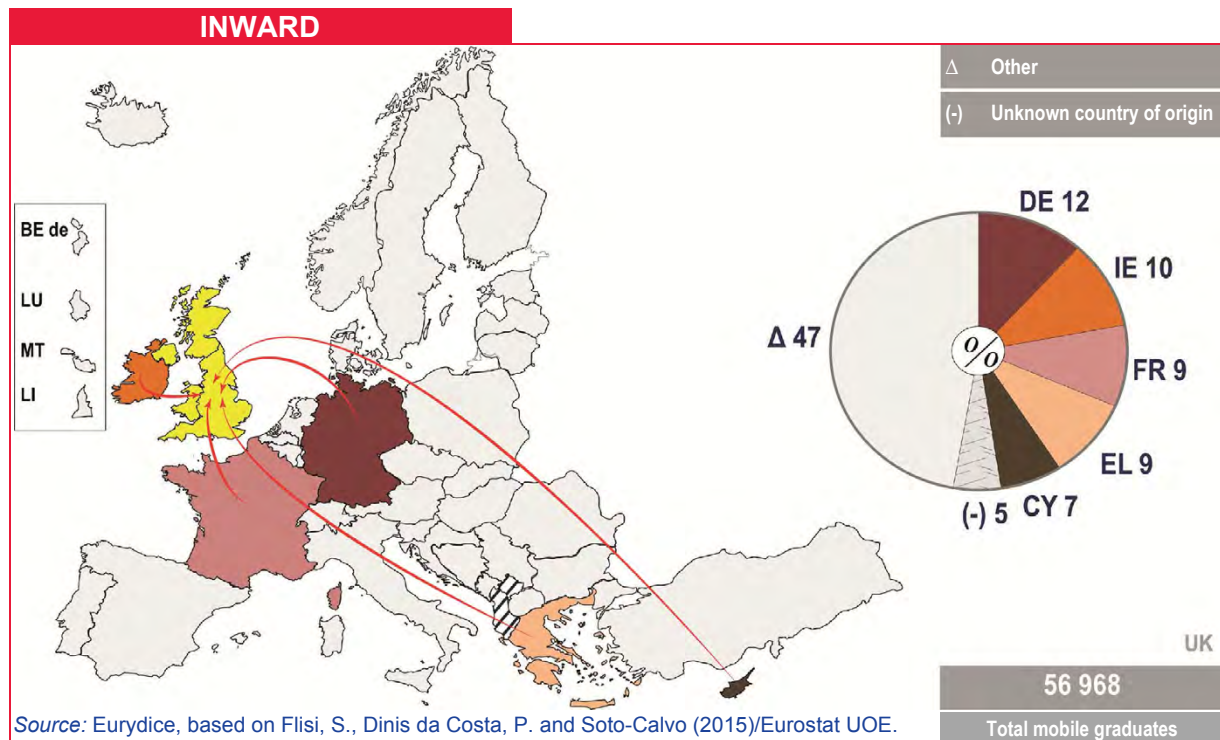
Finland



Sweden



United Kingdom



Bosnia and Herzegovina

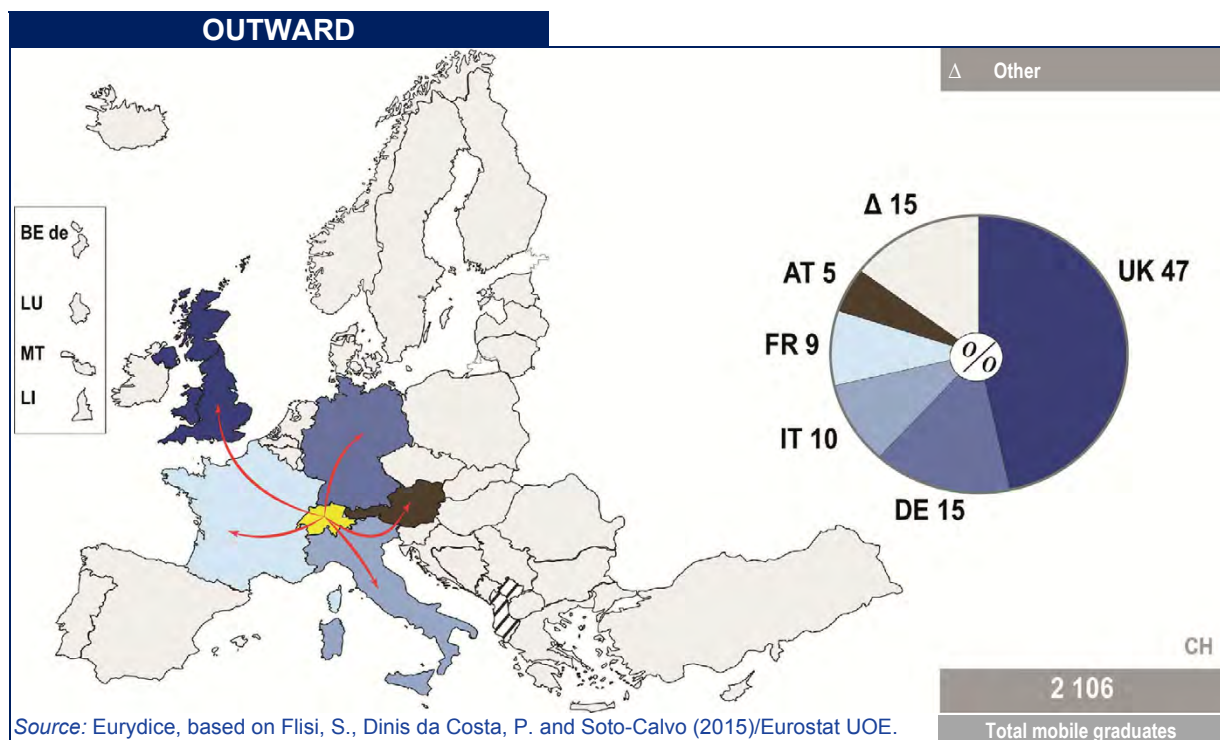
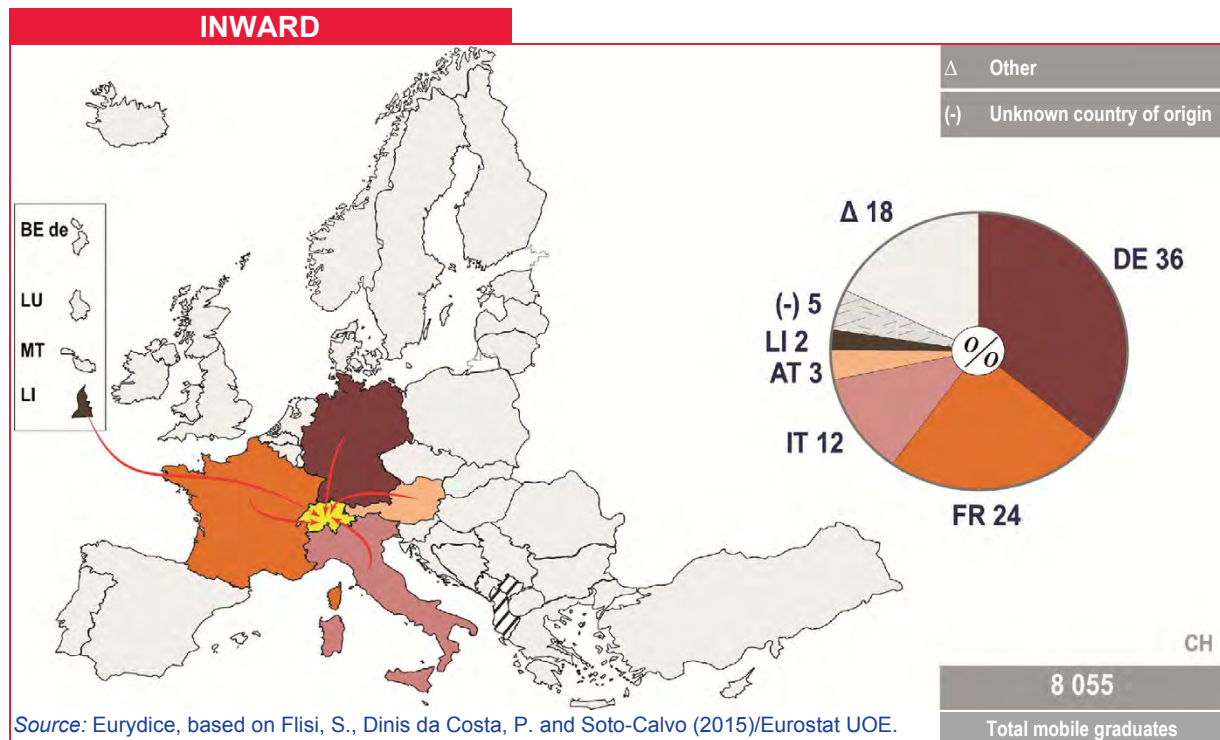
INWARD

Data not available.

OUTWARD

Data not available.

Switzerland

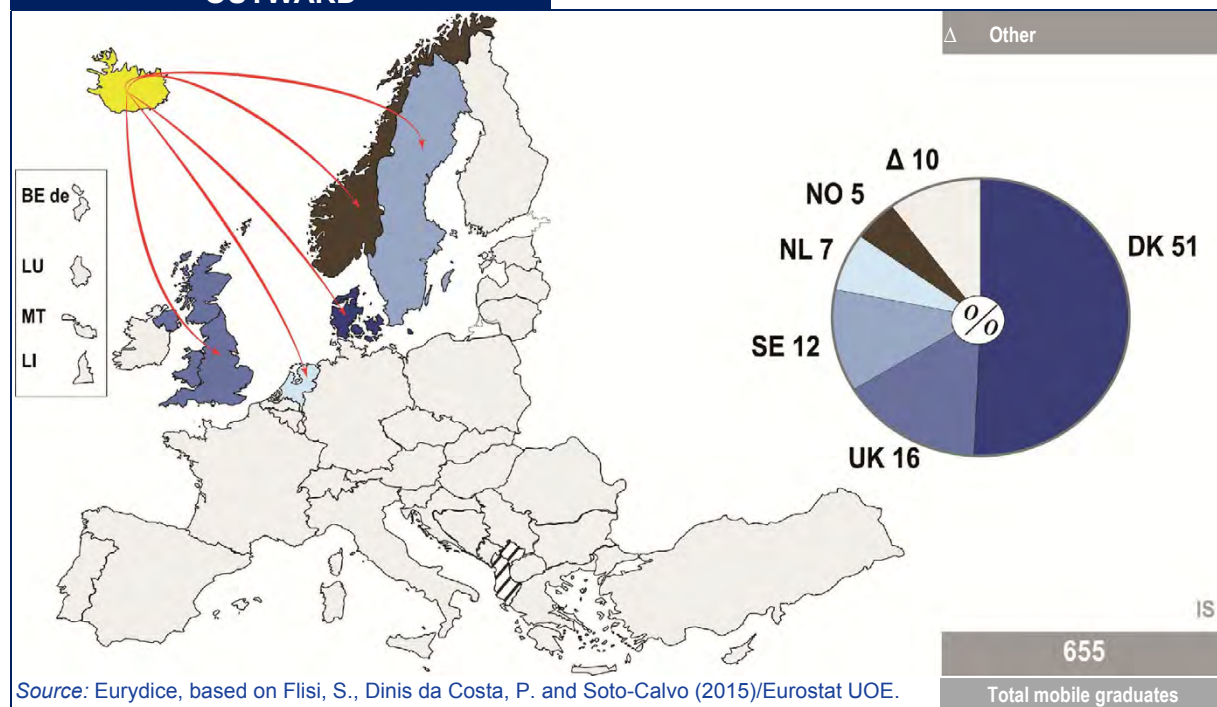


Iceland

INWARD

Data not available.

OUTWARD

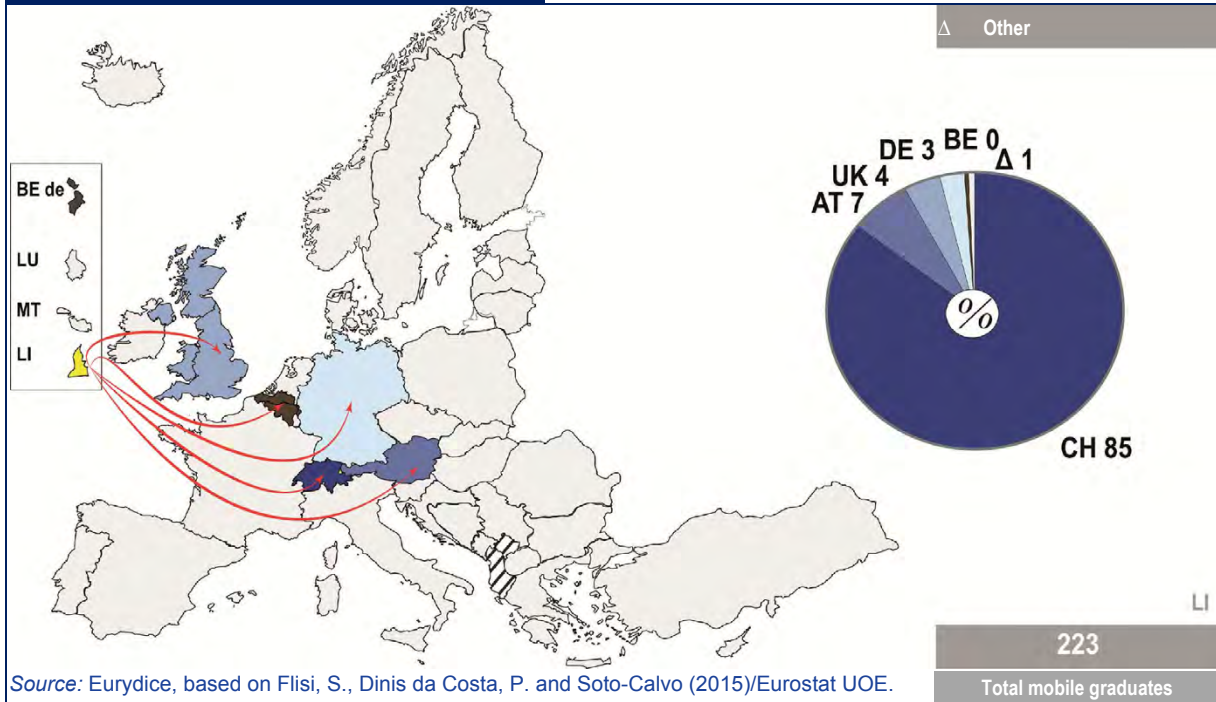


Liechtenstein

INWARD

Data not available.

OUTWARD



Montenegro

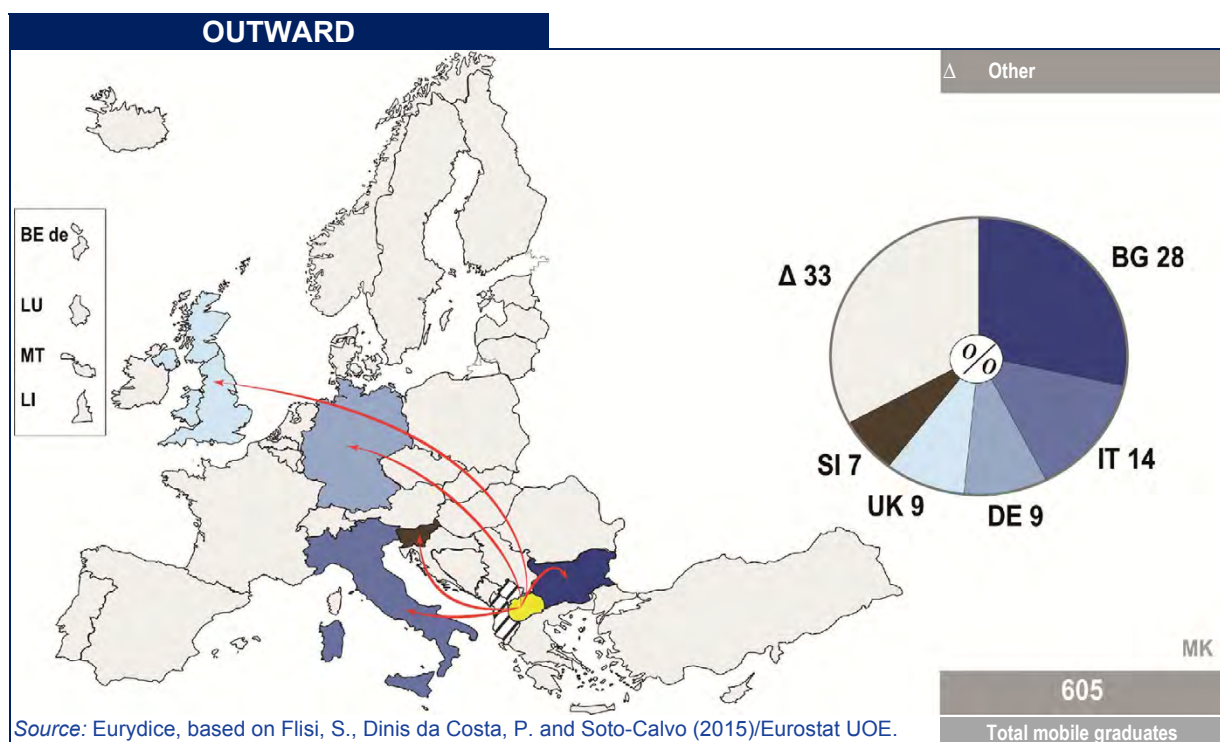
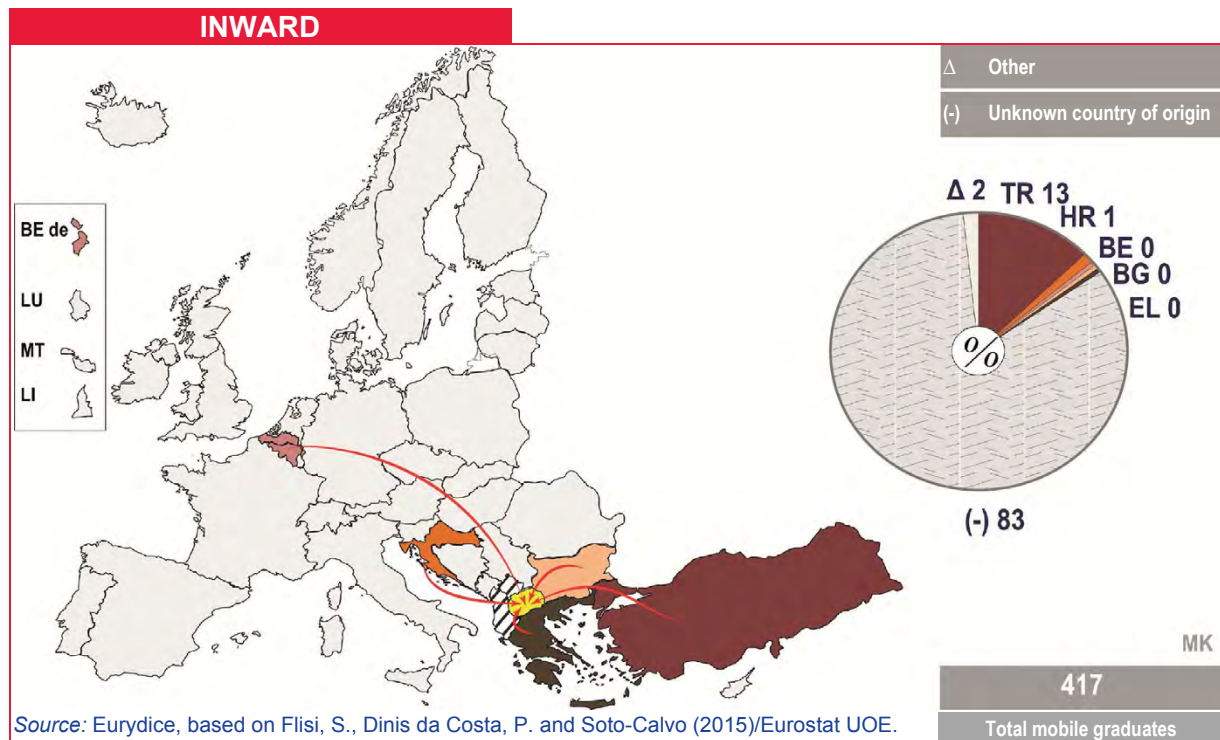
INWARD

Data not available.

OUTWARD

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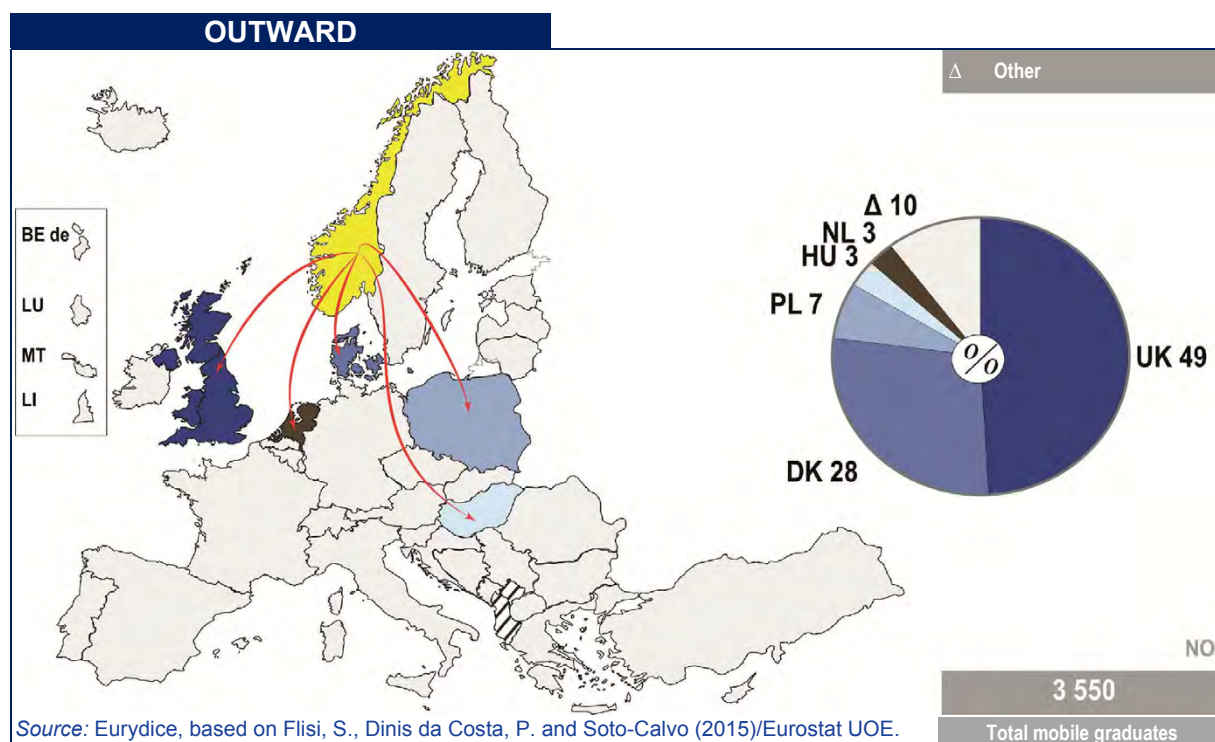
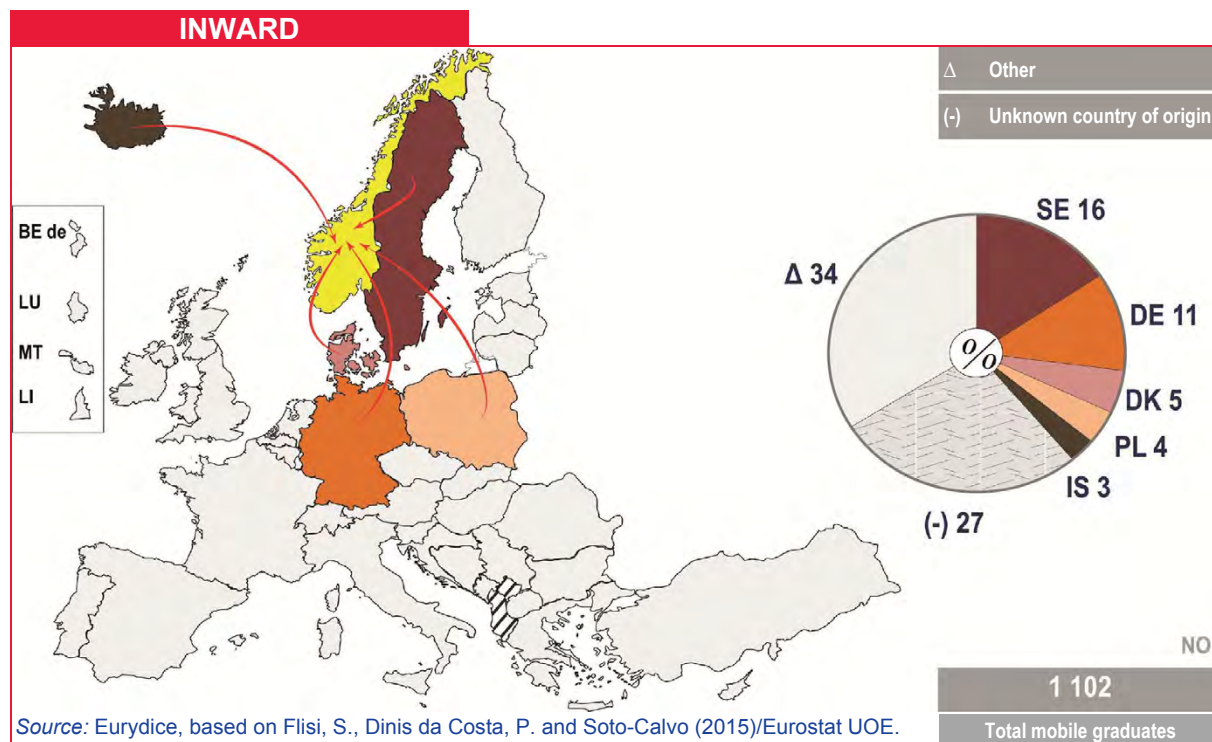
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Country-specific note

Data on ISCED level 5 not applicable.

Norway



Serbia

INWARD

Data not available.

OUTWARD

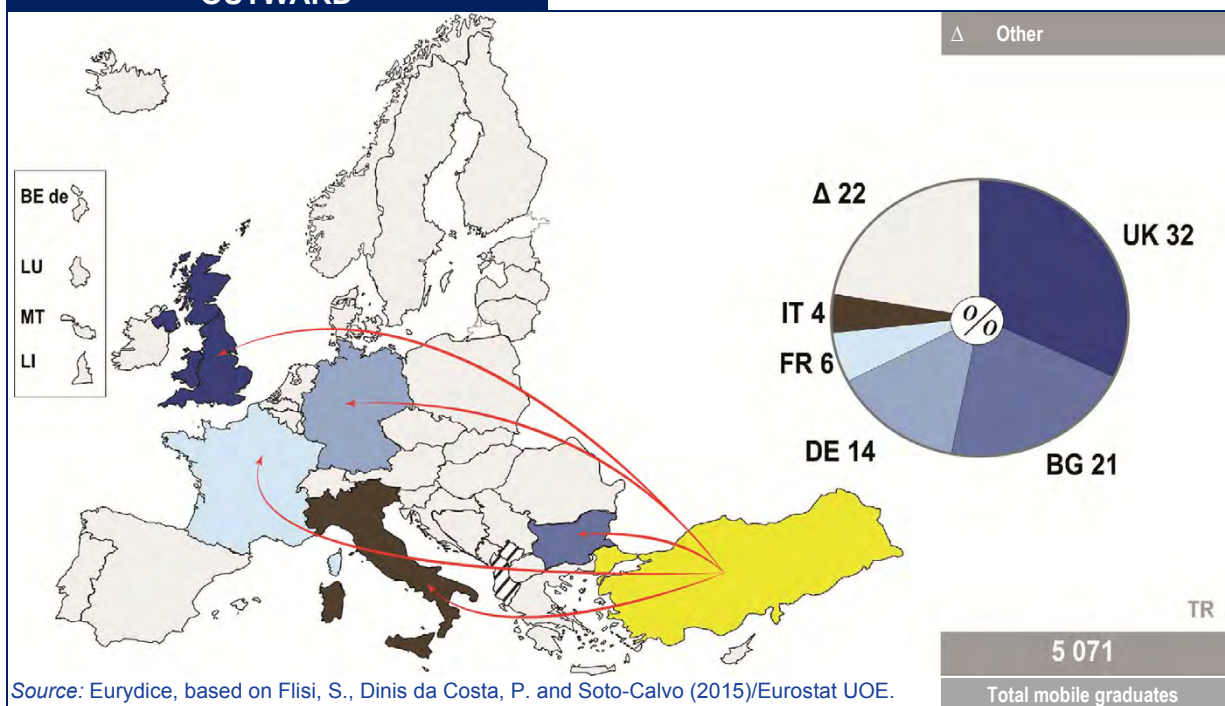
Data not available.

Turkey

INWARD

Data not available.

OUTWARD



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EXECUTIVE AGENCY**

Education and Youth Policy Analysis

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Mobility Scoreboard: Higher Education Background Report

This report has been produced to support the European Commission's Mobility Scoreboard, developed to follow up on the 2011 'Youth on the Move' Recommendation of the Council of the European Union promoting the learning mobility of young people. The purpose of the Mobility Scoreboard is to provide a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in promoting, and removing obstacles to, learning mobility.

The Higher Education Mobility Scoreboard includes six indicators in five thematic areas: information and guidance, foreign language preparation, portability of grants and loans, support provided to students with low socio-economic background, recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications. This report provides background information for the six featured indicators, mapping the policy environment for international mobility of higher education students.

Information was provided by Eurydice National Units and covers the 28 EU Member States, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey. The reference year is 2015/16.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>.

