



## INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT MOBILITY IN EUROPE AND THE CASE OF TURKEY

Diler ABA\*

University of Antwerp, Applied Language Studies, Antwerpen/BELGIUM

### ABSTRACT

This paper investigated the changes and transformation that higher education systems in Europe have undergone in the last couple of decades in terms of internationalization and academic mobility. Various reports on higher education which were published by international organizations such as the European Union, European Commission, OECD countries and UNESCO constituted the data of this literature study. The ultimate goal of the study was to analyze the international aspect of higher education and international student mobility in one specific country, namely Turkey. A thorough investigation of the literature initially revealed that the academic world is at a stage where new challenges and opportunities take place. Because globalization combines economic and cultural change, it has created a demand for fully-equipped graduates who will become the skilled workforce in very competitive professional and academic areas. In order to meet the need for global-ready graduates, mobility programmes such as Erasmus have become one of the most substantial variables of higher education in Europe, and if national governments aim to ensure themselves an important place in the swiftly changing and developing world, it is highly necessary that they follow the developments in higher education, especially regarding internationalization and student mobility.

**Keywords:** *Higher education, internationalization, globalization, Europe, student and academic staff mobility, Bologna Process, Erasmus mobility programme, Turkey.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, higher education institutions in Europe have been restructured in order to establish a comparable, transparent, common and/or similar higher education area called the European Higher Education Area, EHEA (European Commission Education and Youth, 2011). In the EHEA, cooperation among universities and other higher education systems became the determinant factor of quality and development (Parey & Waldinger, 2008; King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010; De Wit, 2010; Wiers-Jenssens, 2008; Potas, Turhan and Kisa, 2011, et al). In the 90s, it was the common view among education ministers in several European countries that segmentation of the higher education sector in Europe was outdated, useless and harmful and caused inequalities (EHEA official website: <http://ehea.info>, 2010; Carpentier & Unterhalter, 2011), because globalization in the economic world required graduates who were able to compete with other graduates in the international economic and educational areas.

Interconnectedness in higher education did not facilitate effective results with regard to academic development, research networking, staff mobility and competitive aspects of educational and professional life. As a result, it became evident that a developing, self and easily growing academic revolution, which would have extensive and swift impact, was necessary. De Wit (2010; 8) stated that among this academic revolution or more appropriately evolution, internationalization has become an indicator for quality in higher education. According to him, the terms used for internationalization could be divided into two

---

\* **Author:** [diler.aba@student.uantwerpen.be](mailto:diler.aba@student.uantwerpen.be)

main categories: curriculum related definitions such as international studies, global studies, intercultural education, and mobility related definitions such as study abroad, global education and offshore education. Frolich & Vega (2005) argued that internationalization of higher education is a complex, multidimensional and often fragmented process (cited in De Wit, 2010). Explaining in a wider sense, Teichler (2009: 1) defined internationalization as increasing cross-border activities amidst persistence of borders while globalization refers to similar activities concurrent to an erosion of borders.

Many, if not all, definitions of internationalization include the term globalization because there is close connection between the two: they overlap and are intertwined in many ways. According to Altbach & Knight (2007), globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century while internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems, institutions and individuals in order to cope with the global academic environment. The causal relationship between globalization and internationalization has been emphasized most explicitly by Knight (2008). She explained that internationalization is changing the world of higher education and globalization is changing the world of internationalization.

Despite the recent significance of the international aspect of higher education, internationalization of higher education systems in Europe has a long history. As Teichler (2009) argues, universities have long been considered one of society's most international institutions. According to him the knowledge stored, generated and transmitted is often universal -not systematically bound by borders- and it has long been seen as desirable to gather systematic information from all over the world and to generate innovation on a world scale. Most academics hold cosmopolitan values in high esteem; however, higher education in the past had a strong emphasis on national structure or organization while universal or international aspects were only some other undeniable substances.

Regarding the historical development of internationalization in higher education, Teichler (2009: 9) claimed that higher education has moved from a "predominantly 'vertical' pattern of cooperation and mobility towards a major role of 'horizontal' international relationships". This argument points at a transformation from scattered specific international activities and also from a focus on national level developments to internationalization on equal terms, towards cooperation and mobility rather than competition and towards a systematic and strategic internationalization.

The concept of internationalization gained vigorous repute and esteem in the 21st century because in the last decades more educational statistics have been systematically collected. Moreover, student mobility, which is maybe the most frequently employed indicator for internationalization, became more widespread than ever. The commencement of the Bologna Process in 1999 was an important catalyst regarding internationalization of higher education in Europe. The contributions of this process to internationalization and to student mobility throughout the world are tremendous.

### **The Bologna Process: A New Era for Internationalization of Higher Education**

The commencement of the Bologna Process is a revolutionary accomplishment to promote cooperation among higher education institutions and to internationalize higher education in Europe. It was launched in 1999 in the city of Bologna with the Bologna Declaration, which was signed by ministers responsible for higher education in 29 European countries. The Bologna Declaration called for creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The European Higher Education Area was envisaged as a competitive higher education zone- encouraging the mobility of student and academic staff-, in which students are able to choose from a wide range of courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. "It is an attempt by European ministers with responsibility for higher education to bring some order into the large variety of structures, systems and degrees which exist, to make European higher education more compatible and comparable as well as more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for

citizens and scholars from other continents” (Europa, 2009). As it had been premeditated in 1999 in the Bologna Declaration, the European Higher Education Area was launched in 2010 at the Budapest-Vienna Meeting. Next EHEA ministerial conference will take place in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015, where the progress and the priorities set at the Budapest-Vienna Declaration will be reviewed. As it is explained in the official EHEA website, next decade is aimed at consolidating the current EHEA (Bologna Process, 2010).

From the beginning, there have been three priorities of the Bologna Process: “Introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and periods of study” (Bologna Process, 2010). Despite the extensive changes and developments that have taken place in higher education in Europe since the onset of the Bologna Process, it is not yet completely possible to measure the impact of Bologna properly. Longer period is necessary in order to see the overall and long-term influence of this Process on higher education in Europe. Nevertheless, since its inception up to the present, the Process has been highly regarded. It has expanded to 47 countries with three million students. In addition to all European Union countries, other countries such as Turkey and Russia also joined the Process. The significance that has been given to the Process shows that the debates regarding the possible benefits and harms of the envisaged reforms, moved from *if* towards *how* within a few years (Reichert/Tauch, 2005 & Witte, 2006 cited in Teichler, 2009).

The Bologna Declaration, which commenced the Bologna Process, was not an instant act. It is the joint declaration of the Sorbonne which was signed one year before the Bologna by four higher education ministers (France, Germany, the UK, Italy) at the Sorbonne University in Paris. It is explained on the website of European Commission Education and Training that the aim of the Bologna Declaration was to create a common frame of reference within the intended European Higher Education Area, where mobility should be promoted both for students and graduates, as well as for the teaching staff (<http://ec.europa.eu>). Teichler (2009) argues that the Bologna Process is shaped mainly by efforts to establish new, more convergent structures of study programmes and degrees across Europe and it also aims to contribute to internationalization of higher education. According to him, the Bologna Declaration triggered off the most significant reform movement in Europe since the activities in the 1970s following the student protest of the late 1960s. Teichler (2009: 3) also claimed that the Bologna Declaration called for a structural convergence of higher education systems in Europe, among other reasons, “as means of facilitating intra-European student mobility”. Additionally, Bologna was meant to ensure the promotion of qualifications with regard to the job market.

Following the Bologna Declaration, there have been Ministerial Conferences every two years, where the ministers discuss the developments regarding the Process and search for new ways and applications for improvement. Since the Bologna, the ministers met five times: in Prague 2001 (Prague Communiqué), Berlin 2003 (Berlin Communiqué), Bergen 2005 (Bergen Communiqué), London 2007 (London Communiqué), Leuven 2009 (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué), and the 10th year anniversary of the Bologna took place in 2010 in Budapest/Vienna. The next EHEA ministerial conference will take place in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015. In each meeting, new goals and regulations have been added to the Process.

### **Mobility in the European Higher Education Area**

The student mobility has often been considered as one of the key elements of the international aspect of higher education. According to King, Findlay & Ahrens (2010), mobility implies a short time-frame of movement, and a high probability of return, as in a typical Erasmus-type scheme where the student must return to base to finish the programme of his/her study. They situate mobility in three different categories: an element of highly skilled migration, a product of globalization and an element of youth mobility cultures and the consumption geographies. Student mobility has been the most common form of cross-

border education, yet it has not been the only form. There are new forms of mobility such as programme and institution mobility. As it was not often very easy to meet the demand of students aiming for a period of study abroad, the programme and institution mobility have grown over the past decade and they are likely to meet the growing demand in the future (OECD, 2004:3).

The programme mobility involves cross-border distance education including e-learning, which is generally supplemented by face-to-face teaching in the local part institutions. The institution mobility, which is still limited in scale, has become an increasingly important feature of cross-border education too. As it is explained in the 2004 report of the OECD, the institution mobility corresponds to foreign direct investment by educational institutions or companies. "The typical form of institution mobility is the opening of foreign campuses by universities and of foreign learning centers by education providers. It may also involve the establishment of a distinctly new rather than affiliated educational institution or the takeover of all or part of a foreign educational institution" (OECD, 2004: 3).

Concerning the student mobility, which is still the most common form of cross-border education, there are three types of mobility that are defined by King, Findlay & Ahrens (2010). The first one is diploma or degree mobility; that is the mobility of students for an entire programme of study. Second one is credit mobility, which refers to mobility for part of the programme. The final type is voluntary mobility and it is undertaken for a variety of personal reasons such as improvement of foreign language proficiency, cultural exposure and/or improvement of professional skills in an international environment.

It has often been emphasized in various national and international reports on higher education that international student mobility (ISM) has been rising remarkably fast in the last decades, especially when compared to total international migration. For instance, international student mobility grew by 52% over the period of 1998-2004, compared to a growth of 13% for world migration (IOM, 2008: 105 cited in King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010: 9). It is widely acknowledged that there are extremely significant national differences within the overall picture of ISM. According to Eurostat (2006) data, in 18 countries in the European Higher Education Area, less than 3% of students are enrolled abroad, and Russia, Ukraine and the UK report the lowest outbound mobility rates with less than 1% enrolment abroad. "At the other extreme, there are ten countries –Albania, Andorra, Cyprus, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia- where more than 10% of students are enrolled abroad" (Eurydice, EACA P9, 2009: 43).

Most of the international students prefer to study in the OECD countries. In 2004, the OECD countries received around 85% of the world's foreign students. Most of this student flow concentrated on just 6 countries: United States (30%), United Kingdom (14%), Germany (13%), France (9%), Australia (7%) and Japan (4%). On the other hand, Asia headed the list of regions sending students abroad for higher education and Europe was a close second followed by Africa, North America, South America and Oceania. (OECD, 2004). It is easily recognized by these percentages that the leading English speaking countries alone account for more than half of all foreign students in the OECD. This fact emphasizes the significance of language proficiency in international education and also the importance of English as lingua franca, especially in the academic world.

There are various educational, professional, cultural, political and individual reasons that are taken into consideration when students decide to study abroad. King, Findlay & Ahrens (2010: 2) argue that causative factors driving international student mobility exist at three levels. First one is the macro-scale of economic and cultural globalization and the internationalization of higher education systems. Second factor is the meso-scale of institutional initiatives and the final one is the individual-scale factors such as language competence, desire for adventure and employability.

Naturally, there are challenges that student mobility faces and difficulties and requirements that it brings along with. The increasing importance and popularity of ISM obliges countries (both national governments and educational institutions) to take certain measures in order to catch up with the rest of the world regarding the developments in international higher education area. For example, in England, inward mobility is one of the highest in Europe; however when compared to other European countries, outward student mobility in the UK is rather low. King, Findlay & Ahrens (2010: 19) believe that this could be a matter of concern given the increasing internationalization of skilled and professional labor markers: “the danger being that the UK will produce proportionally fewer multilingual, multicultural graduates than other competitor countries in Europe and elsewhere. This creates, in turn, two scenarios: one is that fewer UK graduates will gain key positions in European and overseas companies and institutions, and the other is that top positions in UK companies, professions and transnational corporations based in the UK will be taken by multilingual foreign nationals”.

Another barrier that is related to ISM is the economic costs. In the decision to study abroad, availability of scholarship is one of the main determinant factors. Unfortunately, in many countries, including Turkey, financial support is not sufficient enough to meet the demand of students and academic staff. Despite the fact that the Bologna has given considerable attention to the importance of portable financial support to students in order to encourage mobility, the scarcity of financial support still leads to low levels of mobility.

Socio-economic conditions of the country, cultural and linguistic obstacles, concerns about the fair recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, cooperation with renowned universities, the difficulty of obtaining travel and residence documents such as visa are some other challenges that ISM faces. For non-EU members, such as Turkey, the burden of visa applications procedure and the experiences of students while awaiting their visa are quite often frustrating and disincentive (Ozler, 2012).

## **METHOD**

This study is designed as a review paper which takes stock of the field on higher education. The aim of the research was first to investigate the recent changes and developments in higher education systems in Europe and secondly to analyze the international aspect of higher education and international student mobility in EU candidate Turkey. Various instruments such as international and national reports on higher education which were prepared by organizations responsible for education and training both in Europe and in Turkey (i.e. European Commission Education and Training, Turkish National Agency, Turkish Ministry of Education) constituted the data of this study. Furthermore, the investigations of other researchers such as Teichler (2009), Wiers-Jenssens (2008), De Wit (2010, 2011) et al., various press releases, web-sites and handbooks on internationalization and student mobility were also used. Main instruments that were employed in order to find out the developments in Turkish higher education system were the national reports that were prepared by Turkish National Agency (TURNA), the organization which is responsible for the implementation of mobility programmes such as Erasmus, Youth, Gruntwig etc. in Turkey. Even though TURNA published many national reports regarding higher education and mobility in Turkey, only the most recent reports were employed in this study since the goal of this research was to identify the most updated and recent novelties, developments and challenges in Turkish higher education system. Some of these resources are available on the internet while some others can be ordered via online libraries or journals. Collected materials were analyzed descriptively by focusing on 2 specific variables: mobility and internationalization. The goal of this analysis was not only to identify the general trends and changes in higher education in the last decades but also to find out the requirements and challenges that could be associated with internationalization and mobility.

## RESULTS

Considering the general developments in higher education in Europe in recent years, it was found out in this study that the international aspect has become an indispensable component of higher education systems not only in Europe but also in the other parts of the world. Despite the fact that internationalization has a long history, it has gained a remarkable significance only in the last couple of decades. Cultural, economic and social globalizations are some of the most important drives of the popularity of internationalization today. That is to say that the recent importance of internationalization is the result of actual needs and changes in the global areas.

When compared to the education systems of the past, higher education today concentrates on cooperation more than competition. Moreover, internationalization has become an indicator of quality in education institutions, and one of the most common ways of promoting internationalization in a country is to support student and academic staff mobility. Even though international organizations such as the European Union, European Commission, UNESCO etc. and also national governments and higher education institutions stress the importance and benefits of mobility, it has often not been easy to meet the demand of academic staff and students, especially because of financial barriers.

Concerning the changes and developments in Turkish higher education system, five marked findings with respect to internationalization and mobility were noted. First, it was found that Turkey has taken part in noteworthy international educational agreements such as the Bologna Process later than many European countries. Despite this fact, it has made great progress in a short time and now internationalization takes a great place in the agenda of Turkish National Agency (TURNA), Turkish Ministry of Education (MEB) and Turkish Higher Education Institution (YOK). In order to catch up with other developed countries in Europe and the rest of the world, to meet the requirements of the Bologna and to ensure themselves an important place in the rapidly changing academic and economic world, Turkish higher education institutions work ardently (Turkish National Report, 2011; Gulcan, 2010; Europa, 2011b). The objectives that have been defined for higher education and student mobility for the following years reveal this ambition of Turkish academic establishments. To illustrate, Turkish state minister and chief negotiator for the EU, Egemen Bagis, explained in April 2012 that 55 thousand people would be sent to Europe for educational purposes with no charge (ab.ilan.com, Press Releases, 2012). Moreover, Bagis explained in October 2012 in a press release that the budget for the mobility in Turkey was secure even though the financial resources for mobility programmes such as Erasmus were becoming rather limited in Europe. In addition to the funds that are granted by the EU, a noteworthy amount of the financial support for mobility is provided by national organizations in Turkey (hurriyet.com, October, 2012).

Up to 40% of the 55 thousand people mentioned by Bagis will be sent to Europe with national funds. This clearly indicates that there is significant financial support by Turkish establishments for the student mobility. Bagis (ab.ilan.com, 2012) claims that the vision of this 55 thousand people will broaden as a result of their education and training abroad and after their return to Turkey, they are expected to perform better in their workplaces. This argument indicates that Turkish education institutions and Turkish Ministry of Education are aware of the individual, social, academic and professional benefits of internationalization of higher education and student mobility for the future of the country. This is one of the main reasons (besides political rationales) why Turkish institutions support mobility and internationalization rather extensively.

Secondly, mobility trends in Turkey are different when compared to many other countries in Europe and also outside Europe. Cross-border higher education has developed differently across the OECD countries and regions. The 2004 year report of OECD explains that student mobility has been policy-driven in Europe and demand-driven in the Asia-Pacific region, while North America has mostly been a magnet for foreign students (OECD, 2004: 1). In Turkey, however, the developments in higher education were both

policy and demand-driven. The process of change and improvement of higher education started a long time ago. When Turkey applied full membership for the European Union in 1987, it was stressed that for membership, certain aspects of economic, social and academic environments in the country were to be improved. The educational policies of the EU were to be adapted to the Turkish system. The primary objectives of the education policy of the EU have been to encourage mutual understanding among the citizens of member countries, to support European citizenship, to train students and teachers in this process and to ensure participation of all member countries into this process of change and development (Saglam, Ozudogru, Ciray, 2011; Gedikoglu, 2005; Saglam, 2009). Due to the fact that Turkey aims to become a full member of the European Union, it has become crucial that the quality in education is improved in order to harmonize the Turkish education system with that of the EU.

Third, the outward student mobility has been the most common form of international education in Turkey. The demand for international education has always been rather high in the country because higher education students found study abroad quite beneficial for their future career and employment opportunities. To illustrate, in 2001, 44.204 Turkish students went abroad to study, and Turkey was among the top student sending countries in the OECD area. Education database of OECD lists top sending countries in 2001 as the following: China (124.000), Korea (70.523), India (61.179), Greece (55.074), Japan (55.041), Germany (54.489), France (47.587), Turkey (44.204), Morocco (43.063), Italy (41.485), Malaysia (32.709), United States (30.103), Canada (29.376), Indonesia (26.615), Spain (26.196), United Kingdom (25.198) (OECD, 2004). Furthermore, on having a look at the most updated statistics regarding the Erasmus programme (the most popular and successful mobility programme established up to now), we will find that the number of mobile Turkish students have increased remarkably, when also compared to that of the mobile students in many European countries. Between 2007-2008, the start of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), and the 2010-2011 academic years, the outbound student mobility rates in 8 countries grew by more than 40%, among which is Turkey. Turkish academic staff also found international training beneficial for their career improvement. Between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, outbound staff mobility in 12 countries grew by more than 20 % and Turkey was one of these countries too. (European Commission, 2012).

Despite the fact that many Turkish higher education students and academic staff have moved abroad for educational purposes, the popularity of Turkey as a destination for foreign students has not been remarkable. In 2010-2011, 10095 Turkish students went abroad within the framework of Erasmus programme while only 4288 foreign students continued their higher education studies in Turkey with the identical programme (European Commission, 2012, Erasmus 1987-2012, Turkey Statistics). The leading countries which receive the most international students have been the English speaking USA and the UK. Here, it should be remembered that there is a change in geography of international mobility flows, and the key feature for this change is the rapid rise of the developing world, especially China and India and also other more developed Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea. The US and the UK, which have been the main destinations for international students for long, have seen a decline in their international student numbers.

Fourth, in Turkey, which is a fast developing country, the professional value of mobility is rather high. It has often been pointed out in the literature that international student mobility (ISM) is experienced differently in developing versus developed countries and the greater part of student flow is from developing to developed countries (Wiers-Jenssens, 2008; Aktan & Sari, 2010). In regard to employment and prestige, the value and advantages of ISM are higher in developing countries (Varghese, 2008: 24 in King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010: 34). Bracht, Engel, Janson, Over, Schomburg and Teichler (2006) state that knowledge about the Socrates/Erasmus programme seems to be more widespread among the employers from Central and Eastern Europe than among employers from Western Europe, and the employers from the Central and Eastern Europe value international student mobility more favorable than the employers from Western Europe. The fact that mobility programmes are known better and that they

are assessed more favorably by employers in Eastern Europe explains the reasons why student flow is from developing to developed countries. If students have international experience, it is probably easier for them to find jobs upon their return to their home country. The possibility of finding better jobs (with more international responsibilities) has often been stated to be one of the main motives for students who move abroad for educational purposes.

Nevertheless, Bashir (2007: 4) argues that the possible negative impacts of mobility trades on underfunded and inefficient domestic higher education systems operating within weak regulatory systems and the possibility of losing sovereignty over a sector that is vital to national development are some major concerns of developing countries regarding student mobility. Turkey, being a fast developing country, faces different challenges, and the expectations regarding internationalization and student mobility, and educational mobility experiences of Turkish students are somewhat distinct when compared to other European mobile students (i.e. extra administrative work such as visa applications, lack of awareness about the European culture which is the consequence of not being able to move to other countries because of the visa problems etc.).

Finally, in Turkey, as in the case of many other European countries, the process of change and development in higher education gained speed after the Bologna Process (Serbest, 2005; Saglam, Ozudogru, Ciray, 2011). More specifically, internationalization and student mobility in higher education gained remarkable popularity and interest after the Erasmus programme (Bakioglu & Certel, 2010). Turkey became part of the Bologna Process in 2001 at the Prague Communiqué. Since welcoming the Bologna, Turkey has taken various important steps in order to improve its education system and to support student and academic staff mobility (CoHE, 2008). For example, the ratio of enrolment to tertiary education increased from 22% in 1999 to 38% in 2008 (UNESCO, Education Data, 2011). The reforms and developments that have taken place in Turkish higher education system are explained broadly in 2008 and 2011 year National Reports of Turkey. According to these reports, initially there have been developments regarding institutional structure of higher education in Turkey. The number of universities increased to 177 (108 public and 69 non-profit higher education institutions) (National Bologna Report Turkey, 2012). In the second phase, there have been developments in regard with Quality Assurance: starting from January 2007, each university in Turkey prepares its annual strategic plans according to the Law on Public Financial Management and Control-No. 5018. Thirdly, there have been improvements concerning National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for higher education. A Commission and a Working Group have been formed to carry out the work on establishment of NQF for higher education and determined a clear timetable for each step to be taken (CoHE, 2008).

The Turkish national agency (TURNA), which is one of the main organizations that is responsible for the smooth performance and implementation of Bologna reforms in the country, was established in 2002. One year after the establishment of TURNA, European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was launched in 15 higher education institutions and their 45 faculties as pilot projects in 2003. 65 higher education institutions were given Erasmus University Charter (EUC) by the European Commission in 2005. The council of higher education (YOK), the Turkish University Rectors' Committee (TURC) and the Interuniversity Council are involved in the process as stakeholders.

The European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Student (Erasmus Student Mobility Programme), which has become the most widely known and popular student and academic staff mobility tool, was launched in 2003 in Turkey (first with Erasmus Pilot applications). Contributions of this programme to the mobility and internationalization of higher education have often been stressed. To give an example, Teichler (2009) evaluated this programme as the engine of various education programmes that are supported by the EU. According to Fontaine (2006), Erasmus is a milestone which helps its participants to be well-equipped, which broadens their horizons and which offers new experiences (cited in Bakioglu & Certel, 2010: 41). In 2003, 15 Turkish universities were selected for

Erasmus Pilot Project, and 10 of these universities sent students to some European universities within this application. In 2004, the process for full-participation to the Erasmus programme began. In 2004, 1,142 Turkish students were sent abroad and 299 foreign students were hosted. These numbers rose to 10095 outgoing Turkish students and 4288 hosted foreign students in 2010-11 (European Commission, 2012). The remarkable difference between outgoing and incoming student numbers again illustrates the fact that Turkey has not been a popular destination for foreign students while Turkish students have often been quite eager to move abroad for educational purposes. The statistics above also demonstrate that the Erasmus has become a real success since its commence in Turkey (TURNA, 2012; CoHE, 2010).

Turkey has taken steps in order to improve its information network in the EHEA outside of Europe too. It is a partner country of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI), which aims to pave the way towards a more effective cooperation among higher education and research institutions in 12 Euro-Mediterranean countries. It is also a member of Black Sea Economic Cooperation; therefore, it shares experiences with the countries in this region, too. Finally, there are some other applications in which European higher education is promoted in Turkey (i.e. Jean Monnet and Chevening Programmes, Cultural Conventions, Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Programme, European Master Programme in Conference Interpreting) (CoHE, 2008: 47).

Concerning the relationship between higher education and research, Turkey scored rather high in world ranking. According to 2007 statistics, it is on the 19th row in world ranking according to publications in scientific journals. The number of scientific publications in Turkey increased to 21273 in 2007, while only 15347 scientific publications were made in 2005 (Thomson's ISI Web of Science cited in CoHE, 2008).

Despite all the significant changes and developments in Turkish higher education system that are mentioned above, it has also quite often been stressed that a lot remains to be done concerning the reforms of Bologna (ESU, 2011). Some of the main challenges ahead include insufficient financial support to meet the growing demand for mobility. Despite the grants that are provided by the EU within the Framework of Lifelong Learning and Youth Programmes and complementary national funds; the grants available are not sufficient to support all students and staff mobility, "the demand is three times higher than the total grant available" (CoHE, 2008: 43). Furthermore, the administrative burdens concerning the visa applications, insufficient support for social dimension of student and academic staff mobility, student centered learning and the recognition of prior learning were considered as some other key issues that need more attention in the future steps for the implementation of the Bologna Process. Quality of vocational higher schools is also to be improved because the qualifications of the graduates from these schools have not been at the expected level for the labor market needs (CoHE, 2008).

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper has attempted to provide evidence that the international dimension of higher education in Europe has been steadily growing in importance, scope and complexity. The internationalization of higher education originated and gained speed because of actual needs that were the results of globalization. The consequences of the internationalization of higher education in Europe have led to a remarkable focus on student and academic staff mobility, having the aims of cooperation among different universities from various foreign countries, and also for the purposes of competition and education of internationally experienced students with various skills. Even though there is still little collected information on mobility in the EHEA, it is widely accepted that studying abroad helps students to acquire new competences and can contribute to their success in the labor market. Student mobility is also thought to contribute to the intercultural dialogue and informed citizenship. Therefore it became a central objective of both Bologna Process and the EU.

Regarding the changes and developments in the Turkish higher education system, it was found that Turkey has started to take part in international educational agreements such as the Bologna and Erasmus later than other European countries, but it has made great progress, and the internationalization and mobility have become very important components of higher education in Turkey. It was also found that the developments in higher education were both policy and demand driven. When Turkey applied for full membership to European Union in 1987, it was stressed that the educational policies of the EU were to be adapted to the Turkish system. Next, the outward student mobility has been found to be the most common form of international education in the country. Even though many Turkish tertiary students have moved abroad for educational purposes, Turkey has not been a popular destination for international students yet. Fourth, as a fast developing country, the professional value of mobility in Turkey is very high. This paper also attempted to show that the international student mobility was experienced differently in developing versus developed countries, and the greater part of student flow was from developing to developed countries. Finally, in Turkey, the process of change and development in higher education gained speed after 2001. Under the influence of the Bologna Process, structural changes have been introduced and implemented in higher education. The enrollment rates in tertiary education have increased and there have also been developments concerning Quality Assurance and National Qualifications framework. Despite all these significant changes, there are still some important obstacles such as financial and administrative problems (i.e. insufficient grants, complex procedures for visa applications and social aspects of mobility such as lack of intercultural awareness) that need to be addressed.

## REFERENCES

- ab-ilan.com. (2012). 55 bin Kisiye AB'de Ucretsiz Egitim. Retrieved 2012, from <http://www.ab-ilan.com/son-haber/55-bin-kisiye-ab-de-ucresiz-egitim-007910.html>
- Aktan, E., & Sari, B. (2010). An Inquiry on Application Process of EU Erasmus Programme & Students' Views Regarding Erasmus Programme of Student Exchange. *European Perspectives on Internationalization, Exedra Special Issue*, 239: 268.
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The Internationalization of Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Published by <http://www.sagepublications.com>.
- Bakioglu, A., & Certel, S. S. (2010). Erasmus Programina Katilan Ogrencilerin Akademik Yasantilarinin Nitel Olarak Incelenmesi. *Avrupa Arastirmalari Dergisi*, Cilt 18, Sayi:1-2, pp. 37-62.
- Bashir, S. (2007, March). Trends in International Trade in Higher Education: Implications and Options for Developing Countries. *Education Working Paper Series - 6*, Education Unit for the World Bank (HDNED).
- Bologna Process. (2010). About the Bologna Process. Retrieved June 2012, from The Official Bologna Process Website: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>
- Bracht, O., Engel, C., Janson, K., Over, A., Schomburg, H., & Teichler, U. (2006). The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility. Kassel, Germany: Final Report, International Centre for Higher Education Research, INCHER.
- Carpentier, V., & Unterhalter, E. (2011). Globalisation, Higher Education and Inequalities: Problems and Prospects. In R. King, & S. M. Naidoo, *Handbook on Globalization and Higher Education* (pp. 148-168). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- CoHE. (2008). Bologna Process, National Report Turkey. Ankara: European Union and International Relations Unit of CoHE (The Council of Higher Education Turkey).
- CoHE. (2010). Higher Education System in Turkey. Printing Gorsel Tanitim: Ankara. Retrieved June 2012, from The Council of Higher Education: <http://bologna.yok.gov.tr/?page=yazi&c=1&i=3>
- De Wit, H. (2010). Internationalization of Higher Education in Europe and Its Assessment, Trends and Issues. Den Haag, Nederland: NVAO Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie.

- De Wit, H. (2011). Trends, Issues and Challenges in Internationalization of Higher Education. Centre for Applied Research on Economics & Management.
- EHEA Official Website. (2010). History of the Bologna Process. Retrieved June 2012, from European Higher Education Area: <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=3>
- ESU. (2011). Bologna Process in Turkey Yet to Become Reality. Retrieved June 2012, from European Students' Union: <http://www.esu-online.org/news/article/6001/502/>
- Europa. (2009, April). Frequently Asked Questions: the Bologna Process. Retrieved May 2012, from Press Releases, RAPID: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-09-170\\_en.htm?locale=EN](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-09-170_en.htm?locale=EN)
- Europa. (2011 b). Turkey 2010 Progress Report. Retrieved June 2012, from [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2010/package/tr\\_rapport\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf)
- European Commission. (2011, October). Turkey 2011 Progress Report. Commission Staff Working Paper. Brussels.
- European Commission. (2012). Erasmus – Facts, Figures & Trends. The European Union Support for Student and Staff Exchanges and University Cooperation in 2010-11. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission. (2012, September). Erasmus Statistics, Erasmus 1987-2012. Retrieved June 2012, from European Commission Education and Training: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/statistics\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/statistics_en.htm)
- European Commission Education and Training. (n.d.). The Bologna Process-Towards the European Higher Education Area. Retrieved June 2012, from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1290\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1290_en.htm)
- European Commission Education and Youth. (2011, December). Retrieved May 2012, from European Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm)
- European Union. (2010). The EU Contribution to European Higher Education Area. Brussels: Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Eurostat. (2006). Statistics by Theme. Retrieved June 2012, from European Commission: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/themes>
- Eurydice, EACA P9. (2009). Higher Education in Europe 2009: Developments in the Bologna Process. Brussels: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, EACEA.
- Gedikoglu, T. (2005, June). Avrupa Birliği Surecinde Turk Egitim Sistemi: Sorular ve Cozum Onerileri. Mersin University Journal of the Faculty of Education, 1 (1), pp. 66-80.
- Gulcan, M. (2010). Avrupa Birliği ve Egitim. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- hurriyet.com. (2012, October). AB'nin Muslugu Tikandi. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr>
- King, R., Findlay, A., & Ahrens, J. (2010). International Student Mobility Literature Review. Report to HEFCE, Co-funded British Council, UK National Agency for Erasmus.
- Knight, J. (2008). Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalisation. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- MEB. (n.d.). National Education Statistics 2010-2011. Retrieved October 2012, from Milli Egitim Bakanligi: <http://www.meb.gov.tr/english/indexeng.htm>
- National Bologna Report Turkey. (2012). European Higher Education Area. Retrieved from Bologna Process: <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=86>
- National Report of Turkey. (2011). Implementation of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training. Ankara, Turkey: Ministry of National Education, Directorate General for Foreign Relations.

- OECD. (2004, August). Internationalization of Higher Education. Retrieved June 2012, from OECD Policy Brief: [www.oecd.org/publications/Pol\\_brief](http://www.oecd.org/publications/Pol_brief)
- Ozler, Z. (2012). Visa Related Problems of Turkish Erasmus Students. Retrieved June 2012, from Economic Development Foundation (IKV):[http://www.ikv.org.tr/icerik\\_en.asp?konu=haberler&id=396&baslik=VISA-RELATED](http://www.ikv.org.tr/icerik_en.asp?konu=haberler&id=396&baslik=VISA-RELATED)  
PROBLEMS OF TURKISH ERASMUS STUDENTS
- Parey, M., & Waldinger, F. (2008, April). Studying Abroad and the Effect on International Labour Market Mobility: Evidence from the Introduction of ERASMUS. Bonn, Germany: IZA DP No. 3430.
- Potas, N., Turhan, B., & Kisa, N. (2011). The Understanding of University Students Concerning the Nature of Science from European Union Member Countries and Turkey. Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research, 7 (1), IDOSI Publications, 30-38.
- Saglam, M. (2009). AB Surecinde Turk Egitim Sistemi ve Ilkogretimdeki Degismeler. Anadolu Universitesi Acikogretim Fakultesi Yayinlari, pp. 41-60.
- Saglam, M., Ozudogru, F., & Ciray, F. (2011, December). Avrupa Birligi Egitim Politikalari ve Turk Egitim Sistemine Etkileri. Yuzuncu Yil Universitesi, Education Faculty Journal, VII, I, pp. 87-109.
- Serbest, F. (25-27 April, 2005). The Bologna Process for Sustainable Quality in the European Higher Education Area and Harmonisation of Turkey. Antalya, Turkey: The 49th European Organization for Quality (EOQ) Annual Congress, Unpublished Conference Proceeding.
- Teichler, U. (2009). Internationalisation of Higher Education: European Experiences. International Centre for Higher Education Research, Kassel, Unpublished Working Document.
- TURNA. (n.d.). Centre for European Education and Youth Programmes. Retrieved May 2012, from Ulusal Ajans Turkiye: <http://www.ua.gov.tr>
- UNESCO. (2011). Education in Turkey. Retrieved June 2012, from Institute for Statistics: <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/tableviewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143>
- Wiers-Jenssens, J. (2008). Does Higher Education Attained Abroad Lead to International Jobs? Journal of Studies in International Education, 101-130.
- YOK. (n.d.). Bologna Sureci. Retrieved May 2012, from Yuksek Ogretim Kurulu: <http://bologna.yok.gov.tr/>