

Academic Mobility between European Union Countries and Turkey*

Avrupa ülkeleri arasında akademik hareketlilik ve Türkiye

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Özet

Bu çalışma Avrupa Birliği (AB) ve Türkiye arasındaki akademik dolaşımın ana öncülerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Erasmus programı yurtdışında eğitim vermek için yeni olanaklar sunmuştur. Akademik hareketlilik sadece 27 AB üyesi arasında değil AB üyesi olmayan ülkeler arasında da popüler bir gündemdir. Erasmus programının bir parçası olarak, akademik hareketlilik Türkiye'nin AB ile entegrasyon sürecinin önemli bir unsurdur. Son yıllarda, bu hareketliliği güçlendirmek vazgeçilmez olmuştur. Programa katılan Türk öğretim üyesi sayısı sürekli artıyor olmasına rağmen, hareketlilik akımları ile ilgili veriler, AB'den Türkiye'ye akademik hareketliliğin düşük olduğunu göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, AB akademisyenleri için Türk yükseköğretim kurumlarının çekiciliğini artırmak önemlidir. Çalışma AB ve Türkiye arasındaki akademik dolaşım anlamında neyin değişmekte olduğunu ve yıllar boyunca neyin değiştiğini ele almaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Avrupa Birliği, hareketlilik, yükseköğretim kurumları.

Article 149 EC stipulates, in its third paragraph, that 'The Community and the Member States shall foster co-operation with third countries...' Some Member States have a well-established tradition of, mainly bilateral, co-operation with third countries on education. For its part, the Community, in the field of higher education, has established a number of initiatives with third countries drawing on experience gained from the Erasmus and similar programmes (European Commission, 2011, p. 2). Consequently, the HEIs across the EU member states launched measures to organize mobility actions for teachers within the Erasmus programme.

Apart from the EU-27 member states, the scheme has also become popular in Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway,

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the main drivers for the academic mobility between the European Union (EU) and Turkey. The Erasmus programme of the EU has offered new possibilities to teach in abroad. Academic mobility is not only popular between the the EU-27 member states, but also non-EU member states. Academic mobility, as part of Erasmus programme, is a key element of Turkey's integration process with the EU. In recent years, it has become indispensable to reinforce mobility. Data on mobility flows show that, although the number of Turkish lecturers who participate in the programme has constantly been increasing, academic mobility from the EU to Turkey remains low. Therefore, it is important to increase the attractiveness of Turkish higher education institutions to the EU academics. The study considers what is changing in academic mobility between the EU and Turkey, and what has changed over the years.

Key words: European Union, higher education institutions, mobility.

Switzerland and Turkey. Since April 2004, Turkey is eligible for the EU Erasmus programme under which mobility makes short guest lectureships at European partner institutions possible (European Commission, 2010, p. 2). As is the case for other HEIs in EU countries, the Turkish Higher Education Council has encouraged universities to participate in academic mobility. As a result, there have been an increasing number of lecturer exchanges between Turkey and the EU member states.

The Erasmus programme is likely to enhance the quality and reinforce the European dimension of Turkish higher education (HE) system. At the same time, spending time abroad may help Turkish academics to develop specific skills relevant to Turkey. The programme may also benefit EU academics

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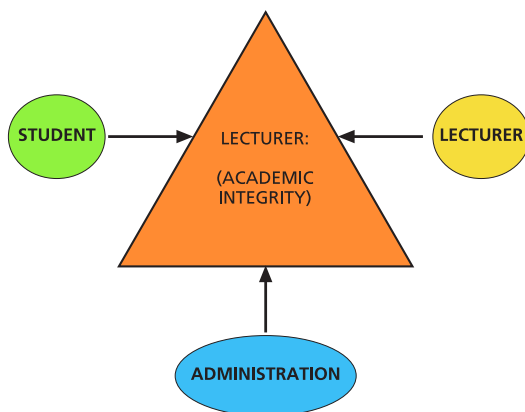
through sharing knowledge and expertise with academic staff from the HEIs in Turkey.

This paper explores some underlying barriers restrain the EU academics from participating in the Erasmus scheme in Turkey. The study is based on the recent publications of the European Commission and the OECD in this field. First, it provides a brief overview of the existing literature on academic mobility to highlight the incentives and barriers to mobility. This is followed by a quantitative overview of the numerical trends in academic mobility. Then, it draws upon the pull-effects on the Erasmus mobility. Final section gives some policy recommendations.

Literature Review

A number of scholars, who explicitly worked on the internationalization of mobility, have focused on the fundamental values of integrity. A study by Ilgar (2011) highlighted the importance of geography education within the context of globalization. Ilgar suggested that education foundations should reduce the deprivation of mass education while satisfying individuals' needs of geography knowledge. In this regard, the purpose of the Turkish Education System is to increase the welfare and happiness of the Turkish citizens and Turkish society, to support and facilitate economic, social and cultural development in national unity and integration and to make the Turkish nation a constructive, creative and distinguished partner in modern civilization (Ilgar, 2011, p. 198).

Olasehinde-Williams (2005) investigated academic integrity problems among lecturers in Nigeria (■ Figure 1). Much of the work of Olasehinde-Williams was concerned with the conceptual framework which was latter developed by other authors. An assessment of the interrelations between the cultural dimension of social communication situation and aca-



■ **Figure 1.** Dimensions of perceptions of lecturer academic integrity. Source: Olasehinde-Williams, 2005.

ademic staff was made, and a new the concept of “bounded mobility” was introduced to explain this complex phenomenon. It was assumed that mobility decisions relating to education and professional activities were the instruments of internationalization, and thus could not regarded as isolated decisions.

Much of the work of Olasehinde-Williams (2005) was supported by Scarino, Crichton and Woods (2007), who assumed that increasingly diverse lecturers would bring a range of diverse backgrounds and expectations to teaching and learning process in Europe. With internationalization, there is a notion of transcending barriers or borders to academic mobility. The process of transcending necessarily entails some form of “crossing-over” that, in turn, entails the recognition of additional social, political, economic, educational realities that participants bring to the learning process. This recognition is best achieved through collaboration with participants (both educators and students) in the educational programme. In this sense, international education is per force collaborative (Scarino et al., 2007, p. 220). Of course, the extent to which these benefits can be realized will guide the EU in its choice of developing high quality human resources in partner countries.

Quite apart from these, Ozmusul (2012) argued that the endeavors of Turkey in the education system in terms of international dimension are noteworthy, but they are not unquestionably sufficient to raise the education system to the high international standards because of the lack of coordination between the public institutions which determine and implement educational policies, and because of the insufficient progress studies on the systematical data set, as well as the insufficient allocation of resource to the education (Ozmusul, 2012, p. 360). This suggests that educational policies are crucial for improving the educational standards within the context of international dimension. So, reforms and development efforts are key to this.

As for Mızıkacı (2005), many universities naturally require more time and resources to complete their preparation period, and striking regional disparities remain in both quality and funding. Turkish Higher Education sector has adopted EU and international mobility schemes unreservedly. For example, not all universities have a balanced commitment to both teaching and research; teaching is more emphasized in the majority of institutions. National services supporting integration and implementation might well take such discrepancies into consideration and establish a well-diversified system of integration (Ozmusul, 2012, p. 70).

From a different angle, a study by Heinz and Ward-Warmedinger (2006) dedicated to the obstacles to academic mobility including the existing administrative barriers, the lack of host countries languages and cultures; the monetary costs of moving, inefficient housing market and the lack of transparen-



cy of job openings (Heinz and Ward-Warmedinger, 2006, p. 12). Undoubtedly, these are the most relevant reasons for barriers to international labour mobility. For Hönekopp and Werner (2000), no mobility was possible without legally permissible environment. Any other barriers, such as language and cultural differences can easily stand on the way to lecturer mobility. The lack of transparency is another deterrent factor that may have a decreasing impact on mobility. This is despite the fact that the dissemination of information across the participant countries may improve the situation over time. In short, existence of these barriers is likely to create challenges for academic mobility.

Realizing that the willingness of EU lecturers to move abroad depends upon openness of higher education systems, improvement of the quality of education is only possible by enhancing and facilitating exchanges of academics. Morgan et al. (2006) employed a variety of methods to explore the general impact of teacher migration from the developed countries of the US and Australia to the middle income countries of Jamaica and South Africa. They concluded that any effects were more likely to be qualitative than quantitative. So, the impact of international teacher mobility on schools in both Jamaica and South Africa was considerable with regards to enhancement of individual potential and knowledge, and core transferable competences that lecturers were equipped with internationalization. It came to be recognized, therefore, that it would not be inconsistent with the competitive funding arrangements for a poor country that was increasingly striving to maximise the value of resources invested in higher education.

The key point of these studies in academic mobility activities is a unique chance to obtain education, training and work experience in another country. To that extent, academic staffs acquire a new expertise and professional skills, and in addition develop their capacities to adapt to new environments.^[1] As Baumgratz has pointed out (1993), mobility needs to be seen as a method suited to enhance the ability for cultural integration on the part of institutions/organizations and to enable individuals to live and act in varying multicultural contexts. Mobility is the method, as well as the aim of acquiring this new quality or qualification (Baumgratz, 1993, p. 3). Attracting the academics outside the EU and developing new forms of cross-border cooperation are key drivers of quality. In the fullest sense, mobility makes it possible for academics to acquire the deeper insights in host countries. There is a strong need for intercultural understanding, which drives differential mobility empowers.

Mobility Potential

The Erasmus staff mobility for teaching assignments has been a very popular action within the Erasmus programme since its addition to the programme in the academic year 1997/98. An essential element of this should be increasing long-term mobility of academic teachers across the EU and other participant countries. Around 90% of EU universities in 31 participating countries are currently involved in Erasmus programme (European Commission, 2010a, p. 9).

Ironically, mobility of academic staff is barely monitored in participant countries. Therefore, it is very difficult to obtain data on mobility of academic staff. Data on mobility flows is supplied by the European Commission (Education and Culture DG). Nonetheless, data collected by the European Commission does inform us about “inward” and “outward” mobility.^[2] Like any other participant countries, it has been possible to obtain the quantitative trends of foreign staff coming to Turkey since 2004, so far.

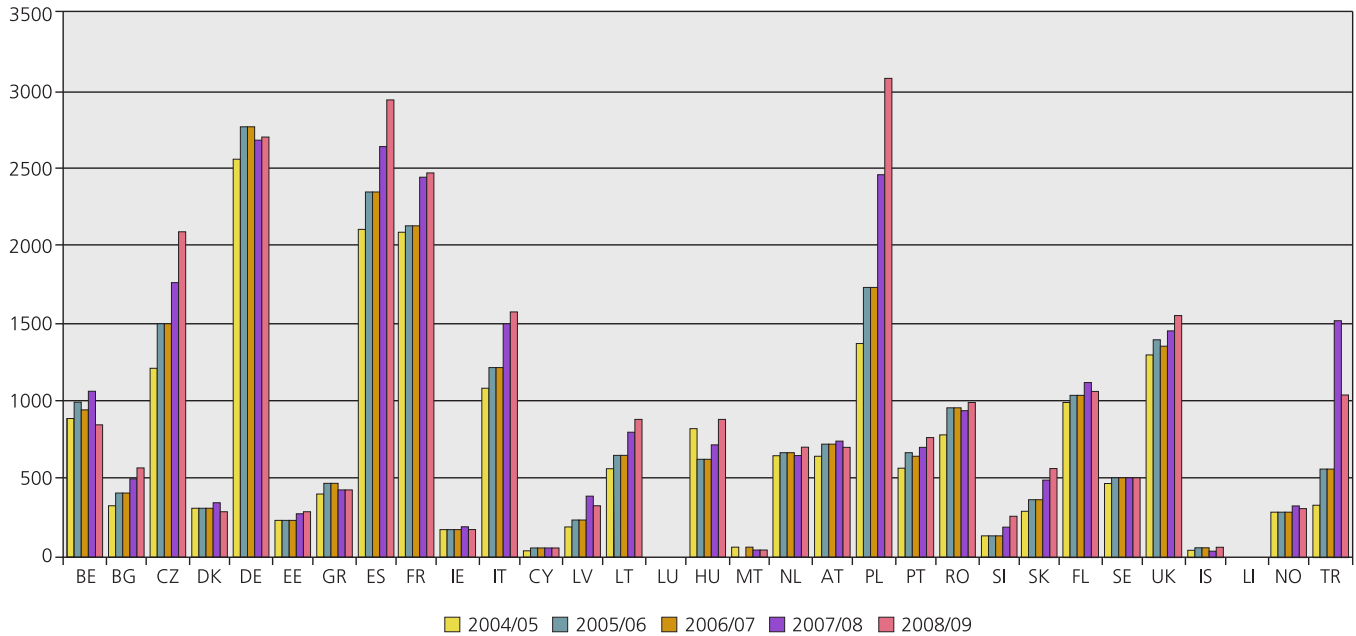
■ Figure 2 shows that there is an increasing trend of outgoing staff mobility for teaching assignments^[3] in all participant countries from 2004/05 to 2008/09 academic year, but a small fluctuations occurred in Belgium, Denmark and, to a lesser extent, Malta. Among these countries, the highest number of Erasmus teaching assignments in the academic year 2008/09 was recorded in Poland, with 3,079 mobility (10.8 per cent share), Spain with 2,925 (10.2 per cent) and then Germany with 2,696 (8.5 per cent). As for Turkey, the most significant general trend increase was in the total number of foreign lecturers, which rose from 339 in 2004/05 to 1,521 in 2007/08. On the main, the increase in outward mobility is a good starting point for illustrating the quantitative trend.

Against this increasing trend, several countries experienced declining or stagnating trends in 2008/09 on previous academic year. ■ Figure 2 clearly illustrates the situation for the 8 major countries – Austria (-6.3 per cent), Denmark (-18.7 per cent), Greece (-4.0 per cent), Finland (-3.8 per cent), Ireland (-2.1 per cent), Latvia (-13.4 per cent), Norway (-6.4 per cent) and Turkey (-30.2 per cent) – in the 2008/09 academic year. More importantly, Turkey had the sharpest declining outgoing teaching assignments, followed by Denmark and Latvia. This is primarily due to the fact that most EU member states have reduced spending on higher education systems which currently require adequate funding.

[1] The statement was made by Ján Figel, Member of the European Commission responsible for Education in 2008, Training, Culture and Youth in Erasmus Mobility Creates Opportunities European Success Stories, Lifelong Learning Programme, Education and Training, Education and Culture DGs, European Communities.

[2] Literally term as inward mobility implies attracting lecturers from abroad, whilst outward mobility is vice versa.

[3] Such assignments are designed for academic staffs to spend a teaching period of a minimum one day (or at least 5 teaching hours) up to 6 weeks at a higher education institution in another participating country in Europe.



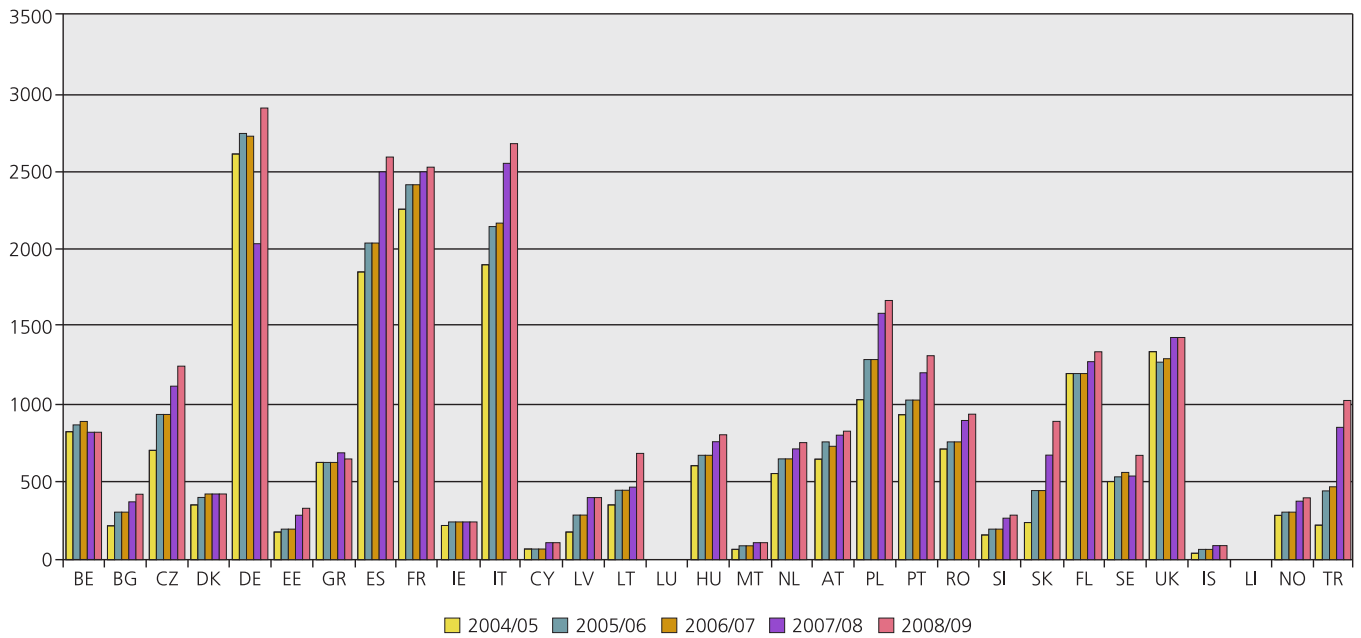
■ **Figure 2.** Outgoing Erasmus staff mobility for teaching assignments in 31 participating countries from 2004/04 to 2008/09. Source: European Commission, 2010c.

While acknowledging the importance of outward mobility by the participant countries, the inward mobility should be considered within the core activity areas as well. With Erasmus mobility agreement, the EU member states (and Turkey) specifically declared their intention to increase the number of incoming academic mobility by capitalising more on their specific assets and advantages. In this respect, the European Council in May 2006 2010 stated that ‘international cooperation programmes and policy dialogues with third countries in the field of higher education not only enable knowledge to flow more freely, but also contribute to enhancing the quality and international standing of European higher education...’.^[4] However, the growth in the number of EU academics, who are taking advantage of working in abroad, is low. This is in particular case for Turkey. ■ Figure 3 illustrates that the relative increase in incoming teaching assignments was markedly the lowest in Turkey (20.9 per cent) between years, in comparison to other countries, notably Slovakia (35 per cent) and Sweden (24.3 per cent). More importantly, the highest share of inward mobility was recorded in Germany, with 2,913 (10.2 per cent share), followed by Italy with 2,681 (9.4 per cent) and Spain with 2,597 (9.1 per cent). However, several countries, including Liechtenstein (-20%), Luxembourg and Malta had a decrease-

ing trend in incoming teaching assignments in 2008/09, while a stagnation in incoming mobility between years was recorded in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus and France.

At the same time, the HEIs in participating countries often seek to balance between incoming and outgoing lecturers, while comparatively few have the capacity to increase in incoming mobility, as noted above. ■ Figure 4 highlights flows between outgoing and incoming Erasmus staff mobility for teaching assignments in 31 participating countries in 2008/09. In most countries, the number of incoming mobility is higher than outgoing mobility, pointing to the specific profile and world class individual HEIs in Europe. In the same academic year, Turkey received less teachers than it sent out on assignments. Several other countries also experienced a reverse balance, namely Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Liechtenstein and the UK. With regard to 2007/08 academic year, there was the greatest imbalance in the ratio of incoming and outgoing teachers in France and followed by Turkey (■ Figs. 2 and 3). Thus, Turkey can be characterised by the second best country, with 1,054 outgoing Erasmus staff mobility for teaching assignments versus 1,020 incoming. A very good balance of academic mobility was recorded in some EU countries, notably in Germany, the Netherlands

[4] Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the Internationalization (1) of Higher Education (2010/C 135/04), 26.5.2010.

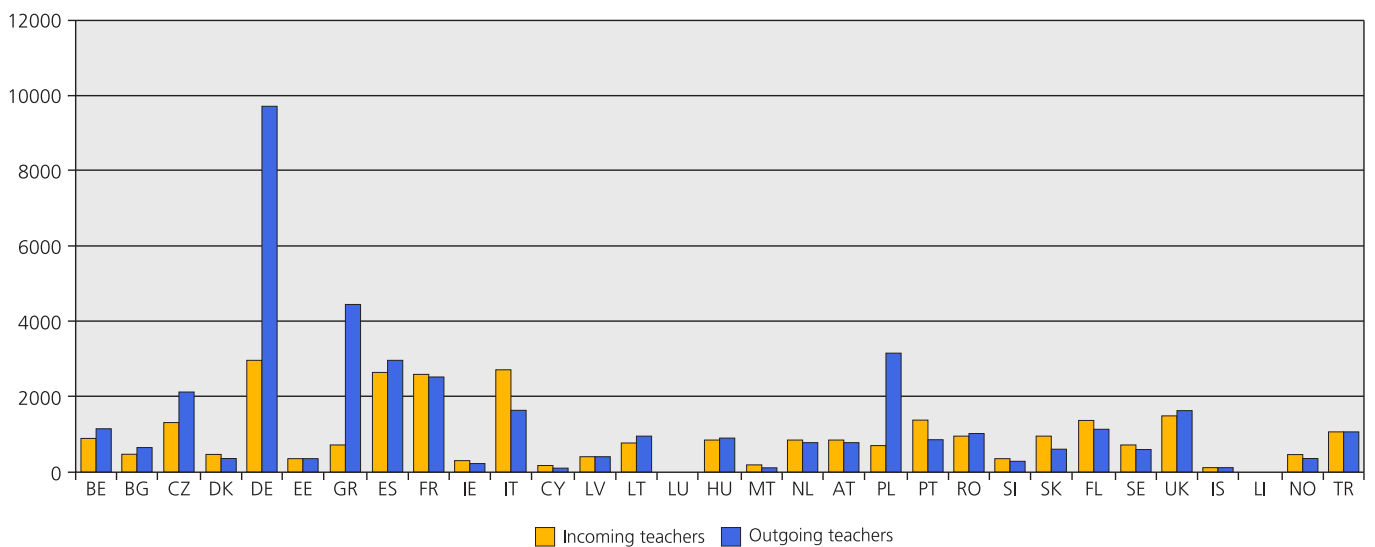


■ **Figure 3.** Incoming teaching assignments in 31 participating countries from 2000/04 – 2008/09. Source: European Commission, 2010c.

and Iceland, which took the opportunities offered by the Erasmus scheme in the 2007/08 academic year.

All in all, flows between outgoing and incoming lecturers in most countries were still unbalanced in 2008/09, although mobility has grown significantly across much of Europe. A

key point is that the number of outgoing mobility in the period of 2004/05 and 2008/09 was higher in Turkey than the incoming mobility, while other countries received higher percentage of incoming staff mobility for teaching assignments. In that further specification lies in imbalance in the



■ **Figure 4.** Outgoing and incoming staff mobility for teaching assignments in 31 participating countries in 2008/09. Source: European Commission, 2010c.

ratio of incoming and outgoing teachers in Turkey in the 2007-08 academic year, but this gap appeared to be narrowed in 2008/09. Mainly, it is fair to conclude that Turkey is a country of supplying academic staffs to the EU rather than receiving it, given the imbalance in the ratio of incoming and outgoing teachers for academic mobility.

Pull-effects of Mobility

From the theoretical perspective, interest in academic mobility has been drawn by the emergency of “pull-effects” rather than “push-factors” which appears to be less importance in causing academic mobility.^[5] This particularly applies to Turkey in relation to incoming teaching assignments. There are at least three factors versus inward mobility in Turkey and thus making its HEIs less favourable destination among EU academics.

Academic Integrity

Studies merely take into account of the academic integration concept. They describe how international academics experience and adapt to their new working environment. An empirical study by Lewthwaite (1997) shows that drive or motivation is needed for the individual to press towards a better integration. Hurdles can come from their living circumstances, academic situation and surrounding culture (Lewthwaite, 1997, p. 171).

A theoretical consideration of mobility can be relevant to the cultural dimension, particularly in terms of adequate skills and education, but it goes beyond that, including the cost of cultural adaptation (Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999, p. 15). In other words, the concept of academic integration for academic mobility is linked to the cultural relocation costs of lecturers in a new country. Some of the integration costs have proved to be borne by academic staffs, who contribute to better matching labour supply, with labour demand. Such costs can be said to have occurred within the Erasmus mobility scheme. This may have major implications for the Turkish HEIs.

An attempt to shed light on the debate about the real benefits and challenges of working abroad, the European Council (2010) stated:

‘mobility provides a means of enriching human capital and strengthening employability through the acquisition and exchange of knowledge, the development of linguistic and intercultural competences, and the promotion of interpersonal contacts...’^[6]

Yet, the potential of Turkish HEIs to fulfill their role in Europe and contribute to Europe’s such competences remains unclear. However, what is known is that there is a noticeable reform in Turkish educational system, as the EU-Turkish relations have been intensified under the Accession Partnership Framework. One important consequence of this is the modification of Turkish national curriculum for both primary and secondary schools (1997, 2002 respectively). The primary school curriculum indicates the following aims related to culture: to be aware of the existence of languages other than Turkish (4th and 5th grades), to develop an awareness of the cultures where English is spoken as the mother tongue, to develop positive attitudes towards and understanding of speakers of English and their way of life (6th and 8th grades) (Atay, 2005, p. 228).

The importance of academic mobility is that it can help to develop new skills of which the HEIs in destination countries provide for the foreign staff. A specific point to make is that the language capacity is important for developing mutual understanding among EU and the Turkish lecturers. ■ Table 1 shows self-perceived known foreign language of adults between 25-64 years of old in 2009.^[7] The EU average was roughly regarded one, while national averages were ranked between 0.3 and 2.5. Four Nordic countries, notably Slovenia, Belgium, Estonia and Slovakia reached the highest standards in terms of the highest number of foreign languages (1.5 and above). Turkey, Hungary and Romania stood out as the countries with the lowest averages countries (below 0.5). While the reform of educational system is under way in Turkey, a greater measure of language competences needs to be taken in order to attract inward mobility. The language barriers, as its current forum, will likely to hinder academic mobility from the EU countries.

The question of academic mobility engenders a deep passion of career progression. By acknowledging in its report in 2008, the European Commission sought this option to boost substantially staff mobility in Europe.^[8] However, the short-term mobility may distort academic life. As for a positive effect of Erasmus scheme, time is too short to capitalise for career development in a home country. With regards to curricula, its aim of learning mobility does not always reach the target sufficiently. In this sense, the EU academics may be discouraged to go abroad, despite mobility seems to be the best option for their career developments. According to the

[5] Literally, the ‘pull-effects’ mean the attraction of destination countries within the context of political, cultural social-economic environment or indicators, while “push-factors” unfavourable conditions on the same ground that cause an outflow of workforce.

[6] Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the Internationalization (1) of Higher Education (2010/C 135/04), 26.5.2010.

[7] Survey did not take into account of language level (i.e., proficiency level).

[8] European Commission (Commission of the European Communities), (2008), Report from the Commission to the Council on Modernising Universities for Europe’s Competitiveness in a Global Knowledge Economy Brussels, 30.10.2008 COM(2008) 680 final [SEC(2008 2719).



■ **Table 1.** Self-perceived known foreign language of adults (25-64 years), 2009 (percentages).*

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian	Average number of languages
BE	56.8	38.2	25.2	7.4	0.6	1.5
BG	20.7	9.0	10.4	1.0	40.2	0.9
CZ	33.4	2.8	33.4	1.4	34.6	1.1
DK	83.4	7.0	47.1	2.8	0.3	1.6
DE	56.3	15.0	13.4	4.6	9.4	1.1
EE	46.1	1.2	14.4	0.7	57.8	1.7
EL	45.3	6.1	3.9	0.7	1.1	0.7
ES	32.4	15.6	2.5	11.9	0.4	0.8
FR	44.3	13.3	9.0	12.2	0.4	0.9
IT	45.5	33.9	6.4	7.7	0.4	1.0
CY	80.7	10.8	4.6	2.0	2.8	1.2
LV	41.2	1.3	17.7	0.2	61.4	1.6
LT	37.9	5.5	20.1	0.9	87.2	1.9
HU	14.5	0.9	21.1	0.1	2.6	0.3
AT	67.8	12.8	12.8	4.0	2.5	1.2
PL	25.0	3.2	17.7	0.6	41.5	0.9
PT	36.1	29.3	3.3	13.4	0.2	0.9
RO	18.9	12.8	2.4	0.8	3.5	0.4
SI	60.3	4.3	46.1	1.7	2.9	2.1
SK†	30.0	2.2	31.4	0.8	47.6	2.0
FI	80.3	9.6	31.6	5.8	6.5	2.1
SE	89.8	10.4	30.2	6.4	1.5	1.7
UK	6.6	39.7	6.3	4.7	0.0	0.7
NO	92.6	11.4	47.5	7.7	1.3	2.5
HR	43.7	3.3	30.9	0.9	4.5	1.1
TR	74.0	7.1	11.0	0.2	2.0	0.3

Source: Eurostat, 2009. *The proportion of respondents can use up to 7 languages regardless of level of knowledge. †Although Slovakian was not recorded as a foreign language in the Czech survey, Czech was regarded as a foreign language in the Slovakian survey.

Eurobarometer Survey data in 2005b,^[9] 43 per cent of respondents indicated that mobility improved their skills, against 15 per cent of respondents, who learned different skills within a company (■ Figure 5).^[10] Assume two countries, a developed country with many skilled workers relative to unskilled workers and a developing country with many unskilled workers relative to skilled workers (Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999, p. 14). Quite simply, the choice of destination is of broader significance for the EU academics, who desire to acquire new skills.

It would not be a mistake to conclude that Turkey's capacity to attract the EU lecturers relies in its investment on education (i.e., language capital). At the same time, the knowledge of appropriate pools of skill plays a great role in

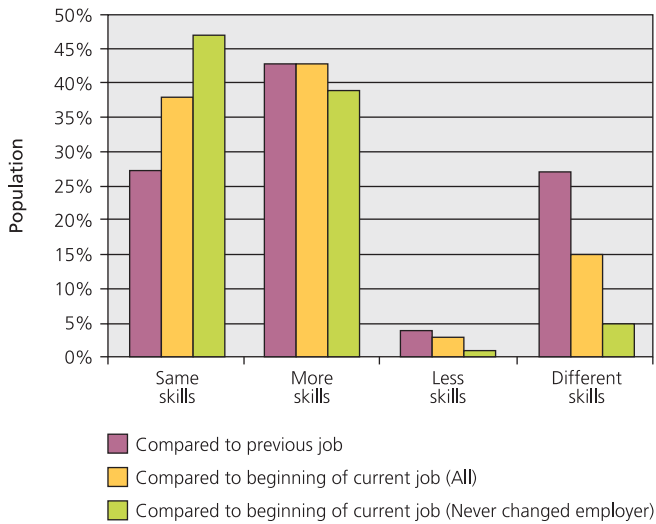
international staff mobility. Consequently, the EU academics will unlikely to choose the HEIs in Turkey rather than Europe as a destination. As mobility forms around the added value, this situation results in an initial earnings disadvantage. It might be tempting to say that the EU academics will more likely to have difficulties to integrate into the Turkish HEIs, when their pre-existing skills are only of limited use.

Quality of the HEIs

A detailed review of literature suggests that the institutional factors are important for mobility to occur, namely the pull and push factors for foreign staffs, which are inherited in the HEIs of the participant countries. To a greater extent, the quality of education abroad can exercise particular pull-

[9] Residents of the EU-15 member states aged 15 years and over (a sample of 24,642 respondents) were interviewed in their homes and in the appropriate national languages.

[10] Ibid.



■ **Figure 5.** Types of skills needed: between current job and previous job and between current position and first position with the same employer (for all and for those who never changed employer), EU-25. Source: Eurobarometer Survey, 2005a.

effects, depending institutional factors such as curricula, university autonomy and quality assurance. Usually, mobility becomes less important relative to a lack of an explicit policy framework specifying use of educational resources in abroad.

If one takes seriously the notion of developing good teaching in higher education, it is important not only look at what the new lecturer requires, but also the context and the environment in which they are required to develop (Nicholls, 2006). The HEIs in Turkey too often seek to compete with the EU HEIs, while comparatively few have the capacity to excel across the board, namely Middle East Technical University, Ankara University and Istanbul Technical University. According to the latest Academic Ranking of World Universities, only Istanbul University is included in the world top 500 universities. It is not surprising that around 200 of Europe's 4000 HEIs are included in the top 500 and 3 in the top 20. As a result, a considerable number of EU HEIs are recognised as world class in the current, research oriented global university rankings.

As a matter of fact Turkey has some good universities, but overall, potential is not fully realized in Europe or somewhere else. A study by the Turkish Economic Policies Research Foundation (2011) noted the current growth and industrialization strategy for Turkey had an adverse effect on the modernization of the HEIs. As the study suggested, the development of a properly functioning innovation ecosystem would provide mechanisms to both overcome the middle-income trap and

improve competitiveness. Generally, the Turkish HEIs are characterised by weak autonomy by the European standards and usually, curricula are too slow to respond to changing needs. Apart from this, a lack of the management tools and funding are recognised as other obstacles that limit inward mobility.

In some respects, the notion 'institution' expresses especially that repeating regularities and circumscribable uniformities are products of human culture and its interpretation and not accidental or biologically determined (Giddens, 1989, p. 301). The main area of delivering reforms in HEIs in Turkey, as many suggested, is the labour market. A study by Kurt (2003) noted that the average labour force productivity of the EU countries was 6-times higher than Turkey. When the objective of free movement of labour, which is a key feature of full membership, is considered, there appears to be a severe mismatch between the productivity of Turkey's labour force and the requirements of the EU. As Taşpınar (2006) has assumed, this will be further highlighted when the vocational education and qualities of Turkish labour are recognized and made comparable to the European standards (Taşpınar, 2006, p. 54). Needless to say, such assumptions point to the enhancement of the quality and relevance of human capital development in HEIs to bring added value to EU academics.

As part of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, a modernization agenda for the HEIs in Europe is currently on the agenda since 2007. This is particularly true for their human resource management. In a report on progress in quality assurance in higher education in Europe, the European Commission highlighted the diverse landscape of quality assurance across Europe. Many HEIs in Europe have been building up their "quality culture" and internal quality assurance systems, mainly through inter-institutional cooperation, mutual assistance and benchmarking (European Commission, 2009, p. 10). Simply, these institutions are looking for ways to create better conditions for the Erasmus mobility staff.

Turkey can not be excluded from this modernization process sweeping through Europe, but part of it. A process of change is evident to convergence with HEIs in Europe. A momentum of sorts has been established since Turkey's achievement of the status of full candidacy to the EU in 1999. Within the structure of the Ministry of National Education, the EU Consultation, Administration, Research and Development Committees were formed and several studies are underway to harmonise the national legislation of education with EU law (Taşpınar, 2006, p. 75). As concerns harmonization, Turkey became part of a European higher education area, when it included into the Bologna Process introduced



■ **Table 2.** Obstacles on mobility (mean values), (1 = minor obstacle; 5 = major obstacle).

	All cb regions	Within EU-15 cb regions	Within EU-12 cb regions	Between EU-12 and EU-15 cb regions
Language	3.03	2.86	2.65	3.34
Lack of information	3.01	3.01	2.75	3.26
Tax systems	2.83	2.73	2.96	3.01
Infrastructure	2.74	2.83	2.84	2.40
Acceptance of qualifications	2.69	2.54	1.94	3.11
Other rights to social insurances	2.58	2.65	1.84	2.75
Labour market restrictions	2.44	2.03	1.81	3.34
Rights to pensions	2.40	2.42	1.60	2.74
Mentality	2.24	2.20	2.09	2.45

Source: European Commission, 2010d. White: minor obstacle (1.00+2.25), yellow: medium obstacle (2.26-3.00), orange: major obstacle (above 3.00).

into the Erasmus programme from 2007. This necessitated a wider range of reforms to be undertaken to cover all aspects of performance from institutional structures to academic quality assurance standards. Finally, prospects for academic mobility are closely bounded up with the success of the harmonization process. The prospect for this will guarantee equal conditions for inward mobility within its borders.

Transparency of the HEIs

Many scholars have argued that transparency of the HEIs in a destination country has a greater impact on the academic mobility (*see e.g.*, Harris and Todaro, 1970). The openness of higher education systems implies international outreach and visibility, which in turn has consequences for international mobility. In other words, decisions to stay “put” are influenced by the deficiencies in terms of accessing to the quality of information on a destination country. Information is thus central to understanding of the opportunities may be available to work abroad. Difficulty for getting right information on quality improvement in Turkish higher education in particular in the areas of teaching or research will likely to limit EU from considering mobility.

Within the Erasmus scheme, the information deficit is the key factor in mobility. In this respect, a new transparency tool is the European exchange or sharing schemes (virtual mobility), building on the existing European cooperation frameworks. ■ Table 2 above provides a general overview of the obstacles for mobility in the EU. Interestingly, the lack of information is observed in most cross-border regions as a medium to major obstacle. So the lack of knowledge or trans-

parency is recorded as the biggest information deficits about the quality of education abroad and the number of information centres. This means that, in order to encourage EU academics to move, the HEIs in particular, and society in general needs to be fully transparent. There is a need to develop a wider range of information, covering all aspects of Turkish HEIs, as well society (e.g., housing) to help EU academics make informed choices.

Most studies show that differences in corruption level between the EU member states and Turkey are often quite large. For instance, 68 per cent of executives of international firms were surveyed believed that measures to fight against bribery and corruption were weak and, most of the cases not, adequate in Turkey, as the result of 10th Global Corruption Survey revealed.^[11] As Göğüş rightly argued (2008), these corrupt practices in Turkey have been the meaning of democratization ‘diluted’, which often signifies nothing more than formality. Above all, concern over corruption is assumed to be a crucial determinant in mobility. The logic behind this assumption is that EU academics are often sceptical about a “closed society” that is ‘open to misinformation’. It is sensible to assume that the largest the mobility flows result from well-informed EU academics about Turkey in general.

The existence of corrupt practices is closely associated with the institutional, socio-political, economic and cultural framework, which is prevailing in a given country (Hallak and Poisson, 2007, p. 88). With the launch of its Third National Programme of the EU in 2008, some progress can be reported on anti-corruption in Turkey. As such, the government

[11] Transparency International, The Global Coalition Against Corruption, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2010/results>.

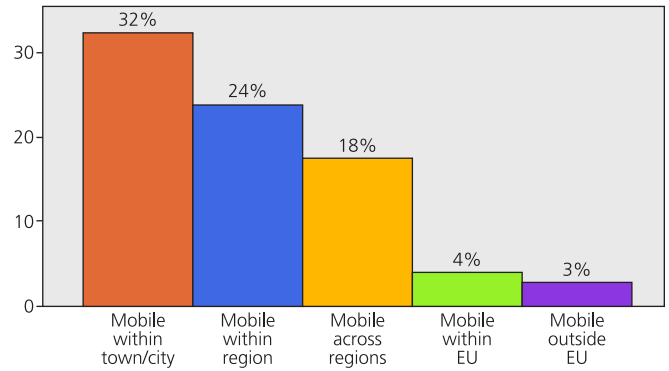
adopted a 2010-2014 strategy for enhancing transparency and strengthening to fight against corruption in February 2010. The strategy aims at developing preventive and repressive measures against corruption as well as improving public governance by introducing more transparency, accountability and reliability into the public administration (European Commission, 2010b, p. 6). In spite of this, Turkey's weaknesses are found in transparency, accountability and auditing principles which are at the forefront to fight against corruption. According to the report of Transparency International (TI), Turkey's Global Corruption Ranking has been worsened, to a greater extent. For instance, index included 180 countries in 2009, of which Turkey's ranking fell to 61 from 2008, placing it at number 58. This situation seriously lowers Turkey's status in the EU and thus mobility. Therefore, more needs to be done to overcome corruption practices.

To sum up, the debate about transparency of the HEIs seems to undermine mobility from the EU member states to Turkey because of the notion of a "close society". In this vein, corruption may easily serve to impede inward mobility. For that reason, some commentators define the term of transparency as clearness, honesty and openness (*see e.g.* Hallak and Poisson, 2007). This definition also underlines some of the apparent obstacles to mobility. Obviously, those considering mobility are not the poorest people in their country. Such people do not have the means to cover the costs that ensue from mobility and often have no access to the required information (Fassmann and Hintermann, 1997).

Geographical Distance

Migration literature highlights geographical distance is important for migration to occur. It is assumed that risks and costs of movements would rise with distance. The reason for this is that circulation of information about the labour market conditions is effective in terms of closer locations (*see* Sjaastad, 1962). Individuals make rational choices about the value of expected returns of their human capital in both home and host countries. In short, mobility is seen as an investment decision. Thus, mobility can only occur when a net of the discounted costs of movement is larger in a destination country than the returns in the country of origin.^[12]

Much of the more recent empirical evidence emphasises a sense of "geographical identity" in determining attitudes towards cross-border mobility. A survey regarding the past mobility of EU academics for the EU-25 countries by the European Commission in 2006, showed that around 18 per

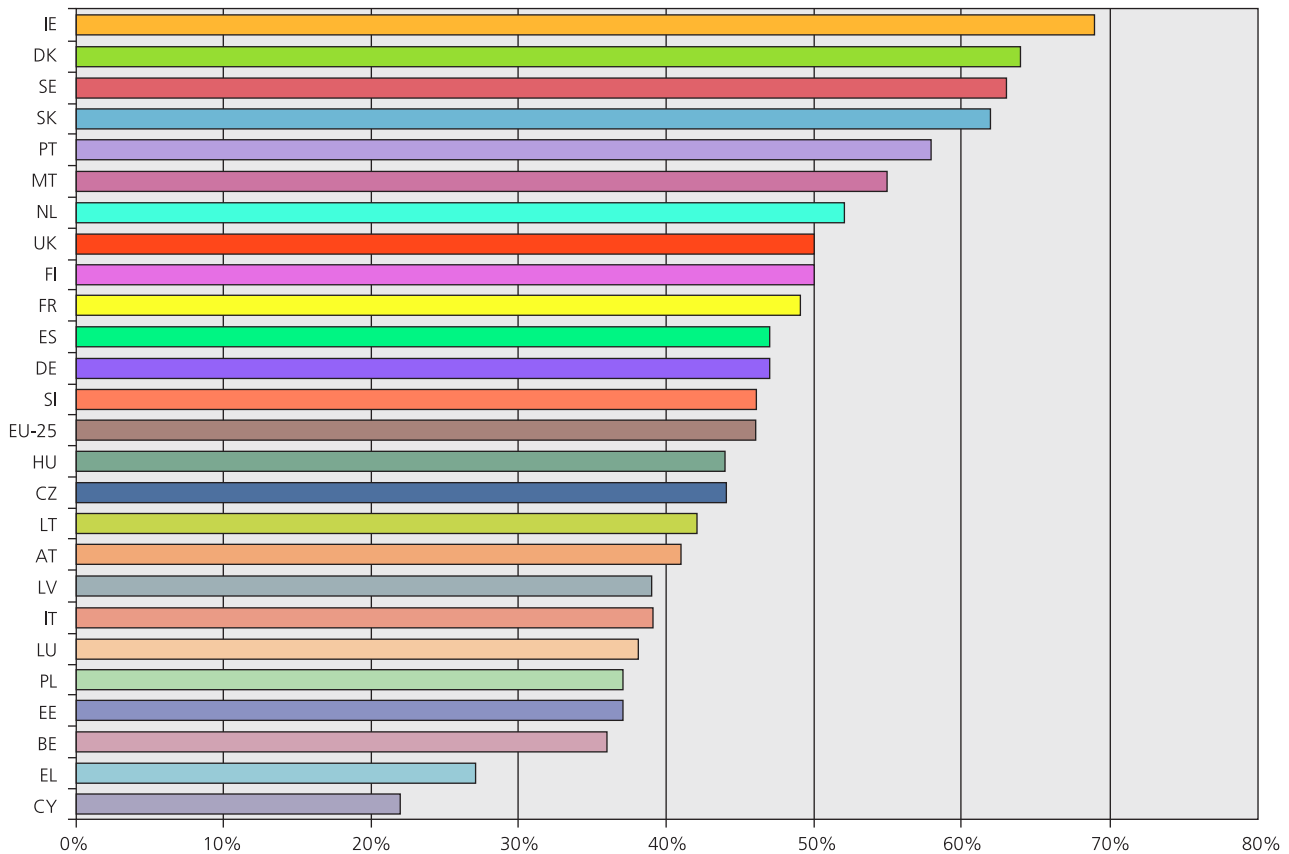


■ **Figure 6.** Past mobility, by distance of move (%). Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), 2006.

cent have moved outside their region (■ Figure 6). Only 4 per cent indicated that they have ever moved to another member state. The long-distance mobility rates in the EU have been relatively small, as less than 3 per cent ever have moved to another country outside the EU. However, mobility between regions within the EU is more pronounced than mobility between the EU and non-EU regions. More than 32 per cent of EU citizens have moved within their own town or city, while almost a 24 per cent have moved outside their town or city. Survey evidence suggests that short-distance mobility is common amongst EU citizens. Survey results do not support the sentiment that mobility is primarily triggered by long-distances. This result implies that mobility rates from the EU to Turkey may fall in the medium term, as long-distance movement becomes less attractive for EU academics relative to the cost mobility entails.

Although the EU has done much to realize the goals of the Erasmus scheme, it stops far short of ending EU academics to move outside the EU, which may be good for the EU as a whole. What matters most is that how EU academics perceive mobility that can certainly affect their life. Generally, EU citizens feel positively about mobility, despite moving can cause physical separation from their social and family network. To illustrate this, ■ Figure 7 shows that around 46 per cent of EU citizens had rather positive views on the benefits of mobility in 2005 (Eurofound, 2006). This figure was only 11 per cent of those had negative views about mobility. ■ Figure 7 also shows that more than 60 per cent of people in Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and Slovakia supported the idea of long dis-

[12] The costs of movement comprise of financial costs (i.e. travel expenses), psychological costs (i.e., the separation from family and friends) and differences in the costs of living, and foregone earnings, while moving.



■ **Figure 7.** Percentage of people who think that long-distance mobility is a good practice for individuals, by country. Source: Eurobarometer Survey, 2005b.

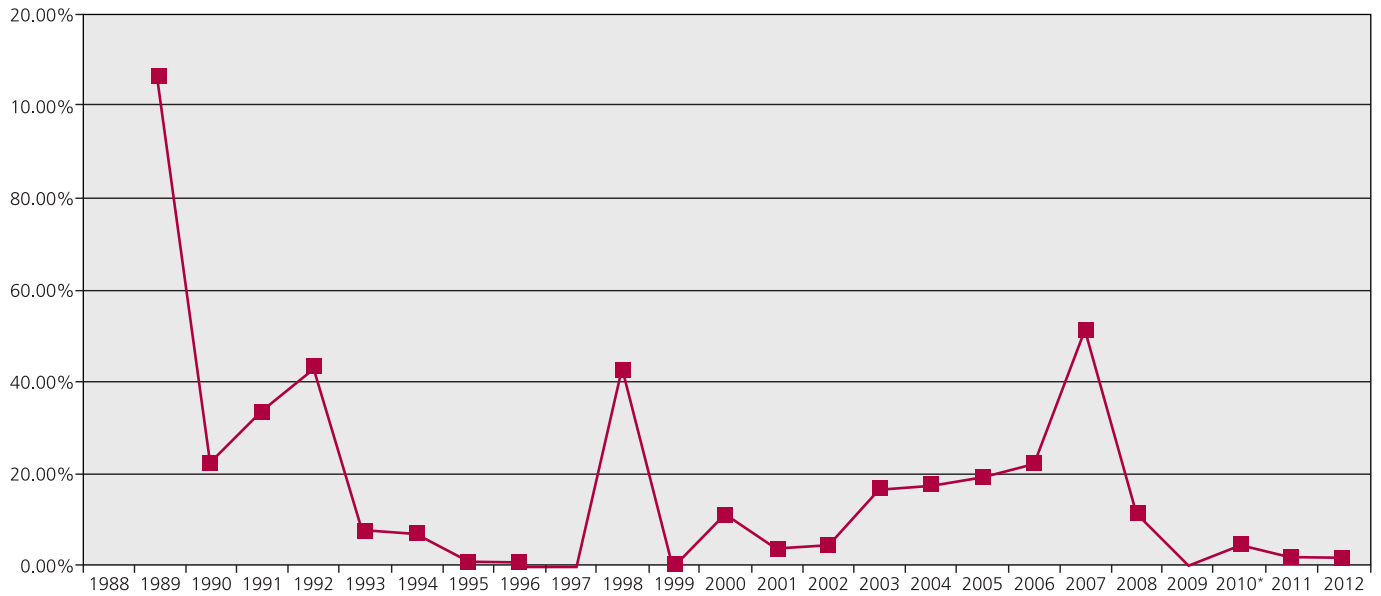
tance mobility in Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and Slovakia, while less than 30 per cent in Greece and Cyprus supported the view that mobility experience was positive. These outcomes nevertheless point toward preferences of EU citizens to move to the Union's regions rather than to move somewhere else.

It is still far from clear what detriment geographical distance can cause for academic mobility from the EU members states to Turkey. This may imply that distance is a less decisive factor in mobility which may not always be the result of individual choices. Despite uncertainties of inward mobility, geographical identity appears to be an important factor to influence cross-border mobility, rather EU citizens prefer short distances. There is at least some evidence that geographical distance can play a significant role in reducing mobility from the EU to Turkey. A clue to this is that the costs of mobility (i.e., travel), often exceed the even the substantial gains from the Erasmus grants.

Erasmus Budget

As the neoclassical approach assumes, mobility intensions depend on how far the individuals maximise their utility that is subject to a budget constraint. If an individual believes that the financial resources are available at the optimum levels, he or she is likely to move within the next five years. To obtain a picture of current mobility patterns, a focus is on the scale of Erasmus funding. For mobility to deliver its potential benefits over the long term implying that funding is attractive for Erasmus movers. In other words, mobility incentives are tied-up with financial sources. Clearly, the financial constraint in the home country is a push factor that influences outward mobility.

The key point in this respect is probably the increasing role of the European Commission to improve Erasmus funding. In a sense that the national agencies in each country are backed into the role of management of the Erasmus budget. As regard to the level of funding, the Commission statistics on Erasmus funding in 2009 indicated that almost 96 per cent of



■ **Figure 8.** Expected percentage change/increase in the Erasmus decentralized budget until 2012. Source: European Commission, 2010c. *The budget from 2010 onwards is provisional.

Erasmus budget had been spent on the mobility actions so called “decentralized actions” since 1988,^[13] while funding levels varied substantially on yearly basis. Funding for 2008/09 academic year accounted for 96.2 per cent of Erasmus budget (up from 95 per cent in 2007/08), which was used by the HEIs in the 31 participating countries. It is interesting to note that, out of the total decentralized funds spent, only 6.26 per cent went to the staff mobility, including staff training and teaching assignments, while 7.83 per cent of funds went to organization of mobility. The challenge faced by the tight budget higher education was low level of mobility. One can easily conclude that the tight financial support has an adverse affect on the inward mobility as far as Turkey is concern and will continue to do so due to inadequate funding.

All in all, at the EU level, existing educational exchange programmes (i.e., the Erasmus programme) is very relevant and efficient promoters of geographical mobility, as participation within the programmes tend to increase the probability for further mobility later in the life course of individuals (Bonin et al., 2008, p. 120). Here, a balance must be struck between its facilitation mobility and funding. ■ Figure 8 above shows expected percentage change or increase in the Erasmus decentralized budget until 2012. In 2008, the budget for the Erasmus decentralized actions accounted for €416.36 million, which was an increase of 11.85% from 2007 (up from

€372 million). In fact, the Commission, in focussing EU spending closely on the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy and on the key drivers of growth and jobs, has proposed a substantial increase in the budgets for education programmes and for research (European Commission, 2011, p. 8). Until 2013, the annual budget is expected to increase at a moderate rate. In parallel to the budget increase, one may hope that scheme will experience a substantial level of mobility. Although Turkey’s success and popularity to attract EU lectures can be increased significantly in the short run, the Commission has estimated the increases in the budget for the period 2011–2013 would be below the increase of the cost of living index in the EU. Almost ironically, most of Erasmus immobility relating Turkey will continue to be caused by the restrictive budget.

Policy Recommendation

After identifying the main drivers for mobility, six key solutions suggested include:

Language Training: Given the lack of language skills in Turkey which tends to reinforce academic mobility, linguistic diversity should be encouraged and increased in vocational education and training. In part, this role should be assigned to the HEIs in their effectiveness to address the language question more strategically and frequently.

[13] These actions include student and staff mobility, Intensive Programmes (IPs) and Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILCs), which are managed centrally by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels (EACEA).



Transparency: To ensure the openness of higher education systems, the initiative as dissemination of right information in the area of teaching can make the Turkish HEIs more understandable and transparent to international staff. Supporting reform through transparency, more individual organizations should therefore be set up as part of harmonization process. Such organizations can help to access to information and thus make Turkey more attractive country as a teaching destination.

Collaboration: In a world where an increasing emphasis placed on ‘internationalization at home’, efforts should be made to establish closer ties between the Erasmus partners and Turkey. Through some steps towards Europeanization of its HEIs, academic mobility can be reinforced.

Assurance of Quality: As the European Commission announced the modernization of the HEIs in Europe as a major precondition for a knowledge based society and economy, with the launch of the Lisbon Strategy, there is now a strong need for flexible and quality of working environment and facilities (i.e., transportation) or investment on infrastructure. By this way, the Turkish HEIs can be made more relevance within the context of Erasmus mobility.

Institutional Priorities and Actions: In meeting the increased demand for harmonization, Turkey must be better aligned with the needs of a better integration of the higher education system in terms of teaching and research collaboration, higher academic standards, curriculum development, institutional promotion, and new funding sources, and in particular with the requirement of the EU legislation. Trends such as international competitiveness, privatization, social inclusion, and participative forms of teaching and research should be supported by providing EU academics with access to more opportunities under the Erasmus scheme.

Funding: The objectives of the Erasmus process can only achieved, wherever possible, through sufficient funding. The Erasmus funding policies should be reviewed so that EU academics receive the necessary financial support to move abroad.

Conclusion

The study suggests that, academic mobility have substantially been increased between the participating countries and it appears that the scheme will reinforce mobility further in the future. This achievement is reached in a period when special emphasis is placed on the inward mobility from the EU member states to Turkey. As the study demonstrated, since 2004, the Erasmus programme is widely viewed as a major trigger for a qualitative leap of academic mobility between the EU and Turkey, Yet, in practice, the picture is not a competitive one, as compared to the mobility levels of EU member states.

Academics in the member states have not been mobile for the purpose of teaching in the Turkish HEIs.

The study evaluated the possible pull-effects on the Erasmus mobility. Concerns over the quality or reputation of the higher education system, linguistic diversity, the available resources, openness, as well as geographical distance can be a challenge for those education systems in Europe which receive substantial inflows of foreign staff. Given the driving forces and characteristics of the EU HEIs in an international context, these barriers seem to lower the number of Union’s academics moving part of Turkey. As the study assumed, EU academics faced with the decision to move, will likely to fall back on habit and “stay put”.

Therefore, policy recommendation is an important component of this study, which mainly focused on the improvement of working environment and the financial conditions. The study highlighted that Turkey’s attractiveness can be enhanced if a number of concerns are urgently addressed: strengthening quality, transparency and increasing information and support measures, and language and cultural preparation, especially academic recognition of the Turkish HEIs.

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