



# Report on a comparative analysis of current practices in Erasmus Staff mobility at European HEIs

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Realising the potential of the international mobility of staff in higher education (REALISE)

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**<http://www.realise-erasmusplus.fr>**

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Nosheen and Sophie

Cover image: Erasmus+ Staff Training Week at Middlesex University

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# Executive Summary

## Key Findings

### Mobility demographics and activities

- 1 in 3 respondents across 50 European higher education institutions have **participated** in European mobility in the past 5 years.
- There has been a 10% **increase in participation of administrative staff** in staff mobility in the past 5 years (one third of the administrative staff who went on mobility are International Relations (IR) staff).
- The number of academic staff in engineering going on mobility has halved in the past 16 years, but the amount of **academic staff in Humanities and Social Sciences** going on mobility has slightly increased. Non-humanities scientific subjects may be less represented in mobility due to the availability of other funds covering research trips.
- The great majority of all staff who went on mobility have worked at a university for **6+ years**.
- 2 in 3 staff who went on international mobility are female. The initial **gender gap** affecting mobility has decreased over the past 27 years.
- 9 in 10 staff amongst those who went on mobility are confident about their strongest **foreign language**.

### Management

- A range of factors are found to encourage the take up of mobility. These include **providing more recognition through pay rise and job promotion, linking mobility with university strategy** and, generally, showing support for staff mobility (by management). Other factors include simplifying administrative procedures, providing family support and sensible work arrangements, increasing the length of the visit, and raising awareness of the emotions associated to the mobility experience, such as curiosity and fear. A key reason for not taking up mobility once an application has been made is **funding being insufficient** to cover costs.
- Mobility's discouraging factors include **problematic work arrangements** (not being able to find replacement at work and too high a workload) and **poor promotion**: respondents lamented the lack of information about partner universities and about the programme.
- Additionally, the **key experienced individual** problem associated with mobility is **insufficient funds**, whereas the **key institutional** obstacle to mobility concerns working conditions, particularly the lack of possibility of having a replacement at work.
- The vast majority of respondents are **satisfied** to have achieved all their set goals during mobility, and the remainder have achieved them partially. Overall, 99% of people who went on mobility thought that their participation in this Erasmus staff mobility programme **met their expectations** to the fullest.
- In terms of **impact**, mobility is strongest with regard to professional development. In practice, mobility opened up a new platform for teaching observation, provided research opportunities and exposed administrative staff to different systems of management.

### Promotion and dissemination

- The main source of information about the programme is through word of mouth.
- **Informal dissemination**, such as the sharing of information about the visit with colleagues, is the most popular means for disseminating the results of mobility.
- The key mobility output is in **problem-solving** i.e. using the new knowledge learnt on mobility to solve problems in an enhanced way once back at the home institution.

### Recognition

- 84% of staff who know colleagues who have been on mobility recognise that Erasmus staff exchange has **helped them professionally**.
- However, **overall perceived recognition is rather low**: barely more than 1 in three people who have gone on mobility in the past 5 years feel their experience has been highly valued and acknowledged by their institution, with administrative staff feeling that their experience is slightly better valued than academic staff.
- It has been recognised that mobility's value is in enhancing the university's educational mission and improving society's sustainability, contributing to emotional well being, providing opportunities for personal development and collaboration, enhancing skills, reaching specific targets (e.g. administrative staff), and favouring problem-solving.
- Obstacles to the recognition of mobility include administrative staff themselves not being aware of the benefits of mobility. Also, the appropriateness of mobility to researchers constitutes a grey area with disagreement from the point of view of management over whether mobility has value for researchers or not.

# Introduction

Internationalisation is a key element in raising the profile of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and in contributing to their modernisation. It enhances creativity and innovation in all activities and services they provide.

At the European level, policies for Higher Education and their resulting initiatives have significantly intensified over the last years. Among the tools available for HEIs, the Erasmus+ Programme is one of the most valuable. If study mobility is seen as its most significant action, staff mobility is also an effective means for internationalising and modernising higher education systems and is essential to supporting student mobility.

The 2014 Erasmus Impact Study concluded that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) target – that by 2020, 20% of students across the EHEA have an international mobility experience as part of their studies – could not be achieved without the internationalisation at home of HEIs. This process depends on the experience and knowledge of academic and non-academic mobile staff, 'it is therefore of the utmost importance that staff mobility will be included among the top priorities of the internationalisation strategies of HEIs' (European Commission 2014:20). In the 2012 Strategy Mobility for Better Learning, the EHEA Ministerial Conference exhorted HEIs 'to give fair and formal recognition for competences gained abroad, to offer attractive incentives' (EHEA 2012:5). The 2012–2015 report of the BFUG Working Group for Mobility & Internationalisation includes the following in its 'recommendations to enhance staff mobility' in the EHEA: 'Encourage and support staff mobility and appreciation of its value' and 'encourage attractive and transparent working conditions as well as transparency of opportunities and of selection procedures for staff at national and international level' (EHEA 2015:24).

Indeed, while its potential impact is very high and well recognised, staff mobility remains the "poor sister" of mobility programmes. Despite a diversity of contexts and situations, all the partners collaborating on the REALISE project, representing universities from

ten different countries, came to the same conclusion that significant efforts and structural change must be made in improving the implementation and recognition of staff mobility. Before possibly looking to other types of mobility, they agreed to start with the Erasmus programme which offers a common field of study, where similar concepts and practices can be understood, and a substantial number of activities be analysed. REALISE therefore aims at improving the implementation and recognition of staff mobility, in order to maximise its impact on both individuals and institutions. To this end, the project pursues three specific objectives:

- 1 Identify and develop innovative practices regarding the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme for staff mobility
- 2 Foster the recognition of mobility in the career development of academic, administrative and technical staff in HEIs
- 3 Raise institutional awareness about the added value of staff mobility and promote its contribution to HEIs' internationalisation strategies.

# Methodology

In the first year of the project, the partners developed and carried out a survey. This report offers an analysis of the survey results.

The survey aimed at gathering figures, data and trends on staff mobility; identifying challenges and obstacles encountered in staff mobility; and mapping practices regarding the management and the implementation of Erasmus+ staff mobility activities in the universities responding to the survey. The methodology for the survey included specific tools to provide the partnership with hitherto unavailable figures, data and feedback on staff mobility activities within each organisation participating in the survey, leading to comparison and analysis of the results. The results of the survey have contributed to the analysis of activities, benefits and obstacles presented here. This analysis also identifies examples of good practice that will provide material for the construction of a toolkit and for engagement in policy dialogue at institutional, national and international levels.

Each partner invited universities from their country to participate in the survey. These universities became 'associate partners' in the project (see list of associate partners on the project website: <http://www.realise-erasmusplus.fr/?q=university/associate-partners>). In each institution that participated in the survey, the target group for the survey included any members of staff employed at the university (academic and administrative/technical). The scope of the survey was the experiences of staff regarding staff mobility between the academic years 2012/13 – 2016/17 under one of the following programmes: the Erasmus Lifelong Learning Programme – Staff Mobility in Higher Education; the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 programme KA103 – mobility to Erasmus+ programme countries (EU, EEA and EU candidate countries); and the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 programme KA107 – mobility to partner countries. The survey sought responses from both staff who had undertaken a mobility under one of these frameworks within the given dates, and staff who had not been on a mobility. The latter

might include staff who had never heard of the opportunity; who had heard of it but not applied; and who applied but did not carry out a mobility.

The survey did not seek responses about any other visits that staff may have had funded through an Erasmus multilateral project or any other sources.

# Methods

The survey consists of the following components:

- An on-line questionnaire: quantitative and qualitative survey among all staff
- A set of questions for interviews: qualitative study among university management

(<http://www.realise-erasmusplus.fr/?q=survey-tools>)

The questionnaire was an online tool which could be completed both by people who had and had not had the experience of a staff mobility funded through one of the programmes listed above. It was built on the survey tool QuestionPro and was composed of 50 questions, 16 of which gathered qualitative data. The questions covered the themes of: access to information; perception; satisfaction; main benefits; impact on professional activities and practices; impact on student mobility; main obstacles to mobility; institutional barriers; recognition; integration with international and modernisation strategy. The narrative identified whether the respondents had experienced staff mobility or not and directed them to the relevant set of questions; there was one set for those who had been on a mobility and one set for those who had not.

6202 respondents from the ten partner countries completed the questionnaire; this was 88 % of the target number of 7000. The highest number of respondents came from French universities (26%); Polish participants made up 13%; Spanish 12%; Italy 11%; Portugal and the UK 10%; Sweden 7%; Belgium 5%; Slovenia 3%; and Germany 2% (see Annex 1). A problem was experienced in Germany where a similar survey was being carried out in the same period as a result of which the response rate was significantly lower than the target figure. On the other hand, in six of the countries (Belgium, France, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden) the participation rate was

higher than the target figures. Answers to the questionnaire have been gathered in 7 languages: Catalan, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish. Those not in English were translated into English by the partner university.

48 interviews were carried out by the 10 partner institutions. The interviews were semi-directive, lasted 20–30 minutes, were carried out face-to-face and then transcribed. The sample interviewed included senior university management such as presidents/rectors/vice-chancellors and heads of faculties/offices, e.g. human resources, staff training, international relations.

The interviews have been anonymised and numbered from 1 to 48, in order to be able to reference them in the text through excerpts and quotations. Quotations from free-text answers of the survey have not been numbered or referenced due to the quantitative nature of the data collection method they were obtained with.

Any references from the questionnaires and the interviews linking data to specific countries have been removed and replaced with 'xxx'.

# 1. Mobility demographics and activities

## General participation in staff mobility in Europe since 2012

Of the 6202 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 1936 people (31% of the sample) declared they have taken up Erasmus LLP/Erasmus+ mobility since 2012–2013, whereas 4266 (69% of the sample) stated they have not. In other words, slightly more than 1 in 3 members of staff across 50 higher education institutions in Europe who responded to our questionnaire were found to have taken advantage of European mobility opportunities in the past 5 years.

## Academic and administrative staff distribution

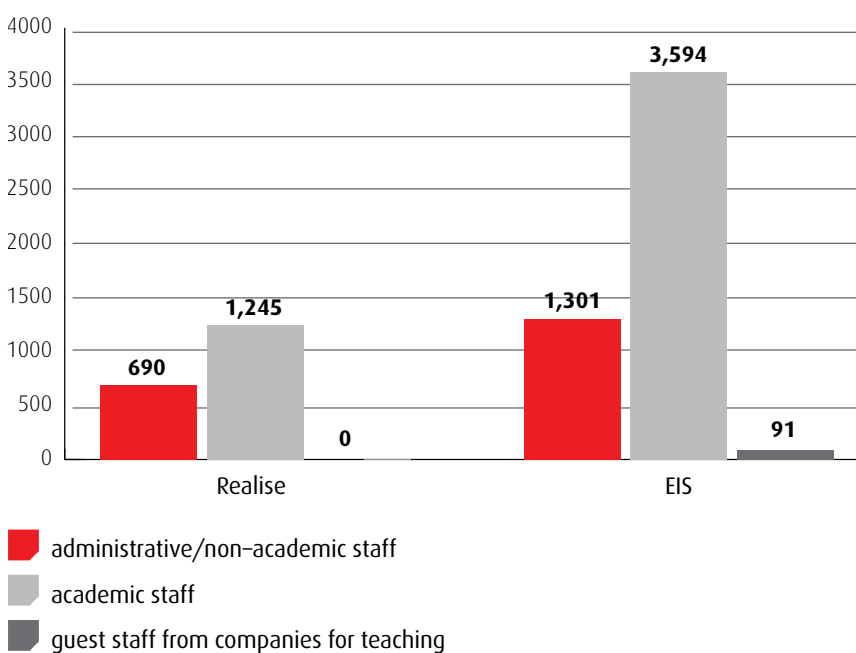
**Table 1 – Distribution of administrative and academic staff and academic staff who went on Erasmus+ mobility since 2012–2013 (n. of responses)**

administrative staff	690
academic staff	1245
<b>Total</b>	<b>1936</b>

Testament to the popularity of international mobility, some of the executive staff members who were interviewed explained that in some European institutions, demand for mobility has been higher than the budget available and that sometimes they had more applicants than they were able to support, “so we’ve had to be competitive [45].”

Of those who went on Erasmus mobility since 2012–2013, the majority (64%) are academics. Administrative staff participation to staff mobility is lower, at 36% (see Table 1). In other words since 2012–2013, almost 2 in 3 members of staff going on mobility were academics. This trend is broadly in line with previous findings from the European commission (2014: 41) which showed that in 2014, academic staff mobility was higher than non-academic staff mobility.

**Fig. 1 – Administrative staff participation to international and Erasmus+ mobility in 2013 and since 2012–2017 (n. of responses)**



It has to be remembered that the European Commission’s findings included staff mobility outside the Erasmus programme, whereas the current questionnaire only included Erasmus LLP/Erasmus+ short term mobility programmes. In this broader context, the present findings are significant in that they show an increase of participation of non-academic staff to international mobility even if this only relates to Erasmus+ mobility and not to other mobility programmes.

Previous findings (Fig. 1) on international staff mobility from the 2014’s Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) in fact showed that in 2013, participation of non-academic staff to international mobility was as low as 26%, whereas in our survey measuring participation from 2012 until May 2017, administrative/non-academic staff participation was at 36%. Hence there appears to be a 10% increase of administrative staff participation to staff mobility in the past 5 years.



### Administrative/ technical staff

Of those who went on mobility and are administrative staff (that is, 690 of respondents, see Table 2), the majority are International Relations (IR) staff (32%), which account for one third of administrative staff mobilities. This result is fully consistent with previous findings showing that IR staff represent a third of administrative staff mobilities (European Commission 2014: 43). The result is not surprising as this professional administrative group is not only more aware than other administrative staff of the opportunities, procedures and benefits of international mobility, but are also likely to be more sympathetic to the aims of the project and therefore more prone to respond to the survey.

**Table 2 – administration segment (n. of responses and %)**

International relations	<b>222</b>	32%
Admissions	19	3%
Student services	<b>91</b>	13%
HR	14	2%
IT	34	5%
Finance/accounting	12	2%
Library	<b>80</b>	12%
Infrastructure/technical services	22	3%
Administration at departmental level	<b>83</b>	12%
Other	<b>113</b>	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>690</b>	

Student services, library and departmental administration account for another third (37%) of administrative staff mobility. Human resources, information technology, infrastructure/technical, finance and admissions are the lowest scoring groups, hence they are the professional groups that are least likely to go on mobility.

### Academic staff

Of those who went on mobility and are academics, slightly more than 1 in 3 academics have a background in Humanities, Languages and Philological Sciences, and Social Sciences. Conversely, the least likely academics to go on mobility (1 in 20) are from Agriculture Science, Architecture, Art and Design, Communication and Information sciences (see Table 3).

Today, languages and philological sciences are the most represented groups in academic staff mobility. This is an increase as compared to the findings of a 2000/01 study on Erasmus teachers (Janson, Schomburg and Teichler 2009: 123). According to this study, in 2000/2001 languages/philology teachers represented 12% of teaching fields in mobility (13% today in the current project). In this respect, an interviewee states that today “there are faculties like philology, which are very mobile, others like sports which are not mobile at all [15]”.

**Table 3 – Distribution of Academic field of work/research/teaching (n. of responses and %)**

1. Agriculture Sciences	20	2%
2. Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning	24	2%
3. Art and Design	25	2%
4. Business Studies, Management Science	117	9%
5. Education, Teacher Training	87	7%
6. Engineering, Technology	114	9%
7. Geography, Geology	36	3%
8. Humanities	138	<b>11%</b>
9. Languages and Philological Sciences	161	<b>13%</b>
10. Law	70	6%
11. Mathematics, Informatics	49	4%
12. Medical Sciences	78	6%
13. Natural Sciences	94	8%
14. Social Sciences	141	<b>11%</b>
15. Communication and Information Sciences	25	2%
16. Other Areas of Study	66	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1245</b>	<b>1</b>

However, back in 2000/2001, academic staff in engineering was the largest group, with a 17% presence. This has significantly halved to 9% in 16 years, according to our findings. According to the same study, all other fields had a

percentage of respondents below 10%. Today this has changed with Language, Humanities and Social Sciences being above 10% (with 13%, 11% and 11% respectively).

One of the interviewees explains that non-humanities scientific subjects may be less represented in mobility due to the availability of other funds covering research trips "To be sure: staff travels a lot (especial in natural sciences, they have a lot money for it), but for scientific reasons only (research, conferences) and with own funding [12]."

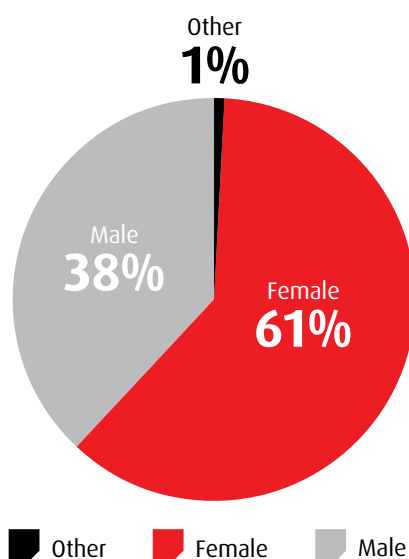
**Seniority, gender, family status, language skills**

**Table 4 – Years of work for HE institution (n. of responses)**

1. Less than 1 year	18
2. 1-2 years	57
3. 3-5 years	214
4. 6-10 years	432
5. More than 10 years	1214
<b>Total</b>	<b>1936</b>

The vast majority of all staff (85%), both academic and administrative, who went on mobility have worked at a university for 6+ years. Those who have worked for 5 years and less account for only 15% of staff mobilities (Table 4). These findings are broadly consistent with previous findings on seniority in teacher staff mobility. Janson, Schomburg and Teichler (2009: 122) report that in 2000/01, 88% of teachers were full professors or in other senior academic positions and only 12 percent were in junior positions, whereas in 1998/99, staff in junior positions taking up mobility were up to 18%.

**Fig. 2 – Distribution by gender (%)**



Of all the staff who went on mobility, the majority (61%) are female and 38% male, with a 1% of unspecified gender (Fig. 2). In other words, today, 2 in 3 staff going on international mobility are female. This result is consistent, if only slightly more increased, with findings from 2014 EIS (European Commission 2014), according to which 60% of all Erasmus mobile staff consisted of female respondents. The amount of female staff taking up mobility appears to have steadily increased in the last two decades, since as Janson, Schomburg and Teichler report (2009: 122), in 1990/91, only 18% of mobile teachers were women and in 1998/99 women were 31 percent of mobile teachers. In regard to 2013-2014, the European Union reported the proportion of total staff mobility being undertaken by women as 51.4% (European Union 2015: 11). With female take up of mobility being represented today at 61% in our study, one can see how female take up of international mobility has increased over the past 27 years meaning that the initial gender gap present in mobility has decreased.

It has to be remembered that this steady rise of the distribution of women in mobility is a general trend that may still have local exceptions. For example, as one executive interviewee stated, "I noticed it one year in particular when I think all the applicants from one department were male, and there were more female staff in that department. That obviously is a concern because it has knock-on effects for people's career progression and networks and all of that [12]."

Of the 1936 respondents who went on mobility, 956 had dependent children (49% of sample) and 979 did not (51% of sample). On this theme, a prominent qualitative find in the 'other' section of Fig. 6, p.18, expressed the idea that family status (having dependent children, family or even elderly parent to take care of) is an obstacle to staff mobility and is one of the factors who keep people from applying for staff mobility.

**Table 5 – Perception of language proficiency (n. of responses)**

Excellent, very good and good strongest foreign language skills	1734
Poor, very poor or no strongest foreign language skills	201
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>1936</b>

When asked to evaluate their knowledge of their strongest foreign language (Table 5), 1734 respondents (90%) stated they have excellent, very good and good strongest foreign language skills, whereas 201 respondents (10%) stated they have poor, very poor or no strongest foreign language skills. Hence at broad European level, of all those who went on mobility, the vast majority (9 in 10 staff) are confident about their strongest foreign language. Looking at the distribution of perception of language skills at a pan-European level, it appears that it is almost exclusively staff who are confident or very confident about their strongest foreign language skills who go on mobility.

**Table 6 – Language confidence across countries (n. of responses and %)**

Country	language confidence responses per country (1+2+3 – excellent–good–very good)	total respondents who went on mobility per country	language confidence percentage within each country
Belgium	89	90	99%
Germany	97	98	99%
Spain	209	221	95%
France	253	300	84%
Italy	292	298	98%
Poland	244	251	97%
Portugal	141	147	96%
Slovenia	140	140	100%
Sweden	62	63	98%
UK	195	314	62%

Given the above, we then looked at the distribution of language confidence (defined as the feeling that a respondent's own strongest foreign language skills are excellent, very good or good) comparatively across European countries (Table 6). The data shows that confidence in having strong foreign language skills is a very important factor for mobility for all countries, but with some variations. In the UK and France, foreign language confidence amongst staff who went on mobility is slightly less prominent than in the other eight countries. In the UK, only 62% of all UK staff who went on mobility (314 members of staff) have high foreign language confidence, as compared to

Slovenia where all the 140 members of staff who went on mobility (100%) have high foreign language confidence. It is notable that the two countries that score lowest here– France and UK – are at the bottom of the scale as far as foreign language learning is concerned: ‘... for the first foreign language, the proportion of students reaching the level of independent user varies from 82% in Malta and Sweden (English) to only 14% in France (English) and 9% in England (French) (EC 2012:6)’.

For the UK, these results can also be explained by the fact that as well as fewer staff possessing foreign language skills, it can be expected that English will be spoken across Europe so the need to have a foreign language is less strong. Still, the percentage of foreign language confidence in the UK is above 50% which is still significant and indicates that even in the UK, proficiency in a foreign language that is not English is a key demographic factor in mobility. Hence, overall these results mean that generally, in Europe, if you are a speaker of a second language, you are more likely to go on mobility, the same being true for the UK and France though to a slightly less extent.

**Table 7 – Comparison between levels of confidence in foreign language skills of administrative staff and academic staff who went on mobility (n. of responses and %)**

<b>1 Language skills confidence of administrative staff who went on mobility</b>			
Excellent, very good and good strongest foreign language skills	597	87%	
Poor, very poor or no strongest foreign language skills	93	13%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>690</b>		

<b>2 Language skills confidence of academic staff who went on mobility</b>			
Excellent, very good and good strongest foreign language skills	1137	91%	
Poor, very poor or no strongest foreign language skills	108	9%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1245</b>		

The level of confidence in foreign language skills displayed by administrative staff and academic staff is similar. Amongst the administrative staff who went on mobility, the vast majority (87%) are confident in their strongest foreign language skills, and similarly, 91% of academics are confident in their strongest foreign language skills (Table 7).

**Activities’ features and types**

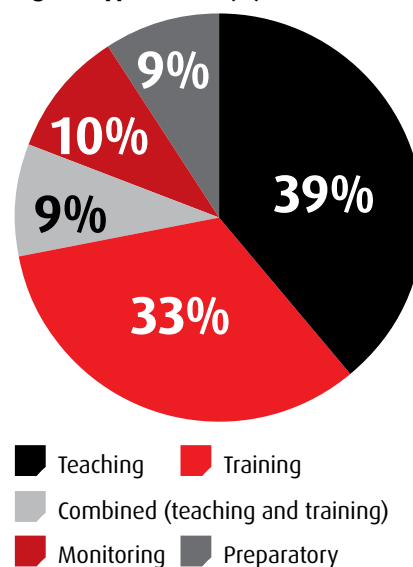
Nearly half (48%) of the respondents, or 1 in 2 members of staff who went on mobility, made 1 visit in the last five years. 1 in 5 staff (22%) made 2 visits over the past five years, whereas 10% or 1 in 10 members of staff made 1 visit per year over the past five years (Table 8).

**Table 8 – Number of visits made in the past 5 years (n. of responses)**

<b>1 Visit</b>	930
<b>2 Visits</b>	433
<b>3 Visits</b>	234
<b>4 Visits</b>	139
<b>5 Visits</b>	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1936</b>

As Fig.3 shows, the most popular visit types remain teaching and training, with 39% respondents taking up teaching visit (931) and 33% going on training visits (782). This number of training visits is consistent with official EC figures, which measured training visits (undertaken by both administrative and teaching staff) at 34% of all staff exchange (European Union 2015: 12). In our study, monitoring, combined (teaching and training) and preparatory visits were distributed at 10%, 9% and 9% respectively.

**Fig. 3 – Type of visit (%)**



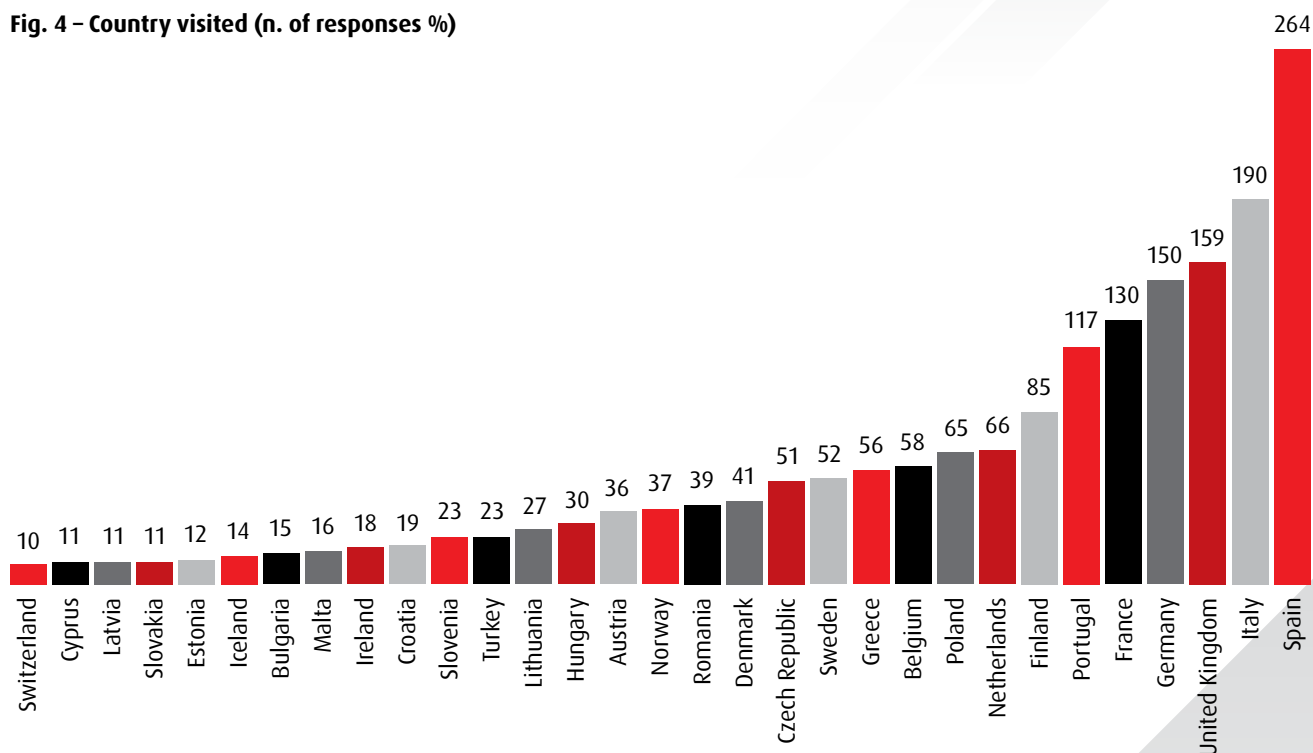
In regard to overall length of mobility (Table 9), 55% of respondents went on mobility for one week; 34% respondents went on mobility for less than a week. Visits longer than one week amounted to 20% of all visits.

**Table 9 – Length of visit (n. of responses)**

Less than a week	660
<b>1 week</b>	<b>1072</b>
2 weeks	112
3–4 weeks	63
5–8 weeks	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>1933</b>

The most visited countries in staff mobility (Fig. 4) are Spain (14%) and Italy (10%), then UK (8%), Germany (8%) and France (7%). These results are fully consistent with the official 2015 EU statistics for teaching visits, according to which the five most popular destinations for staff mobility were Spain, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and France (European Union 2015: 10).

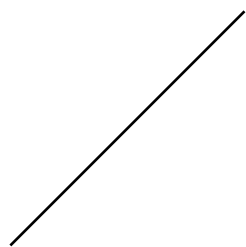
**Fig. 4 – Country visited (n. of responses %)**



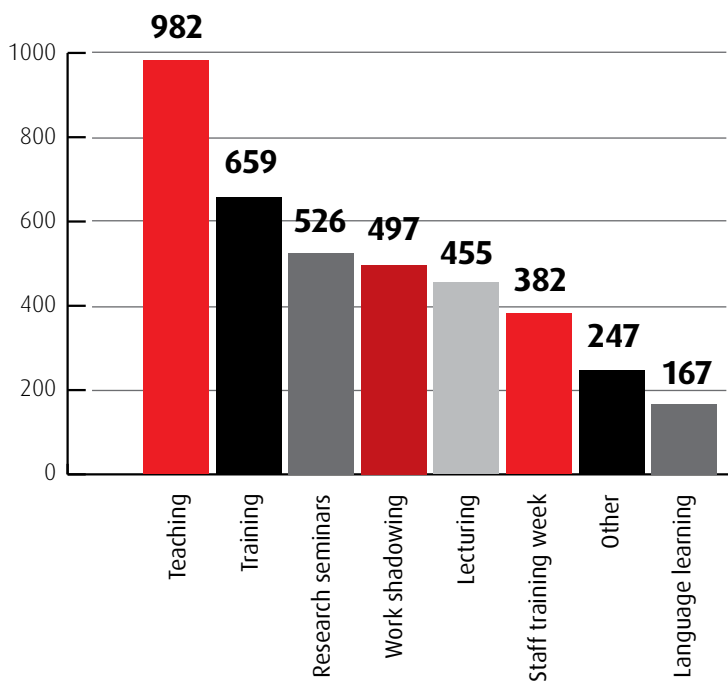
In organising mobility (Table 10), respondents reported that the International Relations Office helped them in 72% of cases. The department faculty helped in another 10% of cases, or helped 1 in 10 staff going on mobility. 13% of respondents stated they organised the mobility themselves. Those responding ‘other’, a statistically less significant number of people (5%), said they organised mobility with the help of a partner, colleague, supervisor or professor, or both with the help of the IRO and their faculty. Here it is interesting to note the role of informal help (partner or colleague) in organising mobility.

**Table 10 – Agent helping in organising mobility (n. of responses)**

Your international/Erasmus office	<b>1417</b>
Your department/faculty/school	200
No-one	248
Other	97



**Fig. 5 – Activities undertaken during the visit (n. of responses)**



The majority of respondents went on teaching visits (25%) and lecturing visit (12%), hence teaching amounted to more than one third of all activities (Fig. 5). General training visits constituted 17% of activities whereas participating in an

organised staff training week amounted to 10%, the two training types combined amounting to 27%, of all activities. Visit to attend research seminars or perform work shadowing amounted to 13% and 13% respectively.

## 2. Management

### 2.1 Pre-mobility perceptions, issues and expectations

#### Reasons for applying/encouraging factors

A number of factors emerged in the questionnaire as to the reasons why HE staff would feel encouraged to apply for mobility opportunities. These factors were noted and are here listed qualitatively and not in order of statistical significance. Lighter or no administrative procedures would help as “we crumble under the funding application procedures.” Low seniority is an encouraging factor as some respondents think that “it’s better to leave these opportunities to young people”. This, however, is not borne out in the data, as noted above. More targeted communication would help particularly as a respondent spells out the need for “spreading digestible information without the need of looking for it”. This need is probably dictated by contemporary digital media consumption habits, that is, social media or advertising algorithms feeding us bite-sized, relevant ads or news to us based on our browsing history without us making any effort to look for any such information.

Encouraging factors include mobility experience matching what one already knows as for example: “if this could come within the scope of my missions — for example to be assigned to a foreign Disability Service” or “I am more interested in research scholarships than in mobility for teaching”. By contrast, some respondents were more interested in novelty, what one does not know, and particularly new and complementary skills to the ones they have. For example, “the possibility of doing research in fields I could not do where I am now”, “the possibility of more practical work, development of professional skills” and more generally “to do a job or course different to my usual one, but complementary to my laboratory work.”

An interviewee suggested that an encouraging factor may be the creation of a need for mobility based on a gap in skills/research/teaching, much like research is based on identifying a gap in the literature:

I suppose if we take an example, let’s say student retention, that’s a big issue at the moment, we’ve got too many students withdrawing, we’re exceeding our benchmark, the university’s getting very concerned about that, I don’t know but if there was evidence, well actually in this particular country they seem to have much lower retention rates, what are we doing that’s different?[...] So one might say let’s go to planning, let’s go to the executive and say what are the big challenges for the university? Okay, let’s put a call out for people who can participate in solving these issues [44].

According to questionnaire respondents, family support is an encouraging factor – that is, the possibility of taking family on mobility or of arranging childcare at home or abroad when on mobility.

Sensible work arrangements would help; one respondent desires “easy replacement in my university, by my colleagues, without any penalization” and “not having to teach the classes I’ve missed in addition to the classes at the host institution.” An example of good practice that reduces issues associated with cumbersome work arrangements comes from an interviewee who stated:

In some institutions, what they tend to do is essentially concentrate the teaching of staff in the first or the last term, and then that does mean, essentially, you can find yourself with a fairly low teaching load in one out of two terms, enabling you then to travel and to undertake research projects and prioritise whatever is non-teaching based [43].

Management support can be an encouraging factor, as emerged through interviews with executive staff. As one of them recognised, “I think that the leading person [management] should be aware that when you send out somebody and he learns something, he gets new ideas, that it can be beneficial for their whole organization.” This factor also emerged in questionnaire respondents’ views but in a reverse manner, i.e. through the complaint that lack of management support is discouraging and in cases, devaluing, for example “My manager laughed in my face when I tried to discuss it with him. I work for a subsidiary company so the [University] doesn’t really care about us.” The concern with the lack of managerial support shows how crucial this factor can be for staff mobility.

Additionally for questionnaire respondents, more encouraging factors would include recognition through pay rise and promotion. One respondent identified an example of good practice in regard to administrative staff: "I believe that the University [...] has largely resolved the issue of recognition, since PAS (technical and administrative) mobility is recognized as training hours that are automatically introduced into the staff member's curriculum and become part of the calculations when competing for transfer, and so this has a direct impact on professional promotion." At another university, an interviewee gave an example of how incentives are linked to mobility:

How we did it at the university college is when you have your assignment for 1 year, you have 40% teaching, research, service and also 5% internationalization. This is something that is now also in the personal objectives of staff here at the faculty. So 5% internationalization, it is not that strict here, you can fill it in whatever way you want, if you teach in English, that is ok, you are busy/doing something for internationalization. If you go abroad, staff mobility, or if you do something else, if you organize a study visit abroad or whatever. But in general that is the way we try to involve the people

and to let it count also. It is a matter of incentives and sanctions. It is not about the money, because the money is there [3].

The above is an example of good practice of the need elicited by another interviewee to have "a clear policy of human resources development integrating staff mobility [12]". These two examples of good practice are a response to a general need, as stated by another executive interviewee, to link mobility with university strategies: "If the visits were linked to strategic aims then actually we'd be going round to people saying you really should go to so and so, as opposed to just waiting until the applications pop into your mailbox [44]." It appears that if mobility were clearly linked to strategy, it is possible that management would be keener to support it.

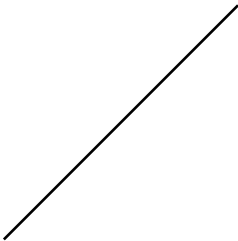
An interest in encouraging feedback is expressed by several of the interviewees, and an example of good practice given by one interviewee:

This year, for the first time, for example, several members of the administrative staff have gone. I asked them about it after they came back, because they had told me they were going, and they said that the experience had been very positive, although, of course, being their first time they were very nervous. They prepared a PowerPoint on what they had to explain there; they spent a week preparing it because it is more difficult than for a teacher, they are not used to it [47].

For questionnaire respondents, length of visit is an encouraging factor as "1 week is too short, maybe if the mobility would be for 1 month I will apply" as well as timing or "the possibility to apply less in advance". This latter point is also confronted by an interviewee who stated that informed planning of certain measures is a solution and an encouraging factor against tight timing: "I personally have a calendar for at least a year ahead. I often participate in the Erasmus Plus programme and I have been trying to travel. So, for me this is not a problem. Whereas for many persons it is not so obvious."



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Awareness of emotions associated to mobility experiences are suggested as encouraging factors by interviewees. The feeling of curiosity first:

Feeling like they are getting away from everyday work! Mobility programmes, initially, spark curiosity. It is the expression of a wanting to discover the Other, with a capital letter. The Others are the other colleagues, another system, another culture and another language. [...] However, this curiosity, this need or desire to put oneself a bit – without going too far – in danger, to be a little bit out of sync compared to one's comfort zone, and with what we are familiar with, what we know, what we master, is very interesting on a professional level, both in the way we work, and on a human level, that is to say in terms of oneself [9].

And then, awareness of the feeling of fear:

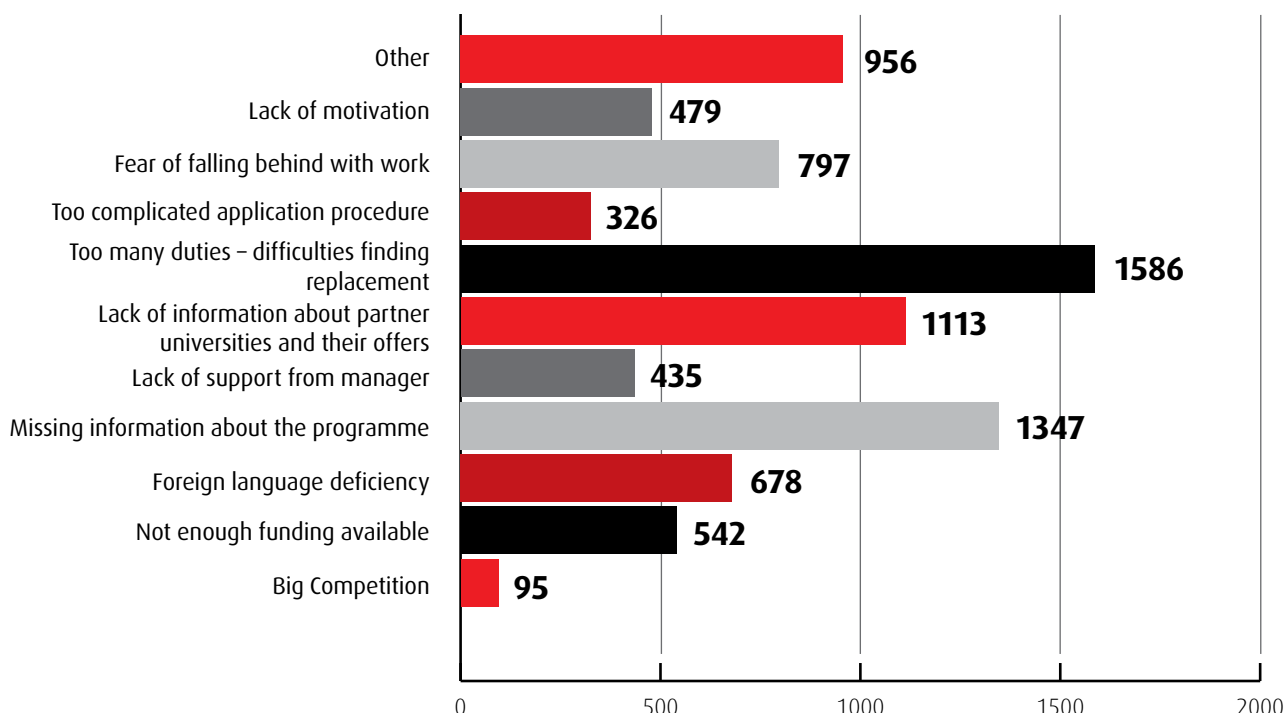
The fear of the unknown is very present. Imagine going to a country we do not know that uses a language we are not fluent in... If initially we reassured people on the fact that things are going to be alright, that the stays are short, that they are accompanied, that other people did it before them, it could remove the obstacle and fear of the unknown [8].

The prospect of making European contacts is seen as an encouraging factor as an interviewee reports:

The membership of the European Union is such an element which certainly encourages. It is the network of contacts which is there and, importantly, own professional development [28].

Reasons for not applying

Fig. 6 – Reasons for not applying for Erasmus mobility (n. of responses)



The major block of reasons for not applying falls under the broad category of problematic work arrangements, that is, the fear of falling behind with work (10%) and too many duties – difficulties finding replacement (29%) representing more than one third of reasons for not applying to mobility (Fig. 6). A respondent sums up all the problems falling in these two categories such as “impossibility to combine with actual teaching duties, disproportionate teaching requirements in a very short time during the visit, need for planning the visit almost 1 year”.

The other major block of reasons for not applying for mobility, at almost one third of total reasons (29%) is lack of information which includes information about partner universities and their offers (13%) and missing information about the programme (16%). In regard with lack

of information, respondents stated that “There was not single information about such opportunities” and “I did not know that it existed”. Erroneous perceptions due to lack of information, which concurred to stopping the respondent from applying, include “no chance to use this [opportunity] outside EU” and ‘Erasmus mobility almost non-existent for technical staff”.

Within the ‘Other’ category, representing 11% of all reasons for not applying to mobility, negative perceptions relating to job status include reasons such as “the Erasmus mobility was supposed to be designed for higher level workers than me” and “I have a temporary academic contract. I am not sure I can apply for replacement”, and relating to job seniority, “I have a very short experience [low seniority].” In this respect an interviewee stated that part time staff

“would never think about going away for a week on university business.”

Relating to seniority but on a more empowering note, a respondent stated: “As senior administrative staff using this great opportunity many times over 10 years as early stage administrators, I decided to encourage mobility of my younger colleagues instead and not compete with them possibly limiting their access to this opportunity.”

Within this category of responses, respondents also indicated family duties (taking care of children or elderly parents) were a reason for not applying.

**Table 11 – Comparison between administrative staff and academic staff’s reasons for not applying for mobility (n. of responses and %)**

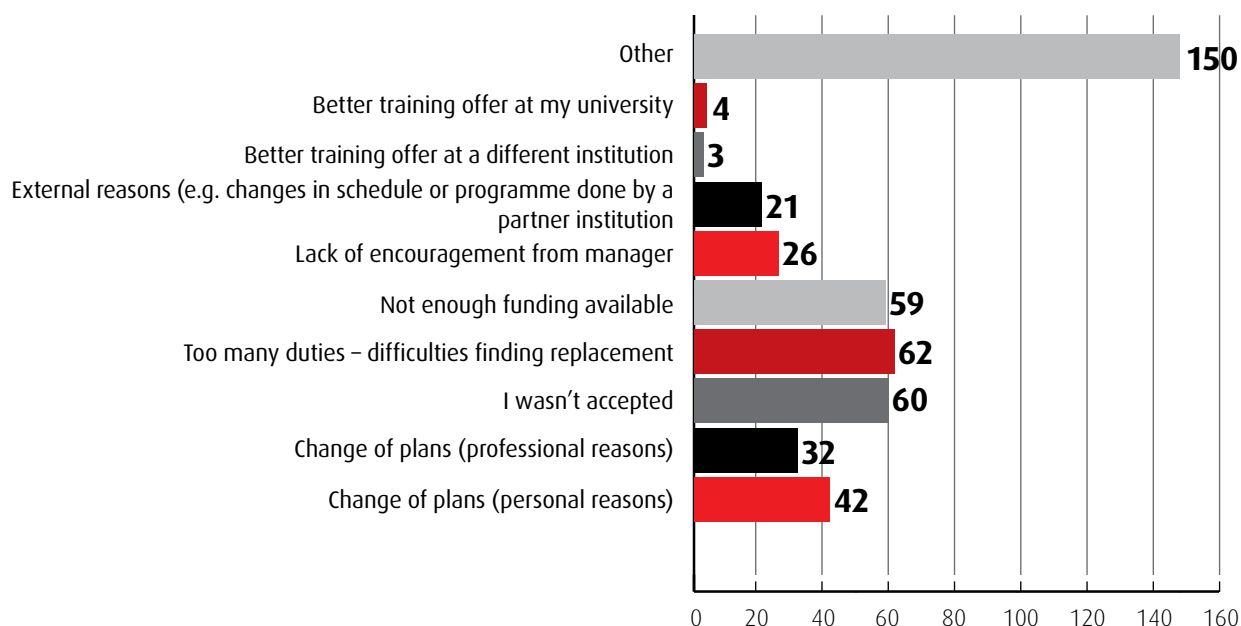
	Administrative staff		Academic staff	
	n. of responses	%	n. of responses	%
Big competition	54	2%	95	1%
Not enough funding available	220	6%	541	7%
Foreign language deficiency	506	15%	675	9%
Missing information about the programme	640	18%	1344	18%
Lack of support from manager	247	7%	434	6%
Lack of information about partner universities and their offers	570	16%	1112	15%
Too many duties – difficulties finding replacement	508	15%	1583	21%
Too complicated application procedure	137	4%	326	4%
Fear of falling behind with work	349	10%	797	11%
Lack of motivation	243	7%	479	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3474</b>		<b>7386</b>	

As Table 11 shows, for administrative staff, the key reasons for not applying for mobility are 1) missing information about the programme, 2) lack of information about partner universities and their offers, and 3) too many duties as well as foreign language deficiency. On the other hand, for academics, the key reason for not going on mobility is having too many duties – difficulties finding replacement. Other key reasons for academics (above 10%) for not going on mobility are 1) missing information about the programme, 2) lack of information about partner universities and their offers, and 3) fear of falling behind with work.

Broadly, academic and administrative staff have almost the same reasons for not applying for mobility. The only small difference is that “having too many duties – difficulties finding replacement” is a very prominent issue for academic staff (at 21% is more statistically significant than the most prominent issue for administrative staff which is at 18%); also foreign language deficiency is more of an obstacle to applying to mobility for administrative staff than for academic staff. This is in line with the data looked at previously regarding foreign languages (table 6) which indicates that confidence in a foreign language is a strong encouraging factor for participation in mobility.

**Reasons for NOT taking up mobility once application has been made**

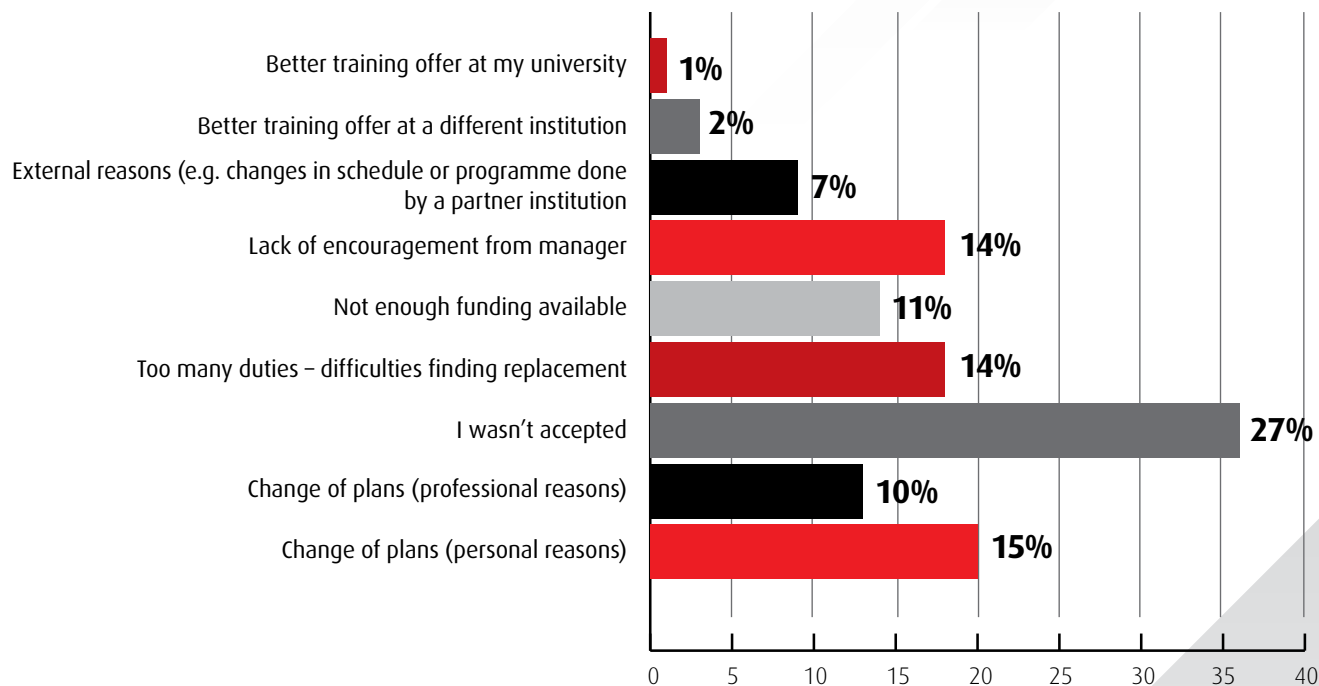
**Fig. 7 – Reasons for not taking up mobility once application has been made for Erasmus mobility (n. of responses)**



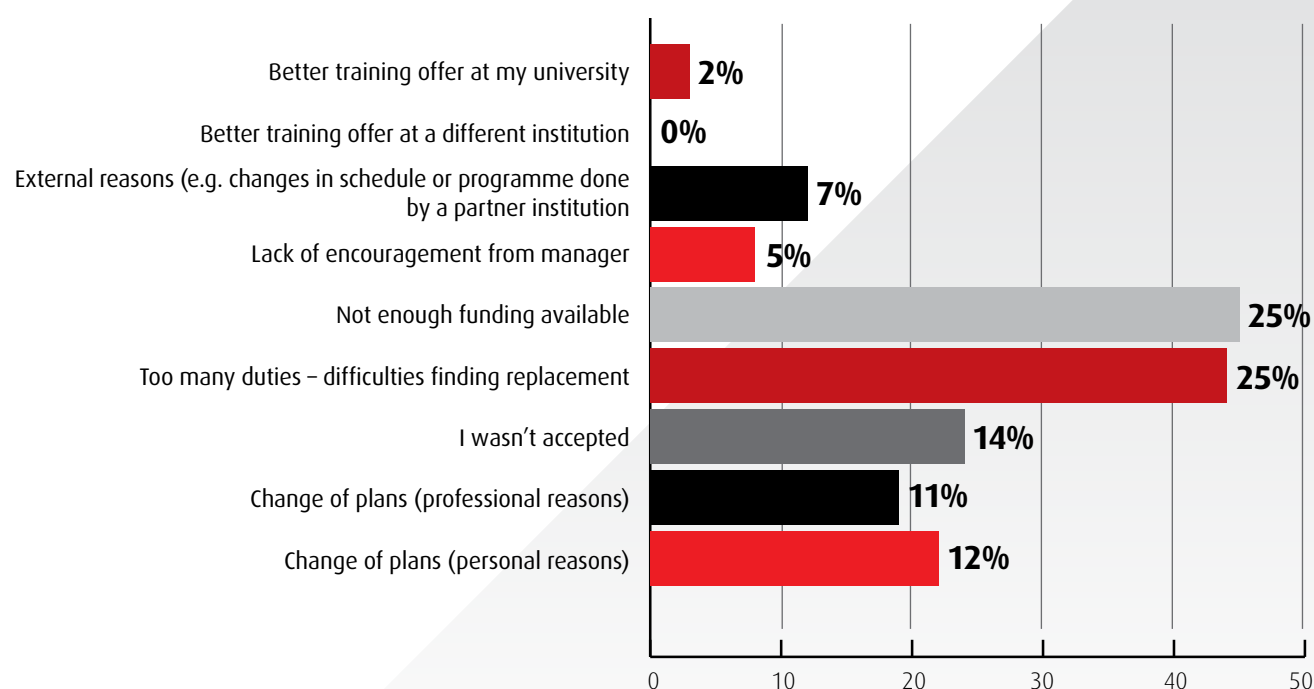
There were 459 respondents who have not participated in a staff mobility programme since 2012, despite having applied for one. In regard to the reasons why they have not taken up the opportunity, more than 1 in 10 respondents report that their application was not accepted, not enough funding was available and they found they had too many duties and difficulties in finding a replacement (Fig. 7).

The other reasons accounted for less than 10% of all cases each. There are a significant number of 'other' reasons (33% of cases) which included having their application being evaluated at the very time this survey took place, or they have encountered problems. Examples of problems include finding too much competition e.g. "Another colleague applied for the same programme and was accepted; lack of coordination among applicants". Or, respondents felt they did not feel they possessed adequate organizational skills.

**Fig. 8 – Administrative staff’s reasons for not taking up mobility (n. of responses and percentages)**



**Fig. 9 – Academic staff’s reasons for not taking up mobility (n. of responses and percentages)**



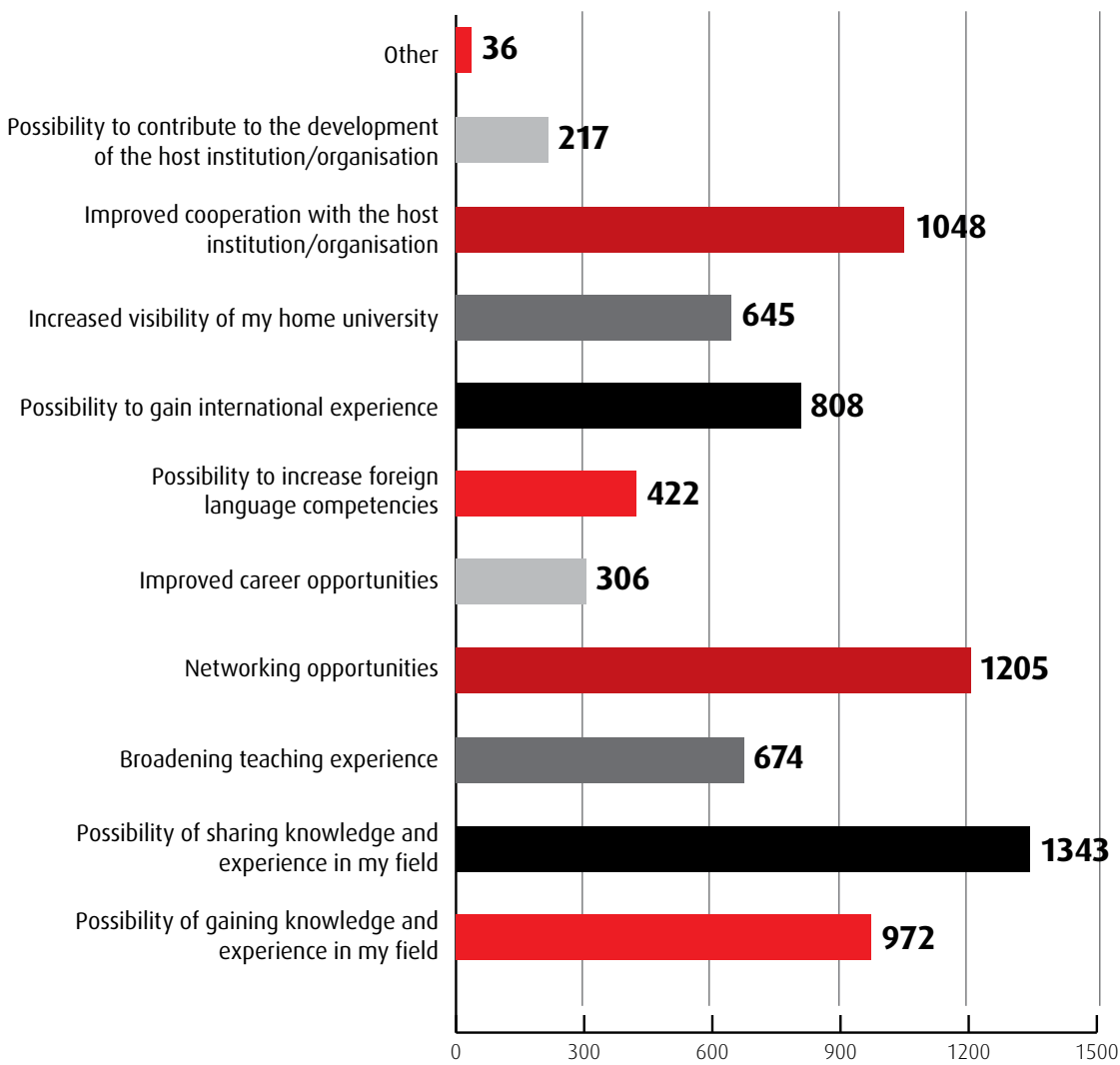
A comparison between academic and administrative staff (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9) as to the reasons for not taking up mobility reveals some differences across these two mobility groups. Administrative staff did not take up mobility after application

primarily due to not being accepted (27%). (The questionnaire did not query the reasons for not being accepted – this would be useful for further research.) On the other hand, academic staff did not take up mobility after application

primarily due to having too many duties and having difficulties finding replacement (25%), and not enough funding available (25%).

**Mobility objectives**

**Fig. 10 – Mobility objectives (n. of responses)**



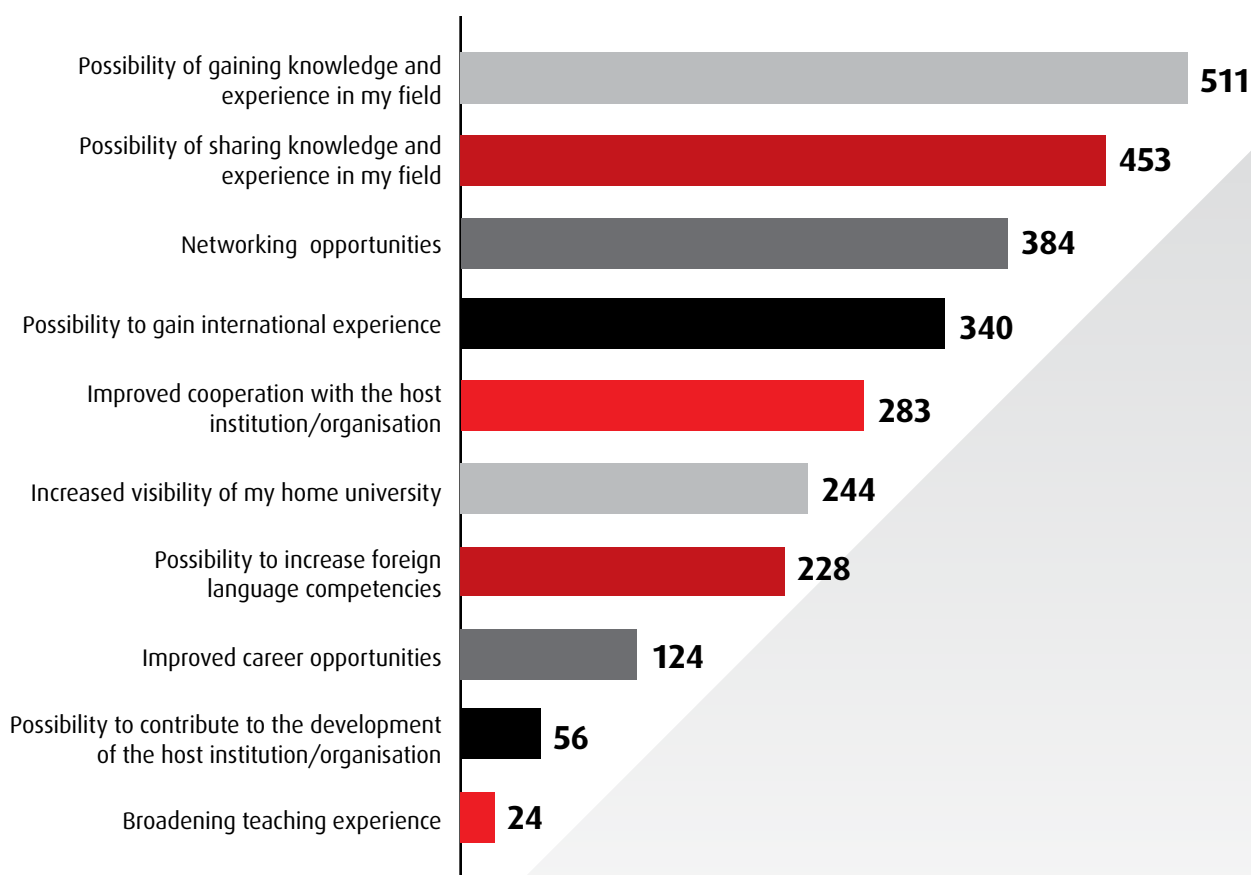
Key objectives of mobility (Fig 10) are (in order of importance): possibility of sharing knowledge and experience in my field (17%), networking opportunities (16%), improved cooperation with the host institution/organisation (14%), possibility of gaining knowledge and experience in my field (13%), possibility of gaining international experience (11%). It is interesting how sharing knowledge is preferred to gaining knowledge, underlining the value of

giving over receiving when it comes to mobility. However networking is also a key concern of mobility, showing at the same time a utilitarian aspect of mobility.

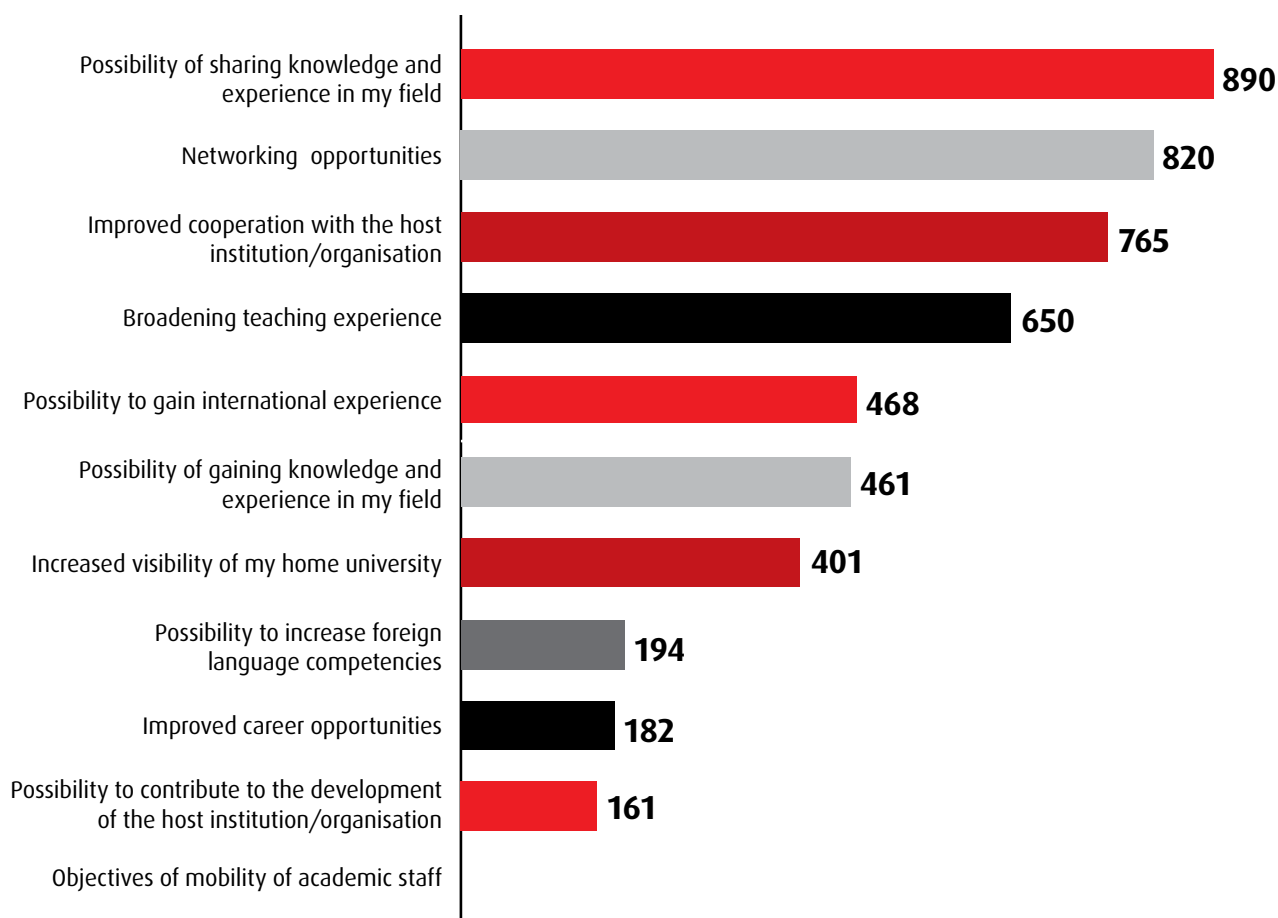
A comparison of mobility objectives across administrative and academic staff involved in mobility (Figs. 11 and 12) reveals some differences: administrative staff's key mobility objectives are gaining (19%) and sharing (17%) knowledge and experience in their fields, whereas

academic staff declare themselves to be more interested in sharing (18%) rather than gaining knowledge and experience (9%) in their fields. A significant objective of mobility for academic staff is improved cooperation with the host institution/organisation (15%). Administrative and academic staff share the same key interest in networking opportunities (15% and 16% respectively).

**Fig. 11 – Objectives of mobility of administrative staff (n. of responses)**



**Fig. 12 – Objectives of mobility of academic staff (n. of responses)**



**Factors influencing choice of host institution**

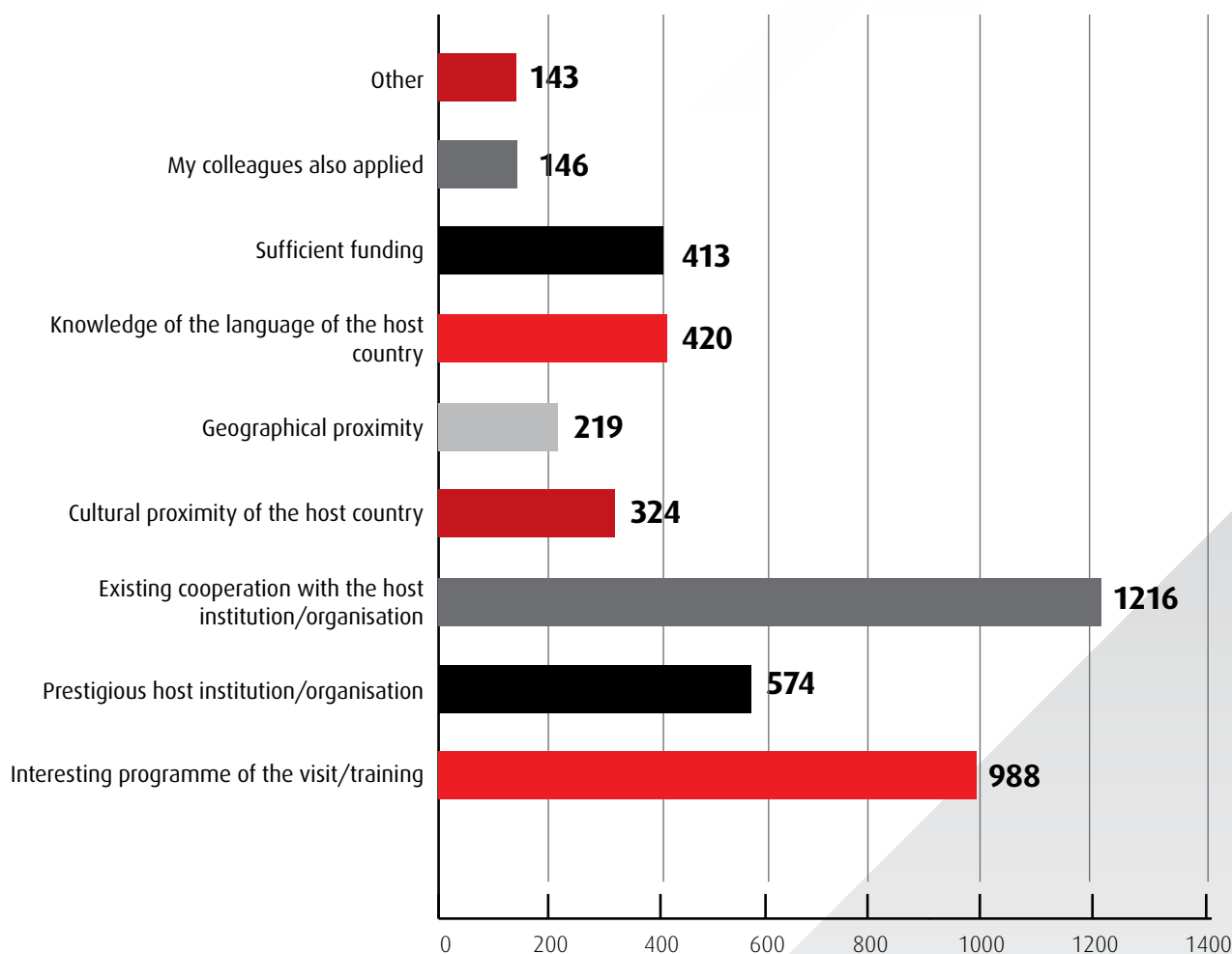
According to the data from questionnaire, existing cooperation with the host institution or organisation is the most significant factor for influencing the choice of host institution/organisation (27%), followed by an interesting

programme for the visit / training event, and by the prestigious reputation of the host institution/organisation (Fig. 13). Qualitative data from another part of the questionnaire gives us a glimpse on this respondent’s experience of pride in

relation to host choice: “having done my staff training in a prestigious institution, famous all over the world for high quality of education and research programmes” and “participation in a very prestigious international PhD programme”.



**Fig. 13 – Factors influencing choice of host institution (n. of responses)**



Other factors include (not in order of importance) 1) restricted choice: “the boss told me so” or “at that time, it was the only option available for me”, 2) location such as “historical location”

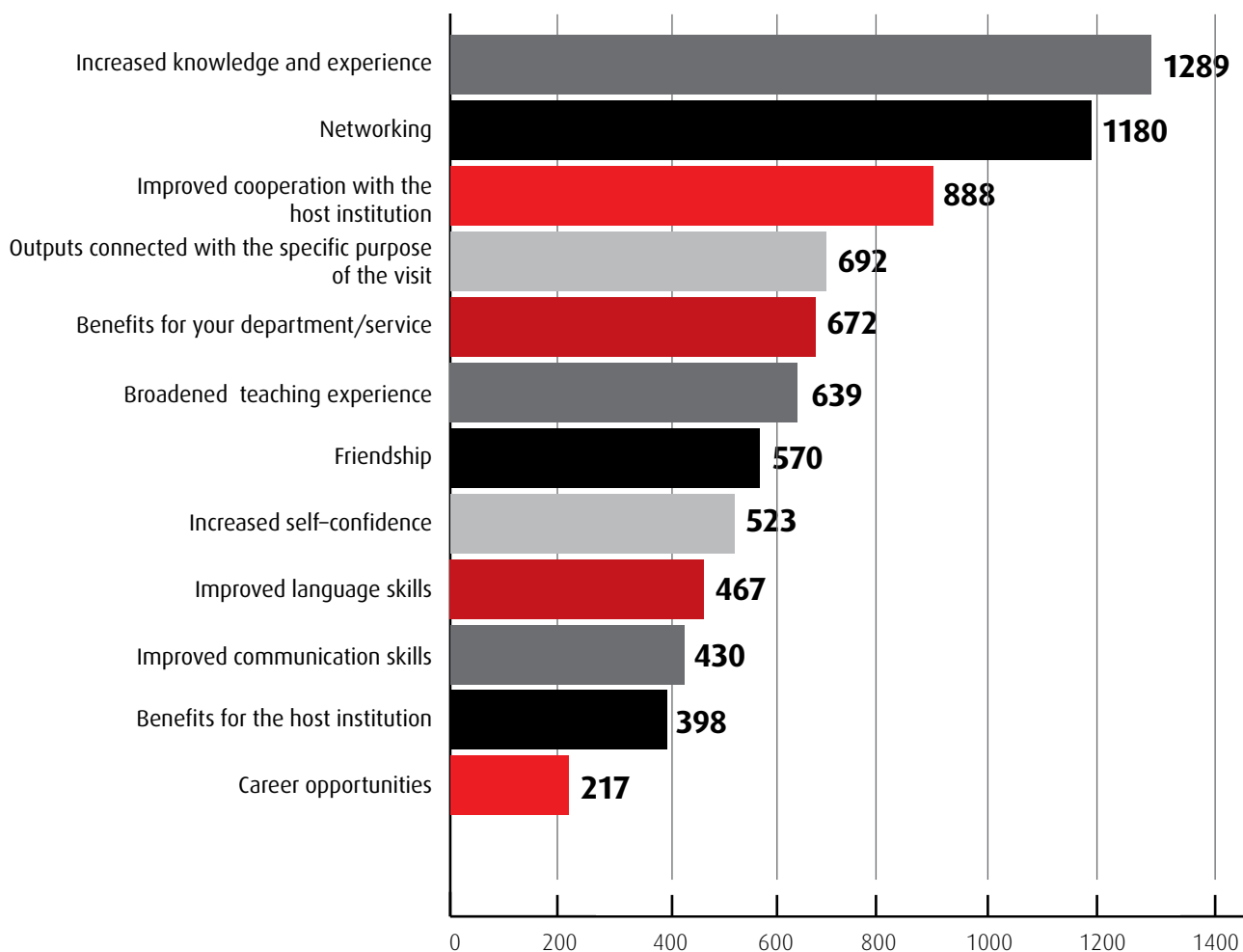
or “interesting city”, 3) students, e.g: “the students that come from that university are, on average, quite good”, 4) friendship: “I know the teacher at the visited university”, 5) family support

such as the good practice of the host of offering child care provision, 6) good communication as in “availability and swiftness of host university in answering my query”.

## 2.2 Benefits and impact

### Outcomes, achievements, meeting expectations

Fig. 14 – Outcomes (n. of responses)

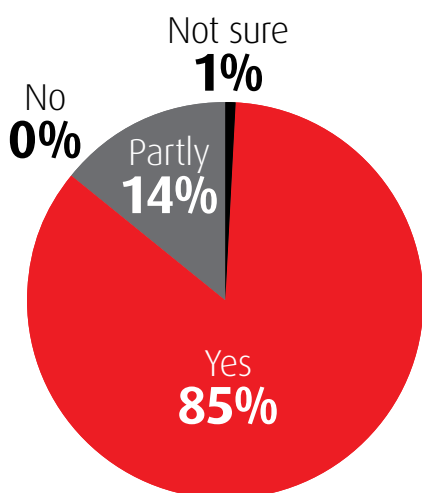


The most frequent outcomes of mobility (above 10%) are, in order of importance, increased knowledge and experience

(16%), networking (15%), and improved cooperation with the host institution/organisation (11%). It is significant that

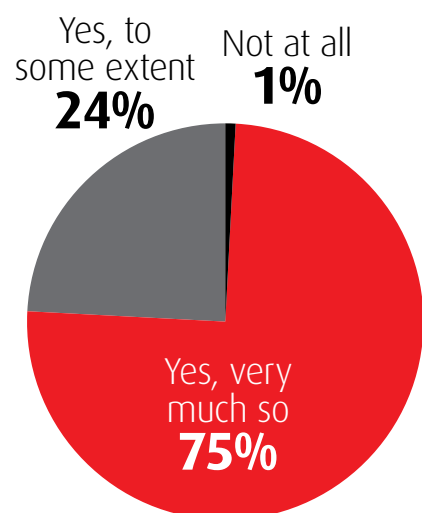
career opportunities (besides the 'other' category) was the outcome with the lowest importance (3%) (Fig. 14).

**Fig. 15 – Achieving goals (%)**



As shown in Fig. 15, 8.5 people in 10 feel they have achieved all their set goals during mobility, and the remainder 1.5 in 10 people achieved them partially. The result is very significant as it shows that mobility's goals are always achieved, and to the fullest in the vast majority of case. These figures remain broadly the same when performing a comparison between administrative staff and academic staff on their sense of having achieved mobility goals.

**Fig. 16 – Expectations have been met (%)**



99% of people who went on mobility thought that their participation in this Erasmus staff mobility programme met their expectations to the fullest (75%) or to some extent (24%) (Fig. 16). These findings remain the same when performing a comparison between administrative staff and academic staff on having had their expectations met.

Lastly, 1846 out of 1933 respondents, in other words, 9.5 members of staff out of 10 indicated they would participate in a mobility opportunity again based on the satisfaction and positive experience of their mobility experience.

### Areas of impact and satisfaction with host

The questionnaire determined the professional areas on which mobility was perceived to have had the biggest impact. Only responses identifying experiences within a specific area of impact as satisfying and very satisfying are reported here.

**Fig. 17 – Areas of impact (n. of responses)**

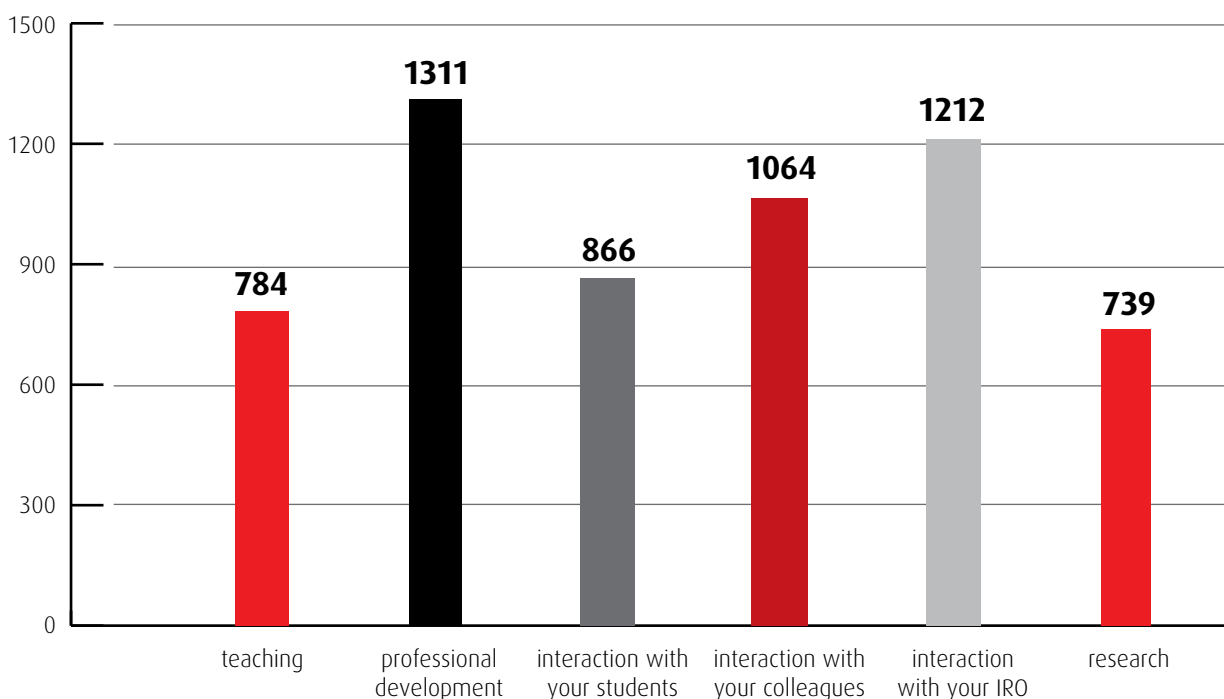


Fig. 17 lists areas of impact for all respondents, academics and administrative alike. Considering that all these areas score at or above 50%, they are all areas of moderate or moderately high impact. Impact is strongest in regard to professional development (71%) and interaction with International Relations/ Erasmus office (69%). Impact is medium in regard to interaction with taught students (56%) and interaction with colleagues (61%). Impact is perceived as weakest in regard to teaching (54%) and especially research (50%). It is significant

to note that ‘teaching’ is the one of the factors with the lowest impact amongst other factors, despite the fact that in this research’s sample teaching mobility is the most popular type of mobility there is (more popular than administrative mobility).

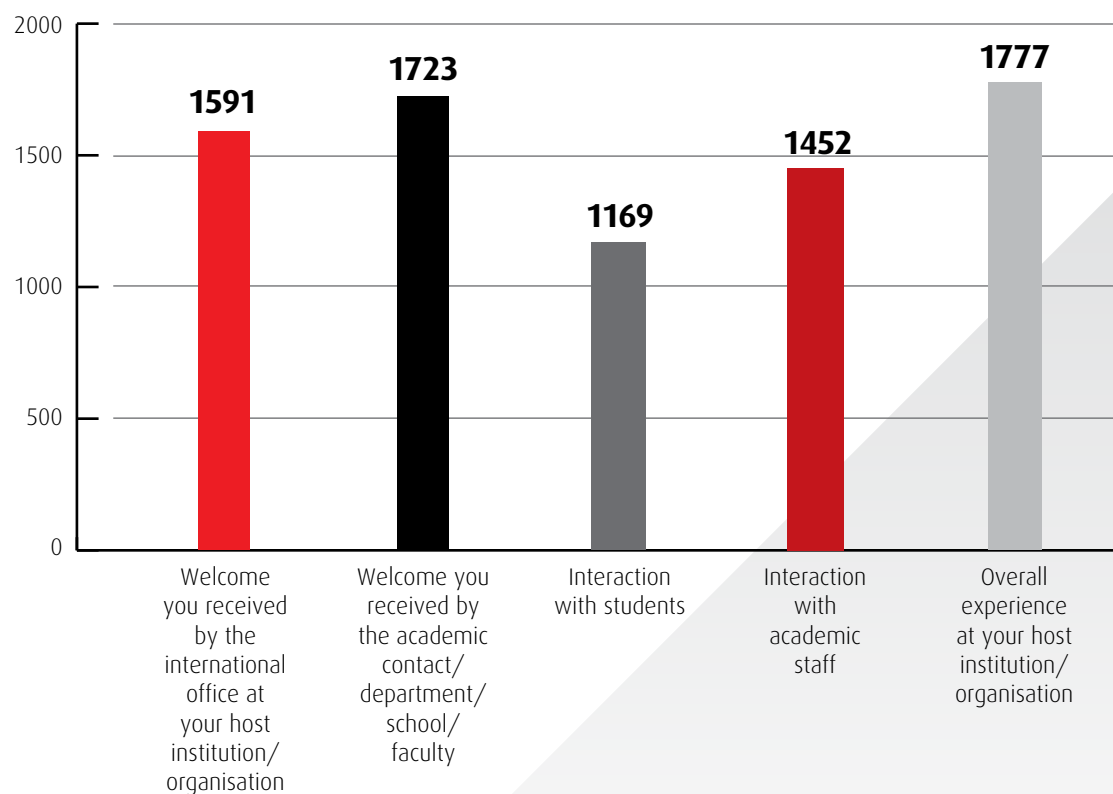
Generally, impact is possibly felt more in the general professional domain than in more specific domains. When impact was correlated to specific domains, say teaching and research, the following results were found: out of 1172 responses concerning teaching impact, 735 respondents (63%) indicated that they felt mobility had strong or very strong impact on their teaching; out of 1147 responses concerning research impact, 644 respondents (56%) felt mobility had strong or very strong impact on their research (Table 12).

**Table 12 – Teaching and Research impact in relation to academic respondents (n. of responses and %)**

total academics respondents	3418	
total responses about teaching impact	1172	100%
<b>satisfied and most satisfied with teaching impact</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>63%</b>
total academics respondents	3418	
total responses about research impact	1147	100%
<b>satisfied and most satisfied with research impact</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>56%</b>

**Fig. 18 – Satisfaction with host (n. of responses)**

Series 1



Satisfaction with the interaction with the host institution in the mobility (Fig. 18) is as follows, in order of statistical significance: more than 9 out of 10 respondents are satisfied with the welcome received by the academic contact/department/school/faculty; 8.5 out of 10 respondents are satisfied about the welcome received by the international office at the host institution; 8 out of 10 are satisfied about their interaction with academic staff; 7 out of 10 are satisfied about their interaction with students. Staff on international exchange are slightly more satisfied about their interaction with academic staff than their interaction with students, a condition that may be mirrored in their everyday work at the home institution. In general, satisfaction about interaction with the host is very high since more than 9 out of 10 respondents are satisfied about their overall mobility experience at the host institution/organisation.

### Positive experiences, benefits and good practice

Respondents reported on their positive experiences qualitatively, giving examples of aspects of their mobility they truly enjoyed while at the same time providing a few indirect examples of good practice enacted by the host institution.

A respondent summed up how mobility experience is personally and humanly valuable as “it is a real enrichment both professional, personal and human.” Another indicated the relevance of mobility for academics: “I would recommend this programme to all academicians. I think that it could be even obligatory, especially for humanists.”

In regard to teaching, a respondent indicated the usefulness and relevance of staff mobility for their vocational profession:

I believe that Erasmus Staff Mobility is a very good platform for teachers (especially new teachers like me) to experience broadened understanding of the different strategies of teaching internationally in order to contribute to the global vision of education.

International teaching experience favoured adaptation due to “teaching in a department with a totally different profile”. Good practice from the host which triggered adaptation skills from the staff on exchange is as follows:

The interaction with the students was brilliant. We had a surprise as once we arrived there, we realised we were not going to teach undergrads as we were told. We had to readjust the schedule, which was a challenge, but a productive one. We ended up doing experiential workshops, in which we participated ourselves. It was a wonderful experience for all of us.

In addition, mobility opened up a new platform for teaching observation as a respondent stated they could benefit from “observing didactic methods and procedures”. Teaching observation is one of the key good teaching and learning practices as recommended by the Higher Education Academy in Britain. Also, a teacher on mobility reported as a positive experience “to know and share experiences in the scope of curriculum development, teaching, learning and research practices in my field.” As it is clear that an international teaching mobility experience can enhance teaching and learning practice at home, a recommendation that can be taken from this report is to conduct further research into whether and how international teaching mobility is contemplated within the guidelines and recommendations of teaching and learning agencies across Europe. Teaching abroad is an enriching experience at a personal level also, particularly “discussing with foreign students during lectures was amazing experience – mainly because of different perspectives and approaches to the history (main field of my teaching programme).”

Mobility provided positive experiences and examples of good practice for researchers too as respondents stated: “I found a researcher in my own field with whom I am collaborating for publication” and “meeting key players in my field” and “a chance to talk to a leading expert on an area of research I was just beginning to embark on, and on which I felt something of a novice. Three years on, this led to a £0.76m funding application, the outcome of which is pending.”

In regards with administrative staff on exchange, respondents reported enjoying knowing different systems of management. "It was a fabulous experience to learn how another department managed the same issues my department faced, especially since administrative staff tend not to get much role-specific strategic training." Examples of positive experiences of administrative staff on training visit include exploring "system for admitting students and for students with disabilities" or "understanding how careers service works in German universities" or knowing "the rules of working with databases in a foreign country".

Good practice emerged in regard with work-shadowing too: "Work shadowing scheme in Great Britain, a leading European country enriched my practical experience. I believe that my visit like shadow provided learning opportunities for the host too, by provoking analysis and improve communication and feedback skills." Furthermore, "work-shadowing allows you to see how the partner institution handles with questions you are facing in your daily work (good practices) and allows you to gain more skills; that also enhances a broadened vision of your work".

In general, all types of respondents enjoyed their enhanced communication experiences: they got feedback about their work from staff or students in the host institutions; and they claimed that "physical exchange has since facilitated communication between the two faculties" and that they developed intercultural competence.

Culturally, mobility was an enriching experience as it allowed respondents to "explore some culture, tourism, gastronomy through an educational project". Good practice about cultural exploration is reported as a respondent stated "I met everybody at breakfast of the entire institute for food science in Iceland. Serving breakfast in the morning gives a good start, a tradition we should adopt in xxxx". In addition, being immersed in a different culture enabled a respondent to verify "the totally groundlessness of some prejudices quite common in my country regarding the hosting country".

Mobility is connected to identity development as it enabled one "to refresh my point of view, to discover myself in that situation" and to increase of self-confidence at work, hence personally. This is expressed in the following experiences "I was enriched by meeting people from other countries and my confidence in myself increased. This was also due speaking another language"; and "the realization that I can deliver an effective and very well received teaching in another setting and in another country".

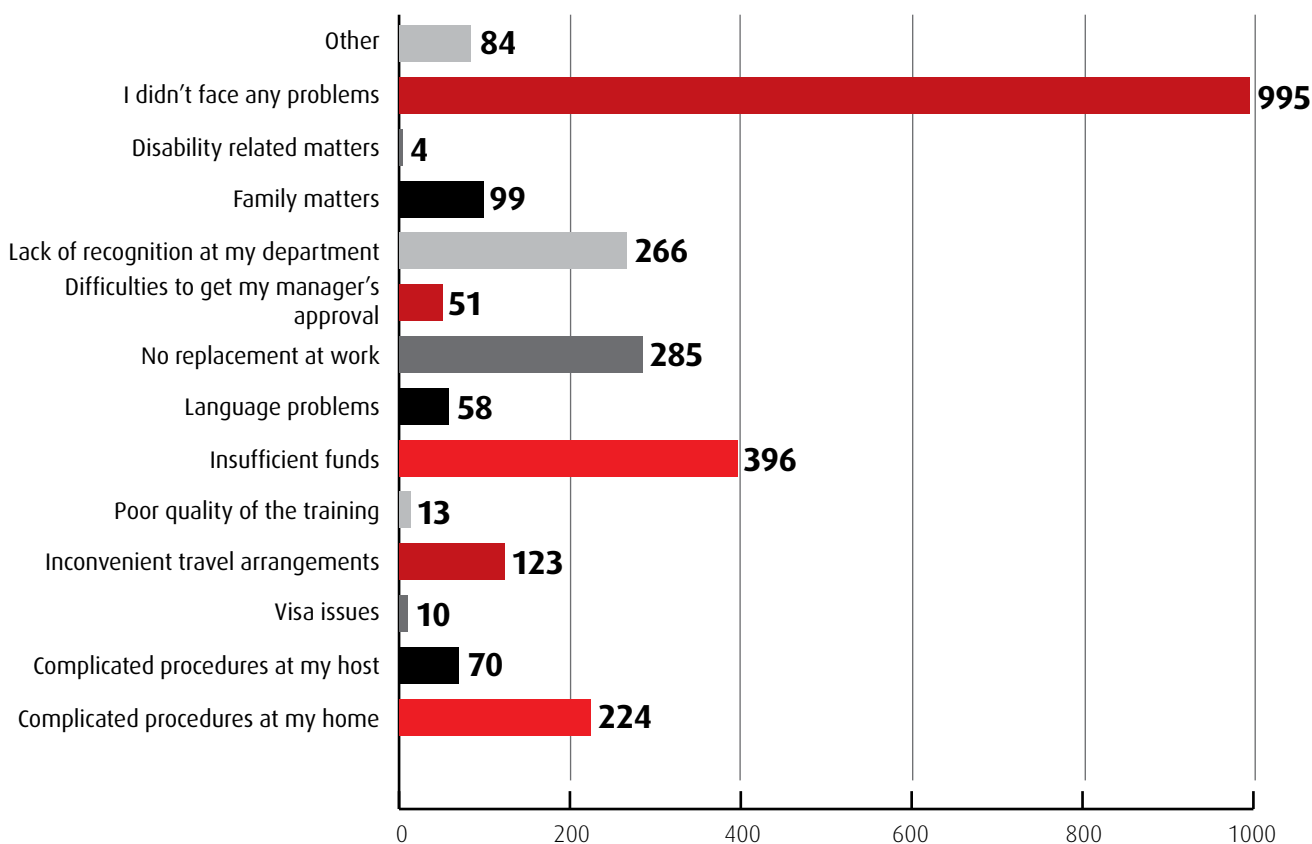
Some respondents were particularly happy about the welcome received, another area of good practice, as for example "however sophisticated the staff, students, and programme at the host university may be -- the best in Turkey -- they received my research, training, and teaching contributions with open-arms, claiming that many of my ideas and research findings were entirely new to them and very exciting".

Peculiar individual experiences such as getting "a chance to consult an important Medieval manuscript" and "giving a lecture in a renovated church, now used for teaching and cultural events" were also part of enriching positive experiences and signs of good practice of the host institution.

## 2.3 Obstacles

### Individual problems faced and negative experiences

Fig. 19 – Individual problems faced (n. of responses)



As the absence of problems amounts to 37% of all answers, with other problems being below 15%, it can be claimed that mobility is generally perceived as not presenting significant obstacles experienced at an individual level (Fig. 19). Amongst the problems associated with mobility, the most frequent (above 10%) are insufficient funds (15%), followed by no replacement at work (11%) and lack of recognition at my department/school/service/team (10%).

The following quote sums up a key theme that emerged while analysing negative experiences reported by respondents. "The experience was very satisfactory but if I will have to name a negative, it will be the uncertainty of expectations." This 'uncertainty of expectations' appears to be one obstacle to mobility. Below (Table 13) is a list of causes or contexts of problems of a systemic nature i.e. that can be experienced systematically by more than one individual, as opposed

to those linked to contingency, such as a cancelled flight or an individual health issue. These causes are followed by quotes from respondents exemplifying of such problems.



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**Table 13 – Problems faced by respondents who went on mobility**


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**Administrative procedure**

complex administration before, during and after mobility – I don't understand how all of this cannot be filled in digitally by the international office.

**Relevance and choice**

The participation in each training course was matched by the host university, there was not possibility to choose.

**Travel (home)**

Arranging travel and accommodation via the University was a challenge– it was easier to book myself and then ask the University to reimburse.

**Travel (host)**

I had a very early flight and the Erasmus office forgot to pick me up (as promised).

**Accommodation**

high cost of accommodation for a short period of time.

**Part-time work status**

I had to do a 2 days mobility because of the incompatibility with vertical part-time (n.b. a kind of working contract).

**Timing**

Arrived outside of term period.

**Application timing**

difficult travel, because we had to organize everything in very short time.

**Contact (Host)**

The lecture was clearly an inconvenience for the hosting professor. She was very busy and my visit just added to her duties.

**Cultural**

There was an encounter (and this was the exception!) where I had to face a very sexist and anachronistic attitude.

**Funding**

To have to spend a lot of my personal money... often you have to choose the destination according to the price of flights.

**Language problem with both NATIVE and NON-NATIVE staff**

Some participants had not an adequate knowledge of English language so it was very difficult to talk with them. In some moments, it was impossible to understand native English colleagues when they were doing some presentations. It was also difficult to understand them when they were having conversations between themselves.

**Representing the home university abroad**

I was unprepared to make a presentation about my home university. Not sufficiently briefed before I went.

**Students**

Students were not available to attend my classes.

**Support (lack of) from management**

the complete closure of my office responsible, totally against this, since in her opinion it is wasting time and distracting from office duties.

**Lack of support from boss in form of lack of feedback**

Little / no consideration by my management on return.

**Social isolation**

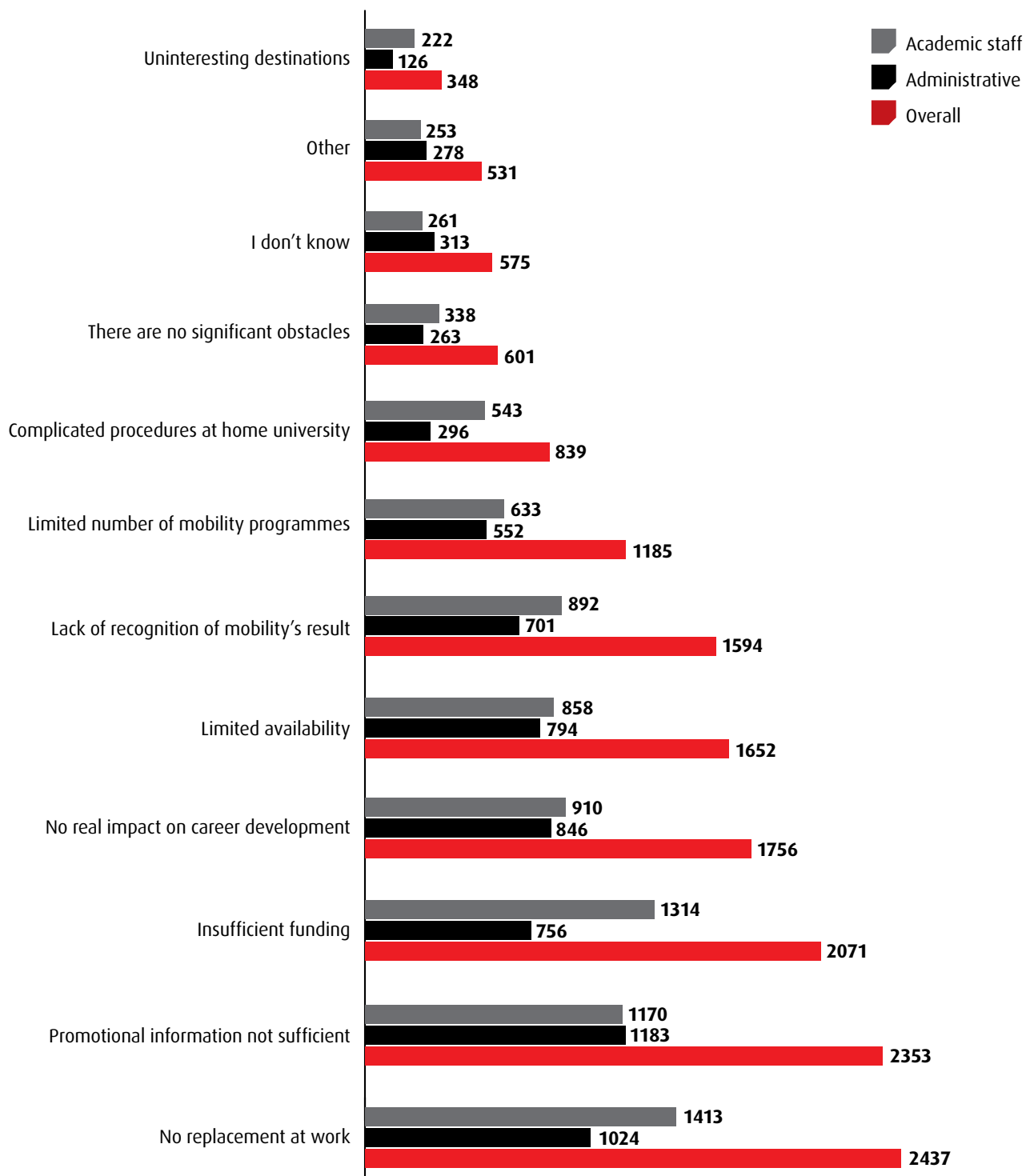
No social events were organised.

**Workload**

Going abroad usually means preparations and extra work without replacement. It is easier not to go.

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**Fig. 20 – Top 3 institutional obstacles that affect Erasmus staff mobility – overall view, administrative staff and academic staff view (n. of responses)**



### Institutional obstacles to mobility take-up and discouraging factors

Overall, the top three obstacles affecting staff mobility take-up at respondents' own institutions (Fig. 20) are: 1) working conditions, particularly the lack of possibility of having replacement at work (15%); promotion of the opportunity and information on such programmes not being sufficient (15%), and insufficient funding (13%). These obstacles are consistently identified by academic staff, who represent the majority of the sample. However, administrative staff give a slightly different priority when it comes to obstacles. The top three obstacles for non-academic staff thus are 1) information on such programmes not being sufficient (17%), 2) the lack of possibility of finding replacement at work (14%), and 3) the lack of a sense of real impact on career development (12%). The finding that promotion for administrative staff is the biggest problem to staff mobility take-up, is consistent with the qualitative finding according to which administrative staff are missed targets of mobility opportunities (see section 4.2, a) and underlines that strategically, promotion targeted at administrative staff may be an area that requires improvement.

An elaboration on the most prominent obstacle concerning the difficulty in finding replacement at work comes from the point of view of management who are expected by staff to support such mobility. This elaboration concerns the extra costs to the sending institution: "He/she has 210 teaching hours and if he/she leaves and, in addition, if this is a trip against remuneration, i.e. we pay him as for the paid leave, we have to employ someone to replace such an employee, to continue the classes. It means that we have double costs [30]."

In regard to limited information on such programmes, interviewees recognised that "there is a challenge of communication about the existence of

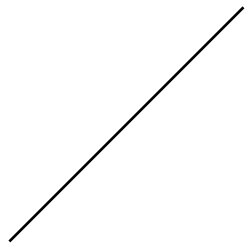
mobility [6]". Particularly, a few executive interviewees indicated lack of awareness as a discouraging factor. Referring to the take-up of teaching mobility, an interviewee stated that "academic staff is often more interested in mobility for research and less in mobility for teaching [18]." This attitude is directly linked to the negative, broad perception that mobility has no real impact on career development. This perception occurs despite the impact that mobility has on teachers, teaching quality and students as indicated elsewhere in this report and in Janson et al (2009). To elaborate on this lack of awareness (perhaps due to lack of information) an interviewee reported that "the recognition of research is clear, but there is a lack of recognition for these other types of more academic activity [46]." The lack of recognition of the benefits of mobility for teaching may be due to a broader and systematic gap in teacher training, of which mobility should constitute a key eye-opening aspect. In regard with this specific gap in recognition, an interviewee stated that "teachers should be given the opportunity to carry out mobility not as a personal sacrifice but as a recognized activity, and offered the resources, in terms of space and time, and the financial, material and technical resources to be able to do so, and recognized for doing so [48]."

In regard with limited information on the programme constituting an obstacle for take-up of mobility from administrative staff, an interviewee stated "I think it is more a question of culture I think, [...] so there I think it is probably much more awareness that we have to create [5]". The concept of 'culture' advocated here probably concerns the set of information and habits that feel 'normal' for administrative staff. If within this set of values and action, mobility for administrative staff is not perceived as a 'normal' thing to do, then there is a lack of awareness of mobility opportunities available for administrative staff that

is systemic in nature. This systemic gap is the issue that this respondent has pointed at.

Concerning the third greatest obstacle, that is insufficient funding, an interviewee candidly admits "there is also no reason to hide that the Erasmus scholarship does not cover full costs. Persons who have other, more urgent expenses simply do not decide to travel for financial reasons [29]."

In addition to questionnaire respondents, interviewees also identified a number of institutional challenges to mobility that did not emerge from the questionnaire but that constitute significant obstacles. These are described qualitatively and not in order of statistical importance. Arranging accommodation for the arriving staff can be seen as a problem. Current political context is an issue, particularly in regard with the rise of conservatism, xenophobia and extremism in Europe, and with the advent of Brexit too, with a respondent noting "I think that the broader context, the political context, it's so fraught with uncertainty at the moment and anxiety that the biggest task it seems to me for the institution is to provide some reassurance of its commitment to the schemes, despite that changing environment [45]."



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Embedding incoming staff mobility in regular programmes is perceived as an institutional challenge, with an interviewee providing an example of how something similar has been done at their university:

not in terms of Erasmus (+), we had the ‘international business class’ here for a couple of years. The format: we had a course with ECTS and so on, a course sheet. And how was this conceived: we had one [...] professor who was responsible, but then classes were filled in by foreign professors who would fly in for one week, they lectured very concentrated and then the next week the other one: 5 or 6 international professors coming in [3].

The demands of being a provider of support for a family is recognised by executive HE staff as an obstacle to mobility, and here we have an example of good practice regarding the provision of support for staff mobility: “we are also improving our specialized administrative support for the Erasmus staff mobility, including the preparation and integration of foreign researchers and their families [23].”

Promoting a specific perception of mobility, one that sees such activity as a normal part of work and lifestyle, is a challenge. “I think the first step is to make mobility seem normal rather than something exceptional. To get people to consider mobility as much a part of the job as going to a conference, for example [46].”

The uneven participation to mobility is identified as a challenge too. An interviewee held the opinion that HE institutions ought to prevent a “long tail” distribution of mobility, with a few moving regularly and many moving rarely [25].

There is also a wide institutional challenge regarding “the systematic dissemination of results with the aim to encourage feedback on mobilities, but also to share the real results and benefits of these mobilities [6].” More on this specific challenge is outlined below.

# 3. Promotion and dissemination

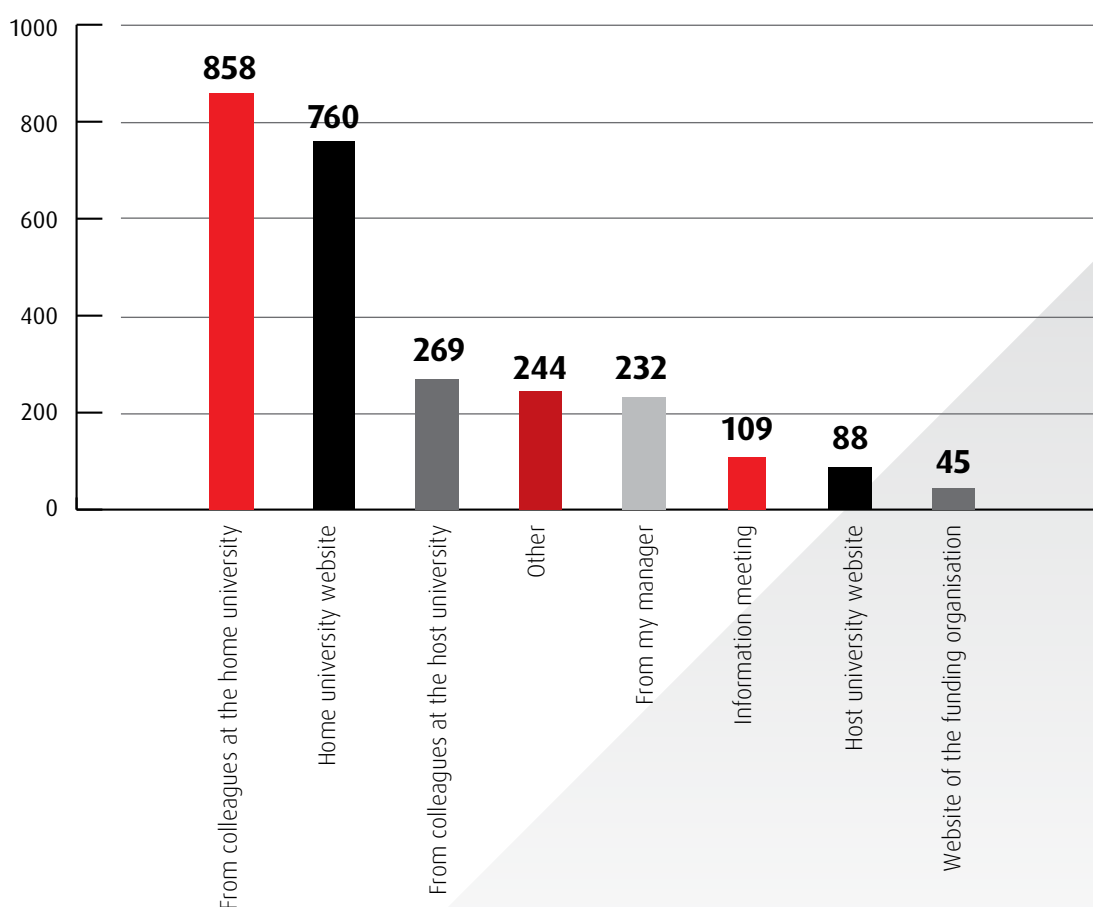
## 3.1 Promotional activities, visibility and effectiveness

In Fig. 20 above, the lack of information on mobility programmes featured as the second biggest obstacle affecting Erasmus staff mobility. One of the executive interviewees firmly stated that “I am convinced that a lack of information is the main reason for the low interest at our faculty.” Hence the perceived effectiveness (or lack) of promotion has been further investigated.

In regard with the promotion of international mobility (Fig. 21), 33% of respondents who did take up mobility between 2012 and 2017, declared they learnt about the opportunities within the Erasmus+ programme from colleagues at their home university, and 29% indicated they found out about it from their home university website. 13% of respondents indicated they learnt about mobility from the host university’s colleagues (10%) or website (3%). It is important to notice the key role that word of mouth – a form of informal promotion – plays in

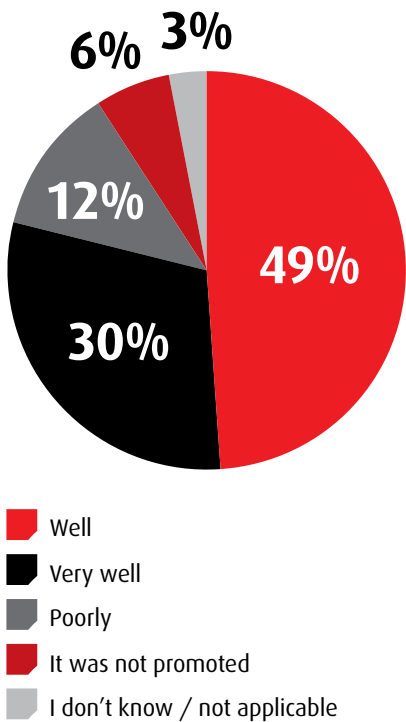
spreading information about mobility. In other words the best ambassadors from the programme are the people who have already been on mobility. Also, it is important to notice that the greater part of promotion responsibility lies with the home university (71%, including home university website, colleague, manager), amounting to more than two thirds of promotion opportunities, versus the minor role that the host university plays in promotion (13% including host university’s colleagues and website).

**Fig. 21 – How did you learn about this Erasmus short-term mobility programme? (n. of responses)**



Investigating the perceived quality of mobility opportunity (Fig 22), 79% of respondents who went on mobility since 2012 agree that the opportunity was promoted well or very well at their home university. This finding contrasts with previous results (as described in Figure 20) according to which perceived overall lack of information on exchange programmes was one of the key obstacles of mobility. The apparent contradiction in findings can be explained by the fact that who went on mobility was obviously successful in finding or receiving the information s/he needed, whereas the larger sample of respondents included staff who did not manage to obtain the information they needed.

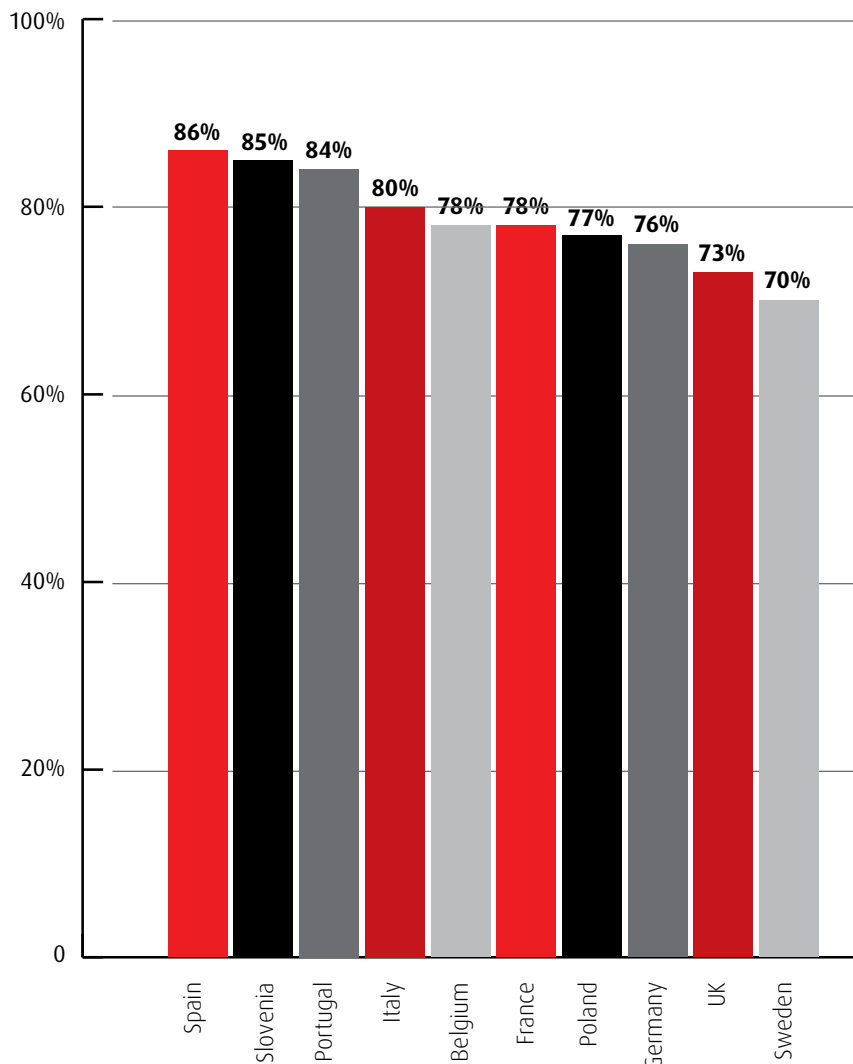
**Fig. 22 – Was this mobility opportunity well-promoted at your university?**



Investigating the above data (relating to staff who has been on mobility since 2012) comparatively reveals that there is no significant variation in perceived promotional quality of the opportunity across countries (Fig. 23). In Spain, Portugal, Slovenia and Italy

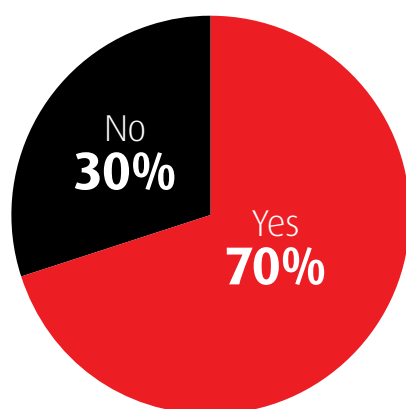
the perception of good or very good promotion ranges from 80% to 86%. In Belgium, Germany, France, Poland, Sweden and UK the perception of good or very good promotion is between 70% and 78%.

**Fig. 23 – Comparison of perceived promotion effectiveness across European countries (%)**



Amongst the staff (4267) who have not been on mobility since 2012, promotion has also been largely visible, with 2985 respondents (70%) having heard of the exchange opportunities, and 1282 having not heard of such opportunity (30%) (Fig. 24).

**Fig.24 – Did you hear about any Erasmus exchange possibilities for staff?**



Correlating these distribution data with data about the number of staff (2591) who did not go on mobility but whose daily jobs require them to contact international institutions/partner universities produced the following results: 1868 or 72% of people whose job requires them to contact international institutions/partner universities have heard of Erasmus exchange possibilities; 1115 or 67% of people whose job does not require them to contact international institutions/partner universities have heard of Erasmus exchange possibilities (Table 14). Hence promotion of the programme is actually more visible for staff who are exposed to contact with international institution as part of their job requirement, but only to a minor extent. Despite the perceived worry about lack of information about the programme, this small difference means that the programme and opportunities are indeed visible to the target party, hence the reasons for not taking

up mobility are not to be primarily attributed to the lack of information. Still, interviewees recognised that to increase visibility and promotion, a good way would be to “pay and hire full time staff mobility coordinators for every faculty [15]” as well as “increase the recruitment of international workers.”

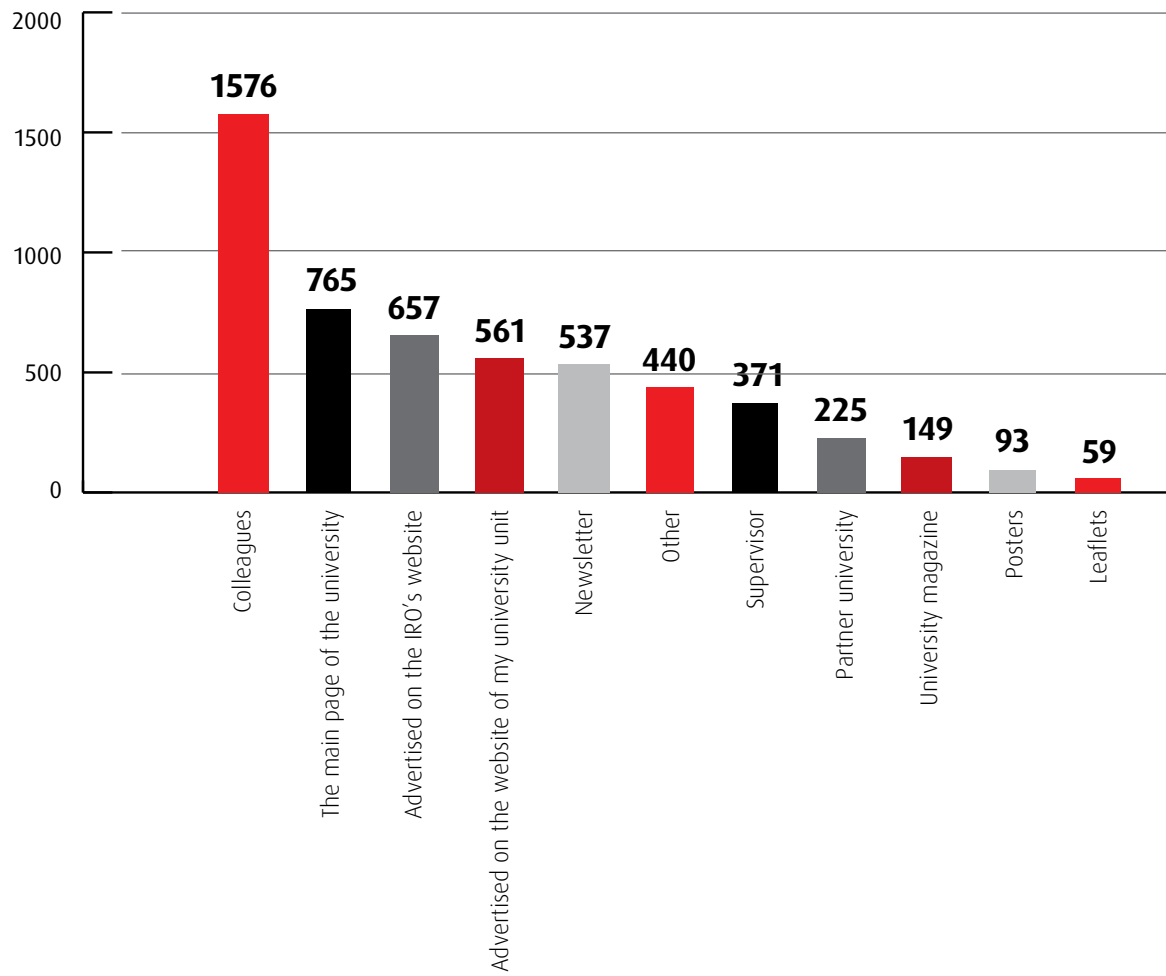
**Table 14 – Distribution of staff who have heard of mobility opportunity in regard with the international contact requirement of their daily job (n. of responses)**

<b>Total number of staff who have not been on mobility since 2012</b>	<b>4267</b>
Staff whose job requires them to contact international institutions	2591
Staff whose job does not require them to contact international institutions	1676
Those who work with international institutions AND have heard of Erasmus exchange	<b>1868</b>
Those who do not work with international institutions AND have heard of Erasmus exchange	<b>1115</b>

Finally, even among staff who have not been on a mobility since 2012, the main source of information about the programme comes from colleagues (29%), hence word of mouth. This is

followed by promotion on the main page of the university (14%), on the international relation office’s webpage (12%) and departmental webpage promotion (10%) (Fig. 25).

Fig. 25 – Means of finding out about mobility opportunities for staff who have not taken up mobility since 2012 (n. of responses)





## 3.2 Dissemination

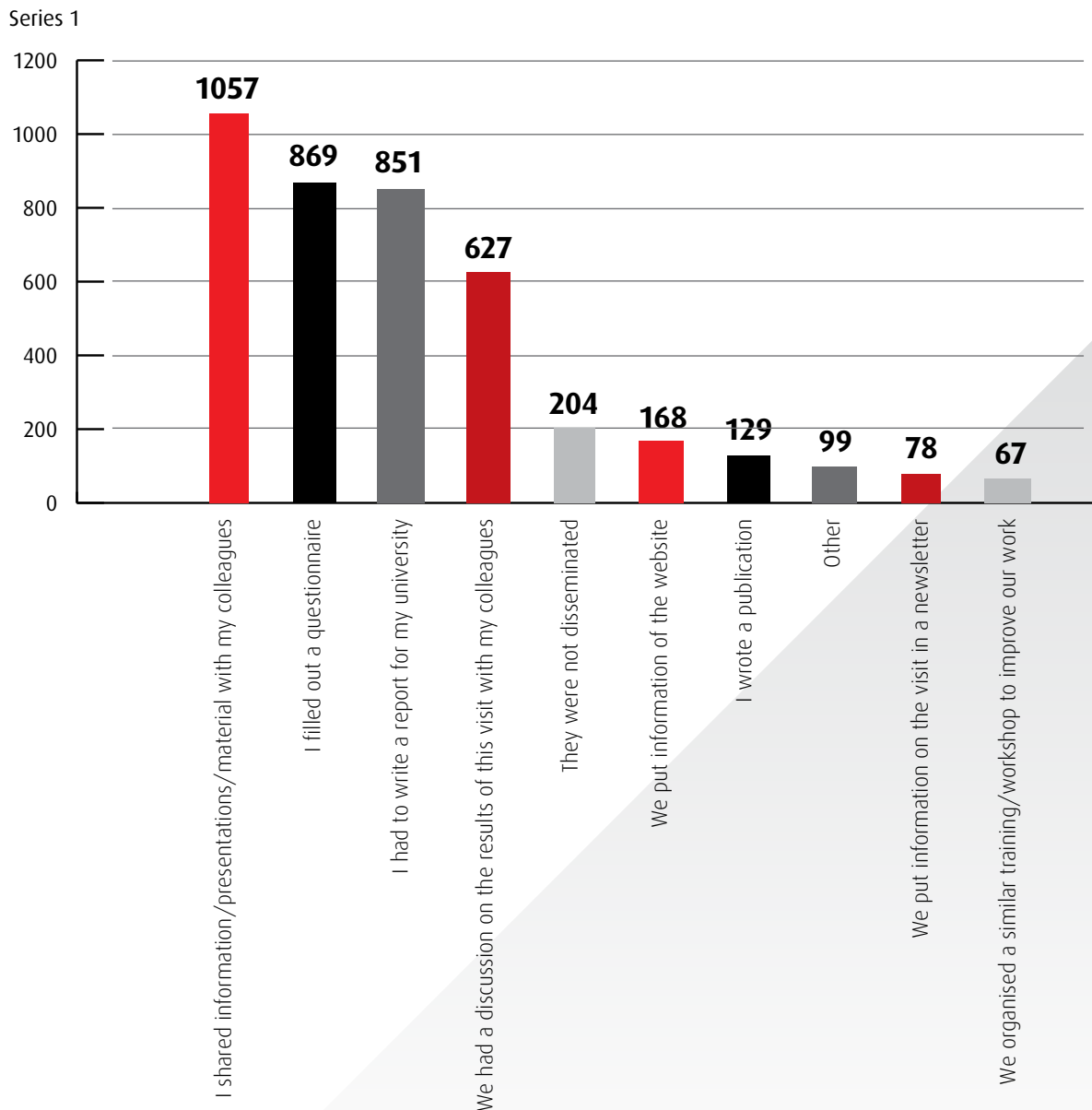
### Means of dissemination

The most popular means for disseminating the results of mobility (Fig. 26) is to share information about the visit with colleagues (25%). Other popular means of dissemination amount to filling out a questionnaire (21%),

writing a report for the home university (21%), and discussing the results of the visit with colleagues (15%). Results not being disseminated amounted to 5% of all dissemination responses. Responses not covered in the options above or simply re-elaborations of some of these

options were expressed in the 'other' section, and despite not being statistically significant these yielded some qualitatively interesting observation, including examples of good practice and obstacles.

**Fig. 26 – Means of the dissemination of mobility results at home university (n. of responses)**



### Dissemination's good practice

The 'other' section to the question investigating the principal means of dissemination, and the interviews to university executives, reveal a number of examples of good practice. The key themes emerging out of these good practices include:

- dissemination to own direct colleagues within the institutions
- dissemination to non-direct colleagues within the home and host institution OR
- dissemination to the wider public (not necessarily academic)
- dissemination to the wider scientific community
- dissemination to students
- formal and informal dissemination modes
- reflections on intellectual outputs of mobility

The means to disseminate to own direct colleagues include monthly meetings, formal presentations at key committee meetings, joint workshops at home institution held in conjunction with the host university, developing field courses. An example of monthly meetings based on disseminating mobility includes:

Once a month, we organize a "presentation" among all international staff of all visits, meetings, training weeks etc. in which we have participated that month, thus sharing the outcomes of the mobility.

Another example of dissemination practice as recollected by an interviewee concerns annual meetings for administrative staff:

For PAS [administrative staff], an annual event is organized where staff members who have taken part in a mobility program in the previous academic year share their experiences. This day coincides with the opening of the mobility call for PAS, so as well as providing an opportunity to learn about the experiences of others, it also goes some way to encouraging PAS to participate in international mobility [46].

This example constitutes good practice particularly as it combines dissemination with promotion.

Formal presentations about mobility results are reported to have taken place at meetings of curriculum commission, hence within the department but with staff at executive or generally higher level.

Dissemination to non-direct colleagues within the home institution includes contacting other departments, giving information about what has been learnt on mobility so that they can replicate. Non-direct colleagues have also been reached as respondents report to have written an article on the newsletter of the host university, and to have shared information about the mobility on social media.

Examples of good practice of dissemination to the wider academic and non-academic public includes the organisation of a photographic exhibition, a presentation at the international congress of Paris 2017, a presentation to colleagues of a national library and an article about the visit published on a local newspaper.

A specific suggestion from an interviewee for disseminating teacher mobility experience mentions the inclusion of a presentation at an annual teaching conference:

I actually think it might be a good idea to maybe have a session at the Teaching and Learning conference that we have every year on lessons learnt from. And it could be a panel discussion, it could be a whole different way. You could have several people who are saying, "What impact did it have on you? What impact did it have on reshaping a programme or learning and teaching methodologies? [41]."

Again this suggestion combines the dissemination of the results of a teaching visit with a promotion opportunity.

In addition to the photographic exhibition, multimedia, including visuals, have been used when sharing with both immediate and more distant colleagues as well as with a wider public – these include writing a blog on a shared platform, sharing a video, talking about the exchange programme, uploading report and photos on the University's

intranet to inspire colleagues to develop projects. In this respect, an interviewee provides example of good practice in which exchange staff write a piece on the home university's newsletter:

We have a weekly newsletter and usually when somebody comes back from a visit they'll write a piece for it. I'm not sure that we actually say to them you have to do this as a condition but actually people quite like doing it. And our newsletter, it's electronic, it's sort of five or six pages long and if people go to conferences and write a half page report or a visit like this they might a page report with a few photos. And it's unstructured, just we did this, we did this and here's a couple of pictures kind of thing [44].

In addition to providing an example of dissemination, what is notable about this description is that it underlines the informal character that dissemination can take. This has been underlined as the key to many dissemination practices, and tallies with the popularity of word of mouth as a key dissemination means as mentioned above. Specifically talking about the informal character dissemination, an interviewee explains that dissemination is "only informal within peer groups or research teams. To change this situation is almost impossible; an additional duty of reporting would be discouraging [14]".

Similarly, another interviewee comments on the need to find a balance between formal and informal dissemination modes:

Too much formalisation and structure may give a bureaucratic slant on the experience. Therefore, we have to find a balance: have some formalisation so that the experience may be shared by the greatest number and so that we can see the impact on the institution, but at the same time to keep a kind of spontaneity of the exchanges between staff members [9].

In regard with dissemination to the wider scientific community, respondents report having developed bids for funding and joint project proposals. They also report having written up some or all of the results from the mobility in a publication, although one respondent underlines they have done so on their own initiative "not because it was asked by the institution." This comment relates to the obstacles concerning the recognition of mobility which will be outlined below (section 3.2).

Dissemination to students has also been mentioned as a key means of disseminating mobility results with students. As evident from the questionnaire's qualitative responses, this effort has taken various forms such as the development of training for an institution's own students, the organisation of a short workshop with doctoral students, the development of a new MA programme and even

a case of dissertation supervision. As this respondent reports, "a supervision of a BA thesis of a student at the host institution took place and was presented at my home institution". Additionally, an interviewee expresses a favourable opinion in regard to disseminating to students: "The greatest benefit is passing this knowledge to students. Expanding this knowledge during lectures while talking about it. I spent some time, I have a different perspective, think about it." Teaching mobility has shown to have a significant impact on respondent's own teaching, so disseminating to students is a key means of fostering mobility impact.

#### Reflections on the nature of dissemination outputs

Lastly, one interviewee reflects on what dissemination should be about, that is, not general knowledge about their visits but the intellectual outputs of their visit – what they have discovered and what kind of important things they would like to share with their colleagues, "for example I have met someone there is who is doing research on that or somebody there is willing to come and teach here about this subject, that kind of thing [4]." Reflecting on what the output of mobility dissemination should be, an interviewee reflects on mobility within the broader context of the educational mission of the university, and of the university's key utilitarian functions concerning the betterment of society. As he states:

We have forgotten that service to society is more than a spin off, it is also about how to translate international knowledge to your local society and local knowledge to international society. And that is something I think you can realize through international staff exchange [5].

In other words as a specific function within a broad university education mission, mobility should help to improve society, that is, using up the new knowledge learnt on mobility to solve problems of a local nature. Hence, mobility's dissemination output is not about the general gathering of knowledge, but specifically about problem-solving.

#### Dissemination's obstacles

As emerging from the questionnaire and interviews, obstacles to dissemination appear to be

- The lack of a formal system for disseminating or evaluating the mobility's results
- The lack of interest of higher management in the individual results of the mobility
- Inconsistent perceptions about who holds the responsibility for disseminating the mobility results
- The pressure of having to produce a public output

In regard with the lack of a formal path for disseminating mobility, a respondent states that "there is no set system of evaluation or dissemination of our experiences. Even if I would like to share my experiences, there is no formal or informal way to do so." It is interesting that staff who take up mobility feel incapacitated to share their experiences because there is no set path, as if such a path is expected to be formal. Also, the lack of a way for universities to evaluate mobility reports is mentioned as an obstacle. As an interviewee states, "we need to ask ourselves what to do with them [mandatory mobility reports] so that they are better highlighted and better used. It constitutes a first feedback, a first impact, which does not go far enough and is not exploited correctly."

The lack of interest from higher management manifests itself with lack of support, as for example a respondent states that "lack of support at the departmental level meant the department hierarchy was not interested"; but also, lack of interest from senior leaders is evident in a common communicational inefficiency such as the lack of feedback. In this respect respondents report having submitted a report to their manager but never receiving their manager's feedback or thoughts about what they submitted, or their manager not sharing their report with others. In some cases the International Relations office is the only one who is interested in the visit outcome, as "IO officer discussed with me about the visit outcome, but my boss doesn't care about it". On trying to change the status quo of ways of working, one respondent also reports trying to "to share my thoughts about possible improvements at the faculty, but no one was actually interested."

Finally, it is interesting to note that besides the lack of a formal path for disseminating results, and the lack of interest from staff who should be interested in their own staff members' professional development, there is also a discrepancy about who should disseminate the results of mobility and who holds responsibility for such a process. From the responses above it appears that there is an expectation that departmental managers should be automatically interested in individual results of the mobility, and that solutions to the obstacles to dissemination should be found by someone else, not by the staff who went on mobility. In this respect a respondent stated that "my department did not do any follow-up of my visit and/or achievements" betraying the ingrained conviction that responsibility for dissemination lays within an external agent, and not within the member of staff who went on mobility. This result provides leeway

for working with staff expectation and perception of responsibility in regard with mobility results' dissemination.

Lastly, an obstacle to dissemination is the pressure of having to produce a public output, particularly in the context of ordinary workload. As an interviewee states:

...you cannot go abroad if you do not write a three page summary of what you have done there, and I think some people will say, then I don't want to do this. So you have to find the right balance between that and at the same time recognizing what that person has learned there, because if you make it public, you also recognize that it is important and we appreciate what you have done there and also of course share the knowledge [4].

This is evidence again of the tension between formal and informal way of disseminating outputs, and particularly the link between dissemination and recognition, the latter aspect of staff mobility which will be explored in the next section.

# 4. Encouragement and Recognition

## 4.1 The perceived benefits of mobility

A quantitative insight into the recognition of the benefits of mobility comes from the respondents of the questionnaire (Table 15). Only those responses that were in agreement or strong agreement with the attitude statements were counted in this measurement.

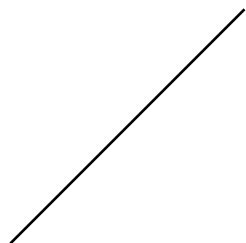
**Table 15 – Distribution of positive attitude (n. of responses)**

Participation in a staff exchange programme may help me develop my career at my institution.	3669
Participation in a staff exchange programme is an asset during a periodic assessment of my job.	3342
Erasmus staff mobility has a positive influence on the visibility of my department and my institution.	3228
In my department, we eagerly host visiting staff from other universities who participate in an Erasmus mobility.	2999
My colleagues support the idea of going abroad for training/teaching.	2781
My manager is aware of the benefits of Erasmus staff mobility.	2658
Erasmus staff mobility enhances innovative practices in my department.	2611
Erasmus staff mobility helps to attract good researchers and professors to my department.	2318
Erasmus staff mobility helps to attract good students to my department.	2226
I am expected to work remotely while abroad.	2097
My department regularly advertises staff exchange opportunities.	2082
My manager encourages me to participate in staff exchange programmes.	1711
In my department, we discuss practices and skills acquired by colleagues who went on a mobility.	1435
Participation in a staff exchange programme is taken into consideration for promotion in my department.	1381
In my department, we implement new practices based on the experiences of colleagues who went on a mobility.	1205

The most positive attitude (above 50%) concerns career development and mobility as an asset during job evaluation. 59% of all respondents believe that participation in a staff exchange programme may help them develop their career at their institution, showing that perception of mobility as helping career advancement is generally positive. Similarly, 54% of respondents think that participation in a staff exchange programme is an asset during a periodic assessment of their job, showing again a generally positive attitude towards recognising mobility as an asset in their job. 52% recognise that mobility has a positive influence on the visibility of their department and their institution.

Fairly positive attitudes are those ranging between 25% and 49%. These mildly positive attitudes concern the eagerness to host visiting staff from other partner universities (48%); the support of colleagues in regard to going abroad for training/teaching (45%), showing that recognition of mobility through support coming from colleagues is only mildly positive. Considering that word of mouth is the most significant promotion channel influencing the take-up of mobility, more may need to be done to foster support for mobility amongst colleagues. 43% of respondents recognise that their manager is aware of the benefits of Erasmus staff mobility. 42% of respondents believe that Erasmus staff mobility enhances

innovative practices in their department, hence there is only a mild agreement indicated here that mobility results in new practices being brought into department. 37% of respondents think that Erasmus staff mobility helps to attract good researchers and professors to their department. Similarly, only 36% of respondents believe that Erasmus staff mobility helps to attract good students to their department, showing that visibility thanks to Erasmus does not strictly involve attracting good students or good staff to the university. Only 34% agree that they are expected to work remotely while abroad, showing that the duplicated workload when one is away on mobility is not such a pervasive occurrence as it is perceived to be; only



34% recognise that their department regularly advertises staff exchange opportunities; and only 28% state that their manager encourage them to participate in staff exchange programmes.

In regard with less recognised benefits of mobility, only 23% of respondents agree that in their department, practices and skills acquired by colleagues who went on mobility are discussed; also only 22% think that participation in a staff exchange programme is taken into consideration for promotion in their department. Here it may be significant to note the link between lack of management support (see *'Reasons for applying/encouraging factors'* section above) and low recognition as perceived by respondents; finally, a mere 19% think that mobility brings about the implementation of new practices based on the experiences of colleagues who went on a mobility in their department.

A qualitative insight into the recognition of the value of mobility comes from the recollections of the benefits of mobility as stated by executive university staff. These recollections are seen as instances of recognition since they are made by the people who have the ultimate responsibility of approving mobility. Through their encouragement and support, appreciation and recognition, and their capacity to provide feedback, executive staff also yield the power to increase the dissemination and hence the impact of international mobility across Europe. The views presented here as to the recognised value of mobility are mostly positive showing the openness of executive staff even in the event of mobility not being their key field of expertise. (However, the views of those who do not recognise the value of mobility are not reflected because those individuals did not agree to be interviewed).

Mobility as recognised by interviewees provides the following benefits:

- broadly, it enhances the university's educational mission and improves society's sustainability
- gives emotional benefits
- provides opportunities for personal development
- enhances skills
- provides collaboration opportunities
- reaches specific targets
- favours problem-solving

With regard to the broad benefits in education and society, mobility enhances the broad university educational mission, as an interviewee states: "if these programmes did not exist, the opportunity of the broad scope of our work would be interrupted." Also, mobility is believed to increase our contribution for the resolution of global challenges and hence for the sustainable development of society.

A key benefit brought about by mobility is the emotional value that it bears. When recognising the value brought about by the new information created thanks to mobility through sharing of practices and knowledge and problem solving, one should remember that the value of information includes emotions (Brier 2008), even if such emotional value eschews quantitative measurement frameworks and is not well recorded in formal outputs. Emotionally, mobility provides an opportunity for acknowledgement. It is recognised by an interviewee as "a little gift, casually, because staff members sometimes have acknowledgement problems, so it is a bit like taking a breath outside [8]." In other words, mobility can be a way to gain recognition outside a 'home' environment, which may boost self-confidence and motivation or "revitalize and reignite passion for your work [1]". For teaching staff, the boost in motivation in turn has impact on students – "if we can have our staff enthusiastic and

actively engaging in exchanges, then that transmits to the students [42]." For administrative staff, motivation leads to innovation: "administrative staff having participated to Erasmus staff training weeks gain motivation and often they propose innovations in mobility procedures [18]." Hence it is clear how the unquantifiable personal emotional value of mobility can turn into quantitative, visible and measurable external outputs.

Mobility is recognised as being a source of informal learning as an interviewee states: "For both, academic and administrative staff, mobility contributes to their professional development, though mostly informal." Mobility is recognised as a way to boost personal development which in turns bears positive effects on performance.

The other thing is that staff can get a lot from it personally which actually enriches their own experience, and then that has a positive knock-on effect on their performance. I think it does feed it because it's part of the overall kind of development of the individual [42].

There isn't however an automatic link between personal and professional development, as will be outlined in the section below on 'Obstacles to Recognition'.

Mobility is recognised as an activity that enhances skills such as problem-solving and reflection, as well as skills that are of a fundamentally communicational nature, that is, intercultural and linguistic skills. Simply being in a different professional context fosters reflection and

consequently problem-solving skills, as an interviewee states: “vis-à-vis our own administrative or teaching practices, it is important to be confronted with other kinds of practices, not only to reflect on our own practices, but also to take a step back and maybe learn from them [9].”

Being in another professional context and a different culture is recognised as fostering intercultural learning:

Being in another culture first and secondly being in another environment always helps to look at your own situation and to not make your own situation the central point of the world [...] I think you learn to be much more flexible in situations with, for example, student exchange, foreign students or situations that are not according to our own rules. If you have been in other institutions, you learn that what we believe is the rule, it is not necessarily so obvious as we think it is [5].

Flexibility and adaptation and generally, as an interviewee puts it “soft skills such as intercultural communication skills [18]”, are a key recognised benefit of mobility. Additionally, foreign language practice is a recognised benefit of mobility too as “guest lecturers (as a result of staff exchange) teach subjects in foreign languages [13].”

Mobility is recognised as being important to problem-solving. One interviewee stated that non-academic staff are exposed to different solutions to administrative issues, and that “the acquisition of information and even skills or best practices has an impact [...] on the functioning of the services, departments, teachings or research practices [6].”

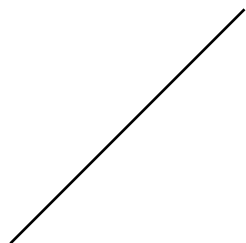
Similarly, interviewees underline how academic staff are exposed to different solutions to teaching issues, as in this example:

Professors can enrich their curricula by inviting foreign/guest lecturers, enhance their teaching potential, improve the curricula (by broadening, deepening and enriching the topics of courses) of both hosting and sending institutions through exchange of experience, disseminate information about best practices and experience of the hosting institution among staff members of the sending institution [33].

For both academic and non-academic staff, sharing experience and knowledge is recognised as a way that allows staff to be exposed to different ways of managing and solving issues.

With regard to providing collaboration opportunities, mobility is recognised as fostering network partnerships and collaboration in research and teaching, in the form of joint programmes.

It is within the remit of collaboration that mobility is recognised as bearing benefits for researchers, and not just for administrative staff and teachers. An example of good practice in recognising the link between mobility and research collaboration is a case in which the university undertakes teaching missions in institutions which may then be working with them in the context of research projects. Another interviewee recognises clearly the beneficial link between enhanced research collaboration and the impact on professional development: “Joint research projects contribute not only for the university funding but also for the increase of joint publications in scientific journals, thus contributing for the researcher’s professional progression and networking [21].” For teachers, collaboration may take the form of joint programmes: “... now we’re thinking about offering a Law degree, essentially a double Law degree, which would enable students from (xxx) or (xxx) to graduate with two Law degrees in four years rather than six [43].”



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Collaboration benefits for administrative staff have not specifically been recognised amongst interviewees, so perhaps this is an area of mobility that needs more acknowledgement or even development. However, there is a general valuing of the opportunity that Erasmus staff mobility presents to administrative staff. For example, one interviewee states that it is the only funding opportunity available at their institution that enables mobility of administrative staff. Another interviewee recognises the importance of Erasmus staff mobility for administrative staff and young staff:

Staff mobility contributes in the sense of internationalization of the institution and it gives individuals the possibility to experience other educational systems and to network. It would be a loss especially for young teachers and administrative staff, because they do not have many other possibilities [32].

Overall, then, one of the recognised benefits of Erasmus mobility is that it can support specific groups of staff that are otherwise more difficult to support, including administrative staff and early-career academics.



## 4.2 Perceived obstacles

### Administrative staff and researchers as missed targets

The programme's potential to reach specific targets such as administrative staff or young employees is fully recognised by executive staff. However there also are obstacles in pursuing mobility targets. One interviewee stated that although they are aware of the benefits that mobility brings to administrative staff, staff themselves may not be aware of such benefits:

The programme is in fact well used by the teaching staff, which is a very good thing. The weakness remains the administrative staff. That does not mean they do not know about the programme, but it means rather that they either do not know they can benefit mobility in the framework of the programme or that it is simply difficult for them to go abroad in mobility in the framework of the programme [9].

Hence the lack of recognition of mobility's benefits for staff constitutes a weakness which undermines the full reach of the mobility target.

One other potential obstacle that has emerged is that the appropriateness of mobility to researchers may constitute a grey area, as an interviewee state that this potential mobility target tend to use other funds. "In research intensive institutions [...] most staff, especially research staff, professors, assistant professors and so on, they do have a lot

of other resources available to go abroad, and so I think this explains why they are not so easily attracted to use these type of funding [4]." To enhance mobility's recognition for researchers, clarification of the appropriateness and benefits of international mobility for researchers may be beneficial.

### The missing link between personal and professional development

However, while interviewees recognise that mobility boosts personal development which can indeed benefit job performance, they also recognise that such personal development does not automatically translate to professional development. This is due to a lack of evaluation structures, as one interviewee recognises:

I'm not aware [...] that we actually include it in any of our progression criteria. I can't think that I can visualise it in any of our promotions criteria, for instance. But certainly that activity will then help to feed in to other things and to perhaps improve performance in areas in that way [42].

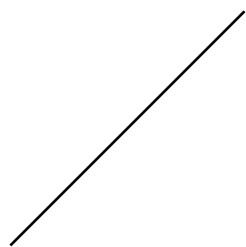
There is certainty about the personal development opportunities that mobility brings about, but this awareness does not necessarily feed into career progression. Indeed at a very formal level an interviewee states: "The mobility is not linked to a strategy [12]". So, despite the recognised value of informal learning, of the soft skills gained in mobility and their link to performance, mobility is not perceived to be crucial to strategy. This betrays an issue with how strategy

is conceived, namely that strategy is understood to exclude personal development opportunities – hence the personal development embedded in mobility is not sufficiently recognised.

This points to the second cause for the missing link between personal and professional development in mobility, that is, the lack of awareness of the benefits of mobility. An interesting contradiction emerging from the interviews showed that interviewees were not aware of the personal and professional opportunities of international exchange for teaching as well as research staff. For example this respondent argued that mobility does not bear benefits for researchers:

...on a personal level it may, it opens your way to publish, to do joint projects, for other things; but it does not translate into any immediate benefit. Doing an Erasmus stay in teaching can help make you a better teacher, and that's it... there is no other recognized value [47].

On the other hand, one interviewee states that mobility bears benefits for researchers but not for teachers. "International exchanges generally take place within the framework of research. In the context of teaching, it is less obvious, less natural [7]". This statement expresses the fundamental idea that internationalisation is not needed in teaching. The muddling up of opinions on the recognised benefits of mobility shows that such benefits are believed to be proprietary to specific roles i.e. administrative, teaching or research. Perhaps this shows the limitations of



evaluation and recognition procedures which are not capable to account for the potential of broad personal development to translate into specific role-based professional development.

**The ‘actual’ benefits and obstacles of mobility**

Our questionnaire investigated how the ‘actual’ benefits of mobility have been recognised by staff who went on mobility over the past 5 years, hence through direct experience, and also staff

who have known colleagues who went on mobility, hence recognition through indirect experience.

This section is about recognition through direct experience.

**Table 16 – Extent to which institution has valued mobility (n. of responses and %)**

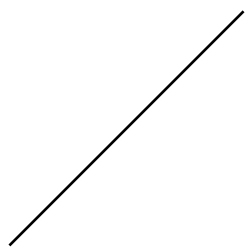
	Overall view		Administrative staff view		Academic staff view	
	n. of responses	%	n. of responses	%	n. of responses	%
minor or no recognition	703	<b>36%</b>	225	33%	477	38%
neutral recognition	538	<b>28%</b>	187	27%	350	28%
major recognition	694	<b>36%</b>	276	<b>40%</b>	417	<b>34%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1935</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1244</b>	<b>100%</b>

As Table 16 shows, overall, 36% of the respondents who have gone on mobility in the past 5 years feel their experience has been highly valued and acknowledged by their institution. The exact same proportion (36%) feels that their mobility experience has not been sufficiently recognised, and a 28% of respondents are neutral towards the recognition they received (Table 16). On the other hand, when comparing the views of administrative staff to those of academic staff, the levels of recognition perceived are slightly different: administrative staff feel their experience is better valued by their institution (40%) than academic staff (34%). Conversely, while a third of administrative staff feel their experience has been given low recognition, 38% of academic staff feel their experience has been poorly valued.

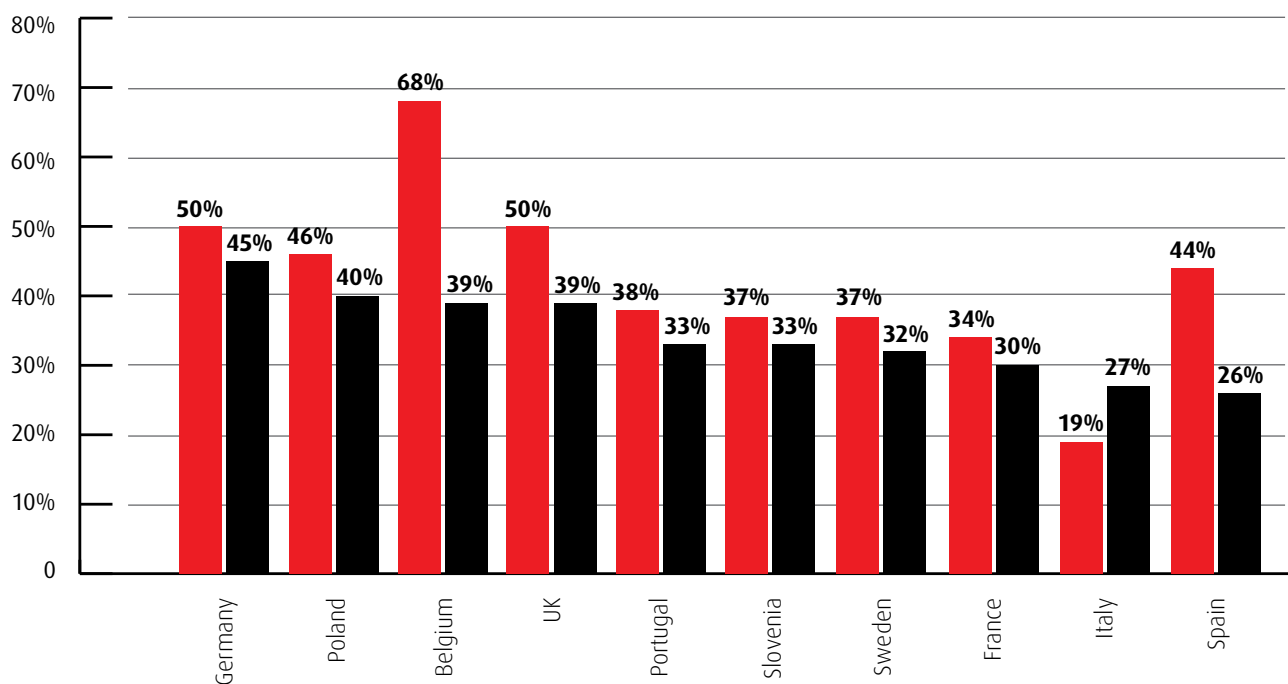
However, there are variations across Europe about the sense of satisfaction associated with the acknowledgement of mobility received by one’s own department (Table 17). Focussing on the number of responses falling within the ‘major recognition’ label, the following results have emerged: Belgium, Germany, Poland, Portugal and the UK are the countries where staff feel they have received satisfactory recognition of their mobility experience from their department, school, faculty, service or university, with Belgium being the country where staff are most confident about the appreciation received. Conversely, Sweden, Spain, France, Italy and Slovenia are the countries where acknowledgement and appreciation of mobility experiences are felt the least, with Slovenian exchange staff being the least confident about the acknowledgement received.

**Table 17 – Cross-European comparative view of staff who feel their mobility has been greatly valued and appreciated (n. of responses and %)**

<b>BELGIUM</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	44	49%
total	90	
<b>GERMANY</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	46	47%
total	98	
<b>SPAIN</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	74	<b>33%</b>
total	221	
<b>FRANCE</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	94	<b>31%</b>
total	300	
<b>ITALY</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	73	<b>24%</b>
total	299	
<b>POLAND</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	104	42%
total	249	
<b>PORTUGAL</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	51	42%
total	147	
<b>SLOVENIA</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	48	<b>22%</b>
total	214	
<b>SWEDEN</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	21	<b>33%</b>
total	63	
<b>UK</b>		
high satisfaction about appreciation received	132	42%
total	314	



**Fig. 27 – Cross-European distribution of administrative and academic staff who felt their mobility was greatly valued (%)**



- admin staff who feel their mobility has been greatly valued
- academic staff who feel their mobility has been greatly valued

In addition to cross-country comparison, analysis was further extended (Fig. 27) to compare levels of perceived recognition of mobility across administrative staff and academic staff for each of the countries in the consortium. In regard with administrative staff, Belgium (68%), Germany (50%) and the UK (50%) are the countries where administrative staff most felt that their mobility was highly valued. Conversely, Italy (19%), France (34%) and Sweden (37%) are the

countries where administrative staff felt the least that their mobility was highly appreciated. From the point of view of academics, the countries where this group most felt that their mobility was highly valued are Germany (45%), Poland (40%) and Belgium (39%). Proportions were lower in Spain (26%), Italy (27%) and France (30%) where academic staff were the least confident that their mobility was greatly valued at their department or institution.

Next, we looked at recognition through indirect experience. Of the 4270 respondents who did not go on mobility, 52% know colleagues who have participated in an Erasmus staff mobility (Table 18).

**Table 18 – Awareness of colleagues who have participated in an Erasmus staff mobility (n. of responses)**

Yes	2240
No	2030

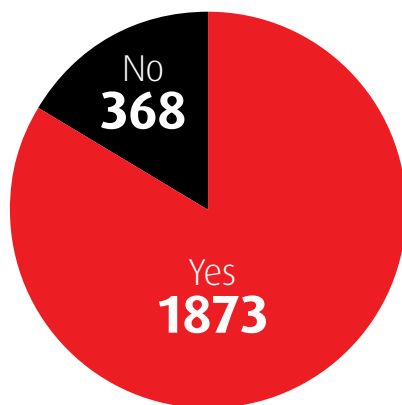
Amongst the staff who know colleagues who have been on mobility, 84% recognise that Erasmus staff exchange has helped them professionally (Fig. 28). The same results are revealed when a

comparison of perceived professional value of colleagues' mobility is made across academic and administrative staff. This shows that the perception of benefits of staff mobility based on direct

observation of such benefits is overall largely positive, hence the professional usefulness and value of international mobility is very widely recognised amongst colleagues.

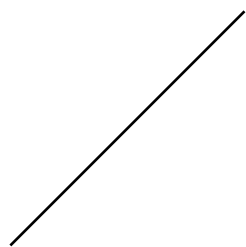
**Fig. 28 – Professional value of colleague's mobility**

Do you think an Erasmus staff exchange helped them professionally?

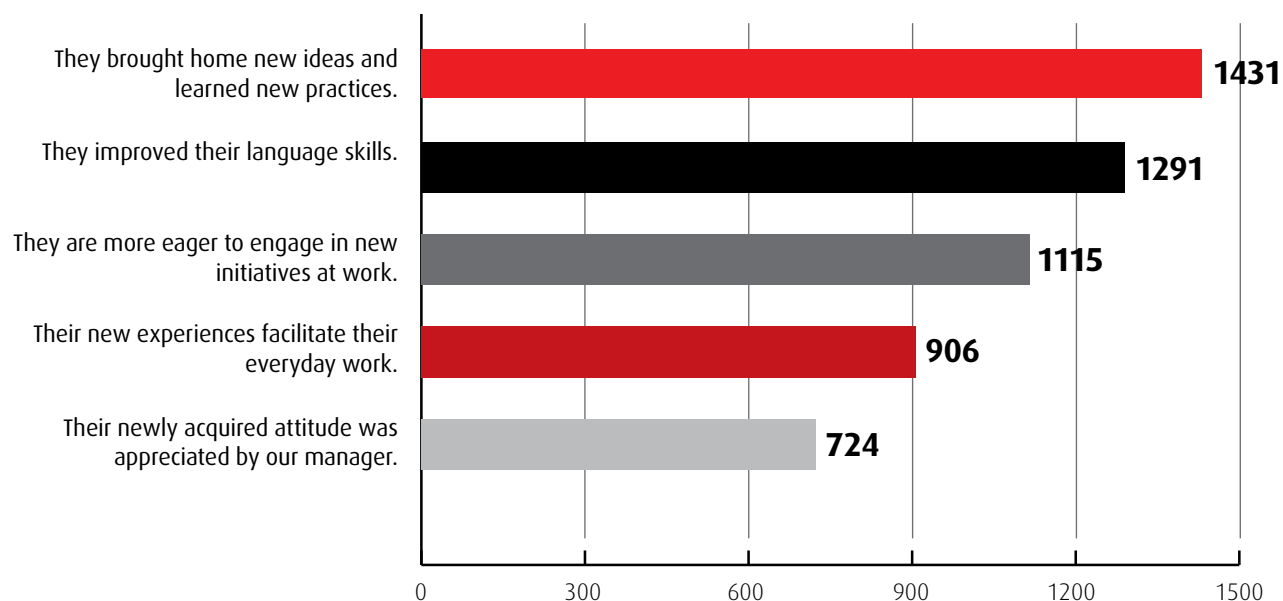


The 1873 respondents who were aware of a colleague's mobility and who recognised the professional value of their colleague's experience were then asked to assess a value according to 5 professional development criteria (Fig. 29). This is how the criteria scored, in order of statistical importance:

- 76% agree or strongly agree that mobility allows one to bring home new ideas and learn new practices
- 69% agree or strongly agree that mobility improves language skills
- 60% agree or strongly agree that new practices are implemented at individual level
- 48% agree or strongly agree that mobility facilitates everyday work
- 39% agree or strongly agree that managers appreciate their newly acquired attitude



**Fig. 29 – Assessing the professional value of colleague’s mobility experience (n. of responses)**



Generally, staff who assessed the value of colleague’s mobility experience (Fig. 29), strongly recognise that international mobility allows one to bring home new ideas and learn new practices and that it improves language skills (Score from 66% and above). They also mildly recognise that new practices are implemented at individual level, that mobility facilitates

everyday work and that managers appreciate their newly acquired attitude (score between 65% and 33%). This latter criterion – manager’s appreciation – however is the one with the lowest score, close to qualifying as an obstacle as to recognising the actual professional value of mobility.

Finally, amongst the staff who recognise the professional benefits of mobility, 60% state they plan to apply for an international exchange opportunity in the near future (Table 19).

**Table 19 – Distribution of staff who recognises the professional benefits of mobility and who plans to apply for an international exchange opportunity in the near future (n. of responses)**

Yes	1133
No	742
total	1873

These results show that despite the fact that 84% of respondents (as outlined in Fig. 28) broadly recognise the professional value of mobility, only 60% (Table 19) would actually consider and plan to apply for an international

exchange opportunity in the near future. This shows that recognising the benefits of mobility is not a sufficient factor on its own to boost the take up of mobility.

# Conclusion

The aim of our survey was to test the experiences and attitudes of university staff regarding Erasmus staff mobility. The participants were academic and administrative staff working in HEIs in the ten European countries of the project partners. The quantitative and qualitative data analysed in this report provides an overview of the responses of these 6202 respondents of the questionnaire, and the 48 interviews conducted with members of senior leadership in the ten partner HEIs.

This report has produced quantitative data and set them against trends identified by previously recorded data – for example, there has been an increase of administrative staff participation in mobility since 2012, and also an increase of women’s participation over the past three decades. Through this research we have been able to enrich the quantitative findings with the qualitative data of perception and indirect experience. The 48 interviews conducted in the ten partner universities have also contributed significant perspectives from senior leadership roles.

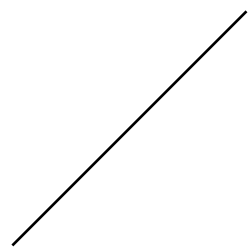
The inclusion of both direct and indirect experiences of mobility during a five year period between 2012 and 2017 has contributed to creating a fuller picture of staff mobility by recording not only the perceptions of staff who went on mobility, but also that of their colleagues and senior leaders. Alongside the responses from staff that went on one or more mobilities during this time (31% of the sample), the perspectives and experiences of the 69% of respondents who had not carried out a mobility have added important insights into the general perceptions around Erasmus mobility in HEIs. For example, 84% of university staff who have not been on mobility but who know colleagues who have been, recognise that Erasmus staff exchange has helped them professionally.

Benefits and obstacles have been explored under three headings: Management; Promotion and Dissemination; Encouragement and Recognition. A range of insights have emerged in all these areas: it has been recognised by respondents and university leaders that international staff mobility bears several benefits to the individuals, institutions and societies involved. Benefits include enhancing the university’s educational mission, improving society’s sustainability, contributing to emotional well-being, providing opportunities for personal development and collaboration, enhancing skills, helping to reach specific targets (e.g. administrative staff) and, overall, favouring problem-solving. The study has also identified obstacles to mobility. In terms of mobility management, these largely draw attention to insufficient funding and difficult working conditions (high workload or not being able to find replacement at work). Responses around the promotion of the programme indicate dissatisfaction around the visibility of opportunities and partner universities. Finally, there are clearly opportunities for developing better dissemination and recognition processes around staff mobility. These would articulate clearer, more concrete outcomes, which would in turn promote the opportunity for wider participation by convincing more staff – and their managers – of the value of staff mobility to the institution as a whole as well as to the individual.

The data in this report provides valuable guidance for universities seeking to improve the experience of international staff mobility for their staff, and also to a lesser degree for visiting staff. It is clear from the data that the mobility experience is highly valued by staff: 99% of those who went on mobility thought that their participation in the Erasmus staff mobility programme met their expectations to the fullest. This is an important starting point for any

future discussions about the promotion, support and development of staff mobility programmes: whatever the barriers are, the experience is valued both by participants and their colleagues. Furthermore, university leaders and policy makers should also be encouraged by the wide range of recognised benefits that emerge in this report. These benefits extend beyond the immediate personal sphere and show impact on the culture and quality of institutions, through the enhancement of elements such as working practices, international networking and general professional development including both attitudes and skills.

The overall analysis is encouraging. While some obstacles may continue to create real barriers for some potential participants, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the number of staff who would go on a mobility can be increased by addressing some of the issues identified in this report. For example, communication is a key topic that emerges across the data. This ranges from the basic dissemination of information to more complex perspectives on articulating the connection between personal development and university strategies. The latter calls for the benefits of international mobility to be recognised by staff development policies. It also points to the need to align mobility with experiences that can contribute to recognition through promotion opportunities. Furthermore the report indicates that there is much scope for connecting the impact of staff mobility with university, faculty and service strategies. By breaking down the principle of personal and professional development into some readily identifiable specifics, the analysis of the data shows how faculties and services benefit from the outcomes of staff mobility often without fully recognising this, hence missing opportunities to make the most of international staff



mobility for furthering their own strategic aims, including the development of their staff. The impact on the general internationalisation of any institution is evident. These insights provide a significant motivation for attempting to reduce any barriers to participation in staff mobility at institutional, national or European level.

**Annex I – Number of questionnaires by country**

Country	Number of responses	Non-rounded proportion	Rounded-up percentage
Belgium	322	0.051918736	5%
France	1592	0.25669139	26%
Germany	105	0.016930023	2%
Italy	706	0.113834247	11%
Other	40	0.006449532	1%
Poland	808	0.130280555	13%
Portugal	617	0.099484037	10%
Slovenia	214	0.034504998	3%
Spain	743	0.119800064	12%
Sweden	407	0.065623992	7%
UK	648	0.104482425	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6202</b>		



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