

# Impact of the European Exchange Programme in higher education *what's in it for you?*

Effects of mobility on the skills and  
employability of students

# Who am I?

- Petra Gillis
- Currently
  - at the National Agency of Flanders for Erasmus+ in Brussels
  - NA management support (official reporting, applications, audits, etc.)
  - Financial officer of Businet
- Previously
  - Higher education (15 yrs): teacher, international officer
  - President of Businet
  - Secondary education (4 yrs)
- European education programmes:
  - Erasmus+ 2014-2020: Mobility of individuals and strategic partnerships for SE, HE, VET, AE
  - Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-2013 with the Erasmusprogramme for higher education

# Survey

- By a number of well placed organisations in higher education, quality management, European Commission, etc.
- To confirm a number of issues students and staff have experienced
- To invalidate a number of assumptions
- Large scale research based rather than small scale evidence based
- On a European level rather than local level
- Students and alumni
- (Staff and organisations)
- Employers

# Measuring soft skills: MEMO©

- Confidence
- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Self-efficacy
- Sociality
- Vigor
- Curiosity
- Serenity
- Decisiveness
- Disputability
- Resilience



MEMO total ©

# Presentation

- Very short summary of the findings
- For the full survey (incl. methodology, etc.):

Erasmus Impact Study

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf)

# Two questions

- What are the effects of Erasmus student mobility in relation to studies and placements on individual skills enhancement, employability and institutional development?
- What are the effects of Erasmus teaching assignments and staff training on individual competences, personality traits and attitudes, as well as the programme's impact on the internationalisation of HEI?

**A bit of facts and figures...**

# Why students want to go abroad

1. Opportunity to live abroad
2. Opportunity to learn/improve a foreign language
3. Opportunity to meet new people
4. Opportunity to develop soft skills like adaptability, taking initiative, pro-activity, etc.
5. Improve and widen career prospects in the future
6. Enhance future employability abroad
7. Possibility to choose a study programme in a foreign language
8. Opportunity to experience different learning practices and teaching methods
9. The length of the study period abroad was appropriate
10. Quality of the host institution/company



# Reasons for not taking part in Erasmus

1. Uncertainty about the cost of the study abroad
2. Family reasons or personal relationships
3. Lack of other financial resources necessary to study abroad
4. Uncertainty about the Erasmus grant level
5. Lack of information about the Erasmus programme and how it works
6. Will take part at a later date
7. Lack of integration/continuity between study subjects at home and abroad
8. Work responsibility in home country
9. Uncertainty about education system abroad (exams,...)
10. Expected difficulties with the recognition of credits at the home institution

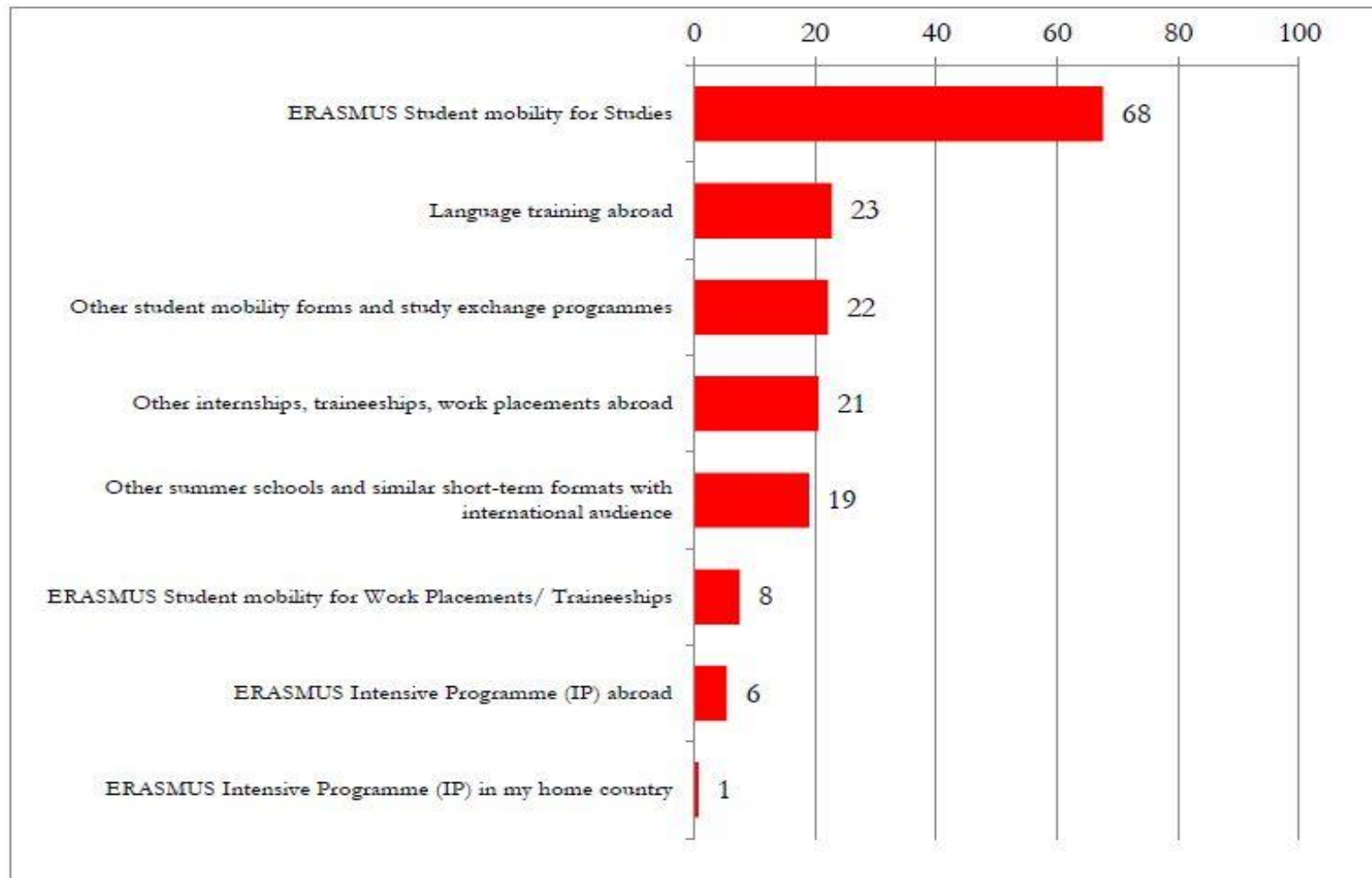


**More than 90% of the mobile students** go abroad to live abroad, to improve their language skills, to form new relationships and to develop skills such as adaptability

**For more than 50% of non-mobile students**, the reason for not going abroad are uncertainty with regard to costs, personal relationships and a lack of financial resources

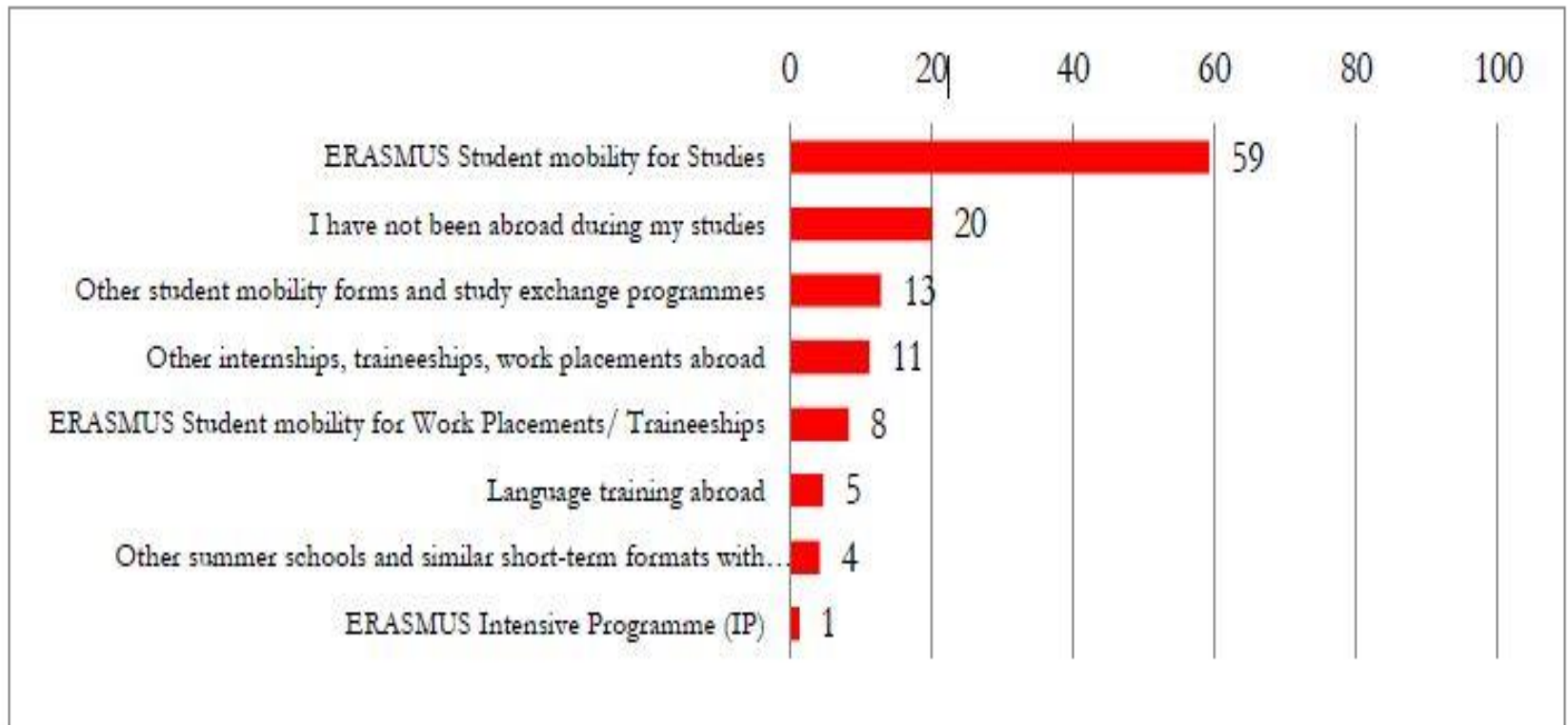
The Erasmus programme's selection process is an obstacle to 14% of the non-mobile students

# Types of mobility (%) of mobile students

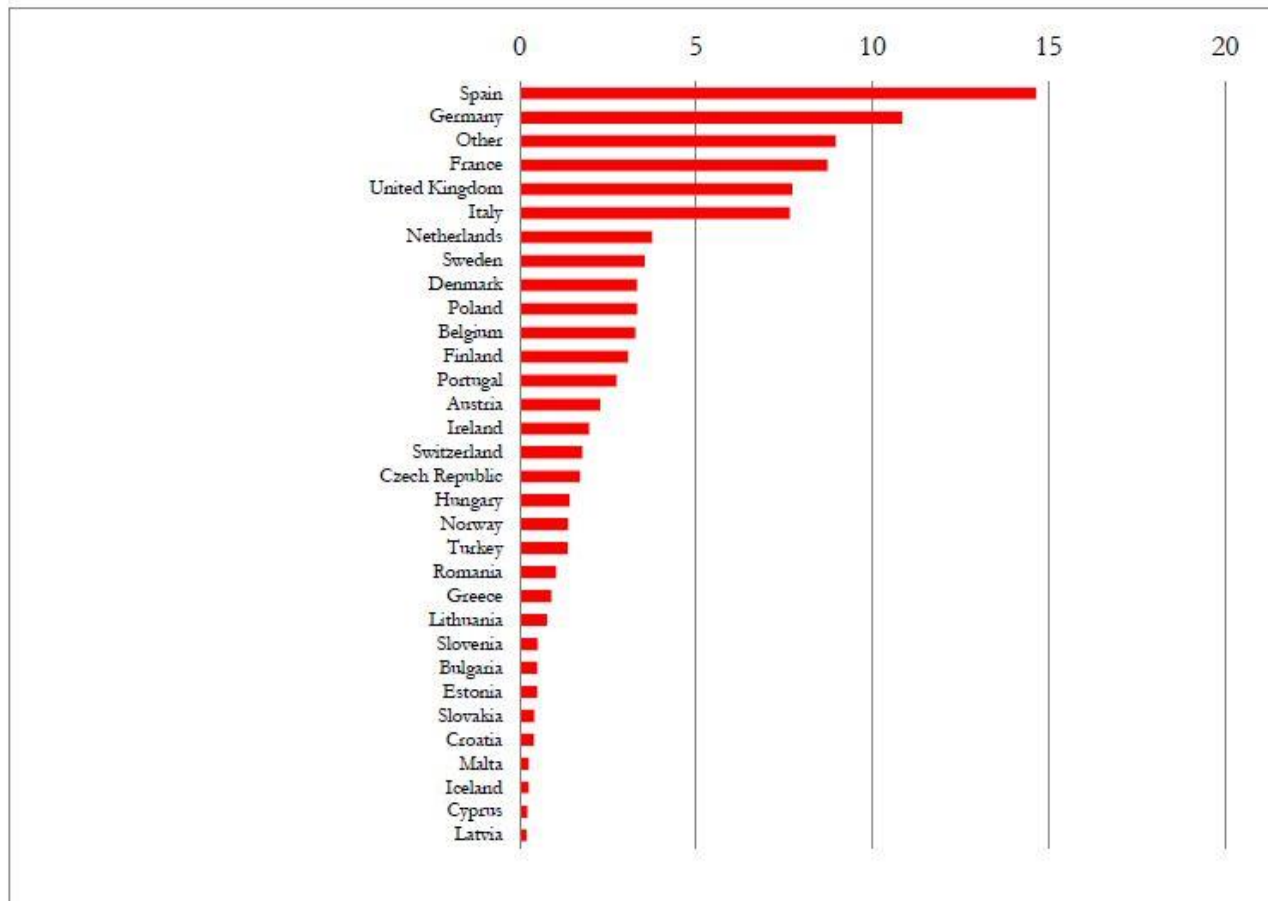


\* multiple answers possible

# Types of mobility (%) of alumni



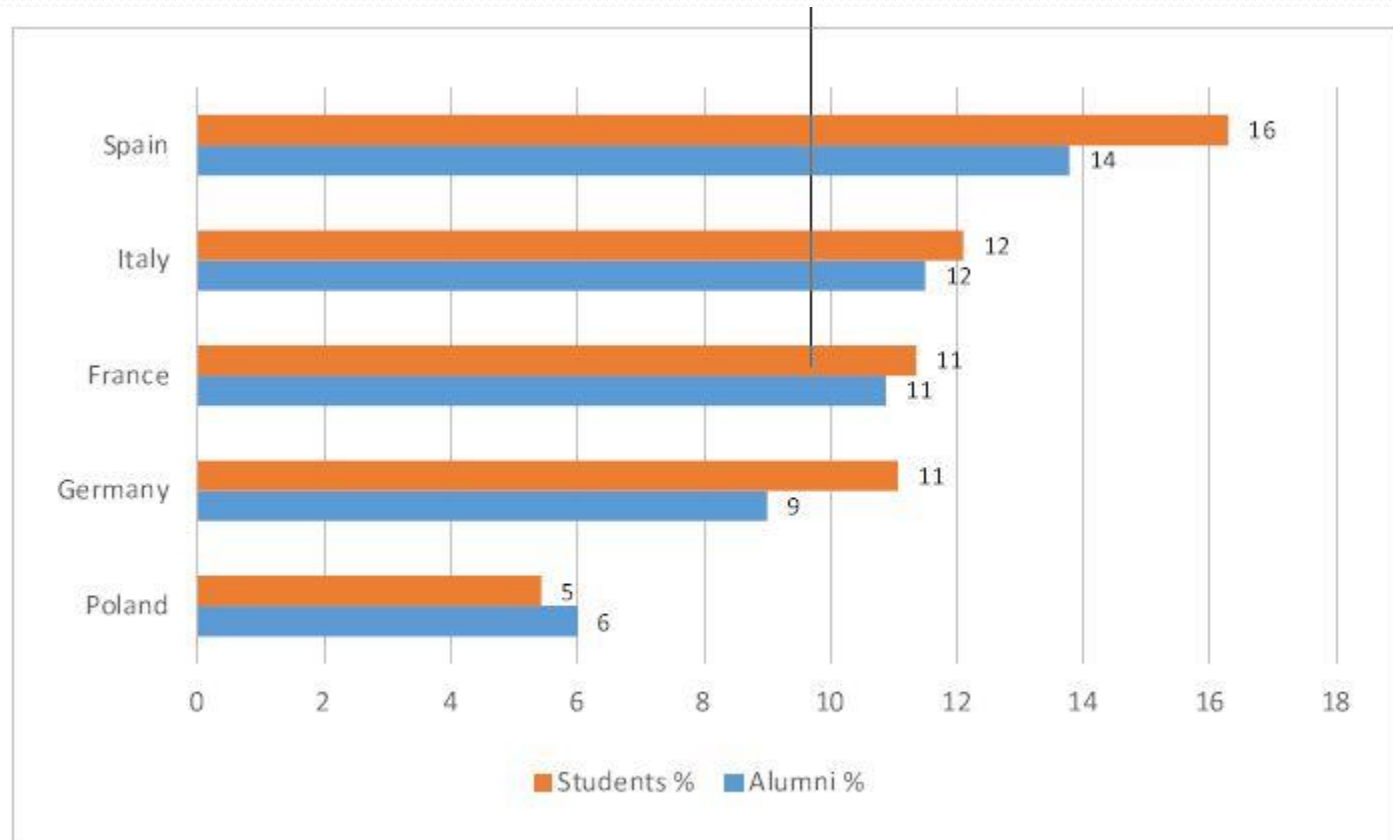
# Host country for mobility of mobile students (%)



# Top five destination countries for mobile students (%)

	EIS sample						All Erasmus students according to EC statistics <sup>26</sup>
	all mobile	all Erasmus mobile	Erasmus actions			Non-mobile	
			Studies	Work placements	IP		
Spain	15	16	16	13	12	9	16
Germany	11	11	11	11	10	6	11
France	9	10	10	9	6	6	12
United Kingdom	8	8	7	11	7	6	10
Italy	8	7	8	6	8	9	8
Total of Top five	52	52	50	42	50	36	47

# Top five home countries of mobile students and alumni (%)



# Main languages of study abroad other than English (%)

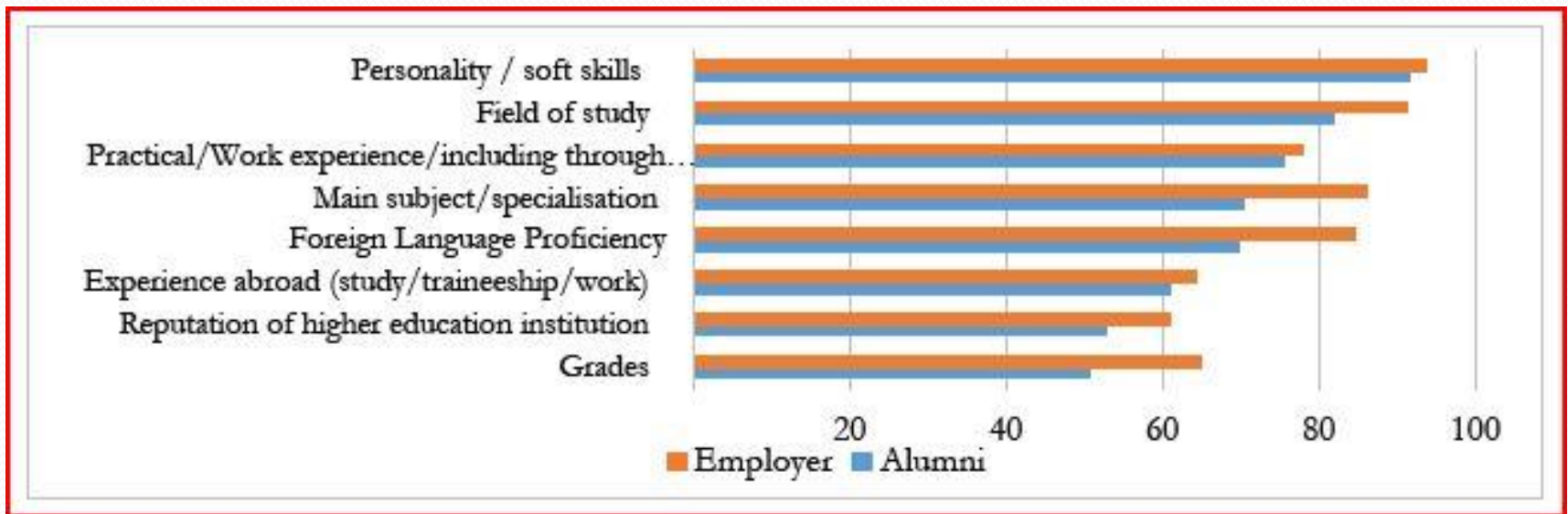
	My mother tongue/home country	(One of) the language(s) of my host country/host country
French	19	12
Spanish	16	20
German	15	14
Italian	7	10



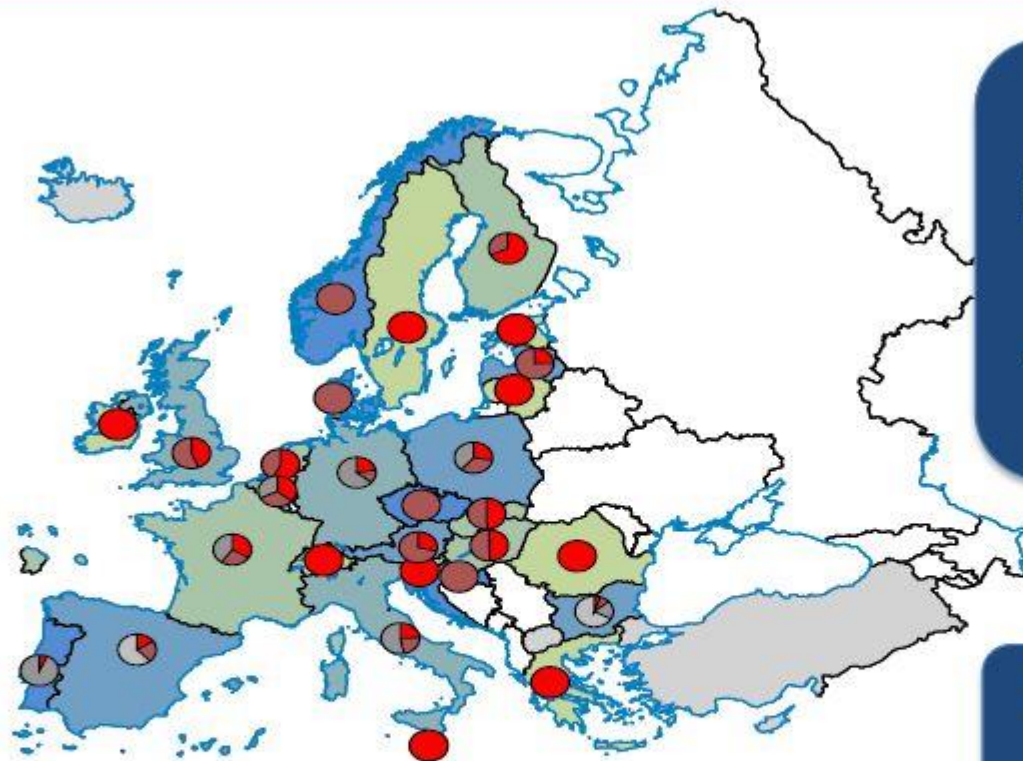
# Expected vs. actual change in skills

What did you expect from your (last) stay abroad and how would you assess the change of these aspects during your stay abroad?	Studies	Workplace - ment	IP	Studies	Workplace - ment	IP
Much improved / improved & Much expected / expected	%	%	%	%	%	%
	Actual changes			Expected		
Memo© factor Confidence	92	92	88	82	86	79
Memo© factor Curiosity	90	91	87	81	83	83
Memo© factor Serenity	87	90	87	71	77	73
Memo© factor Tolerance of Ambiguity	85	88	87	67	70	69
Memo© factor Decisiveness	73	78	69	68	77	69
Memo© factor Vigour	56	64	58	48	55	52

# Aspects important in recruiting young HE graduates



# Importance of foreign language skills for recruitment of HE graduates, perspective of formerly mobile alumni



*The Erasmus period made a positive impact in my CV, which was reflected in the fact that I was employed immediately after graduating” (Alumnus, CZ)*

*My CV seems more interesting” (Alumnus, ES)*

1 (very important) - 4 (not important)

under 1.10
1.10 to 1.26
1.26 to 1.34
1.34 to 1.66
1.66 and more

Rate of importance

very important
2
3
not important

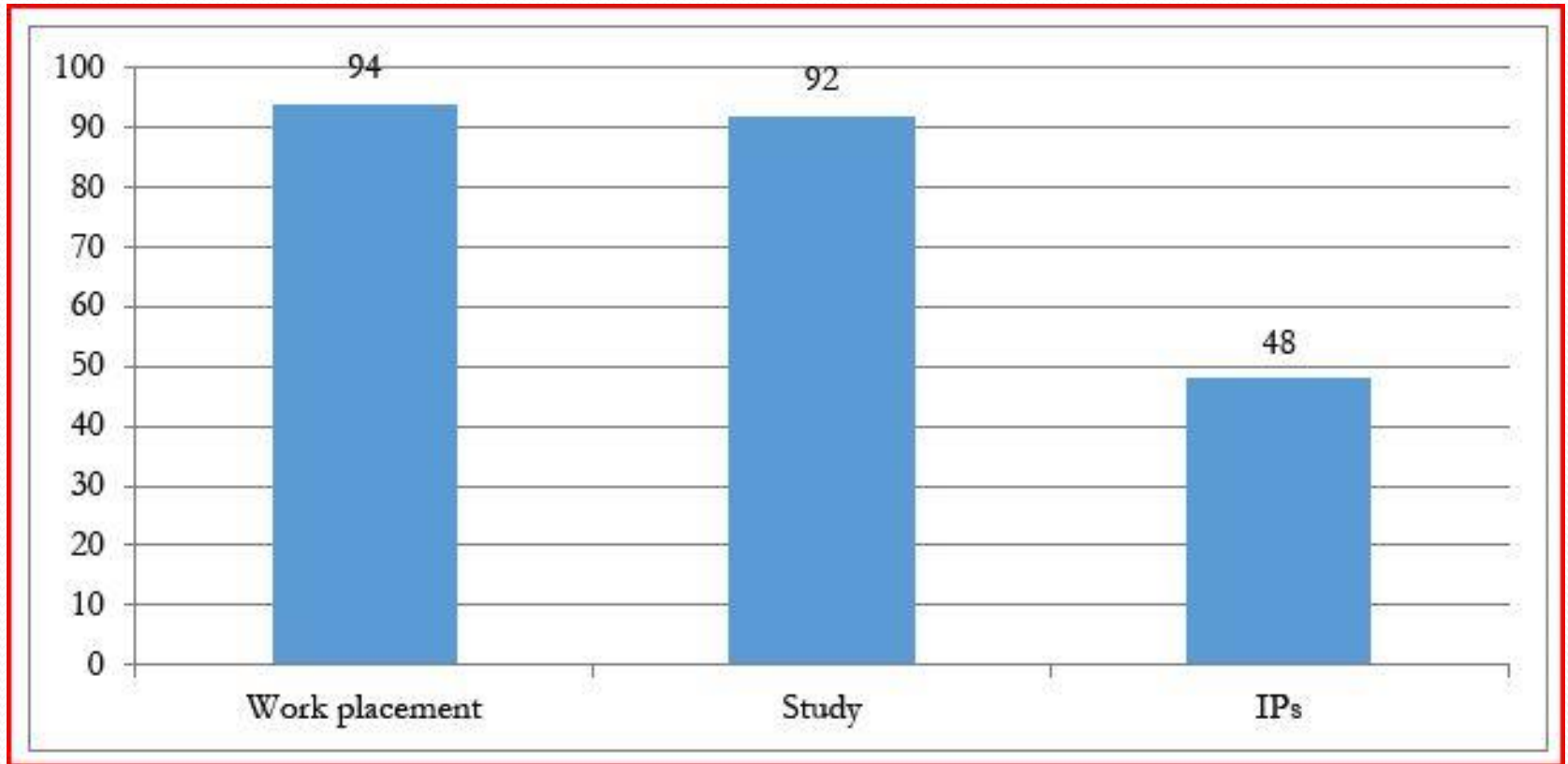
# Skills important for a successful career (*alumni* perspective)

1. Communication skills
2. Ability to adapt and act in new situations
3. Analytical and problem solving skills
4. Adaptability in new situations
5. Planning and organisational skills
6. Decision making skills
7. Critical thinking
8. Sector specific skills
9. Reading and writing skills
10. Foreign language skills

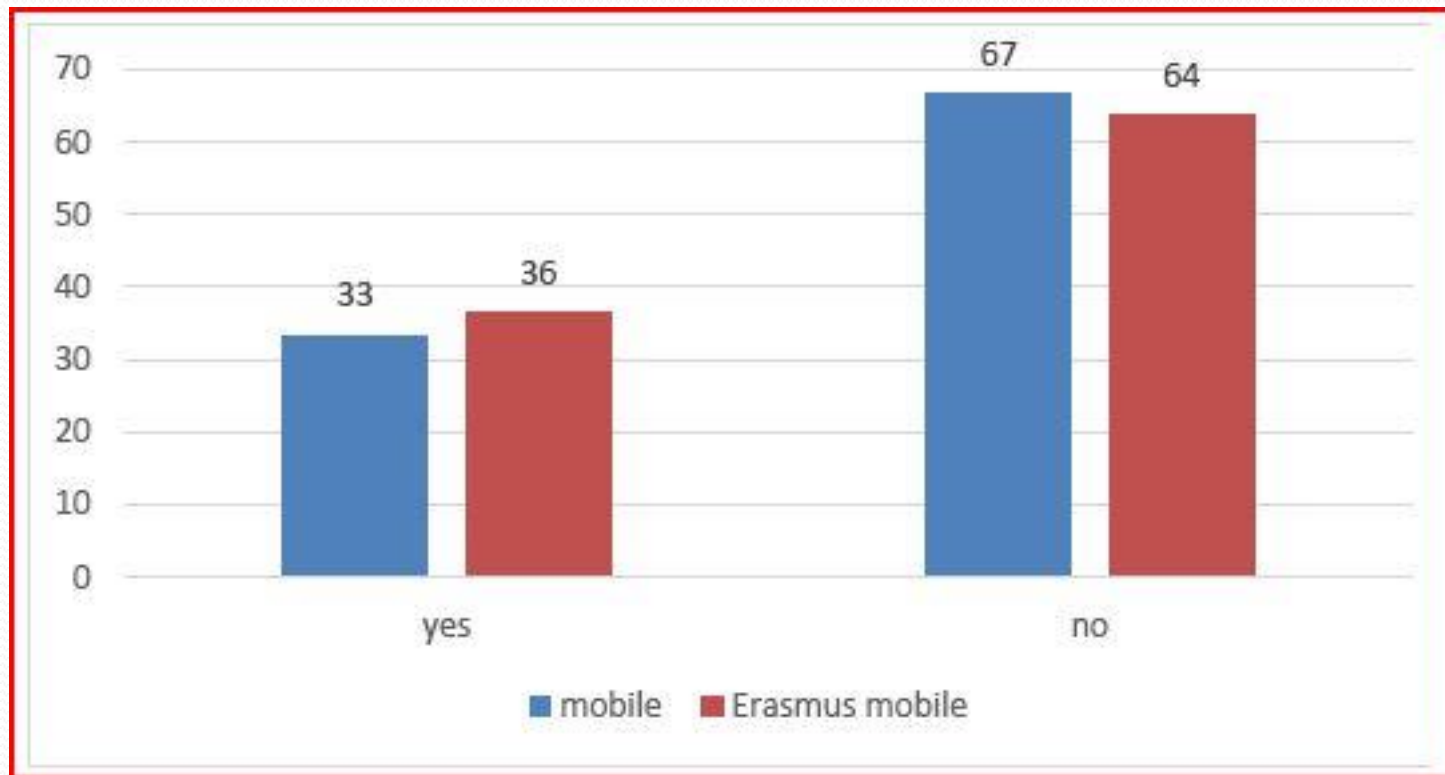
# Change in skills during a stay abroad

1. Knowledge of the host country's culture, society, ...
2. Ability to adapt and act in new situations
3. Ability to work with people from other cultures, ...
4. Foreign language skills
5. Intercultural competences
6. Communication skills
7. Reading and writing skills
8. Sense of European citizenship, Europe-wide perspective
9. Planning and organisation skills
10. Decision making skills

# Impact on employability

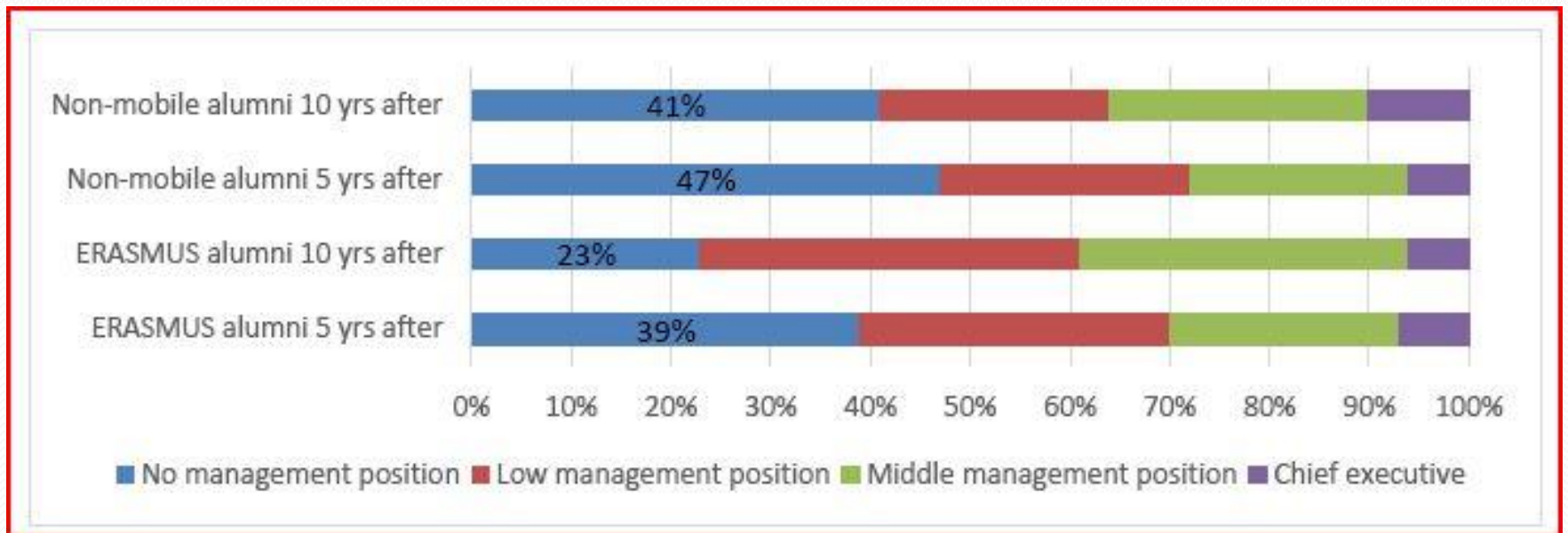


# Job offer through work placement abroad





# Career prospects





## Other influences (relationships, European attitude, place to live and work, ...)

<b>How strongly do you relate to...</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Non-mobile</b>
Very strongly/less strongly (1-4)	%	%
...your former higher education HEI	67	59
...the city you live in	72	70
...the country you live in	74	77
...Europe	82	66

# Working and living abroad

How do you see your future?		Mobile	Non-mobile
Agree/ rather agree		%	%
<b>Ex ante</b>	I can easily imagine living abroad at some point in the future.	90	73
	I definitely want to work abroad for a while.	86	66
	I would like to work in an international context.	93	78
	I would like to live and work in my home country.	58	74
<b>Ex post</b>	I can easily imagine living abroad at some point in the future.	93	
	I definitely want to work abroad for a while.	91	
	I would like to work in an international context.	95	
	I would like to live and work in my home country.	52	

# Social life

- 32% of all mobile alumni and 33% of the Erasmus alumni had a life partner of a different nationality (13% of non-mobile alumni)
- 24% of the mobile alumni and 27% of Erasmus alumni had met their current life partner during their stay abroad

# Key findings

# Key findings

Enhancing their employability abroad is increasingly important for Erasmus students



Top motivations to study or train abroad remain the same as in recent years: the opportunity to live abroad and meet new people, improve foreign language proficiency, develop transversal skills. Just after comes the wish to enhance employability abroad for more than 85% of students.

Transversal skills important to employers are also the skills improved during an Erasmus period abroad



On average, Erasmus students have better employability skills after a stay abroad than 70% of all students.

Based on their personality traits, they have better a better predisposition for employability even before going abroad. By the time they return they have increased their advantage by 42% on average.

While 81% of Erasmus students perceive an improvement in their transversal skills when they come back, 52% show higher memo© factors. In all cases, they consider the improvement of skills to be greater than they expected before going abroad.



# Key findings

On average, 92% of employers are looking for transversal skills, on top of knowledge in their field (91%) and relevant work experience (78%)

While 64% of employers consider an international experience as important for recruitment, on average 92% are looking for transversal skills such as openness to and curiosity about new challenges, problem-solving and decision-making skills, confidence, tolerance towards other personal values and behaviours.

Erasmus students are in better position to find their first job and to enhance their career development

More than one in three Erasmus students who did a job placement abroad were hired or offered a position by their host company.

Almost 1 in 10 former mobile students who did a job placement abroad has started their own company and more than 3 out of 4 plan to or can envisage doing so.

Former Erasmus students are half as likely to experience long-term unemployment compared to those that do not go abroad.

The unemployment rate of Erasmus students five years after graduation is 23% lower.

# Key findings

Erasmus students have a more international life and are more likely to live abroad

Former Erasmus students are more than twice as likely to switch employer.

40% of Erasmus alumni have moved to another country after graduation compared to 23% of non-mobile alumni.


93% of mobile students can easily imagine living abroad in the future, compared to 73% of their stay-at-home counterparts.

33% of Erasmus alumni have a life partner with a different nationality than their own compared to 13% of non-mobile alumni.

27% of Erasmus alumni state that they met their current life partner during their stay abroad.

The Erasmus programme is as inclusive as other mobility programmes

46% of Erasmus students have a non-academic family background, the same proportion as other mobility programmes; 62% of those that are non-mobile come from a non-academic background. The main barriers to an experience abroad are a lack of financial resources to compensate for the additional costs and personal relationships.

- 
- The average Erasmus student shows higher memo values than 70% of all students
  - More than 90% of the students reported an improvement in their soft skills (knowledge of other countries, adaptability, foreign language proficiency, communication skills)
  - 99% of the HEI saw a substantial improvement in the confidence and adaptability of the students.



# Career influences

- The share of employers who considered experience abroad to be important for employability also nearly doubled between 2006 and 2013 from 37% to 64%
- Once they had gone abroad, mobile students increased their advantage on the '**memo**'-values over the non-mobile students by 118% for all mobile students and 42% for Erasmus students

# Career influences

- More than one in three students who did an Erasmus work placement was offered a job by their host company
- Almost 1 in 10 students on a job placement started their own company, and more than 3 out of 4 plan to or can envisage doing so.
- The unemployment rate of mobile students was 23% lower than for non-mobile students

# For more information

- Erasmus Impact Study: Key findings  
[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-14-534\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-534_en.htm)
- Erasmus Impact Study  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf)
- European Commission:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/index_en.htm)
- Well-known Erasmus alumni – inspiring careers  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/annex-5\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/annex-5_en.pdf)
- Erasmus+ film  
<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?sitelang=en&ref=1083255>