



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

THE IMPACT OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

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Abstract

In line with the phenomenon of globalization, which involves the mobility of people, goods, services, money, information and ideas, international student mobility has been an important part of tertiary education over the past three decades. The Erasmus programme is one of the most well-known international mobility programmes worldwide. This thesis examines the objectives and features of the Erasmus+ programme and investigates its impact on European higher education. To do so, first I analysed the different stages of the Erasmus programme to understand its background. Second, I explored data on gender decomposition, fields of study, most popular countries of origin and destination, and higher education institutions with most incoming and outgoing Erasmus students in both Portugal and Europe. Moreover, I conducted a survey to former Portuguese Erasmus students to explore their perceptions about the success of the programme. The analysis of the data points out that there is an overrepresentation of female students in the programme. Social Science, Business & Law is the field of study with the highest proportion of Erasmus students. In addition, Germany is the country that sends most students abroad, while Spain is the country that receives most students under the Erasmus+ programme. The survey data also provide evidence that this programme plays an important role in addressing major societal challenges related to inclusion, diversity, digital and green transition, and young people's participation in democratic life.

Keywords: Erasmus+ programme, higher education, mobility, international students

Number of words: 9 891

Resumo

De acordo com o fenómeno da globalização, que envolve a mobilidade de pessoas, bens, serviços, dinheiro, informação e ideias, a mobilidade internacional de estudantes é vista como uma das principais tendências no ensino superior nas últimas três décadas. O programa Erasmus é um dos programas de mobilidade internacional mais conhecido a nível mundial. Esta dissertação avalia os objetivos e características do programa Erasmus+ e investiga o seu impacto no ensino superior europeu. Para tal, em primeiro lugar analisei as diferentes fases do programa de forma a perceber a sua evolução. Em segundo lugar, investiguei os dados referentes à decomposição por género, áreas de estudo, países de origem e destino mais populares e instituições que enviam e recebem mais alunos sob o programa Erasmus, tanto em Portugal como na Europa. De seguida, enviei um questionário a instituições de ensino superior para avaliar a perceção de alunos portugueses de Erasmus em relação ao sucesso do projeto. A análise dos dados aponta que há uma sobrerrepresentação do género feminino dos alunos que participam no programa. Ciências Sociais, Comércio & Direito é a área de estudo com a maior proporção de estudantes Erasmus. Para além disso, a Alemanha é o país que envia mais estudantes para o estrangeiro, enquanto Espanha é o país que recebe mais estudantes ao abrigo do programa Erasmus+. Os dados do questionário fornecem evidência de que o programa desempenha um papel importante na abordagem dos principais desafios sociais relacionados com a inclusão, a diversidade, a transição digital e verde e na participação na vida democrática por parte dos jovens.

Palavras-chave: programa Erasmus+, ensino superior, mobilidade, estudantes internacionais

Número de palavras: 9 891

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Acronyms List

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
HR	Croatia
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
FI	Finland
FR	France
DE	Germany
EL	Greece
HU	Hungary
IS	Iceland
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LV	Latvia
LI	Liechtenstein
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
MK	North Macedonia
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
RS	Serbia
SK	Slovakia
SI	Slovenia
ES	Spain

SE Sweden
TR Turkey
UK United Kingdom

1. Introduction

Globalization, which involves the transference of people, goods, services, money, information, and ideas across national borders, brings new challenges for organizations. The process of globalization, making higher education more important than ever before, forces higher education institutions to assess their participation in the international environment. To face this reality, higher education institutions all over the world are establishing networks to increase collaboration between them, and students' mobility became inevitable (Ota, 2018).

International students' mobility is an essential educational tool for increasing students' competitiveness in the international job market. The present and future labour market opportunities will require that individuals know how to deal with different cultures and how to adapt to unique environments (Ceri Jones, 2017). Mobility programmes help students develop their communication and foreign languages skills while possibly change their attitudes towards people from other countries and cultures. Therefore, participating in an international mobility programme may be considered a life experience that improves cognitive, emotional, and behavioural skills (Dolga et al., 2015; Mastora V., Panagoulou, N., & Raikou, 2020; Zimmermann et al., 2021).

International student mobility programmes can be divided into the following two subgroups: degree mobility and credit mobility. Degree mobility is characterized by the fact that a student moves to another country for the entire period of their study programme. This period can be one year in the case of a master's degree or three to four years in the case of a bachelor's degree. On the other hand, credit mobility is characterized by the fact that a student that is enrolled in one higher education institution decides to go abroad to study in another institution for one semester or one year. (King et al., 2011). The Erasmus programme is one of the most important credit mobility programmes in the world. This short-term mobility programme aims to transfer and share knowledge across social, cultural and academic levels (European Parliament, 2010; Tekin & Gencer, 2013). Since it was launched in 1987, the programme has provided over 7 million participants the opportunity to have an international

experience in Europe and it is considered by Europeans as the EU's third most positive result, right after free movement and peace (European Commission, 2021a). The main motivation of students to embrace this experience is their personal development. Through this programme, participants can contact with new cultures and people, improve foreign language competencies and develop their soft skills. For most students, enhancing academic knowledge and improving future career prospects are seen as secondary reasons to participate in the Erasmus programme (European Parliament, 2010).

Erasmus has been through six stages since 1987, in which each stage lasts for 7 years. In addition, the programme has been included in the following four programmes: Socrates (1994-1999), Socrates II (2000-2006), Lifelong Learning (2007-2013) and Erasmus+ (2014-2020 and 2021-2027). Each programme has unique features that are explored in this thesis. Erasmus+ is the most recent programme and is divided into two stages with different goals. For 2014-2020, the programme aims to tackle unemployment and increase students' active participation in society (European Commission, 2014). For 2021-2027, the programme seeks to be more inclusive, green and support digital transitions. To encourage this evolution, in 2021-2027 the European Commission funds the programme with €26 200 billion, while in 2014-2020 funds are almost half (€14 700 billion).

This thesis examines the objectives and features of the Erasmus+ programme and investigates its impact on European higher education. To do so, first I analysed the different stages of the Erasmus programme to understand its background. Second, I explored data on gender decomposition, fields of study, most popular countries of origin and destination, and higher education institutions with more incoming and outgoing Erasmus students in both Portugal and Europe. Moreover, I conducted a survey to former Portuguese Erasmus students to investigate their perceptions about the success of the programme.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section 2 explores the objectives and features of the Erasmus programme and provides information on the evolution of the programme over time. Section 3 presents the descriptive analysis of the data used to examine the impact of the programme on European higher education. Section 4 concludes and highlights the limitations of the study.

2. The history of the Erasmus programme

2.1. Before Erasmus+

When the Treaty of Rome is signed in 1957, which originated the European Economic Community (EEC), the signatory states did not consider that cooperation on an educational level is a top priority (Cunha & Santos, 2018). The members are only concerned about the idea of vocational training and the transition from education to employment (Teichler & Lanzendorf, 2002). This idea gradually changes in a way that some states think that there should be greater integration in mobility, mainly through the promotion of students' mobility, inter-university cooperation, and recognition of higher education diplomas (Cunha & Santos, 2018). On 2 April 1963, the EEC members sign a council decision aimed at enabling every person to reach the highest possible level of vocational training, which is necessary for his/her professional activity (European Council, 1963). The sixth principle of that decision states that it is the Commission's responsibility to "encourage a direct exchange of vocational training specialists to enable them to acquaint themselves with and study the achievements and new developments in other countries of the Communities" (European Council, 1987).

When the 1980s come, they give rise to the idea that universities might be considered a means to create a stronger European identity, and students' mobility is seen as the vehicle to achieve this identity. Member states start to believe that European citizens should be able to train and learn wherever they prefer within Europe (Ruszel, 2018). As a result, the European mobility programme goes through various stages and variations before reaching a consensus at the end of the decade. On 15 June 1987, the EEC implements the Erasmus programme in eleven member states (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom). In 1988, Luxembourg, the 12th EU member, joins the programme. Erasmus stands for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Cunha & Santos, 2018; Hubble et al., 2020). This short-term mobility programme intends to transfer and share knowledge across social,

cultural and academic levels with the ultimate objective of creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (European Parliament, 2010; Tekin & Gencer, 2013). Through this programme, European university students have the possibility of studying in another country in Europe for a period of 3 to 12 months, while receiving a paid scholarship to help them pay for any additional costs, such as accommodation and food (Benedictis & Leoni, 2020). The programme enables millions of students to continue their studies abroad while being mobile within the European Union, the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) and EU candidate countries such as Turkey and North Macedonia. This mobility makes partner universities more international (Beerens & Vossensteyn, 2011; European Parliament, 2010; Tekin & Gencer, 2013). Promoting students' mobility, the Erasmus programme helps European countries fight youth unemployment and equips its participants with skills that are valued by employers and society in general, such as intercultural awareness, effective communication, and foreign language knowledge. In addition, the programme fosters a possible change in participants' attitudes towards people from other countries and cultures (Dolga et al., 2015; European Commission, 2015a; Mastora V., Panagoulou, N., & Raikou, 2020). This emblematic program is considered by Europeans as one of the EU's most positive results, after free movement and peace (European Commission, 2021a). Each cycle of the programme lasts for 7 years and each evolution aims at enhancing and broadening its scope, considering the advancements in technologies and society in general (Ruszel, 2018).

The first year of the programme provide the possibility for 3 244 students to continue their studies in an university abroad (Hubble et al., 2020). Figure 1, which represents the number of Erasmus students between 1987/1988 and 2019/2020, shows that this number quickly escalated during its initial years¹. At the end of the first 7-years period, the programme has already allowed over 210 890 students to embrace this mobility experience (European Commission, 2015a). From its foundation until 1995, the year in which 3 more countries (Austria, Sweden, and Finland) join the EU, the programme is guided by the

¹ Since 2007, the Erasmus+ programme started to include traineeships. The traineeships provide higher education students or recent graduates the opportunity to do an internship or work in another European country for 2-12 months. In Figure 1, the values since 2007 reflect both the number of traineeships and international studies. Traineeships represent around 20% of the student mobility.

following two main objectives: to promote students' mobility and to reinforce university cooperation between the member states (Cunha & Santos, 2018). In parallel with the Erasmus programme implementation, the EU develops other programmes designed to promote students' mobility, such as the Lingua programme. This programme allows language students and teachers to do an exchange programme in another country within the community (Cunha & Santos, 2018; Hermans, 1997). The objective of the Lingua programme is to enhance individuals' foreign language skills within the community (Aydin, 2012). The Lingua programme spanned from 1990 to 1994, when it is incorporated into the Socrates programme.

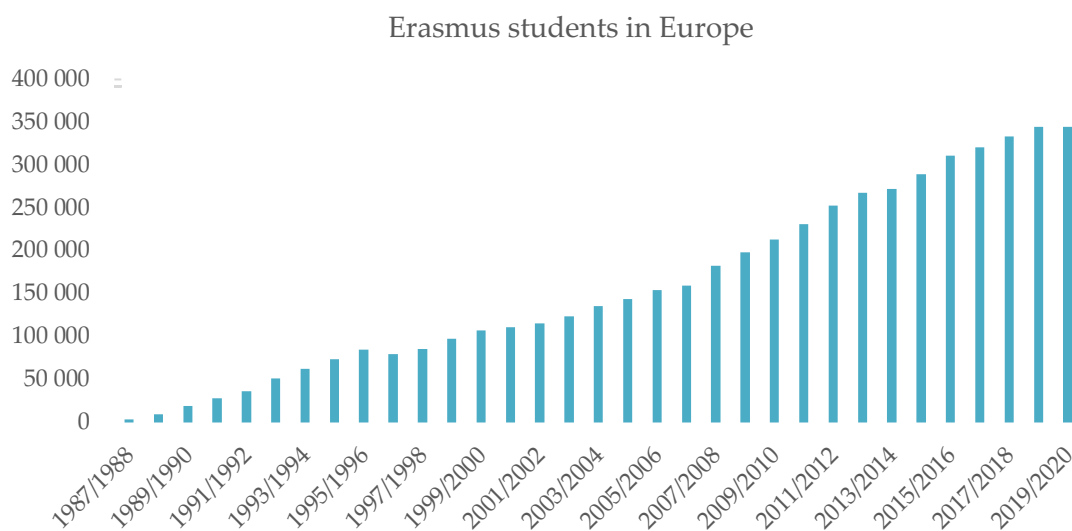


Figure 1 - Evolution of the students' mobility in Europe through the Erasmus programme

Source: European Commission (2015)

With the implementation of the Socrates I programme in 1995, a new chapter in the history of European mobility is written, and alongside it, the Erasmus programme is able to evolve. The European Parliament decides to implement a programme in the EU oriented to the field of education, from 1995 to 1999. During this period, a total of 29 European countries² benefit from €993 million of funding to address three main areas: higher education (through the Erasmus programme), school education (through the Comenius programme), and

² In addition to the 15 EU member states, during 1995-1997, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein benefit from the funds. In 1997, Cyprus, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia are included in the beneficiary countries and in 1999 Bulgaria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia are also added to this list.

horizontal learning (through the Lingua and the Open and Distance Learning programmes). The Comenius funds intercultural education in European schools, namely the education for children of migrant workers and gipsies. The Lingua, as previously mentioned, provides grants to language teachers and students to develop their language skills. The Open and Distance Learning programme, on the other hand, funds projects to incorporate new technologies in the process (European Council, 2002; Gordon, 2001; Teichler & Lanzendorf, 2002). All of these programmes are centralized in the Socrates I programme in an attempt to encourage students' and teachers' mobility, develop curricula, and establish the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) (Cunha & Santos, 2018).

One of the main goals of the Socrates I programme is to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, by allowing both students and teaching staff to be mobile and work with people from different countries. In addition, participants are also able to develop their networks, skills and awareness regarding diversity in Europe (Cunha & Santos, 2018; Gordon, 2001; Teichler & Lanzendorf, 2002). Many aspects contribute to the evolution of international mobility such as the financial support given to students, teachers, and higher education institutions, and the promotion of the ECTS. The ECTS serves as a mechanism to guarantee international cooperation in curricular concerns, assuring that specific aspects are taught internationally and recognizing the transferability of knowledge between universities in different countries. Even though there are some setbacks, the inception of the Erasmus programme in the Socrates programme is more evolutionary than revolutionary due to the various benefits it brings (Teichler & Lanzendorf, 2002).

In the late 1990s, the European higher education system witnesses important changes. Since a joint European action on higher education is not on the agenda of the European Council of Ministers, in 1998, four of Europe's most powerful nations namely France, Germany, Italy, and the UK, decide to take action on their own hands and sign the Sorbonne Declaration. The objective of this declaration is to harmonize the structure of the European higher education system as the countries believe that students can benefit from a studying period abroad, to discover the areas in which they are good. The ministers of education decide to act outside the scope of the European Commission as a way of maintaining

control over the harmonization process (Allegre et al., 1998; De Wit, 2015; Jürgen Enders et al., 2011).

The Sorbonne Declaration's favourable reception paves the way for a larger initiative. One year later, in 1999, the other 25 countries join the original four, signing the Bologna Declaration. Contrary to the Sorbonne Declaration, the Bologna Declaration avoids the use of the term “harmonization” due to its potentially negative connotation, emphasizing rather on actions that promote “convergence” and “transparency” in the European higher education structures, to enhance its attractiveness and competitiveness, as well as the employability of European higher education graduates (De Wit, 2015; Faber & Westerheijden, 2011; Wächter, 2004). This declaration plays a considerable role in the development of European higher education, bringing union in terms of politics, economy, research and development (Aydin, 2012). Voluntarily signing the declaration, each signatory country commits to make curricular changes in their education system to achieve compatibility with international structures and to establish the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The establishment of the EHEA is achieved by “adopting a system of degrees (based on two cycles), setting up a system of credits, and eliminating obstacles to free mobility” (Van der Wende, 2003). The prime motivation behind the development of the EHEA is the need to answer to the international challenges and competition that higher education faces (Faber & Westerheijden, 2011). Shortly after, in 2000, the EU countries sign the Lisbon Strategy, aiming to transform the EU into the “most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (Jürgen Enders et al., 2011). The Lisbon Strategy makes EU members realize that citizens' skills and competencies should be updated through lifelong learning programmes to deal with the challenges globalization brings (European Council, 2003; Pépin, 2007). This development in society also brings innovations to the present and future labour market opportunities, which will more and more require that individuals know how to deal with different cultures and how to adapt to unique environments in all fields (Ceri Jones, 2017).

A second phase of the Socrates programme, which runs from 2000 to 2006, is critical to achieve the goal of lifelong learning. Socrates II contributes to the development of a high-quality education system in Europe by encouraging

continuous learning throughout one's life. The member states believe that lifelong learning can play a crucial role in reducing unemployment, establishing a culture of entrepreneurship, promoting gender equality, and fighting racism, fostering equal opportunities for all. According to the Decision no. 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 January 2000, the main objectives of the Socrates II programme are to enhance education in Europe, providing equal opportunities to access educational resources, to promote the improvement in the knowledge of the languages of the community (especially the ones that are less used and taught), to encourage cooperation and mobility within the education field and to boost innovation in the educational practices through the use of new technologies. This programme is extended to Malta and Turkey, covering a total of 31 countries (European Parliament, 2000). During this period, the European Commission implements another programme, the Erasmus Mundus, intending to expand the Erasmus programme beyond the continent's borders. In other words, Erasmus Mundus aims at fostering cooperation and partnerships between countries inside and outside the EU (European Council, 2003).

Launched in 2004, the Erasmus Mundus programme provides scholarships for masters and doctoral (this latter since 2013) students in any country around the globe. Erasmus+ provides each student €1 400 per month for the maximum period of 24 months to cover the costs of participating in the programme, such as accommodation, travel and living allowance (European Commission, n.d.-a). The programme intends to increase cooperation between European and non-European higher education institutions and to establish Europe as an excellence global learning centre to boost the development and growth of higher education in third countries that are usually underdeveloped. The programme enables the mutual exchange of precious skills and expertise required for the 21st century, such as proficiency in using technologies or acceptance of diversity and change (Sadecka, 2011). Over the four funding cycles, the programme receives around €3 400 billion: €230 million in the period between 2004 and 2008, €493 million from 2009 to 2012, €1 billion between 2013 and 2020, and €1 700 billion in the period from 2021 to 2027 (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2016; European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2021; Marques et al., 2020).

One of the biggest turning points of the Erasmus programme occurs in 2007 when the Lifelong Learning programme is established. Lifelong Learning can be described as the continuous development of the skills and knowledge a person acquires throughout their life (Laal, 2011). Thus, education is no longer restricted to a certain period of a person's life but is seen as something that must always be present from birth to death (Bourdon, 2014). As a result, the Lifelong Learning programme is the first ever to address educational issues from childhood to a more mature phase in one's life. It includes four different subprogrammes, each one directed at a different stage in citizens' life, to move towards a more integrated approach to education and training policies. The Comenius gives attention to infant, elementary and secondary education, the Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus focus on formal higher education, the Grundtvig aims to help adults improve their knowledge and skills, while the Leonardo da Vinci intends to enhance professional training (López et al., 2014; Pépin, 2007). In 2007, the European Commission also implements a traineeship programme that provides higher education students or recent graduates the opportunity to do an internship or work in another European country for 2-12 months. The traineeship aims to help citizens acquire a greater understanding of other economies as well as to develop specific competencies (European Commission, 2015a, 2019b).

2.2. Erasmus+

2.2.1. First Stage of the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020)

In 2014, the Erasmus programme makes a huge quantum leap, by moving from the Lifelong Learning programme to the Erasmus+ programme. The Erasmus+ programme focuses on the already addressed issues of lifelong learning, social exclusion, and active citizenship and takes into account actions to reverse the trends of youth and long-term unemployment that exist in Europe (Profumo & Biondi, 2019). Figure 2 shows the number, in thousands, of young and long-term unemployed people in Europe³, from 2011 to 2020. During this period, the highest values of youth and long-term unemployment are hit in 2014, with around 4 million and 11 million people without a job, respectively (Eurostat, 2020b, 2020a). This newest version of the programme is one of the cornerstones of the EU's development strategy for 2014-2020, as it expands even more its scope, including not only the area of education and training in all stages (covering all the previously covered topics) but also youth and sports. Youth and sports are included because they are recognized as drivers of the Europe 2020 Strategy to overcome the crisis, boost economic growth and foster social equity and inclusion (Benedictis & Leoni, 2020; Ceri Jones, 2017; European Commission, 2014; European Council, 2013).

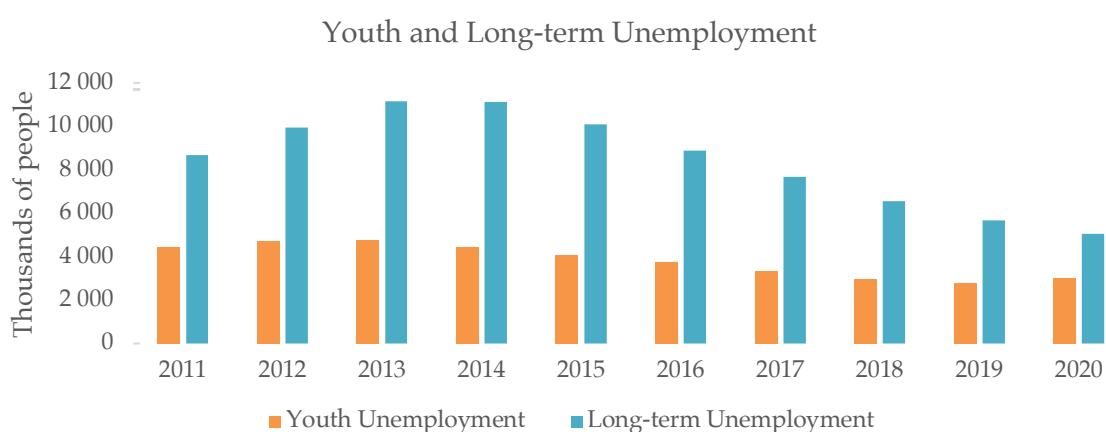


Figure 2 – Number of youth and long-term unemployed people in thousands in Europe

Source: Eurostat (n.d.)

³ For the European Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat), youth unemployment includes people aged between 15 and 24, which belong to the labor force, and do not have a job, while long-term unemployment includes the people that do not have a job for 12 months or more.

In 2014, the Erasmus+ programme is divided into the following subprogrammes: learning mobility of individuals (Key Action 1 - KA1), cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices (Key Action 2 - KA2), and support for policy reform (Key Action 3 - KA3). This reformulated programme also includes two dedicated areas, which correspond to sports and Jean Monnet Activities (European Commission, 2015b). Even though there are new areas addressed by the Erasmus+ Programme, mobility remains the main priority of the programme, capturing around 66% of the budget of the Erasmus+ programme. The KA1 aims at providing opportunities for students and teachers to enhance their skills and cultural awareness, by funding the mobility of individuals in transnational projects (European Commission, 2015b; Stewart, 2014). The KA2 encourages cooperation, strategic partnerships, and cross-sectorial activities, enabling organizations to work together and share innovative practices in the fields of education, training, and youth. The KA3 intends to enhance the quality of education and training systems, by modernizing them (Stewart, 2014). Jean Monnet Activities provide funding and support to the field of higher education, promoting excellence in teaching and research of European integration studies (European Commission, 2015b; Stewart, 2014). Lastly, the new area of sports aims at supporting activities such as non-profit European sports events, cooperation partnerships, and small-scale partnerships, promoting practices in sport, physical activity, and voluntary activities in Europe (European Commission, 2015b).

2.2.2. Second Stage of the Erasmus+ Programme (2021-2027)

With an overall budget of €28 billion, the second stage of the Erasmus+ programme is launched in 2021, again for 7 years (until 2027), and its general goal is to support the personal and professional development of European citizens in terms of education, training, youth, and sports. This evolution of the programme includes four new features: inclusiveness, digitalization, green, and young people.

The programme seeks to be more inclusive by assuring equitable opportunities and access to its activities. The Erasmus+ programme establishes the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy that aims to increase cooperation with third

countries. The main goal of this strategy is to reach out to participants with fewer opportunities that face social, cultural, economic and/or geographic barriers and provide them with a greater chance for personal development (European Commission, 2021a, 2021b).

The digital aspect emerges partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic that forces students and educators to rapidly adapt to online education. The Digital Education Action Plan is renewed to assist EU member states in adapting their education and training systems to the digital era, tracing the path to digital transformation. The plan includes actions to foster the development of a high-performance digital education and to enhance participants' digital skills necessary for digital transformation (European Commission, n.d.-b, 2021a, 2021b).

Aiming to become greener, the Union has a new growth plan, the European Green Deal Communication, that recognizes the critical role of schools and universities in educating students, parents and the general public on the reforms required to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The European Green Deal corresponds to a growth strategy for making the EU's economy sustainable by transforming climate and environmental issues into opportunities. It promotes a healthier way of living, working, producing, and consuming, while protecting biodiversity, forests, and seas and includes actions on agriculture, industry, environment, transport, finance, regional development, research and innovation (European Commission, 2019a, 2021a, 2021b).

The Erasmus+ programme also funds the DiscoverEU programme that enables 18-year-olds to travel across the EU, regardless of their socioeconomic background. The programme provides each participant with a train pass worth €258 that enables them to travel up to 30 days and a maximum of 4 European countries. However, if participants are from the outermost regions (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, Madeira, Azores, or Canary Island) or have special needs, the amount provided may be higher (European Union, n.d.-b). Through this programme, participants can "explore the diversity of Europe, learn about the European cultural heritage and history, and connect with people from all over the world" (European Commission, 2021a; European Union, n.d.-a). This programme plays a critical role in improving young citizens' crucial skills such as problem-solving, self-reliance and

participation in democratic life. The European Commission launches the programme in 2018 as a 3-year pilot test and aims to get 15 000 participants per year. However, during the first year, there are over 100 000 applications and the programme is considered a success. Therefore, the Commission decides to integrate it into the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme, under the mobility initiative (MyEDF, 2020).

To sum up the different stages of the Erasmus programme, Table 1 presents a summary of its evolution from 1987 to 2027.

Period	Summary
1987-1994	The Erasmus programme is launched aiming to promote the mobility of European university students between the partner countries.
1995-1999	The programme integrates the Socrates I programme, which addresses three main areas: higher education, school education and horizontal learning.
2000-2006	Integrating the Socrates II programme, Erasmus starts to include a more long-term vision, encouraging a lifelong learning vision. It is also extended to countries outside Europe, through Erasmus Mundus.
2007-2013	The programme is incorporated into the Lifelong Learning programme, which has as a pillar the idea that education should always be present throughout one's life.
2014-2020	Through the Erasmus+ programme, the scope becomes even broader, including not only the areas of education and training but also youth and sports.
2021-2027	The second stage of the Erasmus+ programme adds new features to the already addressed topics, which correspond to inclusiveness, digitalization, green, and young people.

Table 1 - Summary of the Erasmus programme over the years (1987-2027)

3. Data analysis

To evaluate the impact of the Erasmus+ programme on European higher education, this section includes an analysis of the data regarding KA1 projects, more specifically the students' mobility (KA103 - Erasmus European Mobility Programme). Higher education includes all education levels from the bachelor's degree onwards.

This chapter is divided into two main sections: descriptive data analysis and survey analysis. The main goal is to examine the impact of the first stage of the Erasmus+ programme in Europe, with a special focus on the Portuguese case. For this reason, the descriptive data analysis starts by providing a general overview of European higher education, highlighting afterwards the main aspects of the Erasmus+ programme in Europe. Subsequently, the analysis is followed by an overview of the Portuguese higher education system, focusing then on the Erasmus+ programme in Portugal. Regarding the survey analysis, it includes opinions from former Portuguese Erasmus students to assess their perceptions about the success of the Erasmus+ programme.

3.1. Descriptive Data Analysis

For the descriptive data analysis, the main sources of information are Eurostat, Pordata, data.europa.eu, OECD stat, Times Higher Education, the Erasmus+ factsheets of each EU country and the *Agência Nacional Erasmus+*. Pordata is a Portuguese database that includes information from Portugal and Europe in multiple areas, while data.europa.eu focuses only on European countries and OECD stat covers all OECD nations. Times Higher Education corresponds to an English magazine that is specialized in the higher education field. *Agência Nacional Erasmus+* is the Portuguese organization that promotes and executes the Erasmus+ programme in Portugal, being the link between the European Commission and participants at local, regional and national levels. The agency is divided in two sections, namely *Educação e Formação* and *Juventude em Ação*. The former is responsible for education and training, while the latter

deals with youth. The organization provided me with key data on the programme, stating that this data is still provisional as it can only be proven in 2023.

These sources provide us with information on different areas namely population, education, employment, labour market and sustainable development goals. From these sources, we can extract information like gender balance in European and Portuguese higher education and in the Erasmus+ programme, the most popular fields of study and the number of Erasmus students that each country sends/receives.

Appendix A includes tables with the absolute values of the most important indicators evaluated in the following subsections.

3.1.1. Higher Education in Europe

Before analysing the impact of the Erasmus+ programme on European higher education, it is useful to have a general view of the higher education system in Europe. It is also important to note that this analysis will be done regarding the 34 countries⁴ in which the Erasmus+ programme was implemented during its first stage (2014-2020). Figure 3 shows the proportion of higher education students by country in Europe from 2014 to 2019. Analysing Figure 3, we can conclude that the top 5 countries with the highest number of higher education students are Germany, France, the UK, Spain, and Italy. During the period under analysis, Germany exhibits the biggest increase, from 14,2% in 2014 to 16,1% in 2019 (+1,9 percentage points⁵), while Poland registers the biggest decrease, from 8,8% in 2014 to 7,1% in 2019 (- 1,7 pp). In 2019, around 16% of European higher education students are enrolled in a German institution. Iceland, Luxembourg, and Malta are the countries with least higher education students, making up around 0,1% of the overall European higher education students between 2014 and 2019. Portugal is ranked 9th among European countries and Portuguese higher education students constitute 3% of European higher education students in the period in analysis. (Pordata, 2019b, 2019a)⁶.

⁴ EU28 (including the UK as it still belonged to the EU from 2014 to 2020), European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), Turkey, North Macedonia and Serbia

⁵ From here onwards, percentage points will be denoted as pp

⁶ Note that there is no available information regarding Slovenia in 2017, Netherlands in 2019 and Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey from 2014 to 2019

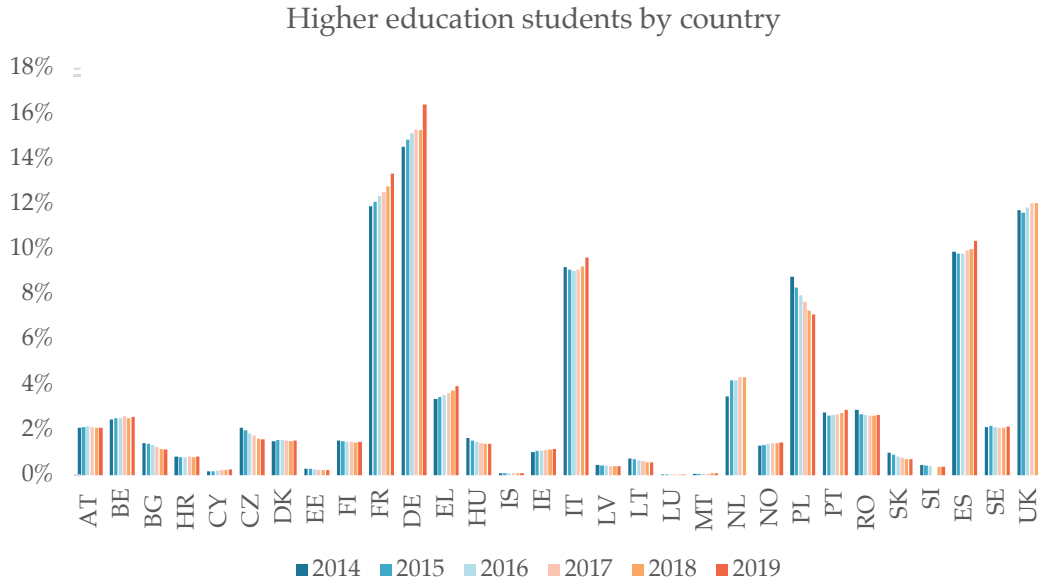


Figure 3 - Evolution of the distribution of higher education students in Europe, by country (2014-2019)
Source: Pordata (2019)

According to the International Standard Classification of Education of 2013 (ISCED-F 2013), there are ten broad fields of study in the higher education system: Education; Arts & Humanities; Social Science, Journalism & Information; Business, Administration & Law; Natural Science, Mathematics & Statistics; Information & Communication Technologies; Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction; Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Veterinary; Health & Welfare and Services. However, this classification is only implemented in 2016 and does not cover the previous years (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, in order to cover the whole period analysed in this thesis, I use the previous standard, ISCED 1997, which includes eight broad fields of study: Education; Arts & Humanities; Social Science, Business & Law; Science; Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction; Agriculture; Health & Welfare and Services (United Nations, 1997).

Figure 4 indicates the proportion of European higher education students by field of study in 2019. As Figure 4 points out, 32% of the total European higher education students are enrolled in Social Sciences, Business & Law, which includes Social and Behavioural Sciences, Journalism and Information, Business Sciences and Law. Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction is the second most represented field (16%), while Agriculture students only constitute 2% of European higher education students.

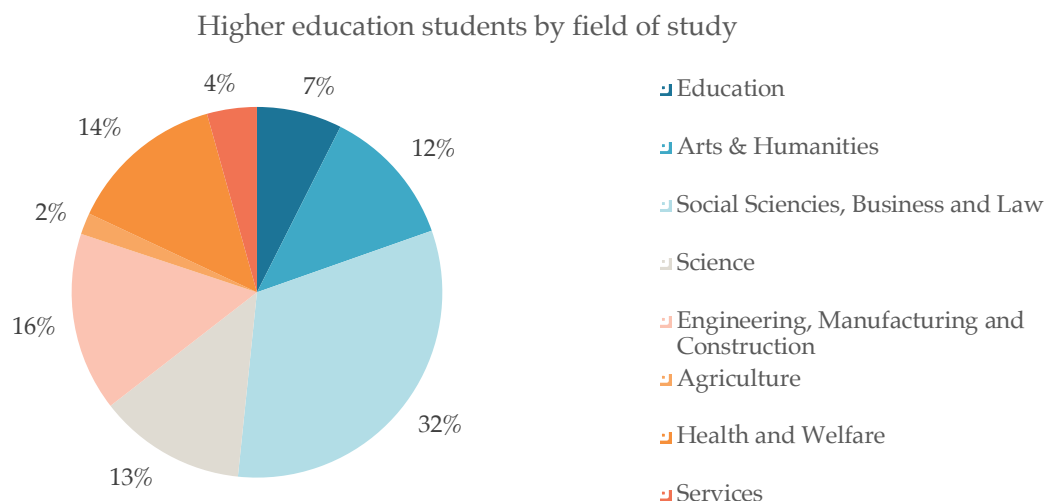


Figure 4 - Distribution of the higher education students in Europe, by field of study (2019)
Source: Pordata (2019)

3.1.2. Erasmus in Europe

Figure 5 demonstrates the share of Erasmus students by country of origin from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. The percentage trend does not exhibit many fluctuations over time in most countries. Between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020, the biggest increase is registered in Italy (+1,3 pp) and the biggest decrease occurs in Poland (-1,9 pp). During this period, the top 5 countries with most students in the Erasmus programme are Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and the UK. These countries are also the top 5 countries with most higher education students in Europe between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020, as seen in Figure 3. Portugal is ranked 9th among the European countries with most Erasmus students.

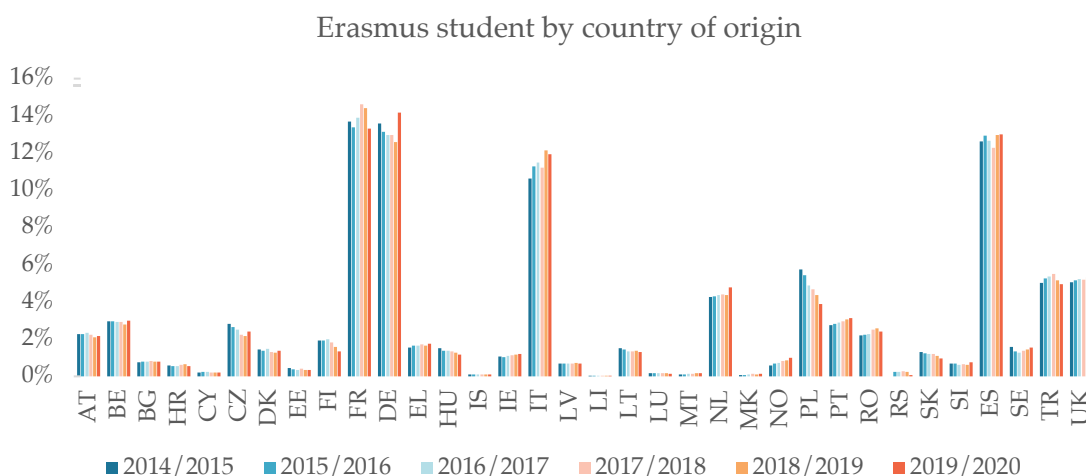


Figure 5 - Evolution of the Erasmus students by country of origin (2014/2015 - 2019/2020)
Source: Erasmus+ Factsheets (2014 - 2020)

Figure 6 represents the proportion of Erasmus students by country of destination during this period. The figure demonstrates that Spain is the most popular destination, followed by the UK. However, the popularity of the UK declines between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020, possibly due to the conversations about Brexit. Germany, France, and Italy are among the top 5 countries that receive most Erasmus students. In sum, Spain, the UK, Germany, Italy, and France are the top 5 European countries that both send and receive most Erasmus students between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020. Portugal is ranked 7th among the European countries that receive most Erasmus students.

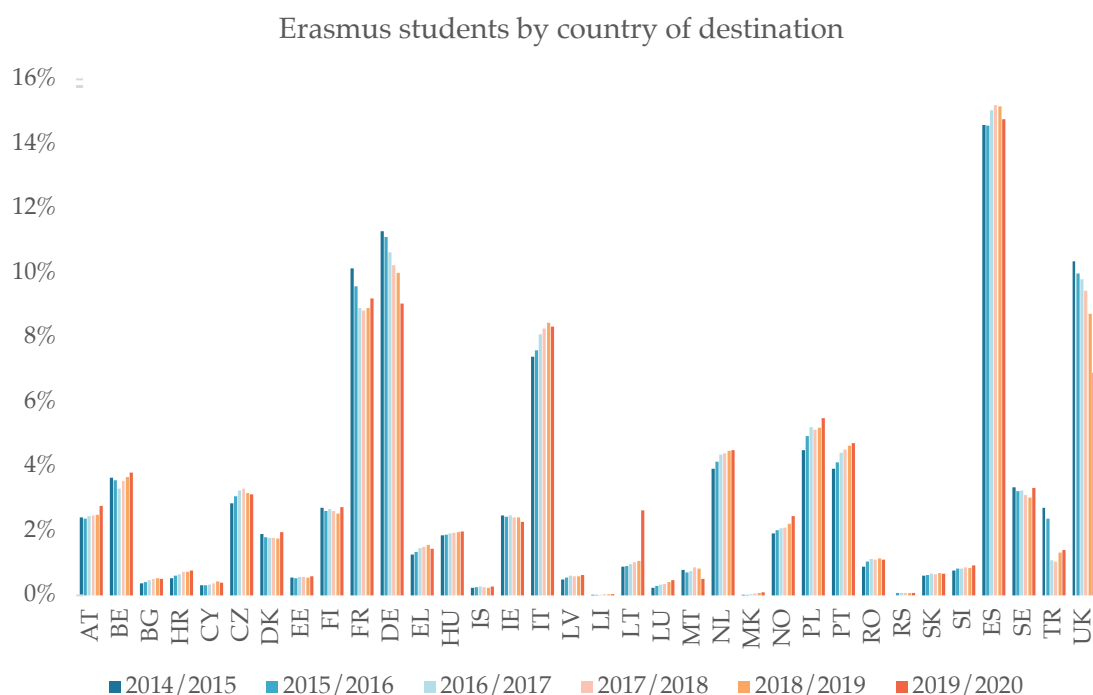


Figure 6 - Evolution of the Erasmus students by country of destination (2014/2015 - 2019/2020)
 Source: Erasmus+ Factsheets (2014 - 2020)

In addition to these 34 countries, it is also possible to participate in the Erasmus+ programme from other countries that are approved by the EU, which are called “partner countries”. According to the European Commission, all countries in the world except Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican, Faroe Islands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are classified as partner countries (European Commission, n.d.-c).

Figure 7 shows the proportion of students to and from partner countries from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020. The figure exhibits an increasing trend regarding the

involvement of partner countries in the Erasmus+ programme. The rise in the percentage of incoming/outgoing Erasmus students in partner countries presents evidence that the Erasmus+ programme is achieving its goal of fostering social equity and inclusion.

Figure 7 reveals that in 2019/2020 there is a significant decrease in the percentage of Erasmus students to/from partner countries. From 2018/2019 to 2019/2020, the decrease of the outgoing students in partner countries is 0,7 pp while the decrease of incoming students is 1,7 pp. This may be explained by the Covid-19 pandemic that hit Europe at the beginning of 2020. The second semester of 2019/2020 is the most affected by the pandemic as on March 17, every European country has at least one positive case of coronavirus and lockdowns start to be a reality. For this reason, most borders are closed and international mobilities reduce drastically (Daniel Dunford, Becky Dale, Nossos Stylianou, Ed Lowther & Arena, 2020; Reuters Staff, 2020; RT Staff, 2020).

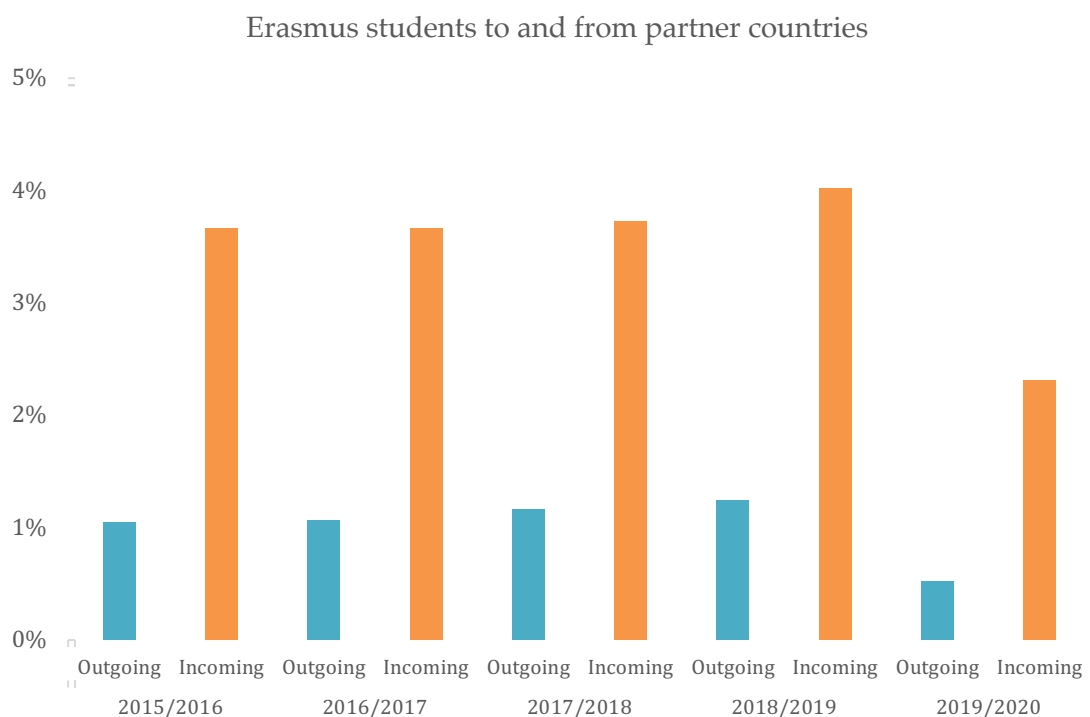


Figure 7 - Evolution of Erasmus students to and from partner countries, by year (2015/2016 - 2019/2020)
 Source: Erasmus+ Factsheets (2014 - 2020)

Figure 8 illustrates the proportion of incoming Erasmus students by field of study in 2019, in Portugal and 4 of the top 5 countries that receive most Erasmus students, namely Spain, Germany, Italy and the UK. There is no data available regarding France. The incoming students in the field of Social Sciences, Business

& Law constitute the highest percentage of Erasmus students in all countries except Germany, where Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction is the most popular subject area for Erasmus students. In all countries under analysis, Services and Agriculture are the fields with least Erasmus students (OECD, 2021).

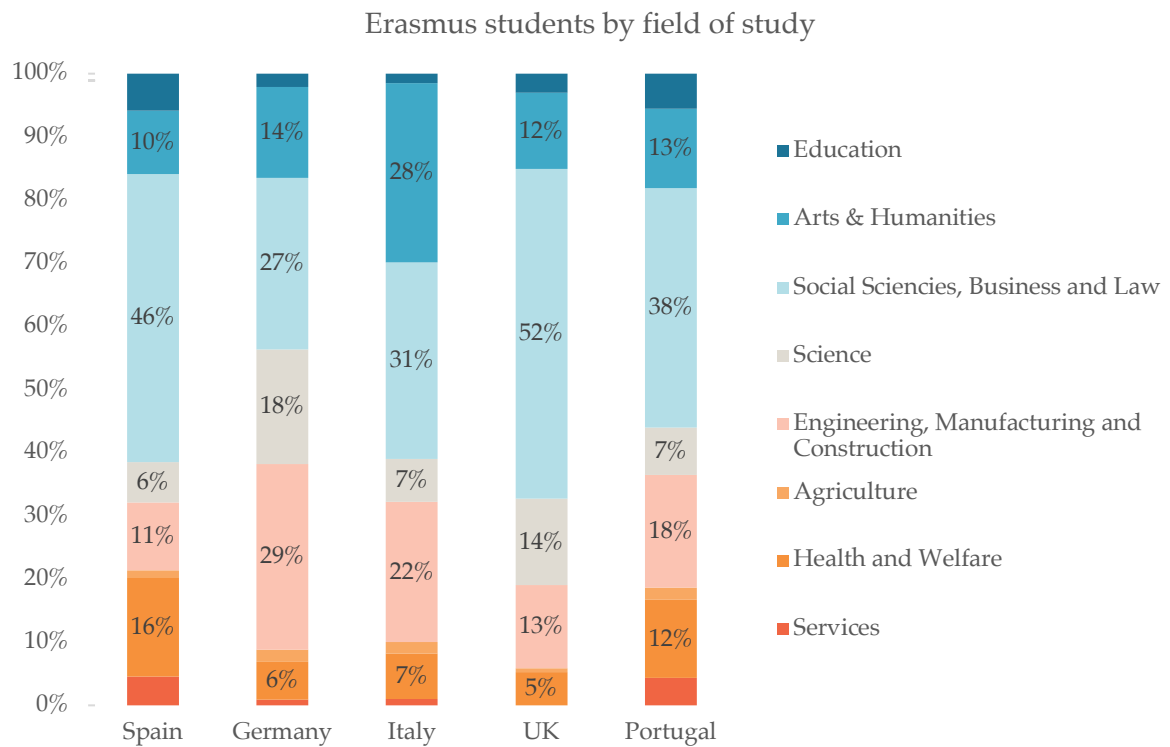


Figure 8 - Share of Erasmus students by field of study (2019)

Source: OECD.Stat (2019)

Table 2 shows the 10 most popular universities chosen by Erasmus students in the period between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020. The number of Erasmus students that each of these 10 universities receives increases over the period. The table highlights that Spain is the most represented country, with 4 universities in the top 10. *Universidad de Granada* is the most popular university for Erasmus students, followed by *Universita di Bologna* in second place and *Universitat de Valencia* in third place. In 2019/2020, the number of Erasmus students that *Universidade de Lisboa* and *Universidade do Porto* receive is 2 644 and 1 774, respectively (European Union, 2021).

Table 2 – Top 10 universities by number of Erasmus students

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Universidad de Granada (ES)	1 382	2 326	2 368	2 619	2 841	2 737
Universita di Bologna (IT)	1 174	2 109	2 332	2 629	2 625	2 778
Universitat de Valencia (ES)	1 246	1 976	2 247	2 595	2 646	2 836
Universidade de Lisboa (PT)	1 042	2 130	2 397	2 681	2 644	2 644
Universitat Politecnica de Valencia (ES)	848	1 887	2 069	2 357	2 350	2 559
Universidad Complutense de Madrid (ES)	1 233	1 905	2 036	1 991	1 976	1 964
Univerza v Ljubljani (SI)	801	1 617	1 818	1 919	2 060	2 213
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE)	895	1 574	1 704	1 633	1 669	1 771
Universita Degli Studi di Roma la Sapienza (IT)	707	1 208	1 402	1 585	1 758	1 892
Universidade do Porto (PT)	650	1 197	1 473	1 664	1 761	1 774

Source: European Union (2021)

3.1.3. Higher Education in Portugal

This section provides an overview of the Portuguese higher education system to analyse the impact of the Erasmus+ programme in Portugal.

Figure 9 demonstrates the rate of Portuguese higher education students enrolled in each field of study, from 2014 to 2019. Social Science, Business & Law is the most popular field of study for Portuguese higher education students, followed by Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction and Health & Welfare. In 2019, the percentage of Social Sciences, Business & Law students is 33% and the percentage of Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction students is 21%. Agriculture is the least represented field, making up only 2% of Portuguese higher education students (Pordata, 2021c).

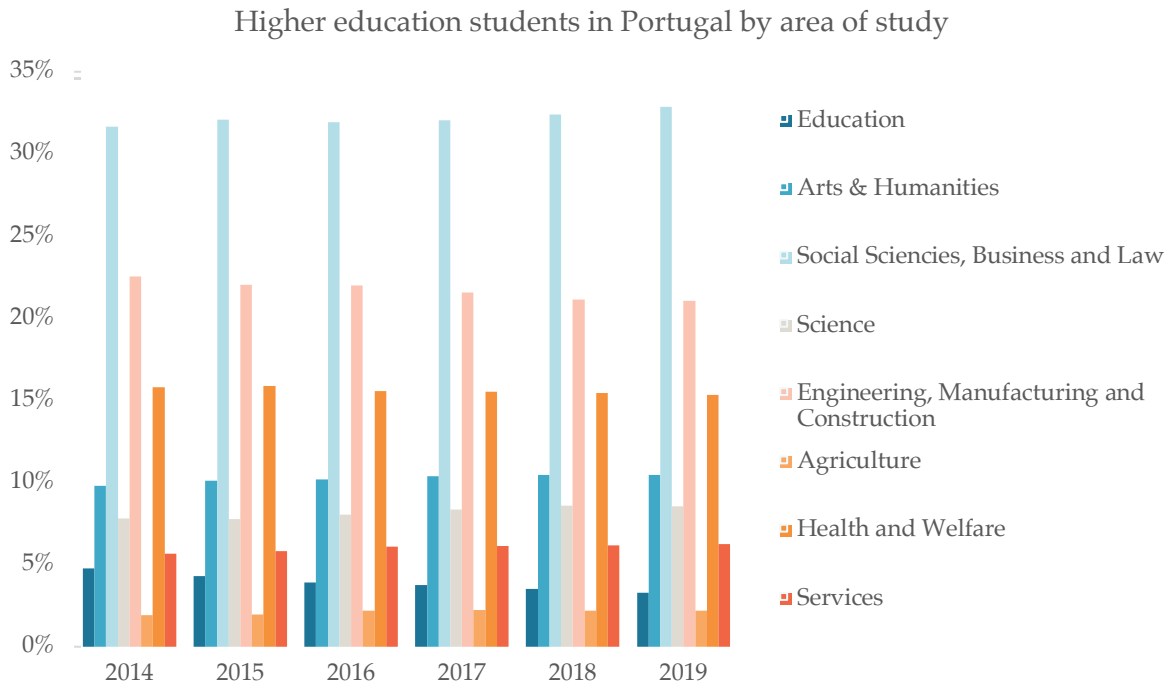


Figure 9 - Higher education students in Portugal, by area of study (2014-2021)
 Source: Pordata (2021)

Figure 10 displays the gender distribution of higher education students in Portugal by field of study, in 2020. Female students constitute about 54% of the higher education students in Portugal. Figure 10 demonstrates that males outnumber female students in the fields of Science, Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction and Services. In the other fields, gender asymmetry is in favour of females and varies from 58% in Agriculture to 77% in Education (Pordata, 2021b, 2021a).

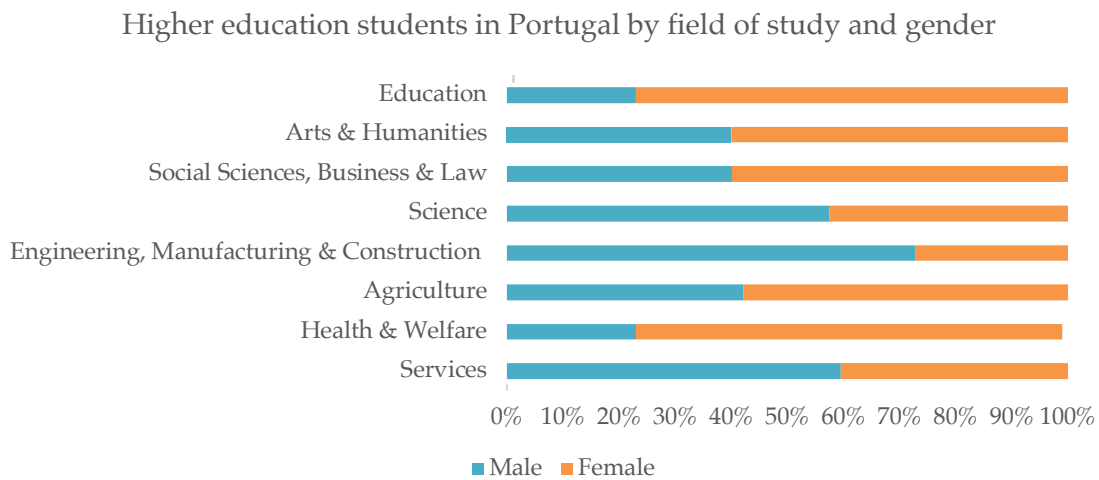


Figure 10 - Gender distribution of higher education students in Portugal by field of study (2020)
 Source: Pordata (2021)

3.1.4. Erasmus in Portugal

3.1.4.1. Portuguese Erasmus students

Portuguese Erasmus students, hereafter called "outgoing students", refer to all students from Portugal who go abroad to study under the Erasmus+ programme. Figure 11 demonstrates the gender distribution of outgoing students, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020 (European Union, 2021). Females are overrepresented among outgoing students, constituting 54% of outgoing students in 2014/2015 and 59% in 2019/2020.

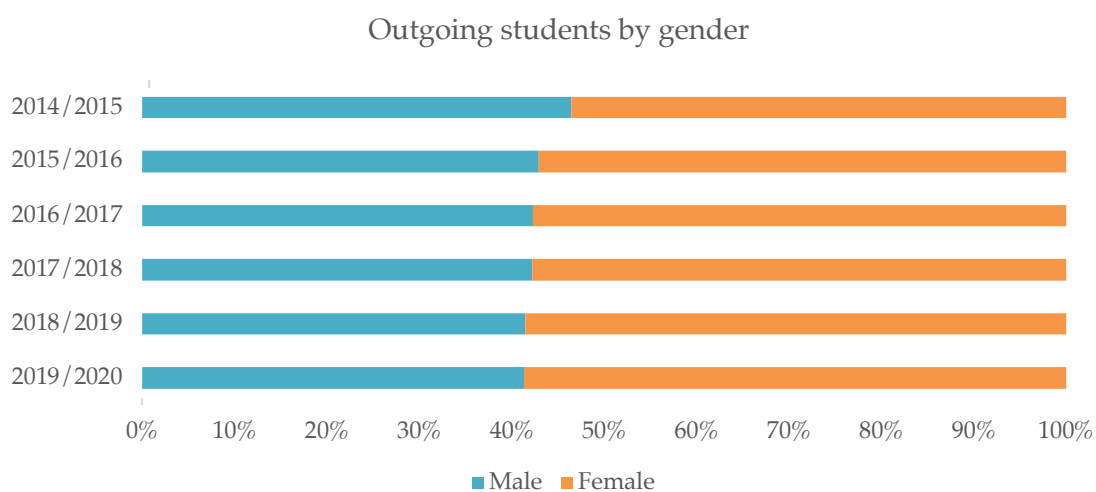


Figure 11 – Gender distribution of outgoing students (2014/2015-2019/2020)

Source: European Union (2019)

Figure 12 exhibits the distribution of outgoing students by field of study, from 2014 to 2019. Students in Social Sciences, Business & Law constitute around 40% of the outgoing students, during the period under analysis. Health & Welfare is the second most popular field, making up 15% of the Portuguese Erasmus students, while Education is the least popular field, making up only 1% of outgoing students (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

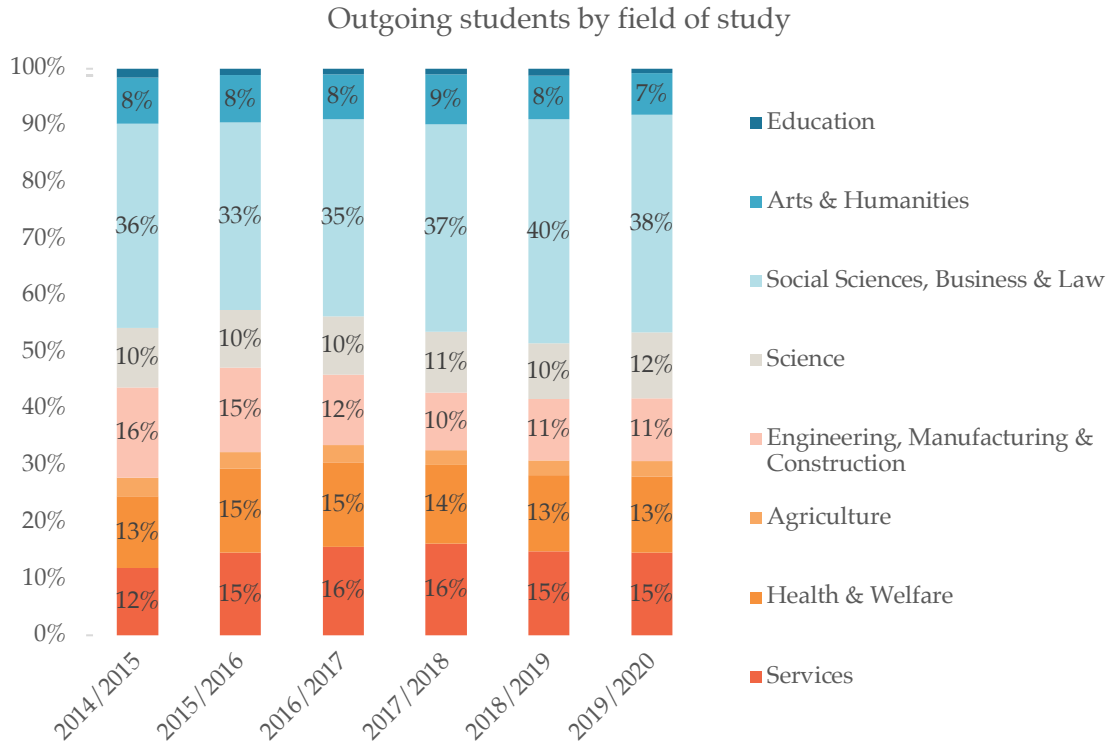


Figure 12 - Percentage of outgoing Portuguese Erasmus students, by field of study, from 2014-2020
 Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

Figure 13 shows the proportion of outgoing students by the district of origin, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. Over this period, Lisboa, Porto and Coimbra are the districts sending out most Erasmus students (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

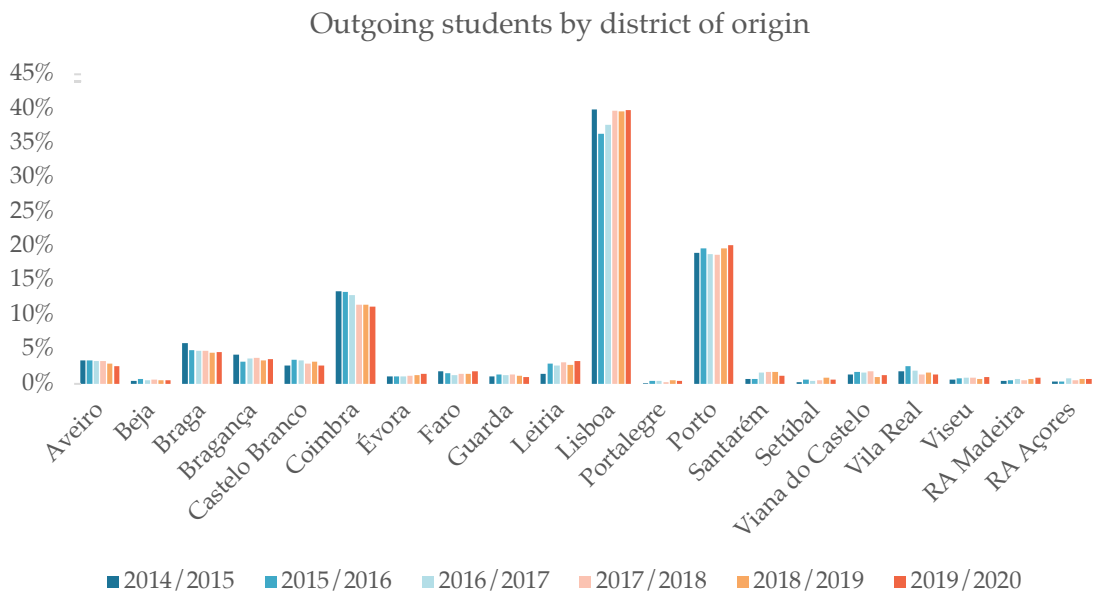


Figure 13 – Distribution of outgoing students, by district of origin (2014/2015-2019/2020)
 Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

Table 3 presents the top 10 Portuguese higher education institutions with the highest number of outgoing students. The values presented in the table correspond to the proportion of Portuguese Erasmus students from each of the top 10 higher education institutions in Portugal, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. 7 of the 10 institutions with more outgoing students are in the top 3 districts (Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra). However, these institutions are losing importance as the proportion of Erasmus students outgoing from these universities is declining (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021). For example, analysing *Universidade de Lisboa*, there is a reduction of 9 pp, from 24% in 2014/2015 to 15% in 2019/2020. One explanation for this may be that the Erasmus+ programme is growing and covers more higher education institutions.

Table 3 - Top 10 Portuguese higher education institutions that send most Erasmus students

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Universidade de Lisboa	24%	13%	15%	16%	16%	15%
Universidade do Porto	22%	12%	13%	14%	16%	11%
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	14%	8%	9%	9%	9%	8%
Universidade de Coimbra	14%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%
Universidade Católica Portuguesa	8%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%
Universidade do Minho	7%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Instituto Politécnico de Bragança	7%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa	5%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Instituto Politécnico do Porto	5%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Universidade de Aveiro	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

Figure 14 highlights the proportion of outgoing students by country of destination, during the period in analysis. Most popular destinations for

Portuguese students are Spain, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic and Germany, in this order (European Union, 2021). Spain, Italy and Germany are also among the top 5 destinations for European Erasmus students, as seen in Figure 6.

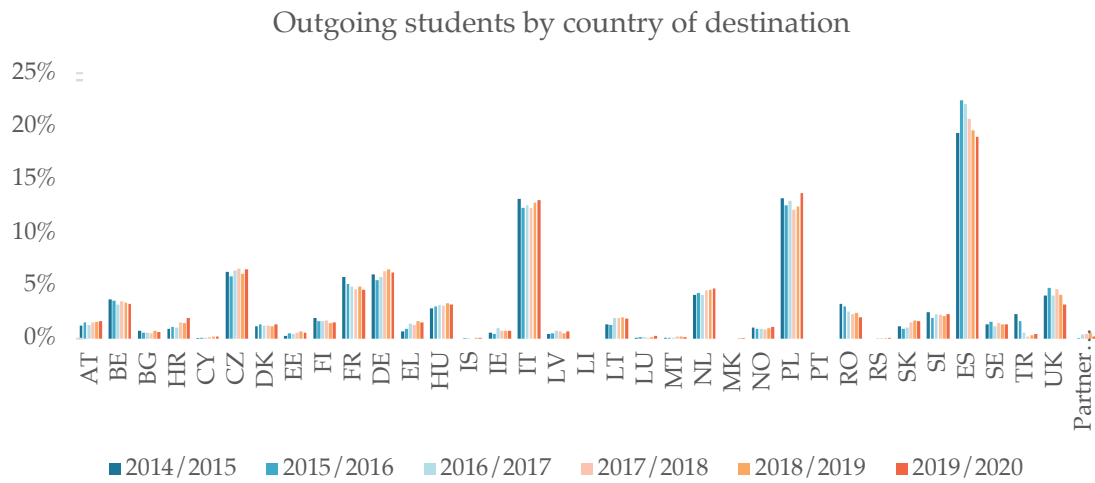


Figure 14 - Distribution of outgoing students, by country of destination (2014/2015-2019/2020)
Source: European Union (2021)

Table 4 ranks the European higher education institutions with most Portuguese Erasmus students. Spain and Italy stand out with 3 institutions each. Tables 2 and 4 indicate that *Univerza v Ljubljani*, *Universita di Bologna*, *Universidad Complutense De Madrid*, *Universita Degli Studi di Roma la Sapienza* and *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* are among the top 10 institutions that are chosen both by Portuguese and European Erasmus students (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

Table 4 – Top 10 higher education institutions that receive most Portuguese Erasmus students

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Univerza v Ljubljani (SI)	108	95	125	122	109	135
Universita di Bologna (IT)	92	88	117	141	111	115
Universidad Complutense De Madrid (ES)	91	111	106	105	93	62
Politecnico Di Milano (IT)	81	85	93	108	82	93
Universita Degli Studi di Roma la Sapienza (IT)	54	64	75	97	69	96
Politechnika Bialostocka (PL)	109	90	65	44	55	95
Univerza v Mariboru (SI)	47	60	81	89	78	86
Universitat de Barcelona (ES)	73	79	78	84	85	44
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE)	37	67	53	72	99	100
Universidad de Salamanca (ES)	65	64	61	87	79	64

Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

3.1.4.2. Erasmus students in Portugal

Erasmus students in Portugal, hereafter called “incoming students”, refer to all students from a foreign country that study in Portugal under the Erasmus+ programme. Figure 15 shows the gender distribution of incoming students, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. Figure 15 points out that female students, which make up an average of 60% throughout the period, are overrepresented (European Union, 2021).

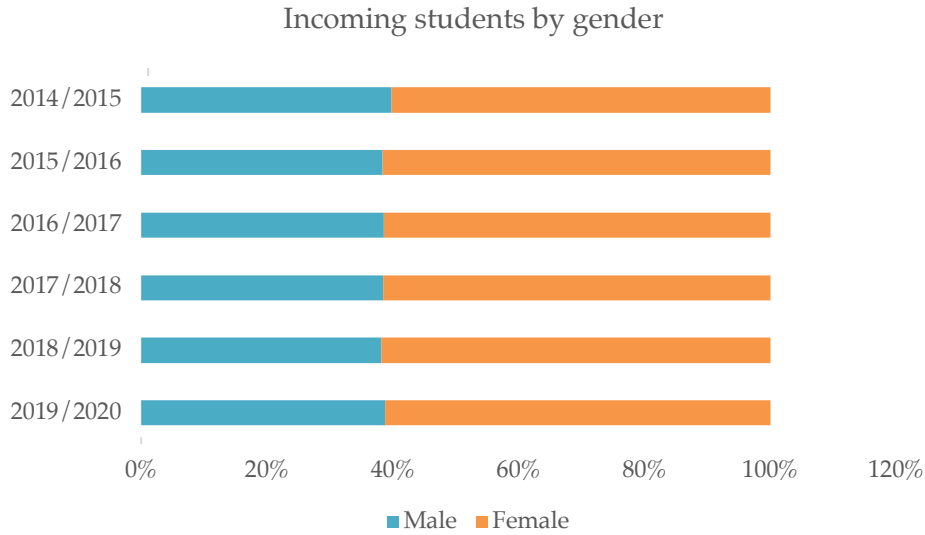


Figure 15 – Gender distribution of incoming Erasmus students, by year
 Source: European Union (2021)

Figure 16 depicts the proportion of incoming students by field of education, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. Incoming students follow the previously analysed tendencies, since Social Sciences, Business & Law is the most popular field and Education and Agriculture are the least represented field (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

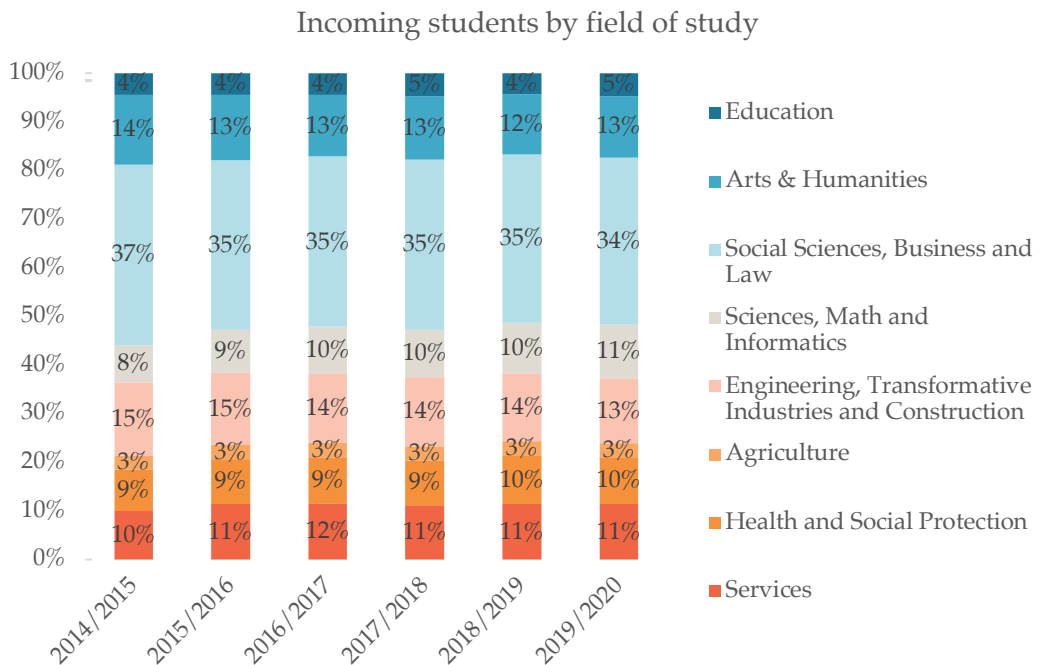


Figure 16 - Percentage of incoming Erasmus students, by field of study, from 2014-2020
 Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

Figure 17 portrays the proportion of incoming students by the district of destination, during the period under analysis. The top 3 districts of destination for incoming students are Lisboa, Porto and Coimbra (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

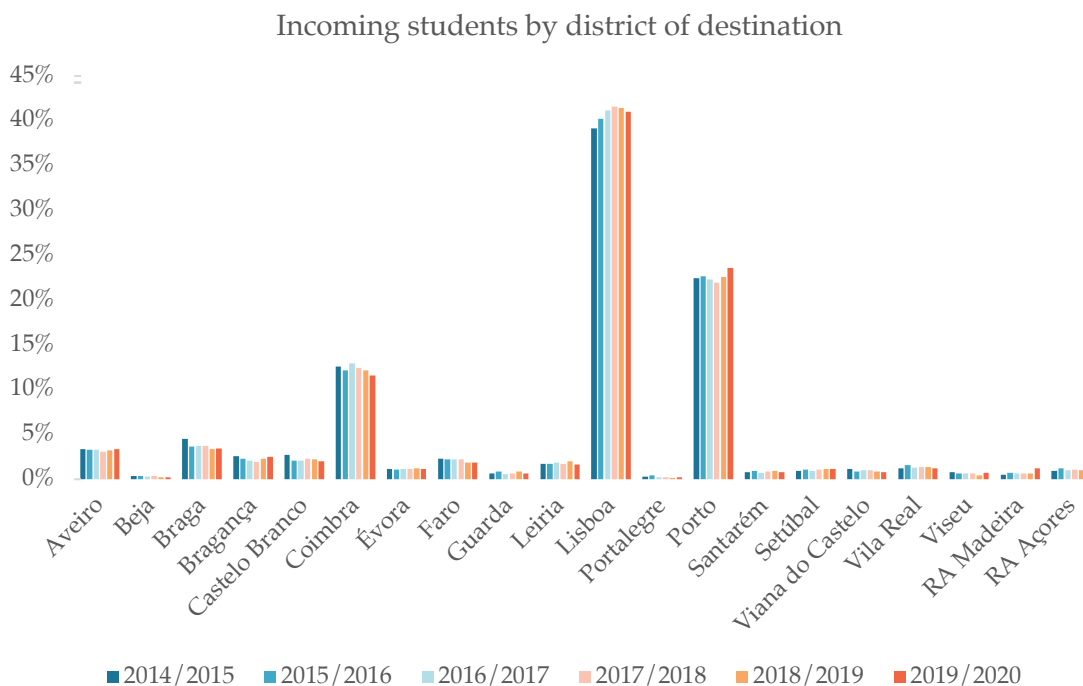


Figure 17 - Distribution of incoming students, by district of destination (2014/2015-2019/2020)

Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

Table 5 shows the most popular higher education institution chosen by incoming students between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020. This ranking is also dominated by higher education institutions from Lisboa, Porto and Coimbra. The choices of incoming students are consistent as there are no significant fluctuations in the percentage of Erasmus students in each institution. *Universidade de Lisboa* is the Portuguese institution that receives most students (around 17% of the incoming students from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020), followed by *Universidade do Porto* and *Universidade NOVA de Lisboa* (9% each). Analysing tables 3 and 5, we can conclude that *Universidade de Lisboa*, *Universidade do Porto*, *Universidade de Coimbra*, *Universidade do Minho*, *Universidade de Aveiro*, *Universidade NOVA de Lisboa*, *Universidade Católica Portuguesa* and *Instituto Politécnico do Porto* are the Portuguese institutions with most outgoing and incoming Erasmus students between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020 (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

Table 5 - Top 10 Portuguese higher education institutes that receive most Erasmus students

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Universidade de Lisboa	16%	16%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Universidade do Porto	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Universidade de Coimbra	9%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%
Universidade Católica Portuguesa	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%
Instituto Politécnico do Porto	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Universidade de Aveiro	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Universidade do Minho	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%

Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

Figure 18 shows the proportion of incoming students, according to their country of origin, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. In Portugal, during this period, most Erasmus students come from Spain, Italy, Poland, Germany, and France. Figure 18 also highlights that there is an increase in the number of French Erasmus students over time, from 5% in 2014/2015 to 8% in 2019/2020 (European Union, 2021).

Percentage of incoming Erasmus students, per country of origin, from 2014-2020

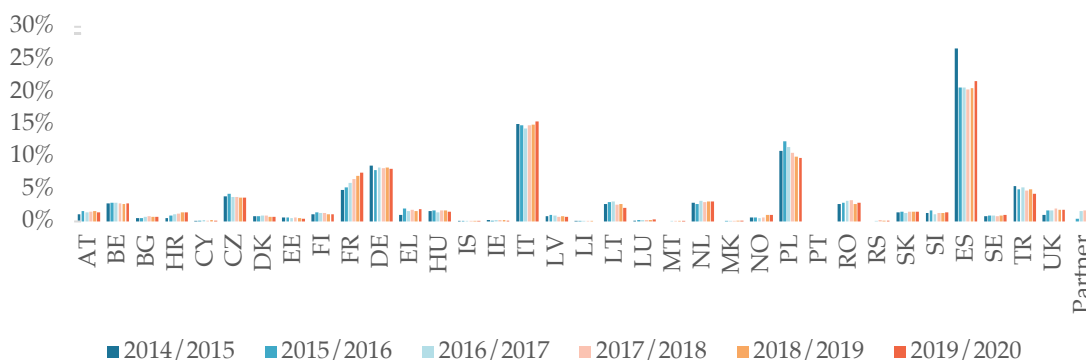


Figure 18 - Percentage of incoming Erasmus students, by country of origin, from 2014-2020
Source: European Union (2021)

Table 6 presents the top 10 higher education institutions that send most Erasmus students to Portugal, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020. In this table, 9 out of the 10 are either Spanish or Italian. *Universidad de Granada* is the one that sends the most Erasmus students to Portugal, followed by *Universidad de Extremadura* and *Univerza v Ljubljana*, the only one on the list that is not from Spain or Italy (Agência Nacional Erasmus+, 2021).

Table 6 - Top 10 higher education institutions that send most Erasmus students to Portugal

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Universidad de Granada (ES)	129	138	140	188	183	218
Universidad de Extremadura (ES)	171	171	204	147	173	158
Univerza v Ljubljani (SI)	109	135	100	128	121	160
Universita di Bologna (IT)	87	112	143	130	143	122
Universita Degli Studi di Roma la Sapienza (IT)	106	116	118	95	120	143
Politecnico di Milano (IT)	88	72	106	104	120	134
Universita Degli Studi di Padova (IT)	95	108	123	129	134	120
Universitat de Valencia (ES)	133	123	55	123	137	131
Universidad de Sevilla (ES)	93	97	115	114	123	121
Universidad de Vigo (ES)	73	56	101	97	99	119

Source: Agência Nacional Erasmus+ (2021)

In sum, the trends of Portuguese Erasmus students are in line with the trends of other European countries regarding the most popular fields of study, country of destination and higher institution chosen. Most of the Portuguese and European Erasmus students study Social Sciences, Business & Law and go to Spain. In addition, *Universidad de Granada* is the one that sends the most Erasmus students to Portugal and to other European countries.

3.2. Survey analysis

I conducted a survey on former Portuguese Erasmus students to assess the impact of the programme on Portuguese higher education. The survey was sent to 82 departments of 32 higher education institutions, 14 students associations and 2 Erasmus organizations, which resulted in 273 valid responses.

The survey is divided into three sections. The first section includes questions that provide data on sociodemographic characteristics of respondents such as age, gender, and nationality. The second section contains questions about respondents' country of destination, the academic year in which they participated in the Erasmus+ programme, as well as their area of study and higher education institution. The questions in these two sections are useful to evaluate whether the sample is representative of the population (i.e., Portuguese higher education students who participated in Erasmus+ programme). The final section consists of questions about the Portuguese Erasmus students' main reasons for doing Erasmus, for choosing the destination they chose and their satisfaction regarding their experience. Section 3 also includes questions to assess if the programme helps students understand the EU values and principles, if it makes them change their attitudes towards inclusion and diversity, and how successful the programme is in achieving its priorities of inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environmental awareness, and participation in democratic life.

Figure 19 presents the age distribution of respondents. Figure 19 shows that 72% of respondents are between 22 and 25 years old, 19% are between 18 and 21 years old and 8% are above 25 years old.

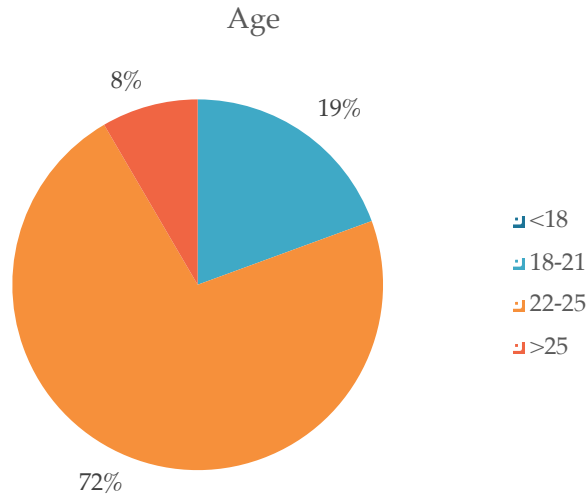


Figure 19 - Age distribution of respondents

Figure 20 presents the gender distribution of respondents. This figure demonstrates that 67% of the sample are female. Female respondents outnumber males, which is in line with Figure 11, pointing out the overrepresentation of Portuguese female students in the Erasmus+ programme.

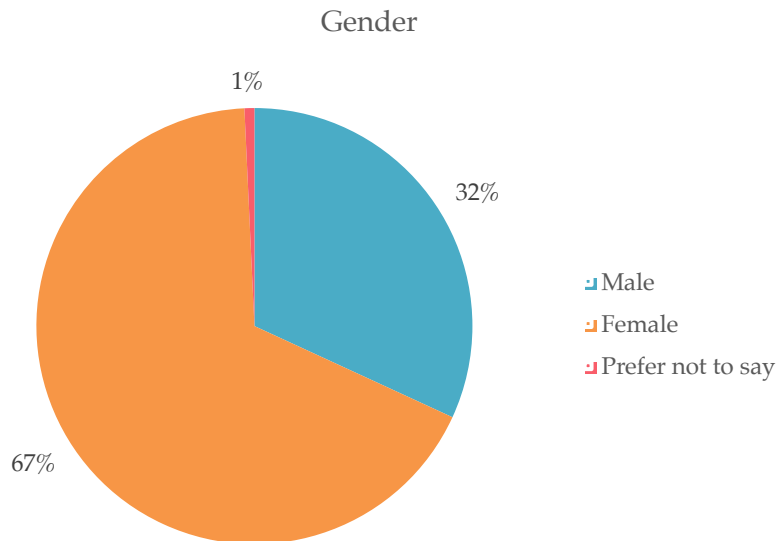


Figure 20 - Gender distribution of respondents

Figure 21 represents the nationality of respondents. 94% of respondents are Portuguese, while immigrant students make up only 6% of the sample. The main countries of origin of immigrant students are Brazil and Cape-Verde.

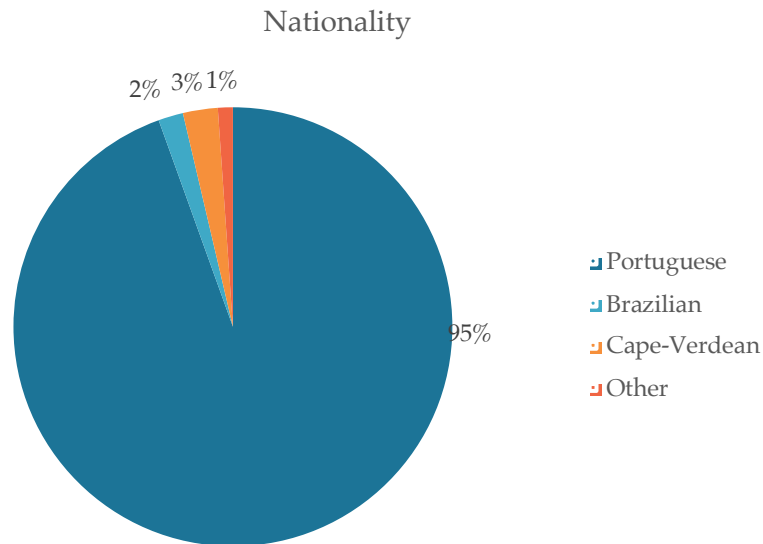


Figure 21 - Nationality distribution of respondents

Figure 22 displays the academic years in which respondents participated in the Erasmus+ programme. I excluded 4 respondents from the data analysis because they participated in the Erasmus programme before 2014 and therefore were not covered by the Erasmus+ programme. Figure 22 indicates that most respondents were enrolled in the programme in 2019/2020, with the second most popular period being 2021/2022. Even though the Portuguese Erasmus data for the 2021/22 period has not been published yet, it is natural that due to Covid-19 there are not as many students as there were before 2020. However, Figure 22 indicates the more recently the students participated in the programme, the more likely they are to respond to the survey.

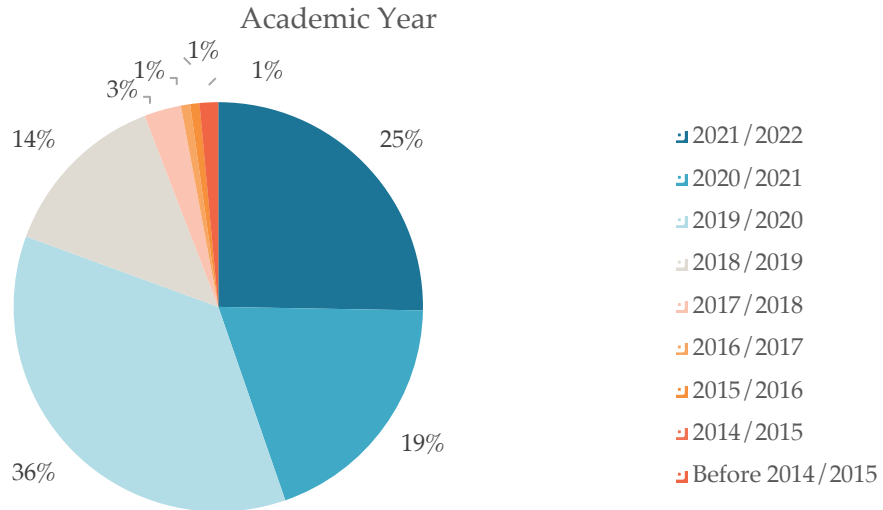


Figure 22 - Academic year distribution of respondents

Figure 23 presents most popular areas of study of respondents. 38% of respondents study Social Sciences, Business & Law, followed by Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction (18%) and Arts & Humanities (17%). No respondents are studying Agriculture or Education. Figure 23 is in line with Figures 4 and 12 regarding the distribution of European and Portuguese Erasmus students by field of study, as the most popular area of study is Social Science, Business & Law.

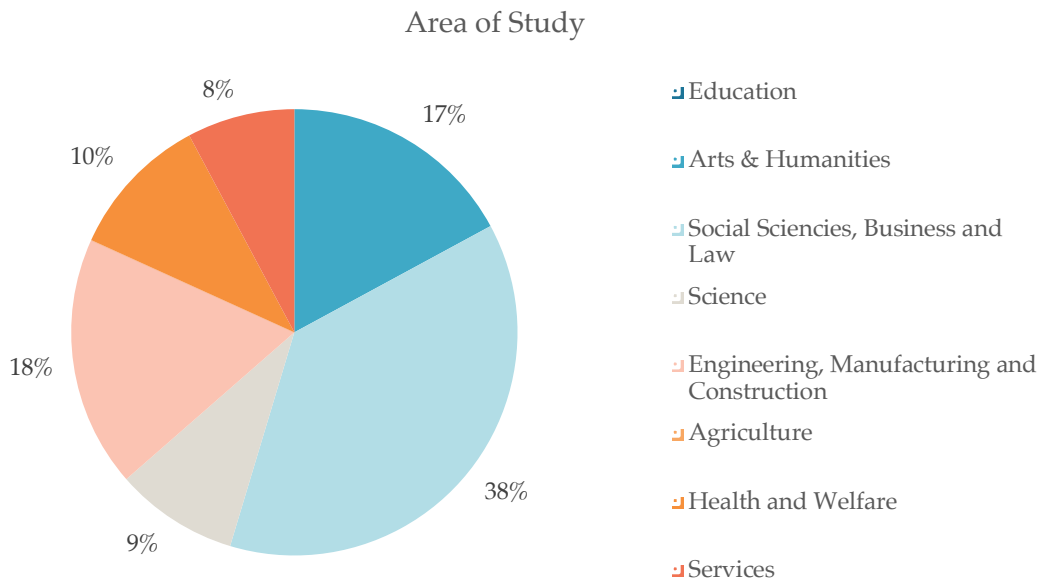


Figure 23 - Area of study distribution of respondents

Figure 24 shows the distribution of respondents according to most popular home institutions. Figure 24 indicates that most respondents are from the top 10 Portuguese institutions that sent the most Erasmus students such as *Universidade de Aveiro* (23%), *Universidade NOVA de Lisboa* (19%) and *Universidade Católica Portuguesa* (15%), as seen in Table 3.

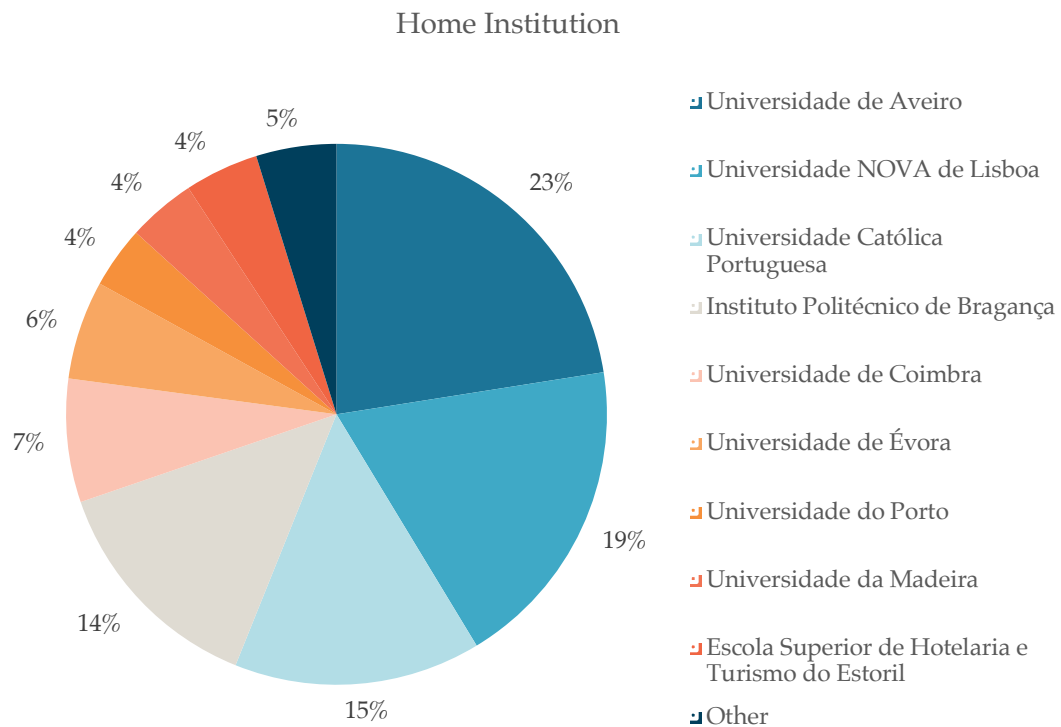


Figure 24 – Distribution of respondents according to most popular home institutions

Figure 25 presents the distribution of respondents by their country of destination. The most popular destination choice of respondents is Poland, followed by Italy, Spain, and the Czech Republic. A comparison between Figure 25 and Figure 14 reveals that the top 4 destinations of respondents are consistent with the top 4 destinations of Portuguese Erasmus students.

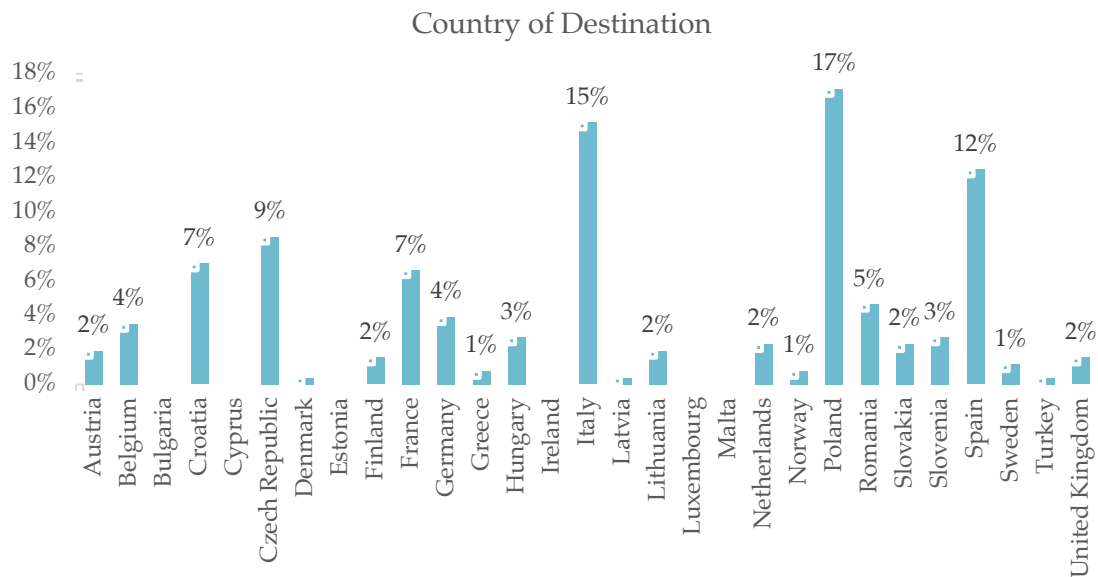


Figure 25 - Destinations chosen by the respondents

Table 7 presents the top 10 higher education institutions most chosen by respondents. The most chosen institution is *Universita Luigi Bocconi*, followed by *Sveučilište u Splitu* and *Politecnico di Milano*. Three of the 10 institutions (namely *Politecnico di Milano*, *Universita di Bologna* and *Univerza v Ljubljani*) are among the top 10 institutions chosen by Portuguese Erasmus students, as presented in Table 4.

Table 7 – Top 10 higher education institutions most chosen by respondents

Host Institution (Country)	Number of students	Percentage of students
Universita Luigi Bocconi (IT)	8	3%
Sveučilište u Splitu (HR)	6	2%
Politecnico di Milano (IT)	5	2%
Uniwersytet Śląski Katowice (PL)	4	1%
Lancaster University (UK)	4	1%
Ekonomski Fakultet Zagreb (HR)	4	1%
Universidad de Coruña (ES)	4	1%
Universita di Bologna (IT)	4	1%
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (ES)	4	1%
Univerza v Ljubljani (SI)	3	1%

In sum, the sample seems to be representative of the population in question concerning gender decomposition, field of study, home institution, destination country and host institution. Both in the sample and in the Portuguese Erasmus

students' population, female students are overrepresented, as well as Social Sciences, Business & Law students. *Universidade de Aveiro*, *Universidade NOVA de Lisboa* and *Universidade Católica Portuguesa* are among the higher education institutions with most students participating in the Erasmus+ programme. In addition, most popular destination countries are Poland, Spain, and Italy and *Politecnico di Milano*, *Universita di Bologna* and *Univerza v Ljubljani* are the higher education institutions most commonly chosen both by respondents and by Portuguese Erasmus students.

In the survey, students are asked to report why they participated in Erasmus. Possible answers to this question include “to gain independency”, “to live abroad”, “to improve career prospects abroad” and “to have fun”. If their reason is not one of the possible options, respondents can write another one. Figure 26 ranks the most given responses to this question and the three most commonly reported reasons for participating in the Erasmus+ programme are improving personal development, gaining cultural intelligence and living abroad.

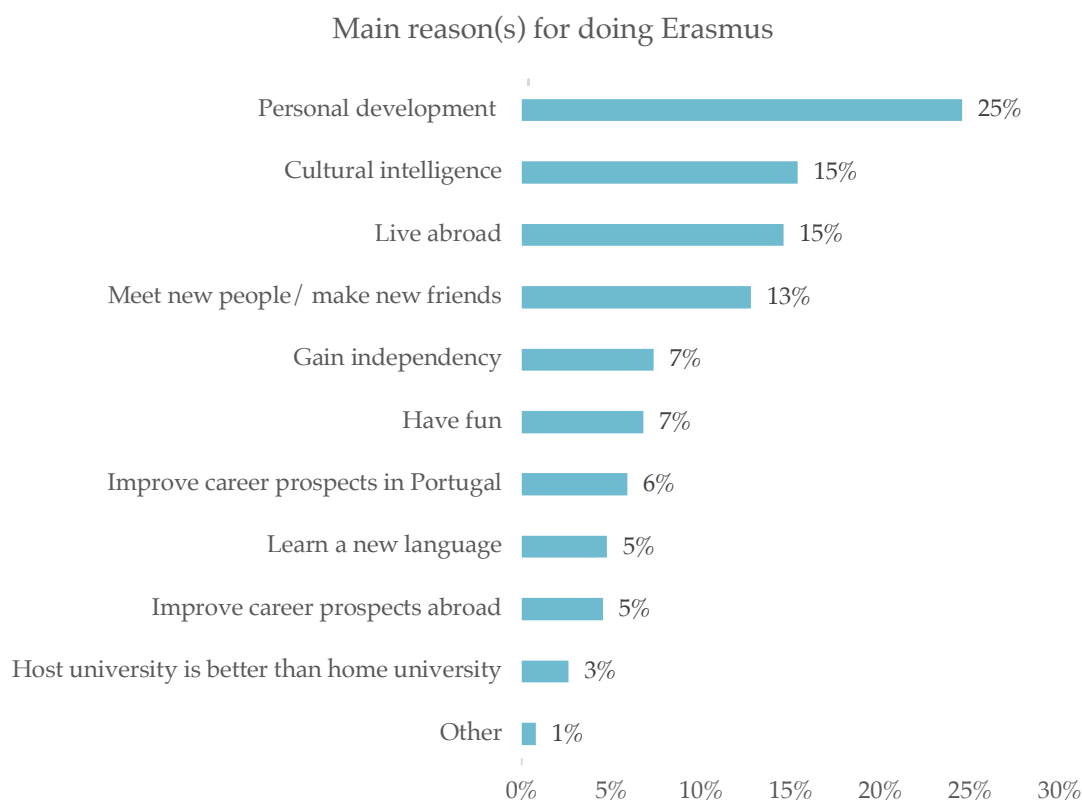


Figure 26 - Respondents' main reason for doing Erasmus

In addition, students are asked to explain why they chose a certain destination. Possible answers to this question include “lower cost of living”,

“higher quality of the education system” and “proximity to Portugal”. Figure 27 summarizes the responses most often given to this question. The three most reported reasons for choosing a specific destination are the possibility to travel more, the interest in the culture and natural heritage of the destination country and the lower cost of living.

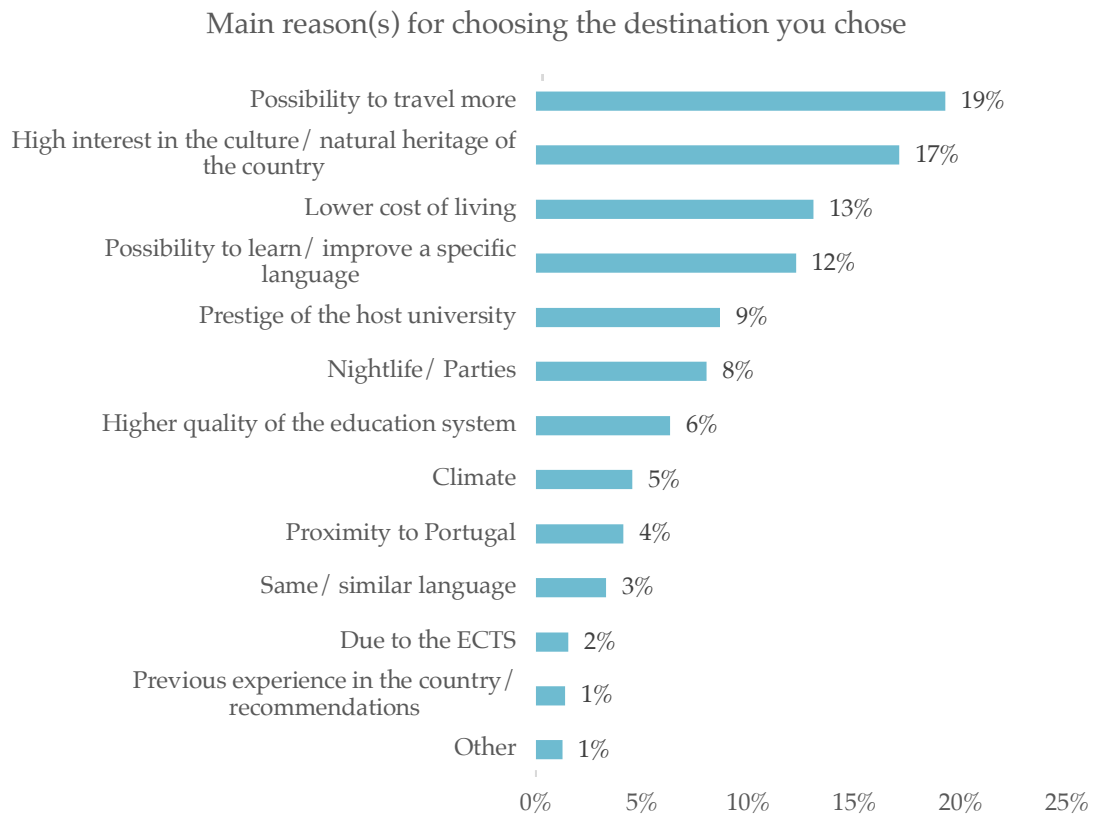


Figure 27 - Respondents' main reason for choosing their destination

In the survey, respondents are also asked to report their satisfaction level with their Erasmus experience. The possible answers to this question are (1) Very dissatisfied, (2) Dissatisfied, (3) Neutral, (4) Satisfied and (5) Very satisfied. Responses to this question are summarized in Figure 28. 60% of respondents are very satisfied with their Erasmus experience, 32% are satisfied and only 2% state that they are dissatisfied. Among those who are very satisfied with their Erasmus experience, 34% study Social Sciences, Business & Law and 30% went to either Poland or Spain. In addition, 49% of them claim that one of the main reasons for participating in the Erasmus+ programme is the desire to acquire cultural

intelligence, which enables them to be aware, understand and adopt practices from different cultures.

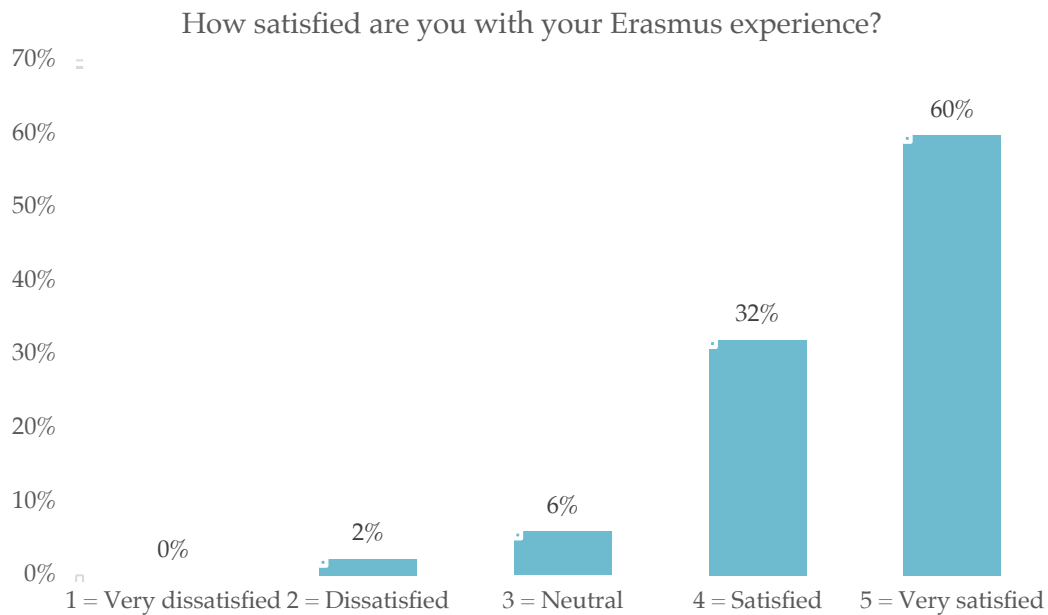


Figure 28 - Respondents' satisfaction regarding their Erasmus experience

Moreover, students are asked to state whether the Erasmus+ programme helps them understand EU values and principles and if they change their attitudes towards inclusion and diversity. Figure 29 summarizes the answers to this question. 79% of respondents believe that the programme fosters EU values and principles, from which 57% changed their attitude regarding inclusion and diversity issues. 12% of respondents state that they changed their attitudes, even though they are not aware of EU values and principles. Figure 29 presents evidence that the Erasmus + programme helps to foster diversity and inclusion in society.

Did Erasmus help you understand the EU values and principles and the importance of inclusion and diversity in society?

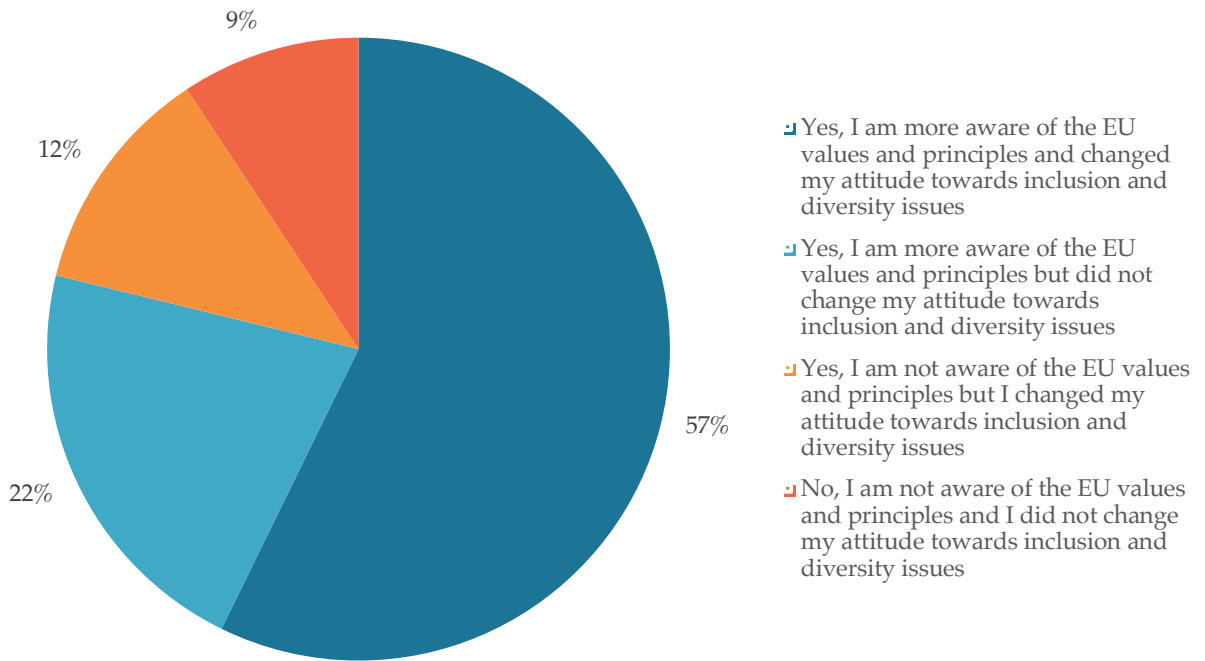


Figure 29 - Respondents' perception of the effectiveness of Erasmus in fostering EU values and principles

As explained in Section 2, the new Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027) has four priorities, which are promoting inclusion and diversity, promoting digital transformation, increasing environmental awareness, and encouraging participation in democratic life. The last question in the survey aims to assess students' perception about the success of the programme in achieving these priorities. To analyse the responses to this question, I divided the sample into the following two groups: group 1 comprises the students who participated in the Erasmus+ during 2014-2020 and group 2 comprises those who participated in the Erasmus+ during 2021-2027⁷. The first group consists of 203 students, while the second group consists of 70 students. I examine whether these two groups of students differ in their perceptions about the success of the Erasmus+ programme in achieving its priorities for 2021-2027. Figures 30 and 31 summarize the responses of students in group 1 and group 2, respectively.

⁷ This analysis only includes data for the first semester of 2021/2022

Figure 30 shows that the proportion of respondents from group 1 that believes that the Erasmus+ programme is very successful in promoting inclusion and diversity, and digital transformation is 59% and 23%, respectively. The corresponding rates in group 2 are 67% and 30%, as seen in Figure 31. The proportion of respondents that believes that the programme is very successful in increasing environmental awareness is 13% in group 1 and 25% in group 2. 15% of respondents from group 1 believe that the programme is very successful in encouraging participation in democratic life, while this rate is 26% in group 2. In addition, the rate of responses stating that the programme is unsuccessful in achieving its priorities is higher in group 1 than in group 2.

A comparison between Figures 30 and 31 reveals that students in group 2 have more positive perceptions about the success of the Erasmus+ programme in achieving its priorities than those in group 1, suggesting that the objectives of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme will have a crucial role in addressing major societal challenges related to inclusion, diversity, digital and green transition, and young people’s participation in democratic life.

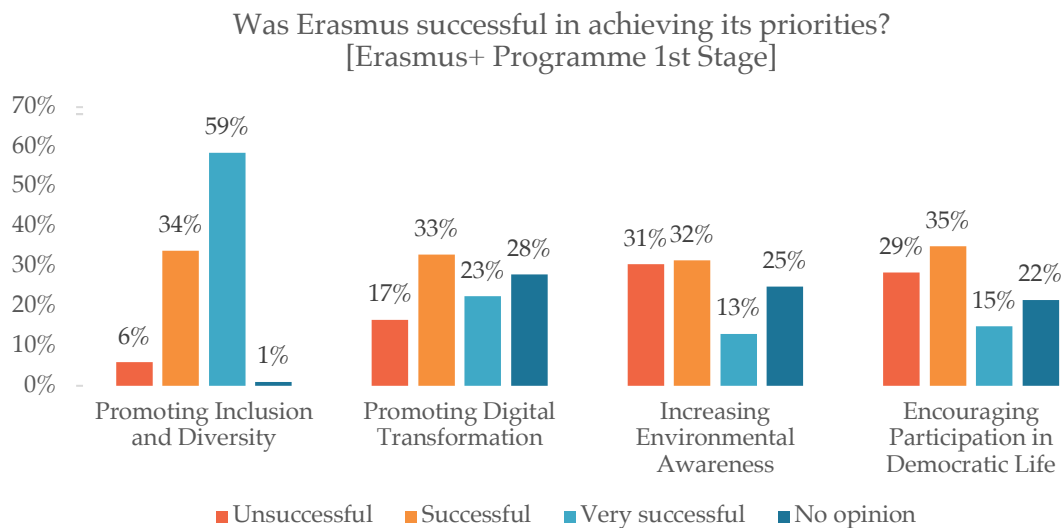


Figure 30 – Group 1 respondents’ perception about the successfulness of the programme in achieving its 2021-2027 priorities

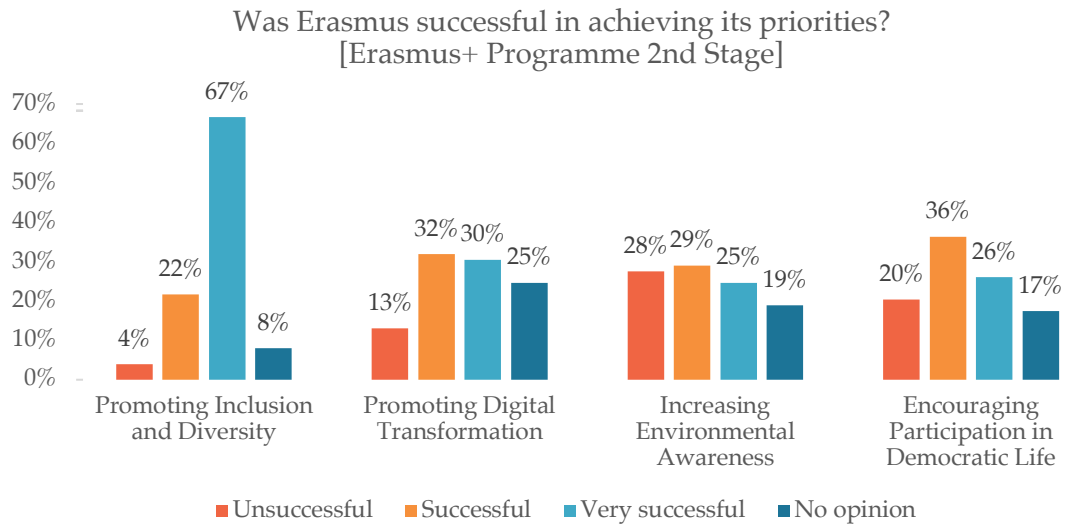


Figure 31 – Group 2 respondents' perception about the successfulness of the programme in achieving its 2021-2027 priorities

4. Conclusion and limitations

This thesis aims to examine the effect of the Erasmus+ programme on European higher education. To do so, I analysed crucial indicators that characterize higher education and the Erasmus+ programme in Europe. These indicators include gender distribution, fields of study, most popular countries of origin and destination and higher education institutions that send and receive most students from the programme. Moreover, I conducted a survey to former Portuguese Erasmus students to explore their perceptions about the success of the programme.

The analysis of the data points out that there is an overrepresentation of female students in the programme. Social Science, Business & Law is the field of study with the highest proportion of Erasmus students. In addition, between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020, Germany is the country that sends most students abroad, while Spain is the country that receives most students under the Erasmus+ programme. The survey data also provide evidence that the programme has a positive impact on students' awareness of inclusion and diversity. Furthermore, the Erasmus+ programme plays an important role in promoting digital transformation, increasing environmental awareness, and encouraging students' participation in democratic life.

However, like any other study, this thesis faces some limitations. The main limitation is that the survey analysis is based only on Portuguese Erasmus students and the representativeness of the sample might hinder us from drawing reliable conclusions about the effect of the programme. In addition, the survey contains several subjective questions that may pose some difficulties for respondents. For example, respondents may interpret answer options differently, or they may not feel compelled to give honest answers.

In future studies, it would be informative to survey Erasmus students from all over Europe to evaluate what students acquire from studying abroad under the Erasmus+ programme.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Data collected

Table A.1 - Number of students enrolled in the European Higher Education, by country, from 2014 to 2019

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
AT	421 225	425 972	431 125	430 371	430 195	423 048
BE	495 910	504 745	508 270	526 760	515 530	519 212
BG	283 294	278 953	266 707	249 937	236 335	229 464
HR	165 161	162 022	162 017	165 197	164 826	163 867
CY	33 674	37 166	40 347	45 263	47 169	50 211
CZ	418 624	395 529	371 948	352 873	329 036	319 343
DK	301 399	313 756	314 822	312 379	310 903	308 567
EE	59 998	55 214	51 092	47 390	45 773	45 484
FI	306 080	302 478	297 163	295 528	294 516	295 451
FR	2 388 880	2 424 158	2 480 186	2 532 831	2 618 729	2 685 408
DE	2 912 204	2 977 781	3 043 084	3 091 694	3 127 927	3 296 249
EL	677 429	690 868	709 488	735 027	766 874	794 107
HU	329 455	307 729	295 328	287 018	283 350	281 461
IS	19 901	18 940	18 590	17 967	17 835	18 297
IE	203 912	214 632	218 411	225 031	231 201	232 512
IT	1 849 159	1 826 477	1 815 950	1 837 051	1 895 990	1 937 761
LV	89 671	85 881	84 282	82 914	81 602	80 355
LI	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
LT	148 389	140 629	133 759	125 863	118 287	111 768
LU	6 788	6 896	6 954	7 058	7 043	1 899
MT	12 610	13 216	13 764	14 425	15 220	16 069
NL	702 183	842 601	843 180	875 455	889 506	-
MK	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
NO	264 207	268 231	277 449	284 042	288 739	290 014
PL	1 762 666	1 665 305	1 600 208	1 550 203	1 492 899	1 430 981
PT	556 111	529 252	538 428	546 644	563 339	583 278
RO	578 706	541 653	535 218	531 586	538 871	533 749
RS	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
SK	197 854	184 390	167 280	156 048	144 447	140 809
SI	92 769	85 616	80 798	-	76 534	75 991
ES	1 982 162	1 963 924	1 968 702	2 010 183	2 051 826	2 083 979
SE	429 444	439 815	426 188	426 354	431 065	432 233
TR	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
UK	2 349 854	2 330 847	2 378 667	2 431 886	2 467 086	2 618 287
Total	20 039 719	20 034 676	20 079 405	20 194 978	20 482 653	20 092 716

Table A.2. Number of students enrolled in the European Higher Education, by area of study, from 2014 to 2019

	Education	Arts & Humanities	Social Sciences, Business & Law	Science	Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	Agriculture	Health and Welfare	Services	Unknown or unspecified	Total
2014	1 546 869	2 477 473	6 489 875	2 337 235	3 231 528	362 589	2 691 379	753 583	149 188	20 039 719
2015	1 506 062	2 457 728	6 487 279	2 470 157	3 089 518	360 778	2 709 968	710 794	242 392	20 034 676
2016	1 523 840	2 452 988	6 490 150	2 470 866	3 143 659	370 371	2 726 301	709 434	191 796	20 079 405
2017	1 532 813	2 448 625	6 477 126	2 554 909	3 094 720	369 816	2 786 218	686 673	244 078	20 194 978
2018	1 544 480	2 485 764	6 508 799	2 659 922	3 077 300	378 377	2 827 520	751 867	248 624	20 482 653
2019	1 491 726	2 441 227	6 424 402	2 580 113	3 128 526	375 292	2 742 857	872 376	36 197	20 092 716

Table A.3. Number of outgoing and incoming Erasmus students, by country, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015		2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018		2018/2019		2019/2020	
	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming
AT	6609	7063	7007	7451	7426	7950	7270	8367	7122	8706	6856	9045
BE	8645	10669	9090	11216	9284	10740	9578	12007	9420	12827	9409	12430
BG	2180	1107	2425	1304	2465	1547	2708	1709	2726	1879	2538	1681
HR	1679	1548	1716	1895	1778	2099	2013	2485	2189	2567	1761	2510
CY	581	928	747	1013	730	1081	709	1245	745	1507	607	1305
CZ	8228	8358	8101	9649	7891	10541	7365	11195	7406	11078	7599	10233
DK	4251	5522	4235	5674	4665	5761	4290	5997	4356	6130	4354	6395
EE	1278	1589	1152	1705	1135	1872	1314	1939	1208	1939	1104	1914
FI	5598	7915	5939	8223	6263	8702	5959	8825	5415	8900	4219	8918
FR	39992	29561	41071	30139	43914	28911	47797	29818	48995	31138	41928	30045
DE	39672	32935	40337	34919	40952	34553	42396	34538	42824	34921	44682	29549
EL	4516	3675	5069	4226	5264	4759	5670	5115	5667	5501	5492	4751
HU	4421	5408	4195	5918	4341	6245	4373	6525	4360	6889	3665	6478
IS	340	711	329	815	372	921	338	850	355	804	328	893

IE	3101	7217	3190	7673	3472	8049	3682	8180	3972	8480	3800	7471
IT	31038	21580	34647	23921	36335	26284	36680	27937	41258	29567	37629	27239
LV	2025	1447	2103	1748	2168	1979	2207	2001	2411	2045	2195	2067
LI	45	55	40	73	42	85	46	100	63	99	33	102
LT	4419	2624	4414	2880	4252	3166	4361	3473	4721	3741	4068	8611
LU	550	695	564	934	538	1077	543	1210	595	1414	434	1546
MT	331	2302	362	2210	413	2435	458	2946	575	2888	566	1708
NL	12397	11453	13147	13028	13831	14167	14375	14841	14888	15648	15030	14721
MK	150	55	209	77	312	121	419	168	398	281	390	293
NO	1723	5612	2113	6328	2315	6767	2684	7125	2967	7740	3139	8034
PL	16796	13120	16671	15562	15450	16943	15266	17335	14897	18192	12274	17921
PT	8033	11481	8705	12969	9131	14330	9677	15232	10395	16222	9817	15404
RO	6406	2583	6851	3292	7215	3632	8179	3747	8800	4023	7590	3591
RS			736	237	774	246	897	257	847	244	261	243
SK	3819	1797	3846	1992	3769	2155	3991	2180	3719	2429	3059	2206
SI	1987	2262	2095	2589	1960	2726	2189	2951	2136	2950	2404	3010
ES	36842	42558	39714	45800	40031	48829	40199	51317	44099	52998	40949	48203
SE	4635	9760	4118	10165	4069	10541	4478	10533	4862	10608	4865	10909
TR	14678	7943	16179	7470	17008	3563	17957	3521	17542	4641	15664	4619
UK	14803	30235	15784	31364	16559	31802	17048	31871	18133	30497	16596	22555

Table A.4. Number of students enrolled in Portuguese higher education, by area of study, from 2014 to 2019

	Education	Arts & Humanities	Social Sciences, Business & Law	Science	Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	Agriculture	Health and Welfare	Services	Unknown or unspecified
2014	17 208	35 492	114 619	28 278	81 577	6 967	57 194	20 522	306
2015	15 049	35 375	112 085	27 132	76 953	6 810	55 530	20 385	143
2016	13 969	36 285	113 800	28 650	78 390	7 778	55 406	21 705	384
2017	13 603	37 558	115 952	30 207	78 027	8 047	56 113	22 198	238
2018	13 084	38 995	120 748	32 019	78 830	8 236	57 518	22 990	333
2019	12 685	40 346	126 537	32 866	81 137	8 422	58 986	24 001	267

Table A.5. Number of outgoing Erasmus Portuguese students, by area of study, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Education	73	100	90	89	117	81
Arts & Humanities	372	719	716	829	765	772
Social Sciences, Business & Law	1 646	2 864	3 176	3 437	3 947	4 043
Science	479	882	937	1 004	983	1 223
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	728	1 282	1 132	956	1 074	1 163
Agriculture	146	255	273	250	265	291
Health and Welfare	577	1 283	1 357	1 301	1 340	1 408
Services	545	1 263	1 424	1 516	1 473	1 539
Unknown or unspecified	7	13	17	8	14	23

Table A.6. Number of outgoing Portuguese Erasmus students, by the district of origin, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Aveiro	150	281	286	295	276	254
Beja	18	62	49	54	51	52
Braga	265	410	414	426	422	459
Bragança	190	272	321	335	322	356
Castelo Branco	120	291	296	259	302	261
Coimbra	597	1 116	1 121	1 025	1 078	1 107
Évora	47	93	93	101	122	143
Faro	82	132	114	133	134	180
Guarda	48	116	109	120	107	99
Leiria	66	242	229	281	261	324
Lisboa	1 774	3 037	3 269	3 546	3 716	3 936
Portalegre	1	37	37	22	52	44
Porto	846	1 643	1 641	1 674	1 848	1 994
Santarém	30	62	145	159	161	113
Setúbal	10	50	41	43	84	64
Viana do Castelo	62	145	143	160	91	123
Vila Real	80	216	167	122	155	139
Viseu	26	69	74	82	65	94
RA Madeira	19	40	63	50	65	92
RA Açores	17	31	69	44	70	66

Table A.7. Number of outgoing Portuguese Erasmus students, by country of destination, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
AT	54	130	112	139	151	163
BE	165	299	282	315	318	322
BG	33	49	51	44	71	61
HR	42	94	90	136	138	195
CY	2	9	8	12	17	22
CZ	281	491	555	591	575	645
DK	51	111	108	108	107	132
EE	13	43	40	52	66	55
FI	86	139	143	154	138	154
FR	258	429	425	418	459	458
DE	270	458	505	565	613	616
EL	31	77	120	113	153	151
HU	128	252	272	278	315	317
IS	n.a.	1	1	n.a.	7	6
IE	26	38	84	66	70	73
IT	586	1 028	1 089	1 103	1 203	1 294
LV	21	40	67	59	46	67
LI	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
LT	61	110	171	175	191	188
LU	5	10	10	10	13	25
MT	3	7	9	19	17	13
NL	184	360	358	407	430	468
MK	0	0	0	0	4	1
NO	47	80	83	80	91	109
PL	589	1 048	1 129	1 083	1 169	1 355
PT	-	-	-	-	-	-
RO	146	254	222	208	226	202
RS	n.a.	n.a.	3	2	3	10
SK	52	77	92	138	159	164
SI	110	161	201	204	202	230
ES	861	1 872	1 915	1 849	1 839	1 885
SE	61	132	104	130	126	132
TR	102	140	48	16	29	47
UK	180	402	353	418	385	317
Partner Countries	0	5	31	39	51	23
Total	4 448	8 346	8 681	8 931	9 382	9 900

Table A.8. Number of incoming Portuguese Erasmus students, by area of study, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Education	289	525	598	693	682	732
Arts & Humanities	946	1 579	1 692	1 924	1 979	1 987
Social Sciences, Business & Law	2 450	4 126	4 679	5 148	5 494	5 395
Science	500	1 038	1 306	1 439	1 658	1 732
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	1 003	1 747	1 872	2 108	2 228	2 098
Agriculture	177	346	429	415	462	444
Health and Welfare	567	1 087	1 250	1 357	1 573	1 510
Services	659	1 355	1 545	1 649	1 823	1 799
Unknown or unspecified	9	15	22	14	20	30

Table A.9. Number of incoming Portuguese Erasmus students, by country of origin, from 2014/ 2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
AT	72	191	190	220	256	224
BE	183	344	389	405	434	443
BG	33	64	94	116	109	111
HR	34	111	153	175	227	216
CY	3	18	32	22	28	20
CZ	256	498	510	556	578	571
DK	52	98	116	132	120	111
EE	38	77	70	95	88	66
FI	75	163	174	189	172	170
FR	319	622	798	968	1 120	1 183
DE	565	936	1 111	1 214	1 324	1 274
EL	66	235	219	259	258	296
HU	108	203	192	245	268	240
IS	1	4	2	2	5	4
IE	17	20	24	39	41	24
IT	989	1 749	1 923	2 190	2 368	2 427
LV	51	123	118	102	128	111
LI	1	1	1	2	1	0
LT	176	355	409	386	423	331
LU	11	30	30	34	35	45
MT	0	0	1	2	1	4
NL	192	317	422	439	483	479
MK	0	2	9	9	17	22
NO	39	71	70	91	165	157
PL	717	1 462	1 539	1 565	1 591	1 546
PT	-	-	-	-	-	-
RO	174	345	421	481	429	457
RS	0	0	7	28	27	17
SK	90	182	181	221	240	232
SI	86	203	153	196	204	215
ES	1 754	2 430	2 762	2 998	3 275	3 397
SE	51	109	117	122	146	157
TR	356	580	703	702	796	671
UK	68	197	233	294	284	287
Partner Countries	0	52	220	248	278	219
Total	6 577	11 792	13 393	14 747	15 919	15 727

Table A.10. Number of incoming Portuguese Erasmus students, by the district of destination, from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Aveiro	315	330	362	361	396	419
Beja	33	39	29	45	26	26
Braga	428	372	406	436	418	436
Bragança	240	233	227	222	280	312
Castelo Branco	256	212	230	266	269	253
Coimbra	1 185	1 233	1 414	1 449	1 495	1 463
Évora	109	107	124	130	152	143
Faro	215	227	244	258	232	235
Guarda	58	86	62	76	102	81
Leiria	163	175	205	202	244	203
Lisboa	3 695	4 074	4 497	4 837	5 109	5 164
Portalegre	24	41	23	25	21	31
Porto	2 119	2 297	2 434	2 552	2 784	2 968
Santarém	77	91	76	103	115	102
Setúbal	88	106	99	126	144	140
Viana do Castelo	106	87	110	114	109	97
Vila Real	117	159	139	157	164	155
Viseu	77	68	72	74	49	89
RA Madeira	50	69	67	76	83	154
RA Açores	86	121	109	123	126	130

Appendix B. Survey questions

This form was carried out by a student from the Católica Porto Business School, for the Final Thesis of the Master's Degree in Service Management, regarding the impact of Erasmus on higher education in Europe, and its main objective is to assess the students' point of view on the impact that the Erasmus Programme had on their personal and professional life. The questionnaire is anonymous and confidential, and the information collected will only be used for this purpose. By filling out the questionnaire, you consent to the use of the information, solely and exclusively, for the purpose of the thesis.

I agree to participate in this research. I declare that I was informed that my participation in this study is voluntary and that all data is confidential.

Yes

About You

1. Age

<18

18-21

22-25

>25

2. Gender

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

3. Nationality

Portuguese

Other: _____

About Erasmus

4. Academic Year

2021/2022

2020/2021

- 2019/2020
- 2018/2019
- 2017/2018
- 2016/2017
- 2015/2016
- 2014/2015
- Before 2014/2015

5. Field of Education

- Business
- Economics
- Finance
- Marketing
- Medicine
- Pharmacology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- Engineering
- Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Humanities and Social Science
- Law
- Sports
- Other: _____

6. Home University

- Universidade Católica Portuguesa
- Universidade da Beira Interior
- Universidade da Madeira
- Universidade de Aveiro
- Universidade de Coimbra
- Universidade de Évora

- Universidade de Lisboa
- Universidade de Trás-os-Montes
- Universidade do Algarve
- Universidade do Minho
- Universidade do Porto
- Universidade Fernando Pessoa
- Universidade Lusíada
- Universidade Lusófona
- Universidade NOVA de Lisboa
- Universidade Portucalense
- Other: _____

7. Country in which you did Erasmus

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland

- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- Other: _____

8. Host University

Erasmus Experience

9. Main Reason(s) for doing Erasmus. Please choose the 3 options that are more suited for your case:

- Live abroad
- Personal development (become less shy, lose the “fear of the unknown”, get out of the comfort zone...)
- Gain independence
- Cultural intelligence (be aware, understand and embrace a new culture)
- Meet new people/ make new friends
- Learn a new language
- Host university is better than home university
- Improve career prospects in my own country
- Improve career prospects in a foreign country
- Have fun
- Peer-pressure
- Other: _____

10. Main reason(s) for choosing the destination you chose. Please choose the 3 options that are more suited for your case:

- Proximity to my home country
- Climate
- Lower cost of living

- Same/ similar language
- Possibility to learn/ improve a specific language
- Possibility to travel more
- High interest in the culture/ natural heritage of the country
- Higher quality of the education system
- Prestige of the host university
- Nightlife/ Parties
- Other: _____

11. How satisfied were you with your Erasmus experience? (Rating scale: 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied

12. Did Erasmus help you understand the EU values and principles and the importance of inclusion and diversity in society better?

- Yes, I am **more aware of the EU values and principles** and **changed my attitude** towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)
- Yes, **I am more aware of the EU values and principles** but **did not change my attitude** towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)
- Yes, I am **not aware of the EU values and principles**, but **I changed my attitude** towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)
- No, I am **not aware of the EU values and principles**, and I **did not change my attitude** towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)

13. How successful do you believe the Erasmus programme was in achieving the following goals:

	Unsuccessful	Successful	Highly Successful	No opinion
Promoting Inclusion and Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting Digital Transformation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing Environmental Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging Participation in Democratic Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix C. Survey answers

About You

1. Age

<18	0
18-21	53
22-25	197
>25	23
Total	273

2. Gender

Male	87
Female	184
Prefer not to say	2
Total	273

3. Nationality

Portuguese	257
Brazilian	5
Cape-Verdean	7
Santomense	1
Mozambican	1
Chinese	1
Portuguese-German	1
Total	273

About Erasmus

4. Academic year

2021/2022	69
2020/2021	53
2019/2020	98
2018/2019	37
2017/2018	8
2016/2017	2
2015/2016	2
2014/2015	0
Before 2014	4
Total	273

5. Area of study

Business	59
Economics	27
Finance	1
Marketing	7

Law	1
Journalism	0
Medicine	27
Pharmacology	1
Chemistry	1
Physics	2
Biology	6
Engineering	49
Mathematics	4
Computer Science	8
Humanities and Social Science	29
Sports	2
Arts	9
Performative Arts	2
Hotel & Tourism	19
Sociology	1
Psychology	3
Communication	2
Biochemistry	2
Biotechnology	1
Design	6
Total	269

6. Home institution

Universidade de Aveiro	61
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	51
Universidade Católica Portuguesa	40
Instituto Politécnico de Bragança	35
Universidade de Coimbra	20
Universidade de Évora	16
Universidade do Porto	10
Universidade da Madeira	11
Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo do Estoril	12
Instituto Politécnico do Porto	5
Universidade de Lisboa	2
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa	2
Universidade do Minho	1
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo	1
Universidade Lusíada	1
Universidade Portucalense	1
Total	269

7. Country of destination

Austria	5
Belgium	5
Bulgaria	0
Croatia	18
Cyprus	0
Czech Republic	23
Denmark	1
Estonia	1
Finland	4
France	15
Germany	11
Greece	2
Hungary	8
Ireland	0
Italy	40
Latvia	1
Lithuania	6
Luxembourg	0
Malta	0
Netherlands	6
Norway	2
Poland	47
Romania	12
Slovakia	8
Slovenia	7
Spain	37
Sweden	3
Turkey	2
United Kingdom	5
Total	269

8. Host institution

Bocconi University (Italy)	8
University of Split (Croatia)	6
Politecnico di Milano (Italy)	5
University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)	4
Lancaster University (United Kingdom)	4
Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb (Croatia)	4
University of Coruña (Spain)	4
University of Bologna (Italy)	4
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)	4
Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia)	3
Politechnika Wroclawska (Poland)	3

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)	3
Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai (Romania)	3
University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)	3
Vysoká škola ekonomická (Czech Republic)	3
University of Wrocław (Poland)	3
Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)	3
University of Chemistry and Technology of Prague (Czech Republic)	3
Other	199
Total	269

(Question 8. has 217 different answers. Thus, here are only represented the ones that appear more often.)

Erasmus Experience

9. Main reason(s) for doing Erasmus

Live abroad	142
Personal development (become less shy, lose the "fear of the unknown", get out of the comfort zone...)	228
Gain independence	67
Cultural intelligence	146
Meet new people/ make new friends	119
Learn a new language	44
Host university is better than home university	29
Improve career prospects in Portugal	54
Improve career prospects abroad	46
Have fun	64
Other	8
Total	947

10. Main reason(s) for choosing the destination you chose

Proximity to Portugal	33
Climate	38
Lower cost of living	104
Same/ similar language and/or lifestyle	25
Possibility to learn/ improve a specific language	94
Possibility to travel more	149
High interest in the culture/ natural heritage of the country	140
Higher quality of the education system	52
Prestige of the host university	68
Nightlife/ Parties	63
Few options	11
Due to the ECTS	11
Other	10
Total	798

11. How satisfied were you with your Erasmus experience?

1 = Very dissatisfied	0
2 = Dissatisfied	6
3 = Neutral	16
4 = Satisfied	86
5 = Very satisfied	161
Total	269

12. Did Erasmus help you understand the EU values and principles and the importance of inclusion and diversity in society better?

Yes, I am more aware of the EU values and principles and changed my attitude towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)	154
Yes, I am more aware of the EU values and principles but did not change my attitude towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)	58
Yes, I am not aware of the EU values and principles but I changed my attitude towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)	32
No, I am not aware of the EU values and principles and I did not change my attitude towards inclusion and diversity issues (nationality, race, culture, gender...)	25
Total	269

13. How successful do you believe the Erasmus programme was in achieving the following goals

	Unsuccessful	Successful	Very successful	No opinion	Total
Promoting Inclusion and Diversity	11	83	163	12	269
Promoting Digital Transformation	42	88	66	73	269
Increasing Environmental Awareness	80	83	43	63	269
Encouraging Participation in Democratic Life	71	95	48	55	269