



PRESS RELEASE

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PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

Implementing coordination for future challenges

In 2017-2018, 245,000 students came to France for credited study (for a period of more than a year), ranking France 4th in the world. Over 90,000 French students took part in credited study abroad (ranking 6th in the world). In addition, almost 44,000 French students took part in Erasmus+ in 2016 (non-credited study, for a period of less than a year).

The Cour des comptes of France carried out a detailed survey on the various forms of student mobility among all stakeholders concerned (incoming, outgoing, relocation, credited and non-credited), based on data which is often unpublished. A factor in outreach and competitiveness, international student mobility concerns four ministries and two operators (Erasmus+ and Campus France), resulting in a total estimated expenditure of €2.5 billion. Public authorities set a target of 500,000 incoming students to France for 2027 and 400,000 French outgoing students to Europe in 2024. To meet such a challenge in acceptable financial and qualitative conditions, a number of key reforms should be undertaken.

The Cour des comptes of France has formulated 11 recommendations to improve knowledge, promotion, management, leadership and, ultimately, effectiveness of the system for international student mobility.

Attractive incoming mobility, but with a lack of focus on student success and the performance of institutions

Between 2012 and 2016, international student mobility into France experienced less progression than into other major host countries.

It is important that the institutions themselves ensure the quality of their international recruitment with a view to improving their responses to the needs and skills of their students, as well as in terms of the consistency of their course offerings. The percentage of postgraduate students compared to undergraduate students should be strengthened, taking into account the specific contribution international doctoral students make to French research. Further monitoring of the quality and transparency of courses offered internationally should be carried out. Information on the type of course offered and its features could be improved. The effects of “filling up” of courses as seen in certain institutions must be avoided.

It would be logical to provide more flexibility to institutions in terms of registration fees for students from outside of the EU, in a bid to take account of their respective comparative advantages on the global academic stage.



Structure and promotion of outgoing mobility to be improved

Institutions play a major role in the development of outgoing mobility; key for student success and their capacity for professional integration. However, the tools available to institutions are scarcely and poorly used.

In addition, Erasmus+ must improve its consideration of student populations distanced from international mobility in economic and cultural terms. The lack of statistical monitoring of mobility at national level is detrimental, as it prevents sociological, territorial, and inter-institution inequalities concerning access to mobility from being addressed. Lastly, knowledge and adaptation of the bursary system are insufficient.

The uncertain role of relocating courses and campuses abroad

A number of higher education institutions have developed internationalisation strategies by relocating their campuses or courses abroad, particularly in an effort to strengthen their academic standing. These course and campus relocations are operated in various ways (autonomous strategies, foreign invitations or bilateral projects) and are often unsatisfactorily inspected, particularly from a budgetary point of view and in terms of the monitoring of conventions. They should be integrated within a global vision for international student mobility, particularly in order to better regulate flows and improve efficiency of the policy.

[Read the report](#)

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