



# Erasmus Mundus Master Courses

Summary Report of 2007 & 2008  
Framework Partnership Agreements  
(FPAs)

EACEA

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**Foreword**

This publication discusses the outcomes of the Erasmus Mundus Master Courses (EMMCs) selected in 2007 and 2008. The EMMCs organised the distribution of the Erasmus Mundus scholarships to international students and guest scholars/lecturers for five consecutive years. The report reviews the following six aspects: the added value of the EMMCs for Europe, for the European higher education area and for academia, quality assurance measures, employability, credit recognition and degree types, as well as collaboration and course management. This summary report is complementary to the synthesis report "Lessons Learnt from Erasmus Mundus: the first generation – EACEA synthesis report" concerning the FPAs 2004-2006.

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## INTRODUCTION

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This summary report concerns the last two generations of Framework Partnership Agreements of the first Erasmus Mundus Master Course (EMMC) programme period (2004-2008). It looks at EMMCs which were selected in 2007 and 2008, offered joint Master courses of high quality that last one-and-a-half or two years, and organised the distribution of the Erasmus Mundus scholarships for international students and guest scholars/lecturers for a total of five consecutive intakes.

The report is complementary to several existing reports concerning the first phase of Erasmus Mundus. In particular:

1. ***Lessons Learnt from Erasmus Mundus: The First Generation EACEA Synthesis Report***, published by EACEA in October 2013, which assessed the FPA generations of 2004 - 2006 whose last intake graduated in 2012. The report focused mostly on the process of inter-institutional cooperation and how EMMCs contribute to the Bologna process (**jointness**), **employability, promotion and sustainability** measures.
2. The ECORYS publication, ***Clustering Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes and Attractiveness Projects: Sustainability, Recognition of Degrees and Joint Degrees, Survey Report*** (ECORYS, 2012), which focused on the first programme phase and looked in particular at **recognition** and **sustainability**.
3. The report ***Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees: The Story So Far*** (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2016).

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## METHOD OF THIS SUMMARY REPORT

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The summary report takes into account the Erasmus Mundus award criteria and the final summary reports submitted by the consortia in 2014. The Master course funding applications were assessed based on two broad criteria: **(A) quality of the content**, and **(B) quality of cooperation**.

Among these, criteria were weighted under the following headings:

1. Academic quality and integration of the study programme
2. Admission and mobility
3. Third-country students/scholars and language policy
4. Quality assurance and evaluation
5. Management and feasibility
6. Other aspects

Under the six selection criteria the following specific aspects were taken into account:

- ◆ The added value for Europe.
- ◆ The academic added value.
- ◆ Quality assurance indicators and measures (learning outcomes and skills; programme evaluation; structure and content of the course).
- ◆ Credit recognition among the partner HEIs and diploma supplement.
- ◆ Career preparation via linked research and non-academic activities.
- ◆ Collaboration and management of the course and of student applications.
- ◆ Promotion activities.
- ◆ Student services.

A final survey was submitted to the consortia after all their five intakes had completed the degree programmes. The survey contained eleven central questions which are related to the original award criteria. The quality of the answers received was rather variable. For instance, some responses were very informative taking into account the work and experience of the entire consortium, while a few coordinators responded to some or all questions only in respect of their own institution. In several cases, some answers do not respond to the questions or no relevant information is provided.

Based on the survey answers received, conclusions are drawn at the end of this report. This summary report also offers an overview on the development of degree types, comparing the type of degree intended by the consortia at application stage with the type of degree awarded to students by the time of graduation of the last intake in 2014.

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## SUMMARY REPORT

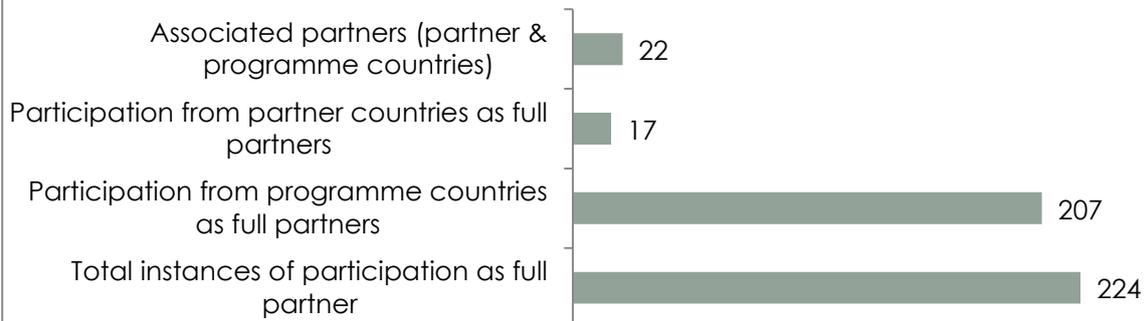
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In 2007 and 2008, the Erasmus Mundus programme provided funding for **46** consortia. Given that one project terminated after the second intake, this report is based on the **45** consortia that completed their contracts as foreseen.

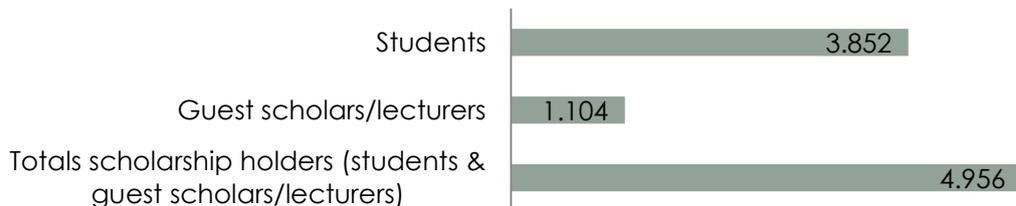
### Numbers of Beneficiaries and Scholarships of 2007 & 2008 FPAs

There were **224** instances of participation of HEIs acting as **full consortium partners** (**207** from programme countries, **17** from partner countries<sup>1</sup>) that managed EMMCs for the five consecutive student intakes. In addition there were **22 associated partners** (13 from partner countries and 9 from programme countries) within the 46 EMMCs. Overall, consortia provided a total of **3.852 students** and **1.104 guest scholars/lecturers** with scholarships from partner and programme countries. Full EMMC scholarships for students from programme countries were made available only from 2010 onwards. The last groups of Erasmus Mundus Master students started their studies in autumn 2012 and graduated by 2014.

### Numbers of HEI Beneficiaries



### Numbers of Scholarship Holders



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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the Call for Proposals in 2007, a distinction was made between "third countries" (today identified as "partner countries") and those countries whose higher education institutions were directly eligible for EM funding, which in 2007 were the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Croatia, FYRoM, and Turkey (today identified as "programme countries").

## (A) Quality of the content

### ◆ ADDED VALUE (FOR EUROPE, ACADEMIA, STUDENTS)

#### ■ FOR EUROPE, THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA, AND ACADEMIA:

EMMC courses often have a multi-disciplinary approach and offer a unique course structure, which includes different experts from the different partners. In best-example cases the fields of study are clearly identified as having a direct impact on the competitiveness of European industry in the respective fields. Accordingly, some EMMCs put a lot of effort into incorporating specific skills courses into their academic plan.

Overall, the EMMCs allowed the partner higher education institutions (HEIs) to strengthen the links between their respective departments, researchers and administrations. Many universities faced challenges, in some cases for the first time, related to the international dimensions of the EMMCs. For example, the new international degrees led to the increased use of the English language, or a change in administrative procedures, such as issuing diplomas, financial calculations, etc.

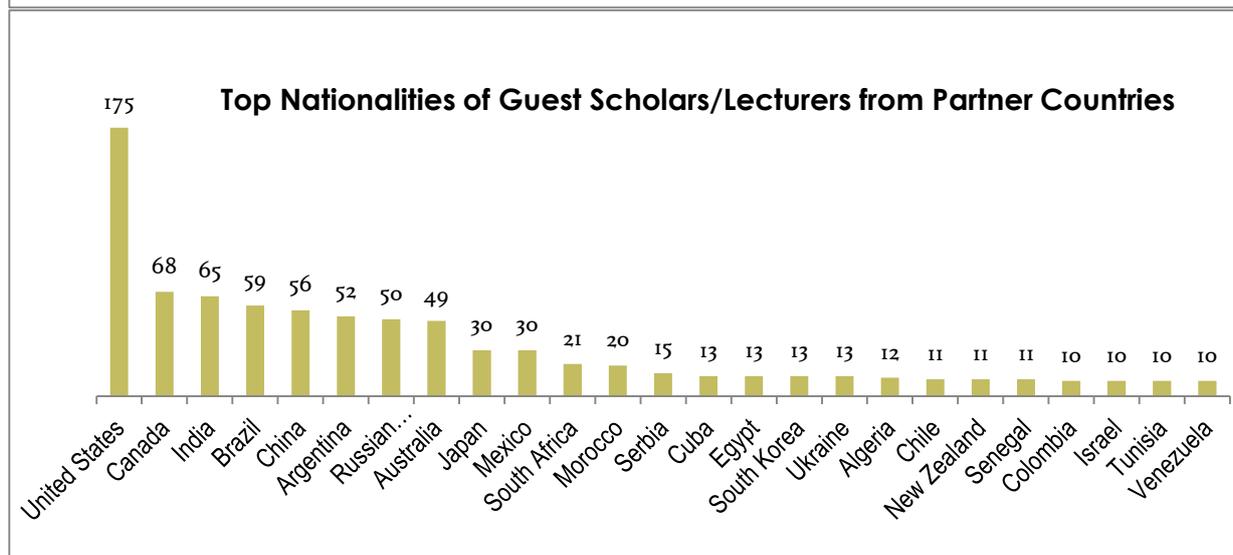
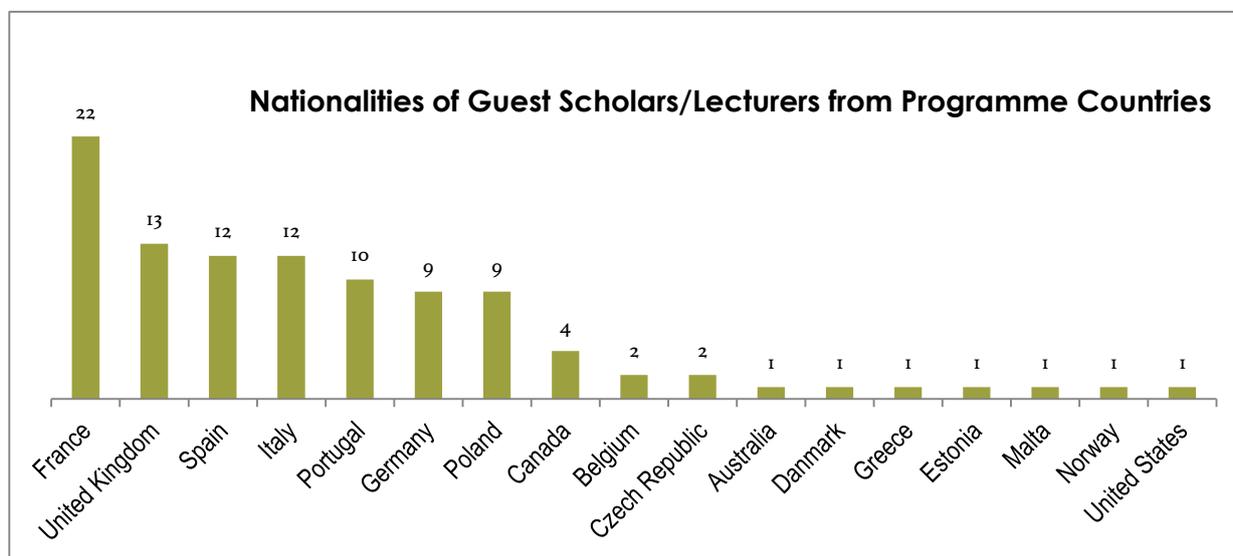
The outcome of the joint degree programmes (in the form of double/multiple or joint diplomas) was an excellent exchange of know-how among European academic experts. The joint supervisions of student theses and the collaboration on joint course modules necessitated harmonisation of how student results were evaluated across the various HEIs.

The exchange of knowledge was enhanced by implementing strategies for the involvement of guest lecturers/scholars from anywhere in the world into the Master degree programmes. Guest lecturers/scholars contributed on a regular basis to the same programme, which reinforced the collaboration between the partners. International guest scholars were involved in tutoring students, co-supervising projects/theses, giving lectures, or teaching entire modules. In a few cases, guest scholars contributed also to the planning of curricula.

**Guest Scholars/Lecturer Participation in EMMCs with an EM scholarship:**

In line with the Erasmus Mundus programme objectives, 1000 guest scholars/lecturers who participated in the 45 EMMCs, which completed all five intakes, came from **partner countries (90%)**, while 102 scholars came from **programme country institutions (10%)**.

While all 45 EMMCs could invite guest scholars from **partner country institutions** (the smallest number was 4 and the highest number was 43), only 11 EMMCs provided scholarships to guest scholars/lecturers from **programme countries**.

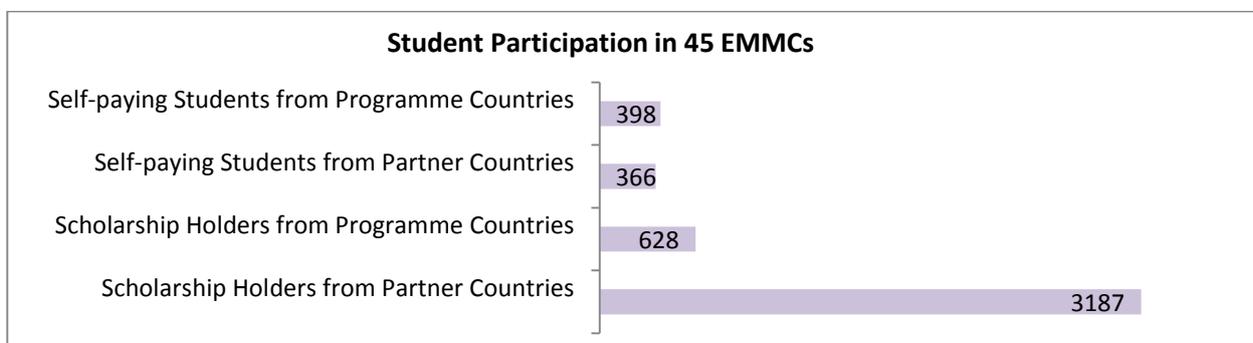


■ **STUDENTS:**

EMMC students benefitted from unique multi-cultural experiences, in at least two HEIs in different European countries. All consortia provided assistance to EM students during the preparatory stages in order to obtain student visas and to plan their lives abroad. Similarly, consortia ensured that students were put into contact with EMMC alumni. EMMCs often organised kick-off seminars, welcoming receptions or special introductory sessions for their groups of students – sometimes in combination with the cohort one year ahead of them. In all cases, EM students received support from the respective university international offices which give direct guidance for essential issues, such as accommodation, enrolment, health insurance, local activities, etc.

Thanks to the different compulsory mobility paths, EM students learned new languages or improved their language skills, learned about different academic cultures, in most cases had the opportunity to get insight into European industries or non-academic institutions/organisations, and received an excellent, often multi-disciplinary, specialised education.

As good practice, it was considered that particular attention should be given to the social integration of student groups, by creating for instance a tutor or buddy system, organising and regularly informing students about social and cultural events, and by offering regular language courses. In one exemplary case, the consortium offered intensive survival language courses for 2-3 weeks (for 2 ECTS) at the beginning of the semester to EMMC students in order to facilitate their integration into daily life in their new country. This intensive course was in addition to the regular, optional local language classes, which all EMMCs offered to their intakes. A few EMMCs also paid attention that psychological counselling was made available, that discussion sessions on cultural identities were offered, and that course work was open to non-EMMC students as well.



### **Student Participation:**

Scholarship holders: In line with the Erasmus Mundus programme objectives, each of the 45 EMMCs had at least three times as many students from partner countries as from programme countries.

EMMCs reported between 54 and 81 scholarship holders from **partner countries** as totals for their five intakes. Scholarship holders from **programme countries** ranged from 2 to 23, with one EMMC having none.

Self-paying students: The numbers and ratios of students from **programme and partner countries** who participated without an EMMC scholarship (764 in total) varied considerably.

Thirty-one EMMCs reported between 1 and 51 self-paying students from **partner countries** over five intakes, while 14 had no self-paying students. One EMMC reported 133 self-paying students from **programme countries** over five intakes, 28 EMMCs had between 2 and 37 self-paying, programme country students, while 16 had none.

### ◆ **QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)**

A certain degree of heterogeneity was noticed concerning efforts invested in the definition of quality assurance measures. The management of quality assurance strategies ranged from shared responsibilities between partners to more centralized approaches. In all cases quality assurance outcomes included the voices of the students via regular student surveys and consortia discussed outcomes in joint meetings.

- **INTERNAL QA:** Internal QA assurance measures either concerned the EMMC programme as a whole or were undertaken separately at each partner institution with minor coordination efforts. Coordinated internal QA measures were, for instance:
  - Collaboration on the criteria for the selection of the best students,
  - identical surveys distributed at each partner institution to students, teachers, local coordinators, and even administrative staff concerning the EMMC,
  - interviews with students after graduation,
  - the establishment of a quality assurance committee, in which all consortium partners were represented, which analysed feedback and improved the course accordingly.
- **EXTERNAL QA:** External QA measures also diverged among the consortia as for instance with regard to external expertise. Among those who benefitted

from it, it was reported, for example, that an external board was set up – composed of representatives of industries or other academic institutions. In other cases, the analysis of an external agency, such as a national QA agency was also mentioned.

Another interesting measure for assuring quality of the EMMC, was the involvement of external experts, such as professors from other HEIs or experts from non-academic organisations/institutions, and the involvement of external experts in the assessment of student theses.

## ◆ EMPLOYABILITY

### ■ CAREER PREPARATION (INTERNSHIPS, NON-ACADEMIC ORGANISATIONS, SPECIFIC SKILLS MODULES)

Many EMMCs involved non-academic organisations in their course programme, although to a varying extent. Collaboration might be crucial for one Master course in a study field oriented towards specific industrial sectors. For another Master course, contacts with the non-academic professional world were primarily for networking purposes. For other Master programmes, additional efforts ought to have been undertaken to increase non-academic involvement and enhance student employment.

The types of non-academic organisations varied and included a wide range of industrial companies, research institutes, NGOs, foundations, associations, governmental, and international organisations.

The nature of their involvement in EMMCs was also multi-faceted and depended on the structure, contents, and efforts made for the programme. In very few EMMCs were internships an obligatory part of the programme during which students had to work on a project. To the contrary, a more common feature was to facilitate optional internships during the summer period for EM students, or students could opt for writing their thesis in a company while also following academic standards under the supervision of their HEI advisors. It was also reported that experts from non-academic organisations got involved in workshop activities, and/or in the planning and monitoring of course modules, which resulted in regular updates of teaching skills and competences as required on the job market. In exemplary cases consortia were also able to elaborate their links with companies which led to additional funding opportunities for their Master programmes.

In other cases, the master offered different types of transferable skills courses such as oral presentation, writing skills, intercultural competencies, career planning, project proposals, etc.

- **GRADUATE FOLLOW UP:**

Although EMMC consortia seem to receive information about the career paths of their graduates who contact them for recommendation letters or to report on their new careers, only few reported about statistical methods used to follow-up on the outcomes of the degrees they were providing. Exemplary courses indicated to follow up students via surveys, once or ideally several times after graduation. Examples of graduate career progress can also be used as a marketing strategy for the Master programme and employability and areas of employability are sometimes used as indicators for the quality and success of their EMMC.

## **(B) Quality of cooperation**

- ◆ **CREDIT RECOGNITION & DEGREE TYPES**

- **CREDIT RECOGNITION:**

The EMMC reports clearly show that participation in an EMMC consortium led to a deeper understanding of teaching and learning goals among the HEI partners concerned. Since EMMC consortia issued double/multiple or joint degrees to their EM students, which, in most instances, were newly established multiple/joint degrees, the programme partners were involved in discussions on evaluating learning outcomes, teaching and learning goals, and had to find ways to agree on student credit achievements. The EMMC reports also show that not all partner HEIs applied ECTS. In cases where partners kept using their own internal credit system, they agreed on converting student credits into the ECTS system as a common denominator. Usually, the information about achieved credits was transferred to the degree-issuing partner institution.

- **DEGREES:**

In 2007 only four out of 23 consortia intended to implement joint degrees, with the remaining consortia foreseeing multiple/double degrees. In 2008 the number of consortia planning joint degrees had risen to 10 out of 22 EMMCs.

At the end of their contracts 7 consortia of the 2008 generation delivered joint degrees to their Erasmus Mundus graduates. In three joint degrees, one or two partners of the consortia were legally prevented from issuing joint degrees. In these specific cases, participating students having studied at one of the HEIs that were prevented from issuing a joint degree were provided with double or multiple degrees. Some consortia, who only issued double/multiple degrees, nevertheless provided an informal joint certificate in addition to the double/multiple degree diplomas. All consortia issued diploma supplement(s).

Legal reasons were cited for not being able to implement joint diplomas as was the administrative complexity behind issuing joint diplomas, necessitating that each diploma has to be signed off by each of the partner HEIs.

Usually, the joint degree was coordinated and issued by one of the partner institutions (usually the coordinator), and circulated among the partners for signature.

One consortium, however, applied a unique organisational model: the joint diploma was issued by one of the two hosting institutions and was signed as a joint degree diploma by the two HEIs which students had attended. Accordingly, each partner institution was automatically participating in the issuance of a joint diploma according to the various paths of the students. Thus, the workload was shared, and all HEIs, including their administrations, adopted this new diploma model.

■ **STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

EMMC consortia put major efforts into the selection of excellent students for each intake. Overall, the selected student pools were of very high quality and included highly motivated students from very different backgrounds. The consortia determined the selection criteria, which varied from one course to another as they depended on the requirements for the specific fields of studies. For instance, in some cases, thematic or/and English tests were required in order to become eligible for the Erasmus Mundus scholarship. One of the challenges which the HEIs learnt to master was the invention of methods according to which the incoming group of students needed to be brought to similar levels of knowledge as quickly as possible.

Overall all 2007-2008 EMMC courses were very successful as only a small number of scholarship holders dropped out from the courses (122 of 3815, 3.8%).

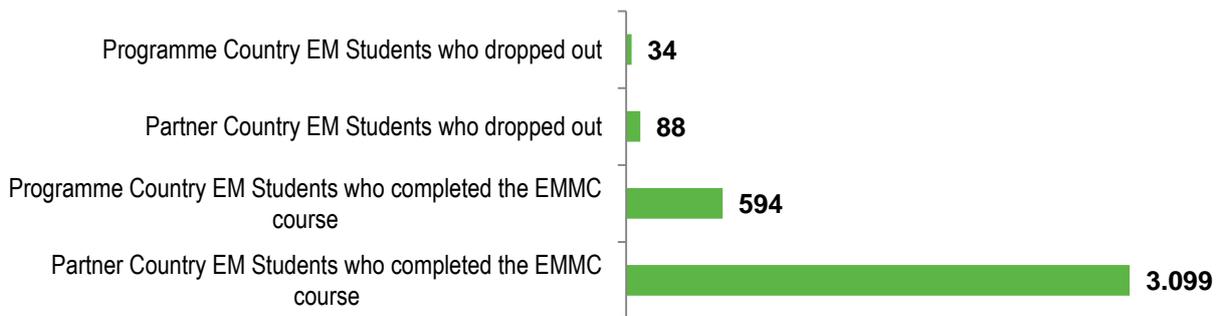
### Student Accomplishments:

Of the 45 EMMCs a total of **3.693 scholarship holders** completed the Erasmus Mundus degree courses (**3.099** from partner countries, and **594** from programme countries).

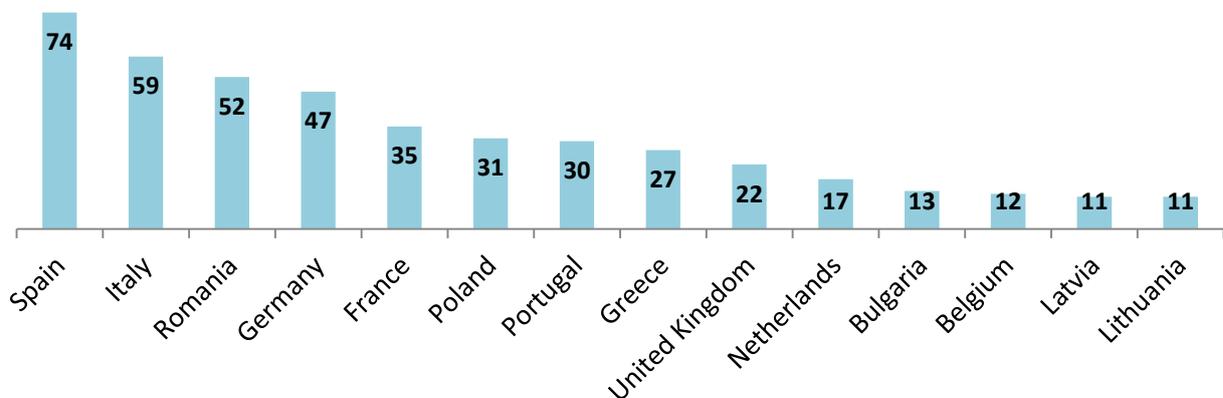
Overall, the total number of scholarship holders who dropped out of EMMCs at some point during their courses is **122** (88 from partner countries, and 34 from programme countries).

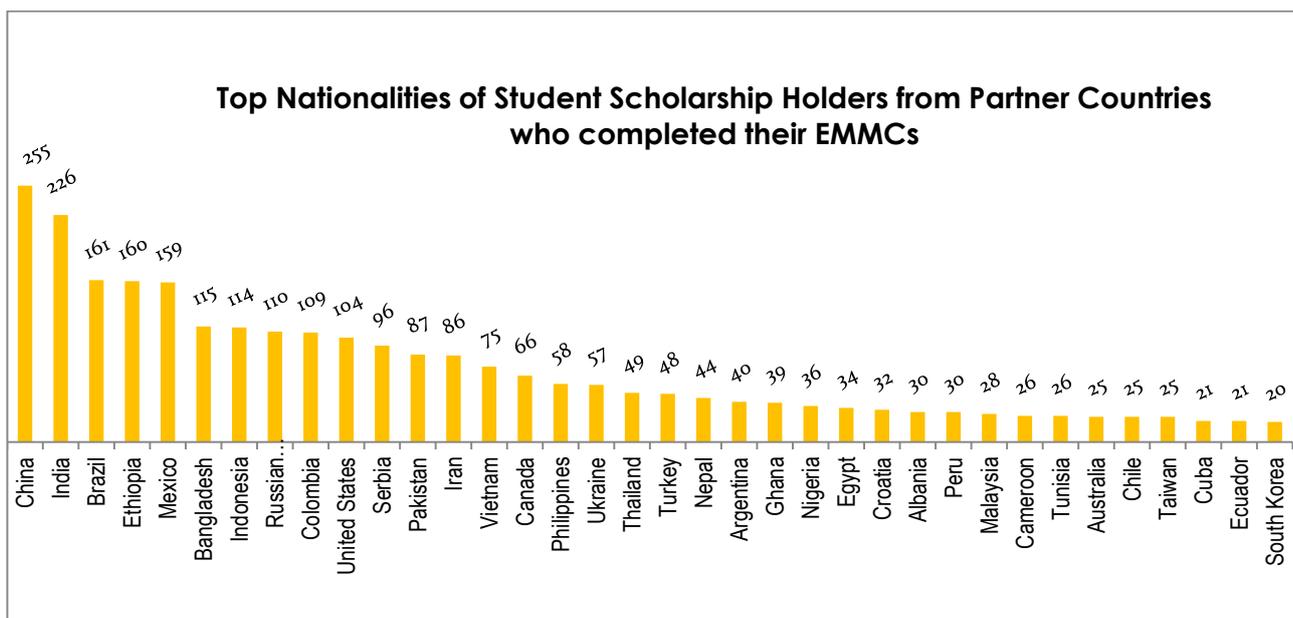
Nine EMMCs had zero drop-outs, which means, that all of their scholarship holders attended the entire respective degree programme. In addition, ten EMMCs had low-range drop-out cases only from among the group of partner country students, and three EMMCs had low-range drop-out cases (between one and four) only from among the group of programme country students. 26 EMMCs had zero drop-outs from among the group of programme country students.

### Accomplishments of Student Scholarship Holders



### Top Nationalities of Student Scholarship Holders from Programme Countries who Completed the EMMCs





◆ **COLLABORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COURSE (INCLUDING STUDENT SERVICES AND PROMOTION)**

■ **COLLABORATION**

The extent and emphasis of collaboration varied among the partners, though in all cases the consortia's partnership agreements set the basis for collaboration. Consortia collaborated on the set-up of the course structure, which started with the sharing of programme costs, clarifications of mobility paths, the planning of course modules, selection strategies, catering student intakes, agreeing on student evaluation, sharing and recognising course credits, issuing diplomas, agreeing on quality assurance measures, on the involvement of guest scholars/lecturers, and on promotion strategies.

One EMMC set up a unique example concerning the rotation and sharing of tasks among the consortium partners – which is an excellent indicator for efforts in cooperation, collaboration and effective transfers of know-how. Since one partner always had to organise the "curricular year" for the international EM student intake and accordingly the high amount of invited lecturers from the partner HEIs and other institutions, the role of the "curricular host" was set to rotate annually. Also, all partners participated in the issuance of the joint degrees, depending on the mobility paths chosen.

■ **FINANCES**

The Erasmus Mundus grant includes lump sums, which the consortia receive for the management of the EMMCs as well as for the costs of student participation. These management and participation lump sums were principally used for administrative and coordinating staff, registration, consortium meetings, student workshops/field study trips, thesis defence

conferences, teacher mobilities, laboratory equipment, the issuance of diplomas, promotion material, and student health insurance. Consortia shared the EM contribution for their administration and student participation costs, some equally, some according to their respective tuition fees, some according to the number of student intakes or number of ECTS acquired – potentially making also a distinction between whether a partner institution was a student's "home" institution or not, and/or according to tasks.

Challenges mentioned: HEI internal collaboration among the different administrative sectors, and inter-HEI collaboration. Collaboration with HEI finance departments in some instances required a lot of work, as they were neither familiar with the external programme rules, nor with documents in other languages than their own.

## OUTCOMES

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The Erasmus Mundus programme was established in 2003 with the overall objective of enhancing the quality in higher education within the European Union and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with partnering countries.

The first phase of the Erasmus Mundus programme (2004-2008) contributed significantly to a shared European experience by supporting international collaboration among a whole range of important fields of studies. The programme also contributed to a growing understanding about Europe's diverse HEI cultures, industries, European culture in general, and partnerships with non-European academic institutions.

The 2007/8-EMMC generations successfully concluded the first phase of the Erasmus Mundus programme and confirmed fully the findings of the Synthesis Report assessing the FPA generations of 2004 – 2006. This first phase was pioneering by raising awareness of the need to increase quality in higher education in Europe via collaboration and knowledge sharing strategies and implementing the first steps towards doing so. This generation clearly showed that the EMMCs contributed to developing structured approaches towards research and education in international, multi-cultural settings.

As EMMC projects demonstrated, their Master programmes are vital in economic and social terms. Their graduates received a specialised, often multi-disciplinary international education, and are well prepared for the job market. EMMC students are especially well prepared for international job markets thanks to the theoretical and practical training in research, on industrial sites, in organisations, through field work, and skills workshops in international settings.

Based on the analysis of the information 2007-2008 EMMC courses provided in their final summary reports, the main outcomes can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ EMMCs raised awareness of the importance of student perspectives in higher education and led to conscientious applications of formal and informal learning and student-centred learning methods. Consortia carefully evaluated student surveys, adapted and improved the quality of the courses and strove to balance student and teacher perspectives.
- ◆ EMMCs contributed to increasing employability for their graduates in Europe and in partner countries. EMMCs reported major successes of their graduates in becoming PhD candidates or employed in academic or non-academic institutions/organisations/companies. Thus, a major step forward was achieved in the consortia's newly established or extended links with the non-academic world of work, e.g. with industrial sectors, NGOs, and research institutes or other institutions for their EMMC students.

- ◆ At the HEI internal level, many institutions reinforced their internationalisation strategies thanks to the EMMC degrees which were the first international multiple/joint degrees for several partner HEIs or departments.
- ◆ Overall, EMMCs had a major innovative impact on how disciplines were taught: multi-disciplinary and specialised degrees could be offered, a greater number of classes in English were introduced, and collaboration in research and teaching across countries was enforced. Due to the quality checks and the involvement of multiple experts, modules were constantly checked and updated according to efficiency and the needs of the field.
- ◆ The system of the joint Master programmes, whether in the form of double, multiple, or joint degrees, has initiated important discussions and agreements on evaluating learning outcomes. ECTS was once more confirmed as the common denominator for diverging grading systems within Europe, which has improved transparency in understanding diplomas and their diploma supplements.
- ◆ The first phase of the EMMC programme also showed that quality assurance measures differ widely among HEI institutions. A European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes started development after the end of the 2008-EMMC generation. The Conference of Ministers, responsible for higher education of the EHEA/Bologna Process, adopted the European approach of the Yerevan communiqué only in May 2015.
- ◆ Despite the overall success of the outcomes of the 2007/8-EMMCs, it is worth underlining that at the end of their framework partnership agreements and according to their reporting, not many EMMCs saw themselves in a position to continue their Master degree programme. Among the reasons mentioned were: lack of a sustainability strategy, very high costs of the Master programme which may not be sufficiently covered by relatively few students, no support from non-academic institutions (e.g. industries), no availability of internal HEI funding. On the other hand, those EMMCs who had already planned their continuation, this was done either on the basis of further EU funding, or, because of the following reasons:
  - a successful promotion strategy of the Master programme, which attracted a high number of self-paying students with which the costs of the Master course could be covered,
  - financial support from non-academic bodies (e.g. industries, research institutes, foundations), which may cover parts or all of the participation costs, monthly stipends of students, or the organisation of degree essential seminars or workshops,
  - consortia stay up-to-date with a wide range of available student scholarships for which they encourage their students to apply,
  - consortia receive the necessary financial support from their own HEIs and can grant fee waivers to students, in combination with competitive project work.

As the outcome of the first programme period 2004-2008 shows, EMMCs have successfully been enriching the European higher education area with high quality teaching and learning and are producing graduates who are better qualified for the job market than without the Erasmus Mundus experience. EMMCs are preparing and elaborating European joint Master degree programmes for international students and are thus contributing to the relevance of joint international programmes in the field of higher education.

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