

## INTERNATIONALISATION IN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: STUDENT MOBILITY

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### **Abstract:**

This paper analyses the internationalization of higher education from two aspects: (I) The aspect of Europeanization of higher education; European policies, particularly the “spirit” of Bologna has influenced regions in the whole world, also the Mediterranean region to develop into a ‘Mediterranean higher education area’ (Union for the Mediterranean and other Arab countries). (II) Motives for the internationalization, which can be of academic or economic nature - especially the latter, which is becoming focal, have a strong influence on the different management of higher education institutions.

According to Knight (2005) the motives for internationalisation of the European higher education are mainly of academic nature and relate to quality improvement, development and improving the reputation of the higher education institutions, while the economic interests prevail in the USA and Australia, where the level of the internationalisation is the highest.

The idea of establish the European higher education area has been closely related to wider international and global processes in higher education based on cooperation and partnership with countries from other regions beyond the borders of the European Union and not only on international competitiveness, attractiveness and recognition. Mediterranean partners have much to gain from higher education cooperation. The South and East Mediterranean Countries can offer knowledge and experience from their rich culture and great commitment to learning. On the other hand, the EU can contribute with already established teaching methods, life-long learning arrangements, materials, labour-market intelligence, quality assurance, qualification systems, financing schemes and educational governance. This would enable the South and East Mediterranean Countries to develop coherent and functional systems allowing for the students to acquire skills relevant for the labour market as it is expected to evolve in the coming two decades. With predicted migration flows, the EU would in turn gain from an inflow of well-educated and skilled labour force (European Commission 2011, 44).

Internationalisation is an old phenomenon in higher education. In the past, mobility of students and staff was dominating. Nowadays, setting up joint programmes or degrees, branch offices in foreign countries and participation in international consortia are gaining importance. Thus, international activities are not marginal any more but are increasingly central strategic issues at the institutional level and an important dimension in national higher education policy development (Huisman & van der Wende, 2004; 2005). Internationalization for instance is referred to the following issues: (I) series of international activities such as mobility for students and teachers, (II) international partnerships and projects, (III) new international academic programs and research projects, (IV) the delivery of education to other countries, (V) inclusion of an international and global dimension into the curriculum and teaching learning process.

In this paper we examine only the issue of student mobility which is one of the most exposed indicators of internationalisation. We discuss the secondary data from 2012 (UNESCO 2014) about students from Mediterranean countries studying abroad (in numbers) and abroad students studying in

Mediterranean countries in numbers (in numbers); and compare the data with 2005 (UNESCO 2014). On the basis of data gathered we show the trends in students' mobility (incoming students- outgoing students).

*Keywords: student mobility, indicator of internationalization, higher education, Mediterranean countries*