Empirical Article

The Empirical Analysis of Degree-Mobile Students: The Hosting Country Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims at providing empirical and theoretical support to the important topic of international student mobility (ISM) in Europe. Specifically, it provides empirical analysis of degree-mobile students in 32 countries: the European Union (EU), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the United Kingdom. The study is based on the aggregate data from the European Tertiary Education Register (ETER). The goal is to construct indicator (benchmark) for analyzing degree mobility of students at the country level. The empirical analysis is conducted from the perspective of a receiving country. It effectively helps to establish the context and content of future discussions on how to address the practical problem of measuring and evaluating the dynamics of students flows in Europe.

Keywords: Bologna Process, degree/long-term student mobility, European Higher Education Area, European integration, internationalization, (international) higher education policy.

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, UNESCO's tertiary education participation indicators, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), reported that the share of students' enrollment in tertiary education of Europe and North America are 21 percent ISCED 5 (professional diplomas), 56 percent ISCED 6 (bachelors), 20 percent ISCED 7 (masters), and 3 percent ISCED 8 (doctorate) (UNESCO, 2020, p. 240). The current study provides empirical analysis of degree-mobile students in 32 nation-states: the European Union (EU), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the United Kingdom. The study is based on the aggregate data from the European Tertiary Education Register (ETER): the goal is to construct an indicator (benchmark) for analyzing degree mobility of students at the country level. The empirical analysis is conducted from the perspective of a receiving (host) country. Specifically, it reviews physical mobility data extracted from the ETER for the period between 2011-2012 and 2016-2017. The analysis addresses the following questions: What is the evolution of degree mobility? How consistent are the derived degree-mobility rates through time? (This means how stable or fluid these indicators are throughout the time); What are the findings from the cross-country comparisons of these mobility rates? It is expected that the answers to the above questions would provide insight into the dynamics of long-term mobility among students.

Although the efforts at providing a solid empirical foundation regarding international student mobility (ISM) have increased in recent years, the efforts to theorize about ISM are less abundant (see Riaño & Piguet, 2016). As to the rationale of this research, it can be claimed that relatively little has been written about ISM in comparison to other forms of migration (Riaño & Piguet, 2016). In this context, the proposed study strives to contribute to the existing knowledge base on ISM both empirically and theoretically. Specifically, the article addresses the practical problem of measuring and evaluating the dynamics of students flows in Europe. Thus, conceiving the idea to evaluate the directions and patterns of student flows.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Problem Statement

Many researchers (e.g., Findlay et al., 2012; Hackl, 2001; Kriesi, Grande, Dolezal, et al., 2012; Kriesi, Grande, Lachat, et al., 2006, 2008; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Naidoo, 2007) agree that education has become a global business which continuously shows an increasing trend in international student flows. Institutions and governments in countries with well-developed HE systems are creating initiatives to receive students from countries with less developed educational systems (Altbach, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007). Therefore, in the field of international diplomacy and domination, certain countries have extended their national interests through education (Peterson, 2014).

There are many factors that drive the patterns of ISM. These factors can be at the individual, institutional, national or even global levels. To name a few, one can recall personal aspirations for better employment prospects abroad, a lack of high-quality higher educational institutions at home, and government policies to encourage cross-border mobility for education (see OECD, 2021). Abbott and Silles (2016) argue, for example, that the main criteria influencing a student's decision where to study are the perceived quality of instruction abroad and the perceived value of host institutions. Students worldwide have become increasingly aware of differences in quality of higher education across regions and countries. This is attributed to a wide dissemination of international university rankings and university league tables (Abbott & Silles, 2016).

Given the complexity of the concept of internationalization in HE, it does not come as a surprise why so many scholars seek to shed light on this topic. The concept of internationalization as a strategy had been introduced in the early 1990s as a response to the increasing importance of knowledge in the global society and the programs and policies of the European Commission (de Wit & Hunter, 2020). It is important to note that one commonly accepted definition of internationalization is that "[this is] the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2008, p. 21). Internationalization can be framed today as "a means of

improving the quality of education and research as well as serving larger social goals" (Marinoni et al., 2019). Some authors argue that the reference to internationalization as a process is of particular relevance to researchers, especially if they intend to measure internationalization. Brandenburg (2020), for example, draws attention to the fact that a process needs entirely different indicators to measure its progress than a status. Indeed, for a process, one needs to analyze the change rate of incoming students over some period of time. For a status, on the other hand, it is sufficient to analyze only what happens in a snapshot. This means that one just needs to find the number of exchanges or the percentage of incoming students in the particular academic year. The current study takes the view of internationalization as a process. Specifically, the study aims at meeting two goals: first, it aims to explore the dynamics of student mobility (i.e., the directions and patterns of student flows) in the European region; second, it strives to measure internationalization, at least one of its important components, namely degree mobility of students.

The European Context

In Europe, the Bologna Process (BP) seems to be most influential in shaping the activities of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the field of internationalization. The ministers in charge of HE in France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom declared in Paris (France) in 1998 that they intend to establish a "harmonized" structure of study programmes and degrees. Soon thereafter, in June 1999, the ministers of 29 European countries signed the so-called "Bologna Declaration" in Bologna (Italy). This event marks the beginning of the BP and is the first attempt to formally harmonize HE on a regional scale. Harmonization in this case refers to the idea that signatories of international agreements "must eventually align their policies with those of the larger 'educational space' they have chosen to inhabit" (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012, p. 11). Importantly, both the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) declarations have chosen ISM as the single most important aim. The national governments, namely, the signatories of the two declarations, have been opting for structural "convergence" of study programmes as the single most important operational measure to achieve the aim of increased student mobility (Teichler, 2019, p. 432). Furthermore, the mobility of students and academic and administrative staff had been called in Berlin Communiqué (EHEA, 2003) as the main basis for establishing a European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

This study draws on Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué of 2009 - a turning point when the shift of quantitative targets towards the event of outward mobility has occurred. This policy reform had clearly aimed at stimulating and facilitating intra-European (credit) mobility. It is interesting, therefore, to examine how inbound degree mobility changed after the policy shift. However, some studies (Kelo et al., 2006; Teichler et al., 2012) have explicitly highlighted the intrinsic differences between "credit" and "degree" mobility. Specifically, the scholars contend that there are differences not only in the main drivers of the two types of mobility, but also in their main funding sources (Ferencz, 2015). In fact, governments can have more control over credit mobility flows because this type of mobility is largely funded via different mobility programmes either at the European, national or institutional level. In the case of degree mobility, however, governments do not have the power and the room to manoeuvre akin to credit mobility. This is explained by the fact that degree mobility is preponderantly self-funded.

Within the framework of BP, HE and research were pushed towards the centre of the EU agenda to construct Europe as a world leader in trade of commercial services (Melo, 2016). Specifically, a driving purpose of the BP and the EHEA is to complement the economic competitiveness generated by the common market. Many scholars (e.g., Broucker et al., 2019; Corbett, 2005; Hooghe & Marks, 2009, 2018; Robertson, 2008; Uslaner, 2004; van der Wende & Huisman, 2004) argue in this regard that the mobility of people in general, and students in particular, can affect other fundamental goals of the BP such as the creation of a cosmopolitan European citizen and consequently becoming the most competitive knowledge economy in the world. Given that education is both sociocultural and economic by its nature, these two dimensions are becoming more closely coordinated among countries in the EHEA. It is worth noting that historically these two dimensions (i.e., sociocultural values and economic strategy) are strongly tied to national policy priorities. Pertaining to the fact that both economic and sociocultural discourses overlap, researchers in their analysis of benefits of studying abroad in addition to its economic effects frequently highlight the relevance of student mobility as a prime mechanism for fostering a sense of European identity

and citizenship (Rodríguez-González et al., 2011). The latter is inextricably linked to European integration and shared European cultural values.

Importantly, some recent developments in Europe, such as the "crisis of European integration", the fear of migrants, and the rise of populist ideologies have brought new challenges that still await appropriate countervailing measures (Zgaga, 2018, p. 19). All these developments have opened a wide discourse in the EU about its key political and economic objectives. Broucker et al. (2019), for example, argue that "Bologna does not seem to have created the desired European connectedness and has not eradicated the diversity between HE systems" (p. 228). It is worth noting that the aspired ideal of co-operation within Europe still matters less than national or regional policy objective with regard to the HE system. This supports the view that system reforms are mostly conducted from an internal, national policy perspective – despite the European context wherein HE systems operate (Broucker et al., 2019). From a policy point of view, Barrioluengo and Flisi (2017) argue that "the identification of the key determinants of international student mobility is central to designing efficient policies aimed at attracting mobile students" (p. 9). For example, the goal to enhance the competitiveness of European universities in the global market is expected to positively affect a region's economy. Therefore, the ministers in charge of HE of the countries involved in the BP review the changes on a regular basis in order to assess the progress (Teichler, 2019). Although many experts have agreed that remarkable reforms have been realized, they have also accentuated that these reforms were not to the extent desired a decade ago. Specifically, expert discussions have shown signs of frustration with the failure to fulfill the plans for building EHEA by 2010. The conclusion was made about the need to continue the collaborative reform efforts, so that reform targets formulated earlier would be reached in the second decade of the BP, up to 2020. However, at the Gothenburg Social Summit (Sweden) in 2017, the target to create EHEA by 2020 has been moved again, this time to year 2025. In the Rome Communiqué (2020) the commitment is made for building an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA by 2030 (EHEA, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Sources and Methodology

As to the methodology used for describing the indicators of degree mobility, the main variable of interest is the number of degree mobile students as a proportion of the total student population (TSP). The empirical analysis is conducted from the receiving (host) country perspective, it reviews physical mobility data from the European Tertiary Education Register (ETER). It can be argued that ETER includes almost all HEIs from which students graduate at ISCED levels 6 (bachelor), 7 (masters) or 8 (doctorate). At the same time, HEIs delivering only professional diplomas (ISCED level 5) are mostly excluded. Importantly, ISCED is a comprehensive framework ensuring application of uniform and internationally agreed definitions that facilitate comparisons of education systems across countries. The figures required for calculating the indicator (ratio) are the number of mobile students (ISCED levels 6-8) in the numerator, and the TSP in the denominator. The denominator incorporates the TSP in the country's HEIs. This means that the TSP is the equivalent of ISCED levels 5-8. In fact, it is the sum of ISCED levels 5-7 and ISCED level 8 for both mobile (i.e., students that received their upper secondary education degree in a foreign country) and resident students (i.e., those who received their upper secondary education degree in the same country). In ETER, the unit of observation is the single HEI. For each institution ETER provides data about mobile and resident students for each respective ISCED level. For ISCED level 7, ETER makes a distinction between ISCED 7 and ISCED 7 long, however, the two categories are considered jointly, and the mobility indicators take into account the sum of these two levels. In the current study, the researcher mainly focuses on finding the share of degree mobile students at ISCED levels 6-8, except for the analysis of Erasmus mobility (not included in this study), which combines ISCED levels 5-8. These levels incorporate ISCED level 5 which is denoted as "short-cycle tertiary education" where HEIs are delivering only professional diplomas; and levels 6, 7, and 8, which correspond respectively to bachelor, master, and doctoral levels or their equivalents (OECD, 2016, p. 28). It is important to stress that information on the breakdown of students by their mobile status is not available for certain countries for some years. As a result, these countries are discarded from the analysis. Additionally, a third category is present, namely "unclassified"

students, although this category is not taken into account for computing the share of degree mobile students. In the analysis shares of mobile students can be computed for each separate ISCED 2011 level and for ISCED 6-8 altogether. Using Microsoft Excel, the researcher computed the TSP for each respective country. The denominator is equal to the TSP in every country. Specifically, it is the sum of the students enrolled at all ISCED tertiary levels. The TSP is computed as a sum of two columns: the total students enrolled ISCED 5-7 and the total students enrolled at ISCED 8. For each country, the ratio measuring the number of degree-mobile students (levels 6-8) as a proportion of the TSP (Barrioluengo & Flisi, 2017) is computed as follows:

$$(1)\ Share\ of\ degree\ mobile\ students = \frac{number\ of\ mobile\ students}{number\ of\ mobile\ students + number\ of\ resident\ students}$$

It is important to clarify that information about the degree mobility are collected by the ETER at the level of the receiving HEI; therefore, the available figures concern only inward mobility. It is agreed to refer to the ratio either "Share of degree mobile students" or by its alternative name -- "(inward/inbound) degree mobility rate". Pertaining to the fact that this study uses the country as the unit of analysis, the researcher is required to adjust institutional statistics (statistics at the level of HEIs) to a more general - country level statistics. To fulfill this objective, the HEIs' numbers such as incoming degree students and the TSP have been aggregated to arrive at statistics for each respective country.

By using the divisive clustering (Verma, 2013), the researcher starts with all the objects (countries) as one cluster and recursively splits the clusters. The division of countries into clusters is based on their TSP. This approach facilitates comparisons because countries from the same cluster can be directly compared to each other and no adjustment for size is required for interpreting the results. Eventually, more meaningful results are received from such analysis, pertaining to the fact that the country size and the student population size both play a role.

It is worth noting that the available data cover only a period from 2011-2012 to 2016-2017 (academic) year. Importantly, ETER adopts practice where they label an academic year at its inception. This means that the academic year 2016/2017 is labelled as 2016 in ETER, while the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), similar to Eurostat and OECD, refers to it as 2017. UIS, thus, follows a different rule for labeling an academic year – it is labelled by the year end. Therefore, according to UIS, the period of analysis in this study will be from 2012 to 2017. However, this study follows the ETER's practice by labeling all academic years at their inception. It contributes to the construction of indicators on the share of mobile students in TSP (see Table 1).

The computed degree mobility rates (*Table 1*) are then compared to UIS estimates for respective countries (*Appendix A*). It is worth noting that the UIS was established in 1999 to meet the growing needs of UNESCO member states and the international community for a wider range of reliable, policy-relevant, and timely statistics in the fields of education. The researcher uses Excel for computing the standard error (SE) of the sampling distribution (Sp) (*Formula 2*) – the case of a pooled sample proportion (P) (*Formula 3*). Then the test statistic (the two-proportion z-test) is computed in Excel (*Formula 4*):

$$(2)\ S_p = \sqrt{\left[P * (1 - P) * \left(\frac{1}{n1} + \frac{1}{n2}\right)\right]}$$

For a pooled sample proportion (P):

Table 1: Inward/Inbound Degree-Mobility Rates

Country & Country Code	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Average Change (%)
European Union (EU)	8.10599	6.93737	6.61118	6.72353	7.06125	10.56941	7.46%
Austria (AT)	13.57	15.01	15.21	15.98	16.78	17.97	5.82%
Belgium (BE)	4.94	4.43	5.82	5.35	5.87	2.28	-7.69%
Bulgaria (BG)	2.20	2.14	1.92	1.79	1.84	1.99	-1.77%
Cyprus (CY)	19.47	19.74	12.21	15.43	14.83	16.12	-1.12%
Czech Republic (CZ)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Germany (DE)	5.67	6.00	6.35	6.83	7.26	7.69	6.29%
Denmark (DK)	7.41	8.19	8.48	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.03%
Estonia (EE)	1.97	2.51	3.30	4.74	6.24	7.58	31.13%
Greece (EL)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Spain (ES)	1.74	1.27	1.43	1.54	2.43	3.19	16.47%
Finland (FI)	n/a	7.07	6.45	6.59	6.81	8.15	4.10%
France (FR)	9.97	9.66	9.46	9.12	n/a	n/a	-2.92%
Croatia (HR)	0.10	0.10	1.73	1.67	1.68	2.19	338.94%
Hungary (HU)	5.05	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	62.10	n/a
Ireland (IE)	4.70	5.90	6.61	7.48	8.06	8.32	12.34%
Italy (IT)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lithuania (LT)	n/a	n/a	2.13	2.81	2.65	3.05	13.78%
Luxembourg (LU)	38.15	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Latvia (LV)	2.67	3.57	4.72	4.16	5.39	4.80	14.54%
Malta (MT)	2.91	n/a	n/a	2.94	4.52	5.03	32.51%
Netherlands (NL)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Poland (PL)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Portugal (PT)	3.10	3.56	3.77	4.45	5.09	5.58	12.56%
Romania (RO)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sweden (SE)	6.51	5.27	5.47	5.75	6.06	6.24	-0.35%
Slovenia (SI)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Slovakia (SK)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
United Kingdom (UK)	15.78	16.58	17.33	17.67	17.47	17.40	2.00%
EFTA states							
Switzerland (CH)	18.45	18.83	19.21	19.26	19.37	19.50	1.12%
Iceland (IS)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Liechtenstein (LI)	80.78	82.86	85.66	87.96	89.06	88.84	1.93%
Norway (NO)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Researcher's own elaborations on data from the ETER project. Degree-mobile students (levels 6-8) are presented as a proportion of the TSP. Data downloaded in January 2021.

(3) $P = \frac{(P1*n1+P2*n2)}{n1+n2}$

where P1 and P2 are the sample proportions (percentages) and "n" is the size of the sample. The assumption is made that n1=n2=1,000.

(4) $z = \frac{P1-P2-\Delta}{\sqrt{[P*(1-P)*(\frac{1}{n1}+\frac{1}{n2})]}}$

There is a "Difference test" or "Hypothesis test Formula", where Δ is their hypothesized difference (0 if testing for equal proportions). Whenever we need to test the null hypothesis where there is no difference between the two proportions/percentages (i.e., d=P1-P2=0), the null and alternative hypotheses for a two-tailed test are often stated in the following form: Null hypothesis: H_0: P1=P2 or H_0: P1-P2=0; alternative hypothesis: Ha: P1$\neq$P2 or Ha: P1-P2$\neq$0. As mentioned before, the test for comparing two proportions is expected to figure out a z-score (z). While comparing the proportions (percentages) of inbound degree-mobile UIS and ETER students at the country level, the researcher uses the level of significance (p-value) to decide whether or not to reject the null hypothesis (see *Appendix B*). P-value of the difference between proportions/percentages is provided in *Appendix A*. The researcher sets the level of significance (Alpha, α). It is typically presumed that α=0.05. Hence, the confidence level is equal to (1- α). A p-value less than Alpha (typically $\alpha \leq 0.05$) is statistically significant. It indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis, as there is less than 5% probability that the null is correct (and the results are random). Therefore, we should reject the null hypothesis, and say that we have evidence for the alternative hypothesis. It should be emphasized that a statistically significant result cannot prove that a research hypothesis is correct, since that would imply a 100% certainty. A p-value higher than Alpha ($\alpha > 0.05$) is not statistically significant (n.s.) and indicates strong evidence for the null hypothesis. This means we should retain the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. It is worth noting that we cannot accept the null hypothesis, we can only reject the null or fail to reject it. Equally important, in all cases we may only state that our results "provide support for" or "give evidence for" our research hypothesis. Please refer to *Appendix (A,B)* for the results on the level of significance of the difference between proportions (percentages).

RESULTS

It is worth noting that the results (see *Table A1*) are quite consistent over time. The consistency of data is evident from the stability of mobility rates over the studied period. On average, at the EU level, the number of degree mobile students (ISCED levels 6-8) as a proportion of the TSP has increased by 7.46% over the studied period between 2011 and 2016. At the country level, the share of incoming degree mobile students has increased between 2011 and 2016 by 16.47% in Spain (ES), 6.29% in Germany (DE), 2.00% in the United Kingdom (UK). Clearly, all these countries show positive dynamics by reporting the increasing share of degree mobile students in the TSP. Nevertheless, the same indicator reports in France (FR) a (-2.92%) decrement between 2011 and 2014. Importantly, degree mobility rates for years 2015, 2016 are not computed for FR due to the missing data on both the number of degree mobile students and the TSP. With regards to Italy (IT), degree mobility rates are not computed over the studied period due to the missing data on the number of degree mobile students. Interestingly, in providing the comparative analysis of before-mentioned hosting states (DE, FR, ES, UK), it can be deduced that the UK has its share of degree mobile students more than twice as large as the EU average in period between 2012 and 2015. As to the years 2011 and 2016, the shares of degree mobile students in the UK are 15.78% and 17.40%, respectively. These numbers are almost twice as large as the EU average in those respective years (e.g., 8.11% and 10.57%). Besides, the UK has 1.5 times higher degree mobility rates than FR in the period from 2011 to 2014. A comparison of degree mobility rates of the UK and DE in the period between 2011 and 2013 will show that the UK rates are more than 2.7 times higher than in DE. Despite a more than double difference in degree mobility rates in the consecutive period from 2014 to 2016, there is a trend to the reduction of that difference. For example, the UK degree mobility rate is 17.40% in 2016. This means that it is only 2.26 times higher than that of DE (7.69%). Finally, Spain (ES) has degree mobility rates that are substantially lower than the EU average. For example, in the period between 2011 and 2013 its rates are more than 4.6 times lower than the respective EU average, with the lowest in 2012 (1.27%). The degree mobility rate in 2012 is almost 5.5 times lower for ES than it is for the EU average. At the same time, ES has shown a high increase of 16.47% in its degree mobility rate over the studied period from 2011 to 2016, relative to DE, UK, and FR. As mentioned before, DE and the UK have a 6.29% and 2.00% increase over the studied period, respectively. As for FR, one can report a decrement of (-2.92%) in its degree mobility rate over time which is evident from the data available for a four-year period (from 2011 to 2014). It is important to note

that the share of degree mobile students is relatively low for ES in 2011 (1.74%), this explains higher relative growth of 16.47% when compared to UK, FR, and DE where the rates at the inception of the period were relatively high, namely 15.78%, 9.97%, and 5.67%, respectively.

Croatia (HR), Malta (MT), Estonia (EE), Spain (ES), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Portugal (PT), Ireland (IE) are the countries that report the highest growth in their share of degree mobile students between 2011 and 2016 (*Table A1*). These are (HR) 338.94%, (MT) 32.51%, (EE) 31.13%, (ES) 16.47%, (LV) 14.54%, (LT) 13.78%, (PT) 12.56%, (IE) 12.34%, respectively. High relative growth of degree mobility rates in these countries is mostly due to their much lower rates at the inception of the period. Equally important, despite the large increment to the share of their degree mobile students, the degree mobility rates in HR, MT, EE, ES, LV, LT and PT are below the EU average. Specifically, the rate in HR is less than 2.19%; in LT it is less than 3.05%; in ES it is less than 3.19%; in MT it is less than 5.03%; in LV it is less than 5.39%; in PT it is less than 5.58%; and, finally, in EE it is less than 7.58% in 2016. As to IE, it is the only country from those listed above where degree mobility rates sometimes exceed the EU average. For instance, in years 2014 and 2015 they are 7.48% and 8.06%, respectively. In fact, these rates are higher than the EU average (6.72% and 7.06%, respectively).

The growth of degree mobility rates in Switzerland (CH), Liechtenstein (LI), United Kingdom (UK), and Finland (FI) are amongst the lowest as compared to other nation-states with the growing mobility. These rates are 1.12%, 1.93%, 2.00%, and 4.10%, respectively. In fact, all above countries have shown consistency in their mobility rates over time, this is evident from slight or relatively modest fluctuations in the observed rates throughout the studied period. It can be stressed that CH, LI, and the UK have degree mobility rates that are substantially higher than the EU average throughout the whole period (from 2011 to 2016). As to FI, its share of degree mobile students is slightly below the EU average in the period from 2013 to 2016. Moreover, the data on degree mobile students are missing for FI in 2011, this explains why the mobility rate for that year was not computed. The following year (2012), however, FI reports a degree mobility rate of 7.07% which is slightly higher than the EU average of 6.94%. Overall, it can be summarized that degree mobility rates in the above countries have remained rather constant during the entire period.

There is a group of countries whose share of degree mobile students reports a negative growth over the studied period (see *Table A1*). It should be noted that degree mobility rates for countries such as Belgium (BE), France (FR), Bulgaria (BG), Cyprus (CY), Sweden (SE) show a decrement of (-7.69%), (-2.92%), (-1.77%), (-1.12%), (-0.35%), respectively. Among the above-mentioned countries only CY and FR have their degree mobility rates to be higher than the EU average. During the period from 2011 to 2015, Cyprus (CY) demonstrates rates that are more than twice as large as the EU average. In 2016, the degree mobility rate for CY is 16.12%, this is certainly less than twice of the EU average (10.57%), however, this is a very high mobility rate. With regards to FR, its portion of degree mobile students (9.97%) is more than 1.23 times higher than the EU average in 2011 (8.11%). It is worth noting that FR shows a slight trend to a decrease in its degree mobility rate. However, relative to the EU average for the period between 2012 and 2014, the portion of degree mobile students in FR has even further increased, showing a 1.39, 1.43, 1.36 times higher rates, respectively. This indicates that for the period between 2011 and 2014, the share of degree mobile students at the EU level was also declining. As to BG, its degree mobility rates are among the lowest in the EU, they are more than 3 times lower than those respective EU average rates between 2011 and 2015. In 2016, BG demonstrates the rate of 1.99% that is 5.31 times lower than the EU average of 10.57% in that year. Besides, the degree mobility rates in BG are rather stable, they are showing only slight fluctuations during the period. Similarly, the stability of rates over the entire period can be observed in SE. In fact, SE is characterized by relatively high degree mobility rates. In particular, these rates are close to the EU average in the period between 2011 and 2015. However, SE has the rate of 6.24% in 2016; this rate differs from the respective EU average of 10.57%. With regards to BE, it is sufficient to say that this country is characterized by the highest decrement (-7.69%) in the share of its degree mobile students. Nevertheless, mobility rates in BE are relatively stable between 2011 and 2015, varying in the range from 4.43% to 5.87%. Therefore, the high decrement in its degree mobility rate is mostly due to the low rate of 2.28% in 2016.

The comparative analysis of countries can be enhanced if the member-states are divided into clusters. Let us illustrate that with the example of two countries. These countries are Germany (DE) and the UK. Importantly, both nation-states have their TSP falling in the interval between 2,365K and 2,744K during the period between 2011 and 2016. Therefore, we can include them to the cluster of "Extremely large countries". The analysis reveals that during the period from 2011 to 2013 the share of degree mobile students in the UK has been at least 2.7 times higher than in DE. The fact that two countries are from the same cluster allows us to deduce that the absolute number of degree mobile students in the UK (from 2011 to 2013) will also be nearly 2.7 times higher than in DE. As mentioned before, one can notice a clear trend, showing that the difference between mobility rates of two countries has diminished in the consecutive period between 2014 and 2016. Eventually, the UK degree mobility rate has been 17.40% in 2016. This means that the UK rate is only 2.26 times higher than that of DE (7.69%). Furthermore, both countries demonstrate stability of their mobility rates. For example, the degree mobility rate in DE varies in the range from 5.67% to 7.69%, showing that it is relatively constant over the entire period. Moreover, this rate has shown a persistent growth over time. With regards to the UK, its rates are also relatively constant over time, varying in the range from 15.78% to 17.67%. As a summary, the degree-mobility rate in DE is 5.67% for 2011. It may be perceived as relatively low when compared to 15.78% rate in the UK for the same year. However, relatively modest rate at the inception of the period helps to explain why DE has a higher relative growth (6.29%) than the UK (2.00%) over the entire period of study.

The second cluster of large countries with high student population (between 1,479K and 1,835K) is referred to as "Very large countries". This cluster includes Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), and Poland (PL). The number of degree mobile students as a proportion of the TSP (i.e., average growth rate) has increased by 16.47% in ES. For FR, on the contrary, there has been a decrement of (-2.92%). As to IT and PL, information in the ETER database about the number of degree mobile students is missing for both these countries. Hence, IT and PL are excluded from the analysis. Thus, the analysis of countries in the second cluster is automatically reduced to the comparison of ES and FR. As mentioned before, ES has shown a high increase of 16.47% in its degree mobility rate. This high relative growth is mostly due to a low rate of 1.74% at the inception of the period in 2011. However, the large increment to the share of degree mobile students in ES should not distract attention from the fact that degree mobility rates in ES are substantially lower than the rates in FR and the EU average, respectively. Importantly, it has been stressed that in the period between 2011 and 2013 those ES rates were more than 4.6 times lower than the respective EU average. Moreover, the rate of 1.27% in 2012 is almost 5.5 times lower for ES than it is for the EU average. As to FR, its degree mobility rates from 2011 to 2014 are higher than the EU average. The degree mobility rates in FR are rather stable, they vary in the range from 9.12% and 9.97%. As mentioned before, the rates for 2015 and 2016 are not computed for FR since the data is missing for both the number of degree mobile students and the TSP in that period. Furthermore, the degree mobility rates in FR significantly exceed those in ES. It is noteworthy that the rates in ES are also relatively stable, they are in the range from 1.27% to 3.19%. However, it is worth stressing that FR significantly outperforms ES in terms of its degree mobile students (both in percentage and absolute terms). In fact, the number of degree mobile students in FR is about 6 times higher in the period from 2011 to 2014 than the respective number in ES.

The third cluster of countries having the TSP in the interval between 431K and 733K is referred to as "Large countries". This cluster includes Netherlands (NL), Sweden (SE) and Greece (EL). The inclusion of Greece (EL) in the cluster is conditional since that country has a high variability in its TSP data. As a result, EL data can be outside of the cluster's interval. Specifically, it falls between 348K and 733K. Importantly, the data on the number of degree mobile students are missing for EL and NL in the ETER database. This explains why the mobility rates for those countries cannot be computed, thus excluding the above countries from the analysis. Eventually, the third cluster is down to the analysis of only one country (SE). SE shows rather stable degree mobility rates over time: the rate variability in SE is falling in the interval between 5.27% and 6.51%. In addition, SE demonstrates only a slight decrement of (-0.35%) in its degree mobility rate during the whole period (from 2011 to 2016). It is worth noting that the degree mobility rates in SE are about 1.2 times lower than the EU average rates in the period from 2011 to 2013. Furthermore, the degree mobility rates in years 2014 and 2015 are about 1.17 times lower than the EU

average. Finally, the data findings in 2016 (see *Table A1*) show that the rate in SE is 1.69 times lower than the respective rate for the EU average.

The fourth cluster of countries is referred to as "High medium countries". Austria (AT), Czech Republic (CZ), Finland (FI), Hungary (HU), Portugal (PT) can be grouped in this cluster because their TSP falls in the interval between 285K and 399K. The analysis of this cluster is down to AT, FI, and PT, since the computation of a share of degree mobile students in the studied period (between 2011 and 2016) is not possible for CZ due to the missing data in the ETER database about the number of degree-mobile students. The degree mobility rate computation is also problematic for HU in the period between 2012 and 2015, since the information on the number of degree-mobile students is missing in the ETER database. In addition, HU did not provide ETER with the data on its TSP in 2012. Furthermore, in the case of HU, there is a significant size gap between the rates that have been found from the available data in 2011 (5.05%) and 2016 (62.10%), respectively. The above findings raise the question about consistency of data in HU. The existing gap in data (from 2012 to 2015) as well as surprisingly high number of degree-mobile students as a proportion of the TSP in 2016 (62.10%), are the factors that have resulted in exclusion of HU from the current analysis. As to the comparison between AT, FI, and PT, the growth rate of 12.56% in PT is more than 2 times higher than the respective growth in AT (5.82%). As to FI, its growth rate of 4.10% is about 3 times lower than the rate in PT. The growth rate in FI has been computed during the period where the data on degree-mobile students are available. This implies that the growth rate computation for FI is done over the period from 2012 to 2016, pertaining to the fact that the data about degree-mobile students are missing in 2011. Overall, it can be concluded that the degree mobility rates in all three countries are stable. This is evident from the variability of these rates over the period. For example, in PT the rates vary between 3.10% and 5.58%. In AT and FI, the rates vary in the range from 13.57% to 17.97%, and from 6.45% to 8.15%, respectively. As to FI, its share of degree mobile students is slightly below the EU average in the period from 2013 to 2016. In 2012, however, FI reports a degree mobility rate of 7.07% which is slightly higher than the EU average of 6.94%. As to PT, its rates are about twice as low as the EU average in 2012 and 2016 and they are 1.75 and 1.51 times lower than the EU average in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Importantly, the difference between PT and the EU average is highest in 2011 where the rate is 2.62 times lower in PT than the respective EU average rate. In 2015, on the contrary, the difference between the computed rates is lowest, showing that the rate in PT is 1.39 times lower than the EU average. Eventually, it can be summarized that AT has significantly higher degree mobility rates than FI and PT. For instance, the rates in AT are more than twice as high as the EU average in the period between 2012 and 2015. Furthermore, the degree mobility rates for 2011 and 2016 are 1.67 and 1.7 times higher than the EU average, respectively. It can be concluded that the rates in AT are among the highest across the EU, showing, for instance, 17.97% in 2016.

Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Denmark (DK), Norway (NO), and Switzerland (CH) can be referred to as "Medium countries" because their TSP falls into interval from 213K to 279K. It is important to mention that NO is excluded from the analysis since the data on the number of degree mobile students are missing in the ETER database. In the case of DK, their shares of degree mobile students and the average growth rate can be computed only for half of the studied period, namely from 2011 to 2013. These are due to the missing data on the number of degree-mobile students in the ETER during the consecutive period (between 2014 and 2016). Furthermore, DK did not provide ETER with the data on its TSP in 2014. With respect to CH, its number of degree mobile students as a proportion of the TSP has increased by 1.12% over the period between 2011 and 2016. As mentioned earlier, the growth of degree mobility rates in CH is amongst the lowest as compared to other nation-states with the growing mobility. At the same time, CH has one of the highest degree mobility rates across both the EFTA and the EU countries, reaching to 19.5% in 2016. When compared to other states within the cluster, CH shows a positive trend in its degree mobility rates. This means that the shares of degree-mobile students in CH have been increasing over the entire period of study (from 2011 to 2016). In a similar way, DK shows a persistent growth of its degree mobility rate between 2011 and 2013. Higher relative growth of degree mobility rates in DK (7.03%) versus (1.12%) in CH can be explained by 2.49 times lower degree mobility rate at the inception of the period in 2011. In contrast to CH and DK, BE and BG have shown a negative growth of their mobility rate over time.

Specifically, BE and BG have reached growth rates of (-7.69%) and (-1.77%), respectively. With regards to BE, it is worth stressing that the country reports the highest decrement (-7.69%) in its share of degree mobile students across all the EU and EFTA states. Simultaneously, it can be emphasized that mobility rates in BE are relatively stable between 2011 and 2015, varying in the range from 4.43% to 5.87%. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the high decrement in its degree mobility rate is mostly due to the low rate of 2.28% in 2016. As to BG, it has been mentioned earlier that its degree mobility rates are among the lowest in the EU. In fact, these rates are more than 3 times lower in the period between 2011 and 2015 than the respective EU average. In 2016, BG demonstrates the rate of 1.99% that is 5.31 times lower than the EU average of 10.57% in that year. Importantly, within the given cluster, the degree mobility rates of all countries are rather stable, they are showing only slight fluctuations throughout the period.

The next cluster is "Low medium countries", this is referred to a group of countries whose TSP falls in the interval between 116K and 212K. Croatia (HR), Ireland (IE), Lithuania (LT), and Slovakia (SK) are included in this interval. The inclusion of SK in the cluster is conditional since that country has a high variability in its TSP data. As a result, SK data can fall outside of the cluster's interval. Specifically, it falls between 116K and 217K. Equally important, the data on degree mobile students are missing for SK; therefore, it is excluded from the analysis. The number of degree mobile students as a proportion of the TSP has increased over studied period by 338.94% in HR; by 13.78% in LT; by 12.34% in IE. It is worth noting, however, that the data on degree-mobile students are missing in 2011 and 2012 for LT; therefore, its growth rate is computed for the period from 2013 to 2016. As mentioned before, high relative growth of degree mobility rates in HR can be explained by its extremely low rate (0.10%) at the inception of the period. Similarly, IE has a modest rate of 4.70% in 2011, which is below the EU average (8.11%). Nevertheless, IE shows a persistent growth of its degree mobility rate throughout the entire period. Consequently, this leads to a relatively high increase of 12.34% in its share of degree-mobile students between 2011 and 2016. Equally important, despite the large increment to the share of their degree mobile students, the rates in LT and HR are significantly below the EU average. Specifically, the rate in HR varies in the range between 0.10% and 2.19%. As to LT, its degree mobility rate varies in the range between 2.13% and 3.05%. As a summary, IE substantially outperforms LT and HR. The degree mobility rates of IE, for example, are about 3.8 times as high as the respective rates of HR or higher between 2013 and 2016. Equally important, LT shows a persistent growth in its share of degree mobile students between 2013 and 2016. Furthermore, LT outperform HR in terms of degree mobility rates. In effect, the (inward) degree mobility rates in HR are among the lowest among the EU countries, despite the fact they show an impressive 338.94% growth over the studied period.

The next cluster contains countries with the total number of students falling in the interval between 48K and 95K. These are Estonia (EE), Latvia (LV), and Slovenia (SI). The above countries are referred to in the current analysis as "Small countries". It is important to point out that the data about total number of students in SI are missing from 2011 to 2013. Moreover, SI did not provide its number of degree mobile students over the studied period (from 2011 to 2016) to the ETER database. Hence, SI is excluded from the analysis of "small countries" and the cluster analysis is down to the comparison between EE and LV. In fact, the high relative growth of degree mobility rates in EE is mostly due to the lower rate at the inception of the period. Besides, Estonia (EE) and Latvia (LV) both report a substantial growth in their share of degree mobile students between 2011 and 2016, with the results of 31.13% and 14.54%, respectively. Equally important, despite the large increment to a share of degree mobile students, the rates in EE and LV are still below the EU average. It is worth noting that EE shows a persistent increase in its degree mobility rate throughout the entire period. The variability of degree mobility rate is higher in EE, it varies in the range between 1.97% and 7.58%. As to LV, its degree mobility rate is rather stable, varying in the range between 2.67% and 5.39%. In fact, LV outperforms EE in terms of its degree mobility rates in the period from 2011 to 2013. In the consecutive period (between 2014 and 2016), the situation had reversed, exhibiting that EE has a higher degree mobility rate than LV.

Finally, the cluster of "Very small countries" includes Cyprus (CY), Iceland (IS), Luxembourg (LU), Liechtenstein (LI), and Malta (MT). The TSP in each of these countries falls in the interval between 0.5K and 44K. Liechtenstein (LI), the member-state of EFTA, stands out from the rest of the cluster in two

respects. First, across 32 countries who had participated in the analysis, LI has the smallest student population. The TSP of LI falls in the interval between 654 and 874 students. Second, LI shows the largest share of degree mobile students among all countries under review. Furthermore, LI reports a steady growth of its degree mobility rate between 2011 and 2015. Overall, the rates in LI are rather stable. In fact, the degree mobility rate in that period (from 2011 to 2015) varies in the range between 80.78% and 89.06%. Consequently, the rate in LI has dropped slightly to 88.84% in 2016. Despite its very high rates, LI has a relatively low (1.93%) growth rate over the whole period. In addition, it should be noted that LI is the smallest country in terms of its TSP; therefore, the absolute number of degree mobile students in LI is relatively low. The data about degree mobile students are missing in the ETER for LU for the period between 2012 and 2016; therefore, LU is excluded from the analysis. In a similar vein, Iceland (IS) was excluded because it did not provide ETER with information about the number of its degree mobile students in the studied period. Moreover, IS has no data about the TSP in 2015 and 2016.

Importantly, Cyprus (CY) shows rates that are more than twice as large as the EU average between 2011 and 2015. In 2016, the degree mobility rate for CY is 16.12%. This percentage number is rather high, but it is less than twice of the EU average (10.57%). Nevertheless, the rate varies in the range between 12.21% and 19.74% and it is consistent over time. CY belongs to the group of countries whose share of degree mobile students reports a negative growth over the studied period. Specifically, CY shows a decrement of -1.12%. As to MT, the data about the number of its degree mobile students are missing for 2012 and 2013 in the ETER; therefore, the growth in its share of degree mobile students is computed only for the period from 2014 to 2016. However, MT shows a substantial increment of 32.51%. The country shows a steady growth in its degree mobility rate. Moreover, MT is characterized by low variability of its rate in the given period. The rate ranges from 2.94% to 5.03%. The rates in MT are about twice as low as those respective rates of the EU average. As a summary, CY outperforms MT in terms of degree mobility rates. As to LI, it shows the largest share of degree mobile students among all countries, however, it has the smallest student population of all. Hence, the absolute number of degree mobile students in LI is not high. Finally, the stability of degree mobility rates for the studied period would signal that the data which had been extracted from the ETER and then used for computing the rates were rather consistent.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results from the conducted analysis show how degree mobility rates have evolved over studied period. The analysis effectively contributes to the issue on how to collect and process a wide range of policy-relevant statistics in the fields of HE. It also helps to establish the context and content of future discussions on how to address the practical problem of measuring and evaluating the dynamics of students flows in Europe. Most recently, the Rome Communiqué (EHEA, 2020) has stressed the importance and the benefits of physical mobility for students, doctoral candidates and staff. This mobility contributes to the excellence and relevance of HE in the EHEA. Diverse cultures cooperate to "connect [different] systems and foster the development of intercultural and linguistic competences, broader knowledge and understanding of our world" (EHEA, 2020, p. 6). The Communiqué (2020) states that the mobility target - at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have experienced a study or training period abroad – will be maintained. This means that the mobility experience, whether it is in physical, digitally enhanced or blended format, is considered as an essential component for HE students to acquire international and intercultural competences. This is to be achieved through internationalization of the curricula or participation in innovative international environments in their home institutions. Altogether this makes the EHEA more attractive and competitive on the global scale. Arguably, HE will be a key player in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Therefore, Ministers (EHEA, 2020) express commitment to ensure that "HEIs have appropriate funding to develop solutions for the current crisis, post crisis recovery … the transition into green, sustainable and resilient economies and societies" (p. 3).

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Appendix A. Comparison Between UIS Inbound Mobility Rates and ETER Shares of Inward Mobile Students (ISCED Levels 6-8)

Country	Country Code	UIS 2012	ETER 2011	Diff.	UIS 2013	ETER 2012	Diff.	UIS 2014	ETER 2013	Diff.
European Union	EU	7.59	8.11	n.s.	6.42	6.94	n.s.	7.20	6.61	n.s.
Austria	AT	14.04	13.57	n.s.	16.76	15.01	n.s.	15.47	15.21	n.s.
Belgium	BE	8.98	4.94	***	9.98	4.43	***	11.19	5.82	***
Bulgaria	BG	3.93	2.20	*	4.08	2.14	**	3.98	1.92	**
Cyprus	CY	23.46	19.47	*	14.88	19.74	**	14.35	12.21	n.s.
Czech Republic	CZ	8.96	-	-	9.39	-	-	9.83	-	-
Germany	DE	-	5.67	-	7.07	6.00	n.s.	7.23	6.35	n.s.
Denmark	DK	8.13	7.41	n.s.	10.13	8.19	n.s.	9.93	8.48	n.s.
Estonia	EE	2.33	1.97	n.s.	2.89	2.51	n.s.	3.72	3.30	n.s.
Greece	EL/GR	4.37	-	-	4.19	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	2.84	1.74	*	2.86	1.27	**	-	1.43	-
Finland	FI	5.71	-	-	7.07	7.07	n.s.	7.43	6.45	n.s.
France	FR	11.82	9.97	n.s.	9.78	9.66	n.s.	9.84	9.46	n.s.
Croatia	HR	0.54	0.10	*	0.30	0.10	n.s.	0.38	1.73	**
Hungary	HU	4.60	5.05	n.s.	5.76	-	-	7.04	-	-
Ireland	IE	5.76	4.70	n.s.	6.45	5.90	n.s.	7.00	6.61	n.s.
Italy	IT	4.04	-	-	4.40	-	-	4.72	-	-
Lithuania	LT	1.79	-	-	2.45	-	-	-	2.13	-
Luxembourg	LU	40.56	38.15	n.s.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	2.80	2.67	n.s.	3.71	3.57	n.s.	4.99	4.72	n.s.
Malta	MT	4.84	2.91	*	5.06	-	-	5.86	-	-
Netherlands	NL	7.25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	1.17	-	-	1.46	-	-	1.97	-	-
Portugal	PT	4.75	3.10	*	3.92	3.56	n.s.	4.11	3.77	n.s.
Romania	RO	2.44	-	-	3.49	-	-	4.07	-	-
Sweden	SE	6.32	6.51	n.s.	5.83	5.27	n.s.	5.91	5.47	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	2.27	-	-	2.62	-	-	2.75	-	-
Slovakia	SK	4.09	-	-	4.86	-	-	5.61	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	17.14	15.78	n.s.	17.46	16.58	n.s.	18.22	17.33	n.s.
Switzerland	CH	16.50	18.45	n.s.	16.85	18.83	n.s.	17.10	19.21	n.s.
Iceland	IS	6.21	-	-	6.54	-	-	7.40	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	80.63	80.78	n.s.	-	82.86	-	85.30	85.66	n.s.
Norway	NO	7.75	-	-	3.62	-	-	3.50	-	-

Country	Country Code	UIS 2015	ETER 2014	Diff.	UIS 2016	ETER 2015	Diff.	UIS 2017	ETER 2016	Diff.
European Union	EU	9.12	6.72	*	9.47	7.06	*	9.84	10.57	n.s.
Austria	AT	15.89	15.98	n.s.	16.35	16.78	n.s.	17.19	17.97	n.s.
Belgium	BE	11.18	5.35	***	12.02	5.87	***	8.54	2.28	***
Bulgaria	BG	4.25	1.79	***	4.57	1.84	***	5.50	1.99	***
Cyprus	CY	17.53	15.43	n.s.	19.14	14.83	**	23.09	16.12	***
Czech Republic	CZ	10.55	-	-	11.51	-	-	12.54	-	-
Germany	DE	7.68	6.83	n.s.	8.04	7.26	n.s.	8.37	7.69	n.s.
Denmark	DK	10.28	-	-	10.81	-	-	10.76	-	-
Estonia	EE	5.18	4.74	n.s.	6.80	6.24	n.s.	8.20	7.58	n.s.
Greece	EL/GR	-	-	-	3.35	-	-	3.41	-	-
Spain	ES	-	1.54	-	2.53	2.43	n.s.	3.23	3.19	n.s.
Finland	FI	7.65	6.59	n.s.	7.81	6.81	n.s.	8.18	8.15	n.s.
France	FR	9.88	9.12	n.s.	9.89	-	-	10.20	-	-
Croatia	HR	0.51	1.67	**	0.43	1.68	**	2.89	2.19	n.s.
Hungary	HU	7.05	-	-	8.86	-	-	9.97	62.10	***
Ireland	IE	7.37	7.48	n.s.	8.19	8.06	n.s.	8.88	8.32	n.s.
Italy	IT	4.95	-	-	5.10	-	-	5.31	-	-
Lithuania	LT	3.54	2.81	n.s.	4.11	2.65	*	4.61	3.05	*
Luxembourg	LU	45.87	-	-	46.99	-	-	46.73	-	-
Latvia	LV	6.12	4.16	*	7.67	5.39	*	7.39	4.80	**
Malta	MT	6.21	2.94	***	8.43	4.52	***	8.28	5.03	**
Netherlands	NL	10.23	-	-	10.74	-	-	11.00	-	-
Poland	PL	2.64	-	-	3.42	-	-	4.12	-	-
Portugal	PT	5.00	4.45	n.s.	-	5.09	-	6.40	5.58	n.s.
Romania	RO	4.26	-	-	4.82	-	-	5.18	-	-
Sweden	SE	6.22	5.75	n.s.	6.58	6.06	n.s.	6.74	6.24	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	2.75	-	-	3.31	-	-	3.88	-	-
Slovakia	SK	5.90	-	-	6.02	-	-	6.90	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	18.49	17.67	n.s.	18.10	17.47	n.s.	17.92	17.40	n.s.
Switzerland	CH	17.18	19.26	n.s.	17.59	19.37	n.s.	17.75	19.50	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	6.78	-	-	6.85	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	87.60	87.96	n.s.	88.89	89.06	n.s.	87.98	88.84	n.s.
Norway	NO	3.63	-	-	3.92	-	-	3.15	-	-

Note: 'Diff.' reports the level of significance of the difference between ETER mobility rates (computed) and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) official inbound mobility rates. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; 'n.s.', difference is not significant. Countries for which no information is available are denoted by '−'. *Source*: Researcher's own elaborations on data from the ETER and the data extracted from UIS (all data downloaded in January 2021).

Appendix B. The Level of Significance (P-Value) of the Difference Between Proportions/Percentages (Comparison of UIS and ETER Data at the Country Level)

Country	Country Code	Academic year: 2011-2012					
		Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat.(Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
European Union	EU	0.078	0.0120	0.43	0.6673	0.3327	n.s.
Austria	AT	0.138	0.0154	0.31	0.6199	0.3801	n.s.
Belgium	BE	0.070	0.0114	3.55	0.9998	0.0002	***
Bulgaria	BG	0.031	0.0077	2.25	0.9878	0.0122	*
Cyprus	CY	0.215	0.0184	2.17	0.9851	0.0149	*
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denmark	DK	0.078	0.0120	0.60	0.7265	0.2735	n.s.
Estonia	EE	0.021	0.0065	0.55	0.7089	0.2911	n.s.
Greece	EL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	0.023	0.0067	1.64	0.9495	0.0505	*
Finland	FI	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	FR	0.109	0.0139	1.33	0.9077	0.0923	n.s.
Croatia	HR	0.003	0.0025	1.73	0.9582	0.0418	*
Hungary	HU	0.048	0.0096	0.47	0.6801	0.3199	n.s.
Ireland	IE	0.052	0.0100	1.07	0.8569	0.1431	n.s.
Italy	IT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	LT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	LU	0.394	0.0218	1.10	0.8649	0.1351	n.s.
Latvia	LV	0.027	0.0073	0.18	0.5701	0.4299	n.s.
Malta	MT	0.039	0.0086	2.24	0.9874	0.0126	*
Netherlands	NL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	PT	0.039	0.0087	1.90	0.9711	0.0289	*
Romania	RO	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	0.064	0.0110	0.18	0.5705	0.4295	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	0.165	0.0166	0.82	0.7933	0.2067	n.s.

Country	Country Code						
Switzerland	CH	0.175	0.0170	1.15	0.8751	0.1249	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	0.807	0.0176	0.09	0.5350	0.4650	n.s.
Norway	NO	-	-	-	-	-	-

Country	Country Code	Academic year: 2012-2013					
		Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat. (Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
European Union	EU	0.067	0.0112	0.47	0.6800	0.3200	n.s.
Austria	AT	0.159	0.0163	1.07	0.8576	0.1424	n.s.
Belgium	BE	0.072	0.0116	4.80	1.0000	0.0000	***
Bulgaria	BG	0.031	0.0078	2.50	0.9938	0.0062	**
Cyprus	CY	0.173	0.0169	2.87	0.9980	0.0020	**
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	0.065	0.0111	0.97	0.8341	0.1659	n.s.
Denmark	DK	0.092	0.0129	1.50	0.9333	0.0667	n.s.
Estonia	EE	0.027	0.0073	0.53	0.7022	0.2978	n.s.
Greece	EL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	0.021	0.0064	2.50	0.9938	0.0062	**
Finland	FI	0.071	0.0115	0.00	0.5014	0.4986	n.s.
France	FR	0.097	0.0132	0.09	0.5357	0.4643	n.s.
Croatia	HR	0.002	0.0020	1.01	0.8449	0.1551	n.s.
Hungary	HU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	IE	0.062	0.0108	0.51	0.6950	0.3050	n.s.
Italy	IT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	LT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	LU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	0.036	0.0084	0.17	0.5664	0.4336	n.s.
Malta	MT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	NL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	PT	0.037	0.0085	0.42	0.6641	0.3359	n.s.
Romania	RO	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	0.055	0.0102	0.54	0.7065	0.2935	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	0.170	0.0168	0.53	0.7003	0.2997	n.s.

Country	Country Code						
Switzerland	CH	0.178	0.0171	1.16	0.8767	0.1233	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	L1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Norway	NO	-	-	-	-	-	-

Country	Country Code	Academic year: 2013-2014					
		Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat.(Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
European Union	EU	0.069	0.0113	0.52	0.6988	0.3012	n.s.
Austria	AT	0.153	0.0161	0.16	0.5642	0.4358	n.s.
Belgium	BE	0.085	0.0125	4.31	1.0000	0.0000	***
Bulgaria	BG	0.030	0.0076	2.73	0.9968	0.0032	**
Cyprus	CY	0.133	0.0152	1.41	0.9207	0.0793	n.s.
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	0.068	0.0113	0.78	0.7829	0.2171	n.s.
Denmark	DK	0.092	0.0129	1.12	0.8696	0.1304	n.s.
Estonia	EE	0.035	0.0082	0.51	0.6938	0.3062	n.s.
Greece	EL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finland	FI	0.069	0.0114	0.87	0.8069	0.1931	n.s.
France	FR	0.097	0.0132	0.29	0.6139	0.3861	n.s.
Croatia	HR	0.011	0.0046	2.94	0.9984	0.0016	**
Hungary	HU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	IE	0.068	0.0113	0.34	0.6345	0.3655	n.s.
Italy	IT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	LT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	LU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	0.049	0.0096	0.28	0.6117	0.3883	n.s.
Malta	MT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	NL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	PT	0.039	0.0087	0.39	0.6516	0.3484	n.s.
Romania	RO	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	0.057	0.0104	0.42	0.6629	0.3371	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	0.178	0.0171	0.52	0.6988	0.3012	n.s.

Country	Country Code	Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat.(Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
Switzerland	CH	0.182	0.0172	1.22	0.8892	0.1108	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	0.855	0.0158	0.23	0.5901	0.4099	n.s.
Norway	NO	-	-	-	-	-	-

Country	Country Code	Academic year: 2014-2015					
		Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat.(Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
European Union	EU	0.079	0.0121	1.99	0.9766	0.0234	*
Austria	AT	0.159	0.0164	0.05	0.5217	0.4783	n.s.
Belgium	BE	0.083	0.0123	4.74	1.0000	0.0000	***
Bulgaria	BG	0.030	0.0077	3.21	0.9993	0.0007	***
Cyprus	CY	0.165	0.0166	1.27	0.8974	0.1026	n.s.
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	0.073	0.0116	0.73	0.7687	0.2313	n.s.
Denmark	DK	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estonia	EE	0.050	0.0097	0.45	0.6741	0.3259	n.s.
Greece	EL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finland	FI	0.071	0.0115	0.92	0.8218	0.1782	n.s.
France	FR	0.095	0.0131	0.58	0.7179	0.2821	n.s.
Croatia	HR	0.011	0.0046	2.51	0.9939	0.0061	**
Hungary	HU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	IE	0.074	0.0117	0.10	0.5379	0.4621	n.s.
Italy	IT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	LT	0.032	0.0078	0.93	0.8233	0.1767	n.s.
Luxembourg	LU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	0.051	0.0099	1.98	0.9764	0.0236	*
Malta	MT	0.046	0.0093	3.50	0.9998	0.0002	***
Netherlands	NL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	PT	0.047	0.0095	0.58	0.7202	0.2798	n.s.
Romania	RO	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	0.060	0.0106	0.45	0.6724	0.3276	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	0.181	0.0172	0.48	0.6827	0.3173	n.s.

Country	Country Code						
Switzerland	CH	0.182	0.0173	1.20	0.8857	0.1143	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	0.878	0.0146	0.25	0.5971	0.4029	n.s.
Norway	NO	-	-	-	-	-	-

Country	Country Code	Academic year: 2015-2016					
		Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat.(Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
European Union	EU	0.083	0.0123	1.95	0.9747	0.0253	*
Austria	AT	0.166	0.0166	0.26	0.6023	0.3977	n.s.
Belgium	BE	0.089	0.0128	4.82	1.0000	0.0000	***
Bulgaria	BG	0.032	0.0079	3.47	0.9997	0.0003	***
Cyprus	CY	0.170	0.0168	2.57	0.9949	0.0051	**
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	0.076	0.0119	0.65	0.7434	0.2566	n.s.
Denmark	DK	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estonia	EE	0.065	0.0110	0.51	0.6951	0.3049	n.s.
Greece	EL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	0.025	0.0070	0.15	0.5580	0.4420	n.s.
Finland	FI	0.073	0.0116	0.86	0.8040	0.1960	n.s.
France	FR	-	-	-	-	-	-
Croatia	HR	0.011	0.0046	2.74	0.9969	0.0031	**
Hungary	HU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	IE	0.081	0.0122	0.10	0.5416	0.4584	n.s.
Italy	IT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	LT	0.034	0.0081	1.81	0.9647	0.0353	*
Luxembourg	LU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	0.065	0.0110	2.06	0.9805	0.0195	*
Malta	MT	0.065	0.0110	3.55	0.9998	0.0002	***
Netherlands	NL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	PT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Romania	RO	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	0.063	0.0109	0.47	0.6826	0.3174	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	0.178	0.0171	0.37	0.6428	0.3572	n.s.

Country	Country Code						
Switzerland	CH	0.185	0.0174	1.03	0.8477	0.1523	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	0.890	0.0140	0.12	0.5486	0.4514	n.s.
Norway	NO	-	-	-	-	-	-

Country	Country Code	Academic year: 2016-2017					
		Pooled prob. (P)	Standard Error (SE)	Test stat.(Z-score)	Normsdist Function	P-Value	Diff.
European Union	EU	0.102	0.0135	0.54	0.7061	0.2939	n.s.
Austria	AT	0.176	0.0170	0.46	0.6774	0.3226	n.s.
Belgium	BE	0.054	0.0101	6.19	1.0000	0.0000	***
Bulgaria	BG	0.037	0.0085	4.13	1.0000	0.0000	***
Cyprus	CY	0.196	0.0178	3.93	1.0000	0.0000	***
Czech Republic	CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	DE	0.080	0.0122	0.56	0.7130	0.2870	n.s.
Denmark	DK	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estonia	EE	0.079	0.0121	0.51	0.6952	0.3048	n.s.
Greece	EL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	ES	0.032	0.0079	0.05	0.5202	0.4798	n.s.
Finland	FI	0.082	0.0122	0.02	0.5091	0.4909	n.s.
France	FR	-	-	-	-	-	-
Croatia	HR	0.025	0.0070	1.00	0.8414	0.1586	n.s.
Hungary	HU	0.360	0.0215	24.28	1.0000	0.0000	***
Ireland	IE	0.086	0.0125	0.45	0.6725	0.3275	n.s.
Italy	IT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	LT	0.038	0.0086	1.82	0.9657	0.0343	*
Luxembourg	LU	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	LV	0.061	0.0107	2.42	0.9923	0.0077	**
Malta	MT	0.067	0.0111	2.92	0.9982	0.0018	**
Netherlands	NL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	PL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	PT	0.060	0.0106	0.77	0.7792	0.2208	n.s.
Romania	RO	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	SE	0.065	0.0110	0.46	0.6758	0.3242	n.s.
Slovenia	SI	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	SK	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	UK	0.177	0.0171	0.30	0.6192	0.3808	n.s.

Switzerland	CH	0.186	0.0174	1.00	0.8422	0.1578	n.s.
Iceland	IS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	LI	0.884	0.0143	0.60	0.7249	0.2751	n.s.
Norway	NO	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: 'Diff.' reports the level of significance of the difference between ETER mobility rates (computed) and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) official inbound mobility rates. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; 'n.s.', difference is not significant. Countries for which no information is available are denoted by '−'. *Source*: Researcher's own elaborations on data from the ETER and the data extracted from UIS (all data downloaded in January 2021)