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**Norwegian participation in the ERASMUS Programme**

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## Preface

This report is concerned with Norwegian participation in the ERASMUS programme and has been commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. The first part of the report comprises a summary of the existing documentation relation to ERASMUS generally, and Norwegian participation in particular. The second part of the report is based on a qualitative study of the perspectives held by Norwegian educational establishments concerning international co-operation and participation in organised exchange programmes. Five institutions have participated in this study, and both the academic and administrative staff have been interviewed. Jens-Christian Smeby has conducted the interviews and written the chapters on The Norwegian State Academy of Music and NTNU – The Norwegian University of Science and Technology; Jannecke Wiers-Jenssen has carried out the interviews and written the chapters on The Norwegian School of Management (BI) and the university colleges in Molde and Stavanger. The other chapters have been written jointly by Smeby and Wiers-Jenssen. The original report in Norwegian (NIFU *Skrifterie* No. 11/2001) has been translated by John G. Taylor. Tine Prøitz has contributed with useful comments. Gratitude is also expressed to those persons at the educational establishments who assisted us in finding the actual persons to be interviewed, and to all those who were willing to participate in the interviews. Thanks are also extended to Ingveid Astad, Asle Haukaas and Vidar Pedersen at the Centre for University Co-operation, and Wolfgang Laschet at NTNU who have assisted in providing background information.

Oslo, October 2001

Petter Aasen  
Director

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## Summary

This report is concerned with Norwegian participation in the ERASMUS programme. The first part summarises the existing knowledge about the ERASMUS programme in general and Norwegian participation in particular. The number of Norwegian students participating in the ERASMUS programme is approximately equal to the proportion of students for Europe taken as a whole, but somewhat lower than that of our Nordic neighbours. In the latter part of the 1990s Norwegian participation in ERASMUS has stagnated although there has been strong growth in the number of Norwegians studying abroad *outside* of organised programmes. In Europe there has been a relatively strong growth in ERASMUS involvement in the same period.

The second part of the report is based on qualitative interviews with academic and administrative staff at five Norwegian higher education institutions: The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), The Norwegian State Academy of Music, The Norwegian School of Management BI, and the State University Colleges in Molde and Stavanger. All institutions have a vision and a strategy for internationalisation, but the implementation and integration of such strategies take different forms. The interest for becoming engaged in internationalisation and student exchange generally, and ERASMUS in particular, also varies. Some regard ERASMUS as a tool for achieving their main academic objectives such as, for example, raising their academic standards and manifesting themselves internationally. Others have a less clear objective regarding what they wish to achieve through participation in the programme. These differences are reflected in the degree of consciousness in the selection of co-operation partners, and the degree to which the study programme is practically oriented towards student exchange.

Student exchange areas appear to be largely based upon the separate individual's engagement, but the degree of involvement by the institutions also varies. It is a positive feature when the staff become engaged, but if exchange is largely founded on an individual basis, the arrangement may become too reliant on one or just a few persons. A high level of replacement among the staff is stated to be a problem. In order to encourage continuity, solid administrative routines are an advantage, and also that there is a clear responsibility for functions and co-ordination between the administrative and academic staff.

Among the circumstances which appear to restrict participation in ERASMUS, language is an element often mentioned. Norwegian academic institutions have established language courses with the objective of encouraging Norwegians to study abroad to a very limited degree. It is also clear that Norwegian academic institutions have a potential concerning the development of courses held in English, and in developing an awareness of which courses have a quality or profile which may encourage ERASMUS or other exchange students to study in Norway. The national finance model for higher education favours the accumulation of course points, and provides few incentives for stimulating student exchange. On the contrary, in a number of cases the academic environments may be financially penalised for involvement in exchange programmes. This serves little purpose in respect of the objective of encouraging international co-operation in the field of higher education.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The basis of the survey

International activity in higher education institutions in Norway has traditionally occurred through the informal network among researchers. From the end of the 1980s, the authorities commenced to signal the desire of increased focus on *formalised* exchange agreements and programmes. In Parliamentary Proposition no. 1 (1991-92), the point is made that international co-operation within the field of higher education must be strengthened through, among other enterprises, participation in EU educational programmes and the Nordic exchange programme NORDPLUS. As from January 1, 1992, Norway became a participant in the EU ERASMUS programme, and through the EEA agreement Norway became a full participant in SOCRATES and LEONARDO da VINCI programmes.

Norwegian participation in the ERASMUS programme experienced considerable growth in the early years, but entered a period of stagnation commencing in 1995-1996. In 1999, participation increased slightly and a total of 1300 students and 140 academic staff from a total of 40 institutions travelled abroad under the SOCRATES/ERASMUS framework. Norway received 800 students and 100 lecturers from 360 overseas educational establishments during the same year. In other words, 'exports exceed imports', but the discrepancy between these as far as students are concerned has fallen in recent years.

Compared with other European countries, Norway has a high proportion of the total student mass who are studying abroad (OECD 2000). More than seven percent of the total number of students is studying abroad.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of foreign students who participate in organised exchange programmes is, however, relatively low compared to a number of other European countries. In Parliamentary Report no. 40 (1990-91) and Parliamentary Report no. 19 (1996-97), it is emphasised that Norwegian educational establishments shall acquire international skills through active exchange arrangements, and that the proportion who undertake part of their studies abroad shall be increased. Further, in a recent Parliamentary report on Higher Education (Parl. Rep. no. 27, (2000-2001), importance is attached to increasing the possibilities for a larger number of students taking *part* of their study abroad, and that participation in international programmes and institutional exchange agreements, should be strengthened. When progressing to SOCRATES 2 in 2000, the Minister, Trond Giske, emphasised that the political objectives for student exchange are that 50 percent of all Norwegian students should have a study period abroad of between 3 and 12 months. The objective is also that an equal number of foreign students should be able to come to Norway. This is a very ambitious target.

The degree to which this target will be reached in Norway is dependent upon whether the educational establishments take this challenge seriously, and not least the extent to which the

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<sup>1</sup> It is not possible to estimate the precise number, partly on account of the fact that students on a short-term stay abroad are frequently registered as studying at a Norwegian establishment according to the State Educational Loan Fund's statistics, while according to the Loan Fund administration, some 14,500 Norwegians are studying abroad.



academic staff regard international professional co-operation, and student and teaching staff mobility as both interesting and useful. The purpose of this report is to describe those experiences hitherto which have either promoted or been a hindrance to educational co-operation.

## 1.2 The main theme and area of study

A number of studies have been undertaken on different aspects of student mobility (Opper, Teichler and Carlson 1990, Maiworm, Sosa and Teichler 1996, European Commission 1999). The extent and organisation of formalised institutional activities associated with the internationalisation of Norwegian educational establishments has been recently documented quite comprehensively in a NIFU report (Olsen 1999). Previous surveys have largely focussed on students and the administrative aspects of the exchange programmes. In this report we will, however, direct our attention to the *processes* which are the fundament of activities within the various institutions and academic environment with a basis in the academic staff's experiences and viewpoints. Even though the academic staff have also been relieved of a number of administrative tasks linked to the exchange programmes in recent years, they continue to play a key role in exchange and the preparation and organisation of various forms of professional co-operation.

In the first part of the report (Chapter 2), the existing material on ERASMUS and student exchange is summarised and where importance is attached to experience hitherto, and the extent to which Norway distinguishes itself from the other countries in the programme. A relatively large amount of material is to be found concerning the EU exchange programmes, due among other things to the fact that there is a relatively comprehensive reporting system incorporated into the programmes relating to the EU and the Centre for International University Co-operation. The reporting system covers information from both the institutions and students involved. In addition, a number of studies have been undertaken of these exchange programmes. Included in these is a recent evaluation of the first phase of the SOCRATES programme including an evaluation of ERASMUS, co-ordinated by Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung og Gesellschaft für Empirische Studien i Kassel:

([http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/evaluation/socrates\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/evaluation/socrates_en.html)). This has been a major source of material for Chapter 2. A summary of this evaluation is given in Annex 3.

The second part of the report (Chapters 4–8) takes up the academic and administrative staff's views on participation in the ERASMUS programme, and is based on qualitative interviews with the academic and administrative staff at five higher education institutions. Attention is directed towards the following questions:

- The institutions strategy and priorities in respect of international educational co-operation
- The academic environment's objectives, motivation and positive/negative experiences in becoming involved in this type of co-operation
- Arrangements for 'outgoing' and 'incoming' students, and the academic staff's attitudes towards this type of exchange
- The academic staff's experience and evaluation of teacher exchange

- The academic staff's experience and evaluation of various types of international subject material and curriculum co-operation.

Commencing with the summary of existing material which illustrates ERASMUS co-operation, and the experiences of the five Norwegian institutions involved which are the focus of the second part of the report, a number of measures are presented in conclusion (Chapter 8) which may be able to contribute to the stimulation and further development of ERASMUS co-operation.

### **1.3 Data and method**

The first part of the report is based on previous research and data: previous research and evaluations in the area, material acquired from the Centre for International University Co-operation publications and web pages. Further, some information from The Centre for International University Co-operation/NTNU database is included and which relates to Norwegian students who have undertaken a part of their studies in another European country in the period 1999-2001. The vast majority of these are ERASMUS students (<http://www.intersek.ntnu.no/rapport/default.htm>). This is not a sample survey, but comprises data based on information from students who choose to register themselves in a database.

An overview of this nature can be important in order to give an impression of experiences with ERASMUS co-operation hitherto. At the same time this presentation provides important background material both concerning the issue under debate and the interpretation of the second part of the report. This is based on qualitative data collected in connection with this survey. Interviews have been undertaken at five establishments:

- The Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- The Norwegian State Academy of Music
- Molde University College
- Stavanger University College
- The Norwegian School of Management BI.

In other words, the selection comprises a university, a specialised university, two university colleges and a private university college. We have attempted to include educational establishments with different profiles, both regarding size, subjects covered and involvement in international activity. In each of the institutions we have concentrated on 3–4 professional fields (faculties or departments, dependent upon the structural organisation of the institutions). All those interviewed have received a draft of the chapter which concerns their own institution for scrutiny. As such, we have been able to correct some errors or misunderstandings, and thereby refine some of the findings.

At each institute we have interviewed both the administrative staff who were responsible for ERASMUS exchanges as well as the academic staff in several departments. We have tried to include a range of subjects including active areas as well as those which have been less engaged in ERASMUS. Overall, the informants have in common a certain minimum of experience with student exchange and international co-operation. The selection of

professional areas and informants was made in co-operation with the institutions. The interviews were undertaken in the period February – April 2001.

The majority of interviews were undertaken at the place of learning, although some were undertaken over the telephone. An interview guide was prepared in advance (See Annex 2). In the majority of interviews there were a number of questions which the respondents were not able to answer as they did not have experience with all the themes which were subject of the interview. The interviews lasted for about an hour. In addition to the interviews, material was also drawn from various printed documents including strategy programmes, annual reports, institution reports to the EU, various brochures, and information from the establishment's web pages. We have also had access to the institutions' so-called "European Policy Statement". This document is included as part of the application to the EU to participate in the ERASMUS programme, and contains information on the objectives and plans for internationalisation.

The aim of this study has to been to obtain a broad spectrum of experience and views concerning ERASMUS co-operation. Our interviews at a selection of educational establishments do not yield an exclusive picture of the situation, and neither do we know whether the results are representative for the entire university and college sector. The material nevertheless supplies an insight into the experiences of the different academic fields with ERASMUS and student exchange. A central issue here has been that through an understanding of the special characteristics of the various institutions we will be able to stimulate and develop co-operation within ERASMUS as well as in other areas of international co-operation within the sphere of education.

## 1.4 The Norwegian system

Four universities, six specialised university institutions, two national institutes of the arts, 26 state university colleges and 26 private colleges provide higher education in Norway. The universities and the specialised university institutions offer education at three study levels: an undergraduate degree, a graduate degree and a doctoral degree.<sup>2</sup> A traditional university undergraduate degree (*cand. mag*) is stipulated to about four and a half years study, composed of introductory courses (*grunnfag*) stipulated to one year study and one subject which is to be studied in more depth for at least 1½ years. A graduate degree course of a further 1½ – 2½ years' full-time study leading to a graduate degree: *cand. philol.*, (humanities), *cand. scient.*, (natural sciences), *cand. polit.*, (social sciences), among others. Professional degrees, for example in medicine, differ somewhat from these structures and to a greater extent are organised as study lines. Doctoral degrees are normally 3 years full-time study beyond a graduate degree.

The aim of the state university colleges is to make higher education more widely available while increasing the amount of academic expertise available to the different regions of

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<sup>2</sup> A detailed description is given in *Two Decades of Reform in Higher Education in Europe: 1980 onwards. Norway – National description* to be found on the Eurydice website: <http://www.eurydice.org/search/frameset.html>.

Norway. The university colleges primarily offer shorter courses of a more vocational orientation than those offered by the universities. Courses normally have a duration of two to four years. In addition to teacher training and courses in engineering, health and social work and other vocational courses of two to four years' duration, the colleges offer undergraduate courses interchangeable with those offered by the universities. Some colleges now offer graduate degree courses. One of the colleges has been given the right to bestow doctorates.

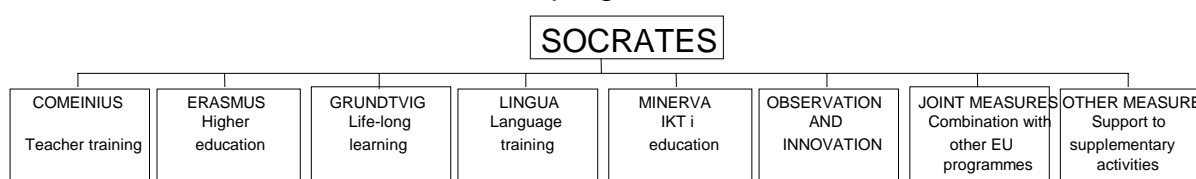
Each examination in the universities as well as the college sector is afforded credit points. The uniqueness of the Norwegian system is a great flexibility in combination of subjects. Many students combine courses at the colleges with courses at universities. In order to promote co-operation and division of labour between universities and colleges, a network, known as Network Norway, was set up for higher education and research. The network benefits the various academic environments by enabling them to co-operate with regard to fields of specialisation and division of labour.

## 2 ERASMUS – background, extent and experiences

### 2.1 What is ERASMUS?

ERASMUS is a part of SOCRATES, – the EU programme for contact and co-operation between European educational establishments at all levels, from kindergartens to further and higher education. SOCRATES commenced in 1995, but is built upon a previous programme, including ERASMUS, which commenced in 1987. SOCRATES is an umbrella programme which contains several modules as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1.** Modules in the SOCRATES programme



The number of participant countries in SOCRATES as of 2000 was about 30 (Centre for International University Co-operation, 2000). In addition to the EU and EFTA countries, the following nations are included: Bulgaria, The Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Rumania, and Slovenia.

ERASMUS is the programme for higher education and is the largest of the programmes in SOCRATES. ERASMUS is also the world's most comprehensive student exchange programme. Over 1750 European educational establishments participate in ERASMUS. The programme is frequently first and foremost associated with student exchange but also contains other elements:

- Teacher exchange
- Professional co-operation (curriculum development , joint courses, subject modules, Master degree programmes etc.)
- Intensive programmes (intensive courses with importance attached to European themes)
- Thematic networks (professional debates, information), having as their objective that of examining the European dimension within a specific professional area, or focussing on interdisciplinary or administrative circumstances of common interest for co-operation within the field of higher education.

We return to a more detailed description of the content of the various elements later. The programme has experienced relatively large changes since its commencement in 1987. Its incorporation into SOCRATES in 1995 led to a number of administrative changes. The transfer from ICP (Inter-university Co-operation Programmes) to IC (Institutional Contracts) was a comprehensive reform. One of the objectives of these structural changes was that responsibility should be less reliant upon individuals, and that the administration in the educational establishments should relieve the academic staff to a greater degree.

A development has occurred whereby several institutions now have a number of administrative staff who are concerned solely with SOCRATES. According to the institution co-ordinators, the academic staff are partially relieved from administrative responsibilities, but they continue to be equally involved in the academic aspects. A survey of the academic staff shows, however, that the academic subject co-ordinator's workload has not been reduced compared to previously. They use an average of five hours per week for these tasks (Maiworm and Teichler 2000b).

A Norwegian survey (Olsen 1999) shows that a majority of educational establishments had established 'international offices' by 1998. The organisation of international activity varied broadly between the institutions, and there were considerable differences in the numbers of staff concerned with international affairs, ranging from a single half-position to more than 30 staff. Approximately half of the institutions had established their own international committees. Responsibility for arrangements for international students was frequently a central issue, but the student organisations were often important co-operation partners. Several state university colleges mentioned that the formalisation of international co-operation was met with opposition among the academic staff, and that some departments were sceptic towards the use of increased resources at the central administrative level. Professional engagement was regarded as the most important assumption for international co-operation, but the frequent impression was that there was often only a few devotees who had the time, interest and surplus capacity to participate. A general problem seems to be that parts of the international activity were linked to specific persons, and that the activity ceased if this person moved away.

## **2.2 Student exchange**

Student mobility is the most visible component in the ERASMUS programme, and more than a half of the ERASMUS budget is used for student stipends. There has been a strong increase in the number of mobile students, from 28,000 in 1990/91 to almost 100,000 in 1999/2000. In the same period the number of participant countries has increased from 10 to 30. More than 700,000 students have participated in ERASMUS exchanges since 1987.

The exchange period has a duration of 3–12 months, and comprises part of the study course in the home country. It is an assumption that the arrangement has received prior approval. The students do not pay semester fees and receive financial support in the form of an ERASMUS stipend. The amount of the stipend varies considerably from country to country, and further, may change from year to year. For Norwegian students the ERASMUS stipend amounted to about kr. 1500 per month (€190) in the academic year 1999–2000, and came as a supplement to any loan or stipend from the State Educational Loan Fund.

In order to travel abroad under the scheme, one must be a student at a university or college which participates in the ERASMUS programme. Further, one must have undertaken at least one year's study. Another assumption is that the place of leaning where one studies has an exchange agreement in that particular field. All Norwegian universities and specialised university institutions participate in ERASMUS, as do 24 of the 26 state university colleges, two art colleges and eight private colleges. The degree of participation and number of co-operation agreements varies between the various educational establishments.

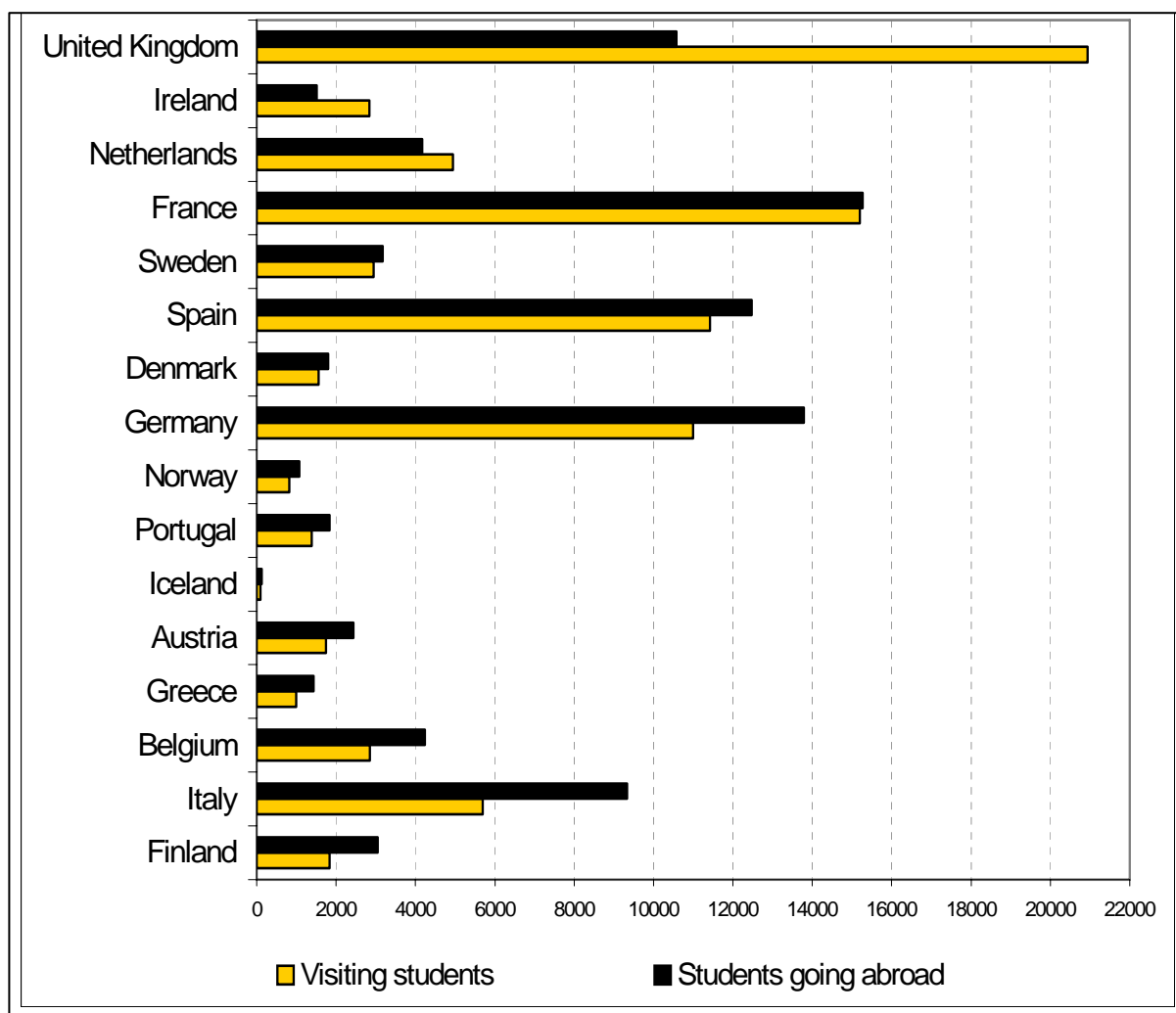
One of the intentions of ERASMUS is that students shall not lose time by being an exchange student. Here, the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) – the EU system for converting course points and grades, is central. The use of ECTS increased considerably throughout the 1990s, and formal approval of courses in other countries has increased. Those who have followed a course with ECTS points, have a larger part of their educational studies abroad approved than others when they return from abroad (87 as opposed to 74 percent). The expected delays in studies are also somewhat lower amongst those taking ECTS courses than among others. It is nevertheless important to note that the expected delays in study courses have increased. On average, students expect a 50 percent delay in the study period on account of exchange studies, i.e. they expect a delay of about half a year should their study sojourn abroad been about a year (Maiworm and Teichler 2000a). This can indicate that the formal approval in a good many courses can be more pro forma than real. But it might also be thought that the courses are organised in such manner that these fit into other courses only with some difficulty. Study abroad might be something which is undertaken *in addition* rather than *in place of* studies at the home institution. One may thus achieve credits for these studies but without that they comprise an integrated part of studies at home. ECTS has been taken into use in virtually all Norwegian universities and colleges. It is first and foremost the course credit conversion which is used; conversion of examination grades is scarcely employed in Norwegian educational establishments. A Norwegian survey (Olsen 1999) shows that all universities and specialised university institutions had procedures whereby education from foreign establishments could be incorporated. These procedures were less widely used at the state university colleges at the time of the survey. The use of ECTS was also more extensively used at universities and specialised university institutions than at the state university colleges.

Countries which are not a member of the EU, but which are participants in the SOCRATES programme, cannot exchange students between themselves, only with other EU countries. Norwegian students cannot, therefore, travel to all countries which are included in SOCRATES. Generally, there are more co-operation agreements and exchange places than utilised. The proportion of exchange places which are utilised is, on average, 48 percent. The highest level of utilisation is to be found in Great Britain where 66 percent of the places are filled. The lowest percentages (in parentheses) are found in Greece (22), Portugal (29), Iceland (30), Finland (32), and Norway (32) (Maiworm 2000).

### **2.2.1 Extent of student exchange**

As seen in Figure 2.2, Great Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands have far more incoming students than home students travelling abroad for part of their studies. This trend increased during the period 1993/94 – 1997/98. For the majority of the other countries, this pattern is reversed. Italy and Finland are the two countries with ration of fewest incoming to outgoing students. The balance between these two flows has improved during the 1990s. As illustrated in the figure, Norway has fewer incoming and outgoing than our Nordic neighbours. If consideration is made of the student population, Norway is about average for all countries in the ERASMUS co-operation, although clearly well behind the Nordic neighbours (Foss 2000).

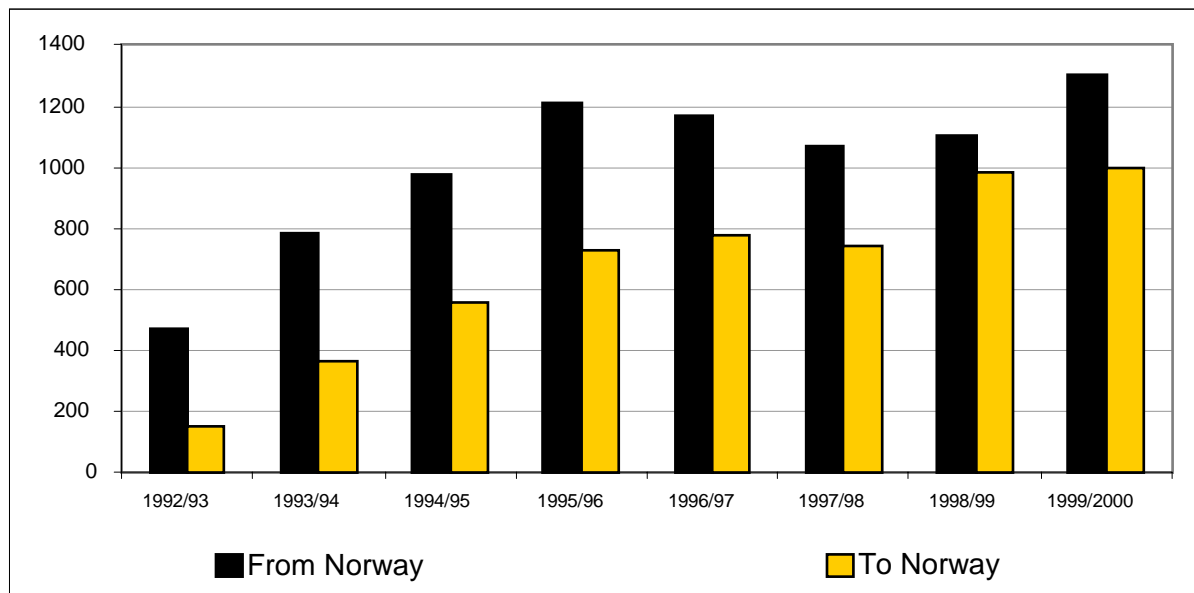
**Fig. 2.2** Total incoming and outgoing students in 1997/98



Source: Data base of the Socrates Technical Assistance Office

After Norway joined ERASMUS in 1992, almost 8000 students have participated in student exchange under the scheme. Norwegian participation in ERASMUS experienced particularly strong growth during the initial years, but stagnated after 1995. As noted in Figure 2.3, the trend has reversed again. In 1999/2000, some 1300 Norwegians participated in the ERASMUS programme. The numbers of incoming students has increased quite steadily and now amounts to 1000 students.



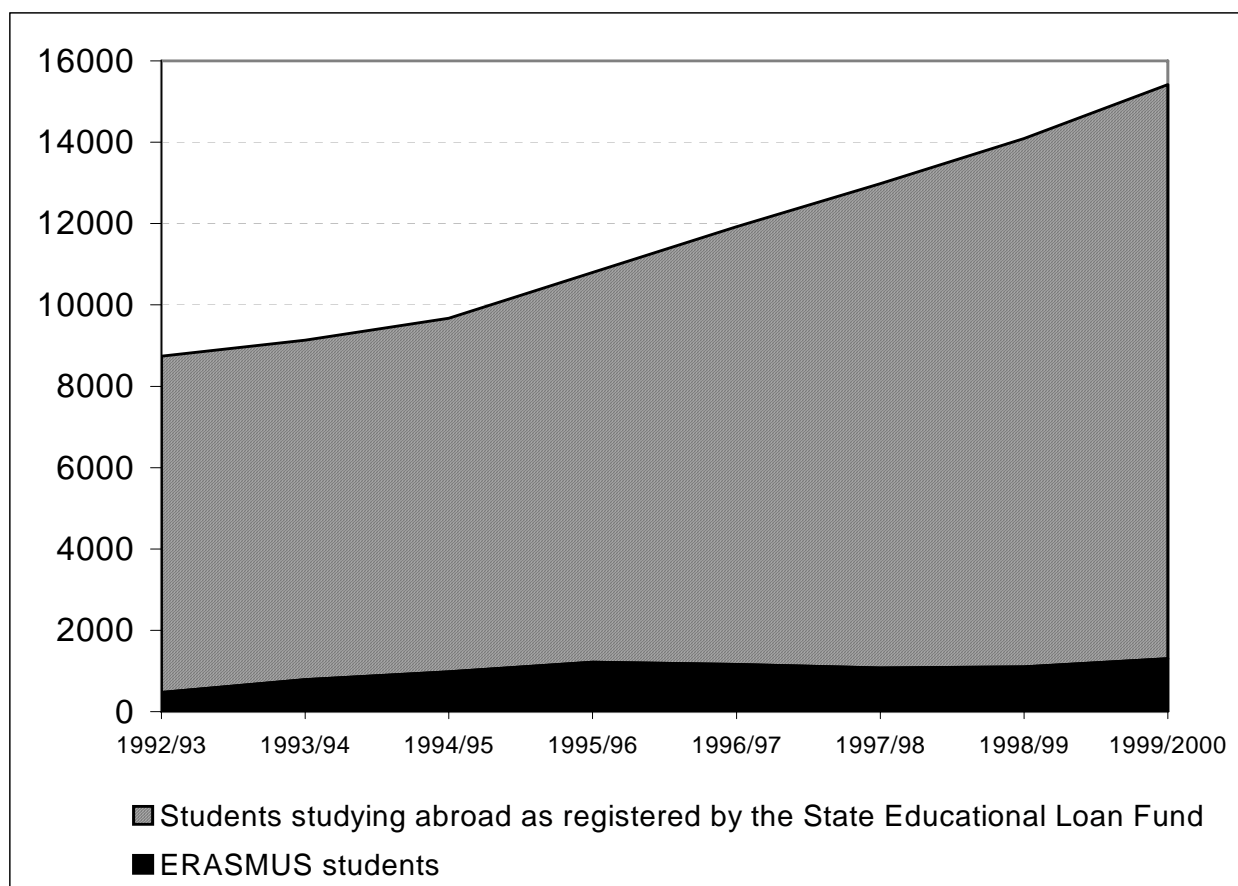
**Figure 2.3** Total ERASMUS students to and from Norway 1992/93 – 1999/2000

Source: Centre for International University Co-operation

If we look at ERASMUS students in total in Europe, this showed an annual growth of 9 percent between 1995/96 and 1999/2000. In other words, there has been an increase in Europe generally while in Norway the trend was stagnation. This was also the case in Sweden during the 1990s (<http://www.programkontoret.se>).

Figure 2.4 shows the trend in total Norwegian ‘outgoing’ ERASMUS students compared to the total number of students studying abroad based on data from the State Educational Loan Fund. The latter group essentially comprises students who undertake the *whole* of their studies abroad. (ERASMUS students and others short-stay exchange students are normally registered as studying at the institution in their home country).

**Figure 2.4** Total outgoing ERASMUS students and total foreign students registered by the State Educational Loan Fund



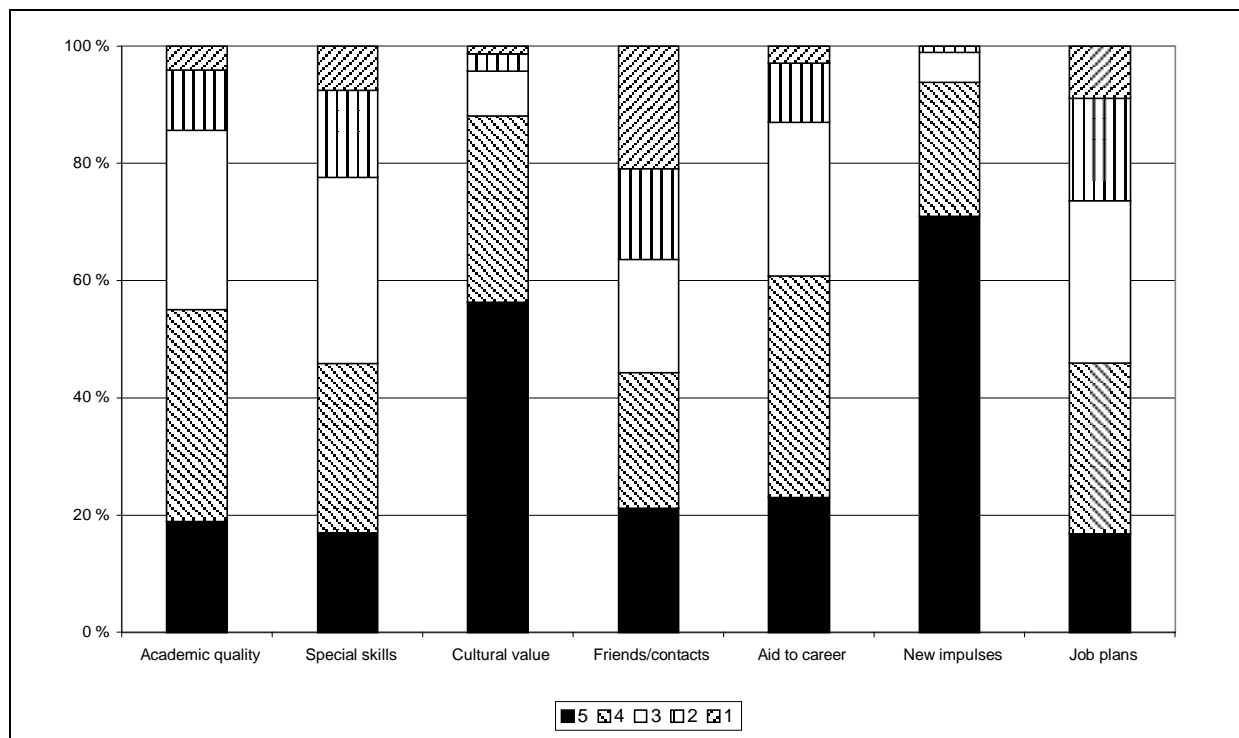
Sources: Centre for International University Co-operation and the State Educational Loan Fund

We note that the total number of students studying abroad as registered by the State Educational Loan Fund increased by almost 50 percent during the first half of the 1990s, a period during which the number of outgoing ERASMUS students was virtually stable. The growth in incoming students is due to a number of reasons. Within certain fields such as medicine and other health subjects, it is a fact that it is difficult to acquire a study place in Norway, thus motivating interest in studying abroad (Wiers-Jenssen 1999). Further, English language programmes have been established in Eastern Europe, and it is also possible to obtain support for studies in Australia, for example. A number of foreign educational establishments have recognised the economic potential of recruiting students from abroad and have been very active in their marketing with the aim of attracting more affluent students, from Norway, for example. It is nevertheless clear that a majority of Norwegians choosing to study abroad do so because they have a desire to study in an international environment, perhaps possessing a sense of adventure, and not because they have been “forced out” on account of a lack of study places in Norway (Wiers-Jenssen 1999). It may thus seem paradoxical that a larger number of students do not avail themselves of the ERASMUS exchange system.

Among those who have taken advantage of travelling abroad for a study sojourn, cultural experiences and new impulses are the most important reasons for travelling. Figure 2.5 shows the results from reports given by Norwegian students who undertook part of their studies in Europe

(the vast majority being ERASMUS students). Academic quality, particular special areas and circumstances related to job and career are of much less significance.

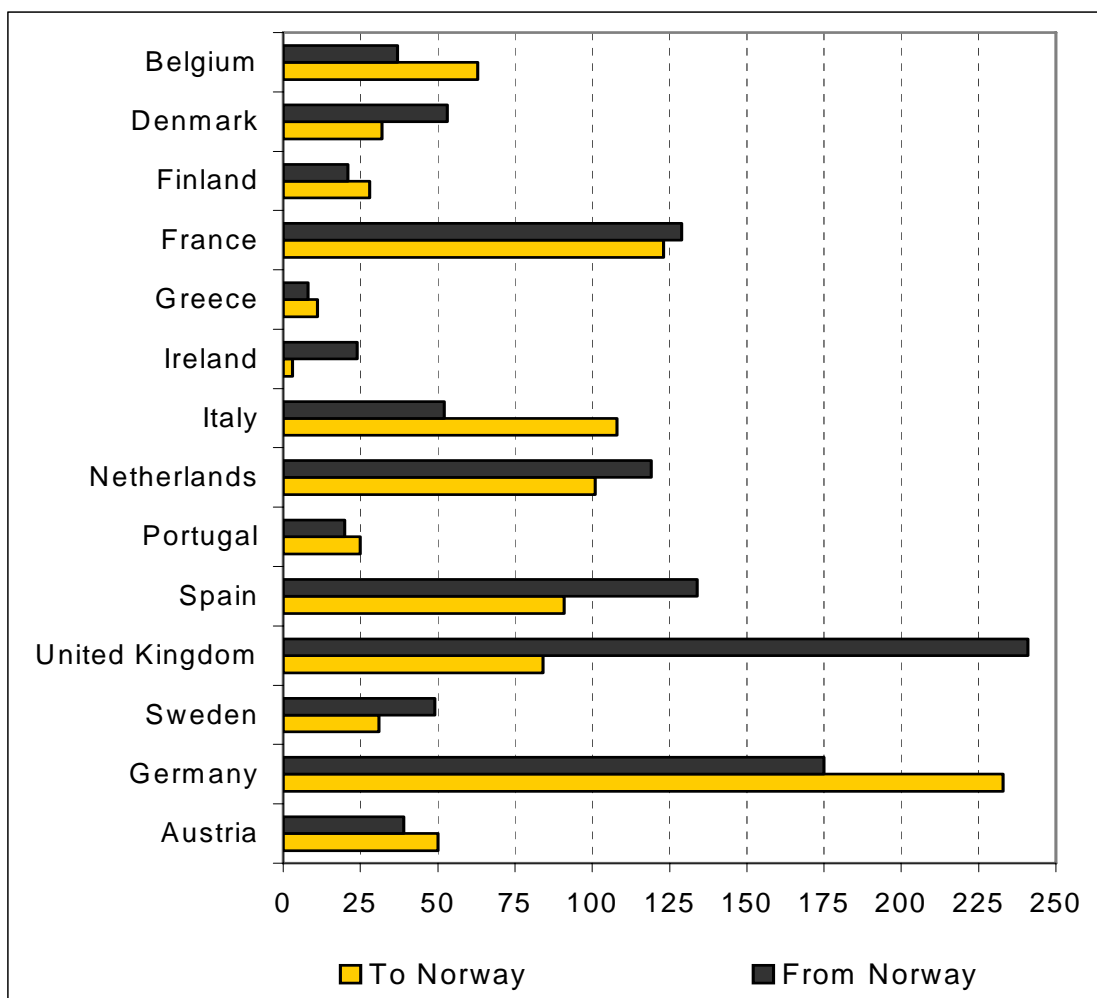
**Figure 2.5** Motivation among Norwegian students undertaking part of their studies in another European country. 5 (=Very important, 1 = less important).



Sources: Centre for International University Co-operation and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Figure 2.6 illustrates that Great Britain, Germany, France, France, Spain and the Netherlands are those countries where most Norwegian ERASMUS students choose to study. This corresponds largely to those nations which head the list of countries which send most students to Norway, but the balance between incoming and outgoing students varies. There are far more Norwegians who choose to study in Norway than British students choosing to study in Norway. The exchange relationship between Italy and Germany is the opposite: there are more outgoing than Norwegian incoming students with respect to these countries. (Further details are given in the Annex tables).

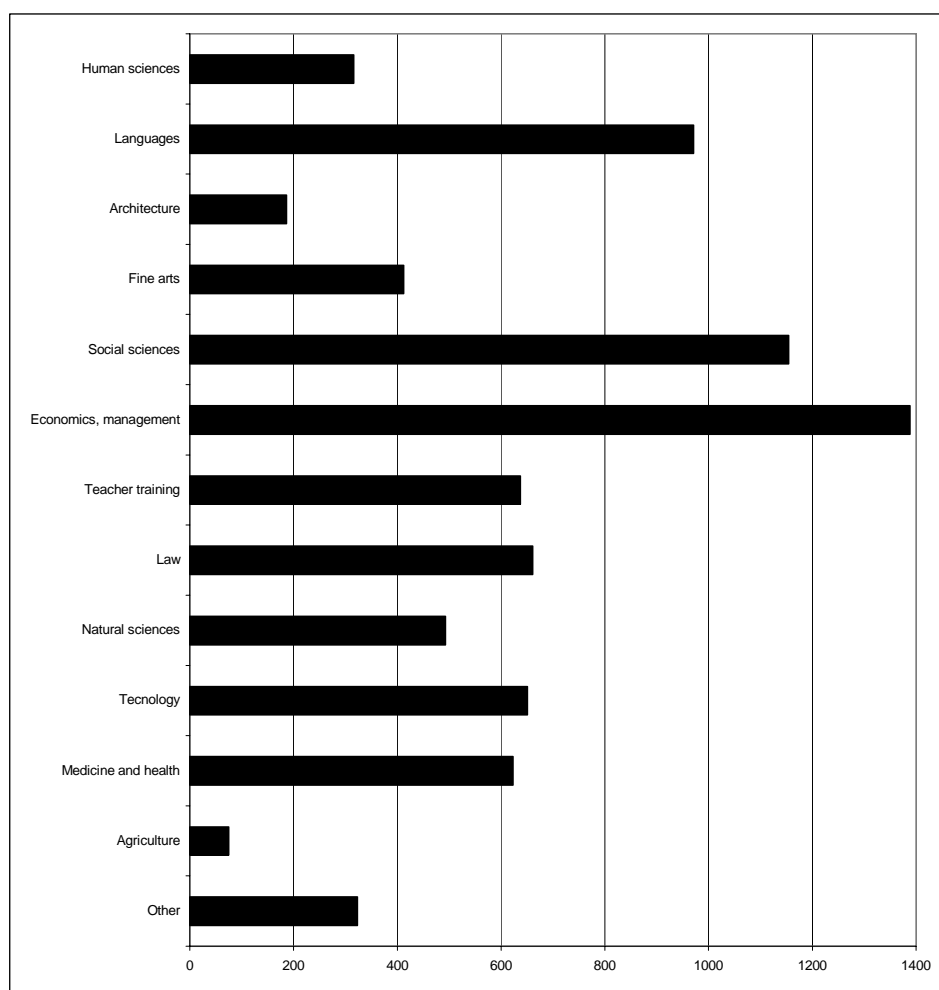
**Figure 2.6** Total incoming ERASMUS students to Norway, and total outgoing Norwegian ERASMUS students 1998/1999 by country.



Source: Centre for International University Co-operation

With regard to the distribution of students by field of study, it is seen in Figure 2.7 that the largest groups comprise economics and management, social studies and languages, but there is also a relatively large number of students undertaking teacher training, engineering and technology, medicine and health, and law, who have participated in ERASMUS exchange.

**Figure 2.7** Total outgoing Norwegian ERASMUS students in the period 1992–1999 by study field



Source: Centre for International University Co-operation

Tradition and participation in international co-operation varies widely from one educational establishment to another. Concerning student exchange, there are far more agreements than those just included within the ERASMUS programme. The largest include the Nordic exchange programme NORDPLUS, NUFU (a Norwegian universities' programme for co-operation in the third world), the Ministry of Education and Research quota programme, Co-operation programme with Central and Eastern Europe, Barentsplus and the EU programmes LEONARDO DA VINCI and SOCRATES (ERASMUS is part of SOCRATES). Many institutions also have bilateral agreements with places of learning abroad, for example in connection with Master degree courses. In 1998, only a small number of these institutions had set targets for the number of students travelling abroad each year, and of these most still had a long way to go before reaching their targets,

The majority of educational establishments had more outgoing than incoming students. The specialised university institutions, however, generally had a balance in numbers (Olsen 1999). As seen in Table 2.1, there is a considerable difference between the educational establishments with regard to the proportion of students who participated in ERASMUS exchange. To a certain

extent this may be seen in connection with the general involvement in international involvement, but is also associated with the particular fields of study involved, for example.

**Table 2.1** *Total number of ERASMUS students travelling abroad in the period 1992/93-1999/2000 and in 1999/2000; total registered students 1999; total students studying abroad 1999/2000 per 1000 registered students by place of learning.*

	92/93-99/00	99/00	Total reg. stud. 1999	Stud. abroad per 1000 reg. stud. 1999/00
Oslo School of Architecture	56	7	403	17,4
Norw. School of Management BI	308	43	9631	4,5
Norw. Lutheran College	86	7	910	7,7
Agder University College	334	49	6194	7,9
Akershus University College	15	2	2142	0,9
Bergen University College	147	27	4833	5,6
Bodø University College	80	10	3546	2,8
Buskerud University College	16	0	1936	0,0
Finnmark University College	109	18	1761	10,2
Harstad University College	10	5	860	5,8
Hedmark University College	33	6	3801	1,6
Lillehammer University College	65	8	1833	4,4
Molde University College	95	7	1356	5,2
Narvik University College	6	2	934	2,1
Nesna University College	35	10	941	10,6
Nord-Trøndelag University College	9	0	2707	0,0
Oslo University College	509	90	8191	11,0
Sogn og Fjordane University Coll.	12	3	2263	1,3
Stavanger University College	85	6	5966	1,0
Sør-Trøndelag University College	115	23	5468	4,2
Telemark University College	79	7	4067	1,7
Tromsø University College	49	9	2268	4,0
Vestfold University College	17	4	2769	1,4
Østfold University College	142	26	3684	7,1
Ålesund University College	22	2	1113	1,8
Stord/Haugesund Univ.College	84	8	1974	4,1
Free Faculty of Theology	14	2	792	2,5
Norw. School of Economics and Business Administration	620	122	2786	43,8
Norw. Univ. of Sport and Physical Education	25	6	719	8,3
Agricultural University of Norway	106	16	2640	6,1
Norw. State Academy of Music	48	10	483	20,7
Norw. Univ. of Veterinary Science	15	3	431	7,0
Norw. University of Science and Technology	937	136	18938	7,2
University of Bergen	1763	189	16109	11,7
University of Oslo	1392	192	33047	5,8
University of Tromsø	191	21	6041	3,5

Source: Centre for International University Co-operation

Some fields are more international in character than others; some subjects have longer traditions than others concerning student exchange; some are more module-based and, as such, are more appropriate for exchange schemes. Some educational establishments have a significant proportion of part-time students, and it cannot be considered that all students in this category can be regarded as potential exchange students. Comparisons between institutions should thus be made with reservation.

As seen in Table 2.1 the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration is in a class of its own regarding students travelling abroad. This college has participated in the programme from the start and a total of 620 students from the college had study sojourns abroad in the period 1992–1999/2000, which is quite considerable seen in relation to the size of the college. The college has as its aim that 50 percent of business course students shall study abroad – and 40 percent do, in fact (Olsen 1999). Other colleges who have had a large number of students studying abroad in relation to its size include Oslo School of Architecture, The University of Bergen, The Norwegian State Academy of Music, The University Colleges in Molde, and The State University College of Finnmark.

### **2.2.2 The students social background and financial situation**

A study of ERASMUS students' social background reveals few signs that ERASMUS students are notably distinguished from other higher education students concerning parents' income or work, but there is a tendency towards parents of ERASMUS students having a somewhat higher education than other students (European Commission 1999). In other words, "cultural capital" appears to be of more significance than financial capital for participation in ERASMUS.

Previous surveys have indicated that exchange students have frequently undertaken earlier sojourns abroad, or that their parents or siblings have resided abroad (Opper, Teichler and Carlson 1990). In the EU study of ERASMUS students' socio-economic background at the end of the 1990s, some 80 percent of ERASMUS students state that they are the first in the family to study abroad (European Commission 1999). The proportion is somewhat lower among Norwegian and Swedish students. One possible reason for this is that there are strong traditions in both Norway and Sweden for undertaking the *whole* of the study course abroad, and that parents or other family members have also studied abroad to a greater degree, although outside the organised programmes.

The size of ERASMUS stipends was reduced in the 1990s, and a larger proportion of costs of the exchange sojourn has been transferred to the students. This may have prevented some students from participating in the programme. Every fifth ERASMUS student mentioned *serious* financial difficulties (Maiworm and Teichler 2000a). In total, a half of all ERASMUS students have experienced financial problems during a stay abroad (European Commission 1999). Generally, one finds that, more so than others, students who reside with their parents experience that the stay abroad involves extra costs. For those who do not normally live at home, the ERASMUS stipend is stated to cover 80 percent of the extra costs of residing abroad.

Norwegian ERASMUS students do not generally report financial difficulties, something which should be seen in the light of the relatively favourable study financing arrangements (State



Educational Loan system), and which enables students to be relatively financially independent of their parents. The Norwegian ERASMUS students state that two-thirds of their income during a study sojourn abroad comes from public loans and grants. Further, it should be remembered that the Norwegian currency goes considerably further in several EU countries than in Norway. ERASMUS stipends are of relatively little significance for the total financial situation of Norwegian students (17 percent of income), while these stipends are of major significance for students from several countries.

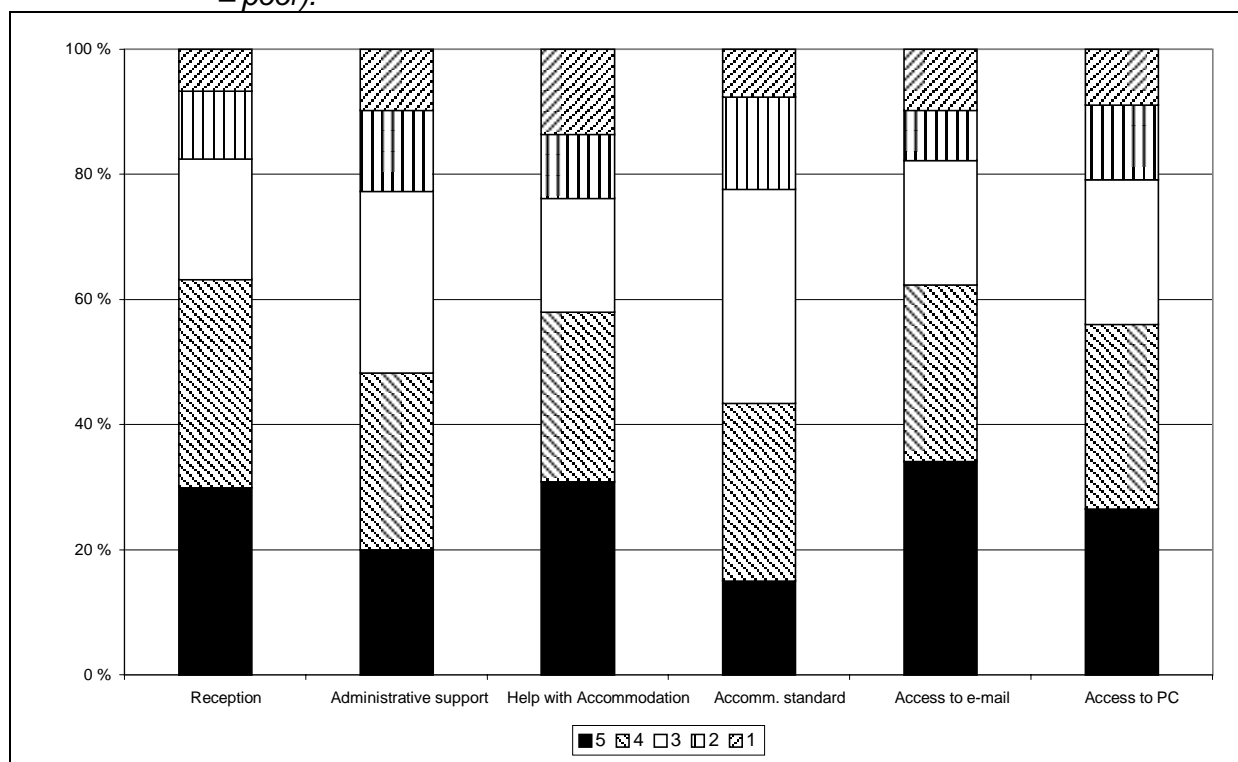
One criticism which is often raised against the ERASMUS programme is that it takes a considerable time before the students receive their stipends. Results from an evaluation of the SOCRATES programme's first phase confirm the legitimacy of this criticism; students state that it took more than eight months from the time when the application was made until the money was received (Maiworm and Teichler 2000a). This implies that on average, students first received payment after that had been abroad for almost two months.

## **2.2.2 Education and preparation**

Norwegian students who have undertaken part of their studies in another European country (the vast majority being ERASMUS students), were asked to evaluate the importance of the international section, subject teachers, the faculty, friends, Internet and study guides in connection with planning their study sojourn abroad. An analysis of this data indicates that all of these information sources are important (Table 3, Annex 1). The most important information sources appear, however, to be the Internet, friends and the international section at their home educational establishment. In the same survey, students were asked to evaluate the support and assistance they received when planning their studies abroad. The most important support appears to be other students abroad, but also the faculty/advisor at home, the international section at home and abroad, and the student advisor at home (Table 4, Annex 1).

The evaluation undertaken of Norwegian students also shows that they are reasonably satisfied with the practical assistance at the foreign place of study. As shown in Figure 2.8, some 30 percent of students consider the manner in which they have been received as being very good. Students are least satisfied with the administrative support and the standard of accommodation.

**Figure 2.8** Norwegian students' 'evaluation of reception and organisation at the foreign educational establishment in connection with short-stay studies (5= excellent, 1 = poor).



Sources: Centre for International University Co-operation and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

To what extent the students follow the normal courses during their ERASMUS sojourn varies from one country to another. The host country's language is the major restricting factor in order to be able to follow the same courses as the host country's students. Those students who study in countries such as Greece, Portugal and Norway thus follow normal courses to a lesser degree. In total, six of ten ERASMUS students follow all courses in the host country's language. A third language, normally English, has become increasingly significant as an educational language. A survey from 1998/99 shows that 59 percent of ERASMUS students followed courses solely in the host country's language; 25 percent followed part of the course in the host language; 15 percent followed courses in their own language or a third language (Maiworm and Teichler 2000a): Very few Norwegian institutions arrange language courses for outgoing students. The reason for this is that students generally travel to English-speaking or Nordic countries (Olsen 1999).

The majority of Norwegian academic institutions offered language courses for incoming students, but did not necessarily provide them themselves. Few offers of courses held in English appeared to be a major obstacle in attracting more students from abroad. One problem according to the administration in Norwegian educational establishments, is that the academic staff declined to lecture in English. Understanding was expressed, however, that the academic staff did not give priority to student exchange in a period when increased student numbers, mergers, demands for increased skills etc. were essential issues. Becoming acquainted with the educational programmes of institutes in other countries can be extremely demanding. Offers of assistance

with lodgings together with information meetings are given by most. Many also have a tutor/advisor arrangement and offers of courses in Norwegian culture and history (Olsen 1999).

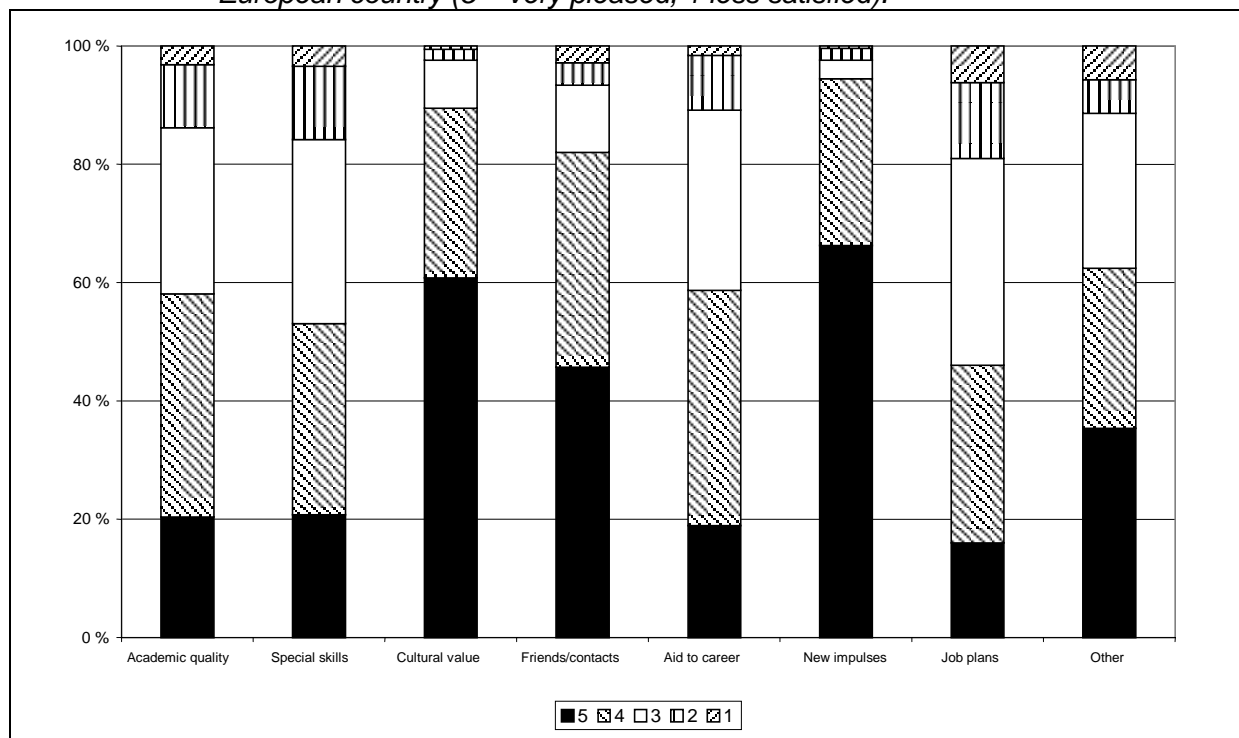
In the same survey, the educational establishments were also asked whether changes had occurred in the curriculum as a result of internationalisation, and to what extent this could be linked to the ERASMUS programme. Both universities and colleges appeared to give small priority to this matter. A number of institutions had established their own Master's degree programmes, or co-operated with institutions abroad on such programmes. The Master's programmes at Norwegian universities have largely been held in English and aimed at 'quota students' and the Eastern European programme. In the college sector, Master degree programmes had aroused little interest, but where found were largely in association with the foreign institution and as special courses for their own students. Some, however, hoped to be able to offer such courses in the future (something which may be assumed to have arisen as a result of the debate concerning a new degree structure at Norwegian universities and colleges).

#### **2.2.4 Gains and career**

The majority of ERASMUS students appear to be satisfied with their sojourn abroad. In a survey from 1998/99, 93 percent of students maintain that they are satisfied with their ERASMUS studies, and only 2 percent were dissatisfied. The advantages were particularly related to cultural and language aspects, the same also applying to personal development and improved career possibilities. The academic achievements were also considered as positive, although less so than the other factors mentioned. 57 percent considered that they had achieved a greater academic advance than they would have done at home, while 27 percent considered this to be equal; 18 percent considered that they had achieved less academically. Those who had studied in southern Europe did not support the view to the same extent that they had achieved a greater academic advance than at home. The students maintain that they had made considerable advances in language skills (Maiworm and Teichler 2000a):

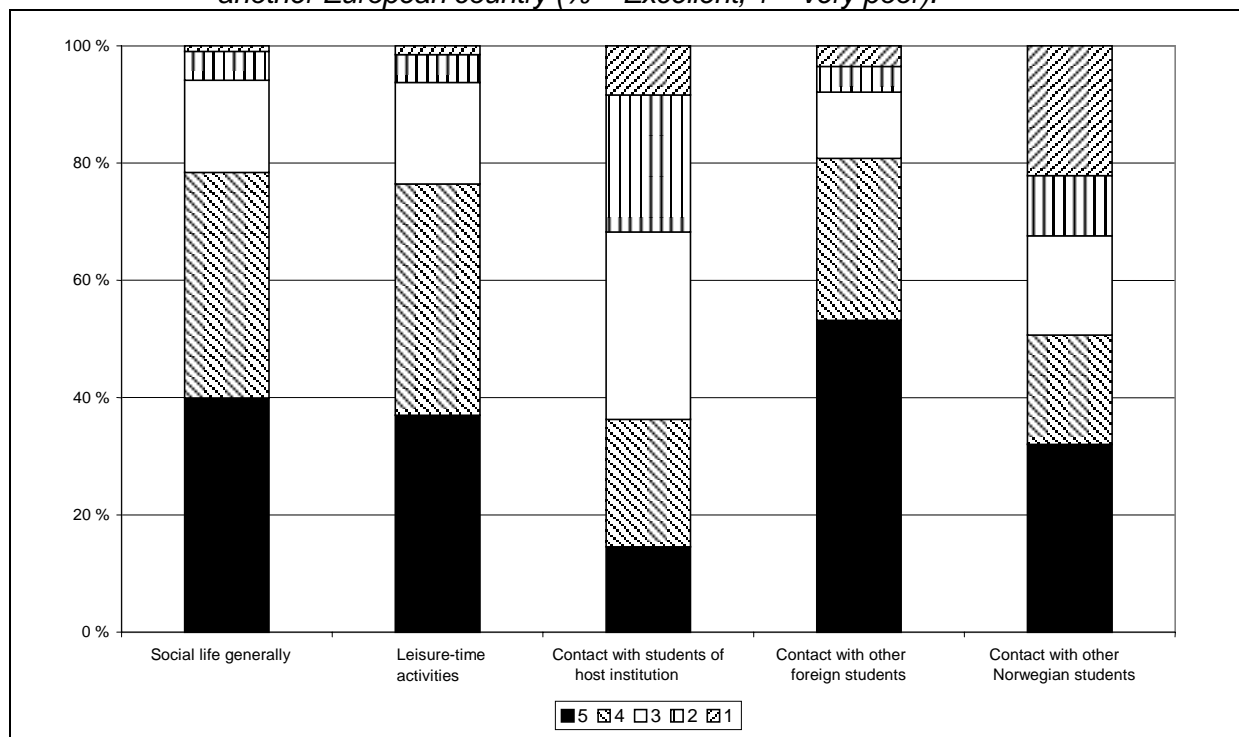
Data from Norwegian students who had undertaken part of their studies in another European country (the majority being ERASMUS students), show how students consider the various parts of their study sojourn. As seen in Figure 2.9, cultural experiences and new impulses are those which gave most satisfaction. About a half had made new friends or a partner when abroad. The evaluation of the academic aspects of the study and its significance for careers and job plans appear to be more divided. If these results are compared, there is a very large correspondence between the students' motivation for travelling abroad (Figure 2.5) and their evaluation of the results of the sojourn. This may, however, be related to the fact that the students have answered both questions after they had arrived back home, and many students may therefore have had difficulties in distinguishing between the original motivation for travelling and the actual gains achieved.

**Figure 2.9** Norwegian students' evaluation of the results of partial studies in another European country (5 = very pleased, 1 less satisfied).



Sources: Centre for International University Co-operation and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

**Figure 2.10** Norwegian students' evaluation of social integration during partial studies in another European country (% = Excellent, 1 = very poor).



Sources: Centre for International University Co-operation and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

The same survey (Figure 2.10) shows that Norwegian students in general were very satisfied with the social picture during their partial studies abroad. However, it is worth noting that the students were least satisfied with the integration with students in the host country. The results indicate that ERASMUS students largely associate with each other but less so with the other students. Contact with foreign students may naturally be of value, but based on the objective of becoming familiar with another country's culture and language it can be unfortunate to have only limited contact with the host nation's students. Several studies have revealed that social contact with the host country's students can have a positive effect on adaptation and satisfaction (Klinenberg and Hull 1979, Furnham 1986, Opper, Teichler and Carlsson 1990). The majority of Norwegian undertaking studies abroad outside of the programme have significant contact with the host country's students (Wiers-Jenssen 1999).<sup>3</sup> This is partly associated with the fact they are staying longer in the host country. Students use several months in becoming adapted to many aspects of the new society. The more distant the country from Norway, both in respect of language and culturally, the longer time taken for adaptation. Oberg (1954) splits this adjustment process into four stages. To complete this adjustment and where familiarity with the local culture is achieved, probably takes longer time than the length of the ERASMUS study period.

There are certain differences based on country regarding the level of satisfaction registered by students. Norwegian students appear to be less satisfied than students from other countries. Students on exchange studies in southern European countries are less satisfied than those under academic exchange in northern Europe. They are, however, equally as satisfied with the social and cultural gains as others. Virtually all students consider that they have had positive social and cultural profits from the exchange visit (European Commission 1999).

Regarding gains other than the purely academic, one study shows that ERASMUS students consider themselves more experienced concerning language ability than those who have not had an exchange study. But they also consider their ability to be higher concerning, for example, analytical skills, ability at problem solving, oral communication, and the ability to work independently. An exchange visit during their course of study appears to make entry into the labour market easier; the mobile students find work more rapidly than those who have not studied abroad. (Jar and Teichler 2000).

Students who have been mobile distinguish themselves from other students in as much as they have considered, applied for and obtained employment abroad. They maintain that experience abroad and language skills have been important in the employer's evaluation of their application. About four of ten previous ERASMUS students have jobs with a considerable international content. Two-thirds consider that their sojourn abroad made a positive contribution towards them acquiring their first job. When asked about the significance of certain aspects of their stay abroad retrospectively, personal development, knowledge of the host country and language skills are those which are most positively regarded. There are few, however, who consider that their career has necessarily been more successful than others, and there are few with a higher income (Jahr and Teichler 2000).

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<sup>3</sup> The exception is students undertaking medical studies in English language programmes in Eastern Europe.

A longitudinal study of previous ERASMUS students has shown that students regard ERASMUS exchange as useful in respect of the changeover to the labour market and the working situation, even though they personally did not necessarily regard the exchange visit as a springboard (Teichler and Maiworm 1994). The academic gains of the exchange were considered lower five years after the sojourn than at the time immediately following their return. Other gains (cultural, language) were considered much the same at each point of time. It also emerged that the delays in completing studies were somewhat less than expected.

### **2.3 Teaching staff mobility**

There has been a considerable increase in the number of persons participating in teacher exchange. At the end of the 1990s more than 700 had participated. Teacher exchange has a framework of 1 to 8 weeks, but the mean duration of teacher exchange had become less during the 1990s. In 1990/91 the mean duration was 24 days while in 1999 it was just 8 days. The ERASMUS stipend proportion of financing of teacher mobility has declined slightly, being compensated by an increase in support by the home country (Maiworm 2000). Teacher exchange is an area where there are few statistics for Norwegian educational establishments. It is first in 2001 that each country received ear-marked means for this purpose; previously, the institutions used a larger directly distributed sum for sending teachers, and which has not been reported on a national basis.

Part of the SOCRATES 1 evaluation included a survey of the academic staffs' views on teacher mobility and ERASMUS (Maiworm and Teichler 2000b). Academic staff who have been involved in teacher exchange report a number of problems of which the most frequently mentioned is the limited financial support from the Commission (45 percent), the considerable workload (35 percent), problems in interruption to teaching and research responsibilities in the home institution (35 percent) and in finding a substitute teacher (28 percent). Arrangements for a teaching period abroad are regarded as poor both by the mobile teachers and the institutional contact, and here there has been no change since the early 1990s.

Teacher exchange is nevertheless considered as positive by those participating. Cultural understanding and the possibility to become acquainted with other teaching methods are among the positive aspects mentioned. Further, it was emphasised that teacher exchange is also advantageous to the non-mobile students in so far as they are offered courses which normally might not be available in their host institution. The academic staff experience only small differences in academic ability between students in other European countries and the host country.

The majority consider that there have been positive developments arising from the Europeanisation and internationalisation at their institution, particularly regarding student mobility and research co-operation. A comparison of the viewpoints of the academic staff and the institution co-ordinators shows, however, that the academic staff – almost without exception – have a *less* positive evaluation regarding the extent to which changes have occurred.

In Norway, the state university colleges made greater use of teacher mobility than universities and specialised university institutions. This applies both for teacher exchange through

SOCRATES/ERASMUS and NORDPLUS. Even though the extent of teacher mobility is relatively modest, the administration at most universities and specialised university institutions, and about half of the state university colleges, considered that the academic staff had more opportunities for a sojourn abroad (Olsen 1999).

## **2.4 Curriculum development**

The development of the curriculum is a central factor in SOCRATES, among other reasons as it is an area which can be to the advantage of many more than just the mobile students. 13 percent of institutions linked to ERASMUS co-ordinate curriculum development projects, and about 30 percent of the institutions are involved. On average, five countries are involved in each project. Included under the curriculum development projects are those at lower levels (CDI), higher levels (CDA), integrated language courses (ILC), intensive programmes (IP), and so-called European modules (EM) which comprise courses focussing upon other countries, aspects of European integration or comparative perspectives. In 1999/2000, Norwegian institutions were involved in 11 curriculum development projects and was co-ordinator for two of these (Maiworm 2000).

In a document analysis, 53 curriculum development projects have been examined in an evaluation of ERASMUS (Klemperer and van der Wende 2000). The results show that a interdisciplinary approach was used in two-thirds of the projects. The number of teachers involved in each project varied from 3 to 150. The majority had more than 20. The duration of the projects also varied. The language programmes and the so-called “European modules” are frequently of a relatively short-term nature (one to three years), while about two-thirds of the other projects extend over three years.

Among the most frequently mentioned problems was the lack of finance, lack of active participation from all parties involved, and technical and administrative problems. Concerning the results, it was stated that in 95 percent of cases the projects had resulted in the development of study programmes and/or teaching means. After one years’ co-operation, a third of the courses have commenced. Not all final reports were available at the time when the analysis was undertaken, and in consequence it is difficult to state to what extent curriculum development was institutionalised and would resulting permanent changes.

## **2.5 Thematic network**

The objective of the thematic networks is to develop an European dimension within selected academic fields (or other themes or common interest) through co-operation between higher educational institutes and academic or other organisations. As a part of the evaluation of the ERASMUS programme’s first phase, 16 thematic networks were examined using document analysis (Klemperer and van der Wende 2000). There are two types of partners: institutions of higher education, and diverse other organisations such as research centres and business, for example. The number of partners is increasing, and a half of all networks have between 75 and 150 partners. The most frequently cited objectives were to promote ECTS, to meet European needs, to advance an European dimension, and to compare study courses. The most frequently reported means for achieving these aims is a comparison/review of existing programmes, to

inform about new teaching methods and curricula, improvement in education and quality control, network and communication with external groups and common curriculum development.

All the projects focused on the European dimension, and all except one also focussed on education and teaching. Focus on distance education and further education was incorporated into about a half of the networks. All were interested in quality improvement, and the majority had one or another form of quality control. The use of external evaluation is more common here than in the curriculum development projects, but there is still some way to go.

One problem frequently reported is the postponed start of projects resulting from a delay or lack of finances. In consequence, a number of projects were down-scaled and meetings were replaced by electronic communication. Administrative problems were also frequently mentioned, particularly the work load in co-ordinating the networks. Further, inactive partners were seen as a problem in half of the networks. Language and communication were additional problems. The interdisciplinary nature of the networks and the fact that these have an extensive coverage could also be a source of administrative problems. Regarding the achievement of objectives, it was not possible to evaluate this on the basis of the document analysis. But among the results which were most frequently reported are European conferences, comparative analyses at the European level, short courses, scientific articles, new pedagogical tools (survey and analysis methods).

The thematic networks are dependent upon individual engagement; institutional involvement varies and has also seen to be problematic on a number of occasions. The future of the networks is nevertheless dependent upon the degree to which the results are adopted and implemented by the institutions. It has therefore proposed that the thematic network be integrated into the institutional contract under the SOCRATES programme's second phase.

## **2.6 Challenges**

A central feature of teaching institutions which have been successful in their internationalisation strategy is that internationalisation penetrates the entire institution (Foss 2000). The University of Joensuu in Finland is an example of such an institution. Joensuu is located far into the Karelian forests and has, among other things, used internationalisation as a strategy for attracting Finnish students. The institution has attached considerable importance in giving priority to its stronger aspects of research and education. Within education, concentration has been focussed on five areas where they offer year units which are in English but which are also open to Finnish students. Each of these year units is divided into modules. Students can take individual modules or the entire programme. There are also several choices enabling foreign students to specialise to some extent during the year.

In the evaluation of SOCRATES 1, the institution co-ordinators attach considerable importance to the significance of SOCRATES for internationalisation and Europeanisation. A clear majority of the institution co-ordinators are of the opinion that that co-operation and mobility activities have been extended and/or improved during recent years. But the institutions also experience problems, and four areas have been noted: financing of student and teacher mobility, a lack of resources in the institutions with regard to administrative staff and financing, a lack of interest in teacher mobility and curriculum-related themes among the academic staff and administrative



problems – for example delays in the form of financial transfers. Other factors which were also of some significance included opposition to the introduction of ECTS, poor accommodation quality, and a lack of interest on behalf of the students. In general, it is the co-ordinators from southern and eastern Europe who were the most satisfied with the programme while there is more scepticism from the Netherlands, Great Britain and Sweden (Maiworm and Teichler 2000c).

In the Norwegian survey (Olsen 1999), the lack of motivation among students and staff was stated as an obstacle for further internationalisation. It was nevertheless recognised that the administration had an important task in respect of information and organisation. At specialised university institutions and state university colleges, a lack of resources was frequently stated to be a problem. Further, a number also considered that a lack of an organisational basis for international activity created a problem. In particular, those colleges which did not have staff with a special responsibility for internationalisation stated that international work was given low priority by the administration. Reporting to Brussels in connection with participation in the EU programme was regarded as time-consuming. The degree of international engagement frequently revealed an association with a particular academic field. It appeared easier to achieve exchange within those areas which initially are considered international, for example, business economics. Teacher training in many institutions has been characterised by minimal exchange, but there are also a number of state university colleges which have achieved significant levels of exchange in this field. Some courses are not particularly module-based and may thus have problems in participating in ECTS (time-for-time exchange).

In a summary of the evaluation of ERASMUS, Ulrich Teichler (2000) attaches importance to the fact that consideration should be given to finding methods of retaining the interest of the academic staff in ERASMUS, even though it is not realistic to return to the network-based models. Further, he emphasises that teacher mobility has scarcely changed during the 1990s and that there is therefore need for a new approach to improve this situation. Financing of teacher mobility could, for example, be linked to academic support to mobile students, integration of teacher mobility in the host institution's regular educational programme, and participation in curriculum development projects.

Further, Teichler considers that institutional strategies may be strengthened if the institutions observe that creativity and consistency between concepts and activities are rewarded, and that the manner in which SOCRATES is administered should be changed. Previous experience suggests that this is difficult, but criticism should be a stimulus to change, for example, in reducing the time before stipends are paid, rewarding innovative proposals and changes in the reporting system in the direction of less weight on administrative and financial goal achievements.

### 3 Stavanger University College

The University College in Stavanger was established in 1994 on the basis of a merger of seven colleges. The college has seven departments and offers a broad spectrum of education; some 40 basic courses and 60 supplementary courses. Among the more specialised courses we find hotel and tourism management, and education in offshore and oil industry technology. In addition to vocational subjects, first and second year university studies, courses are also offered in some areas leading to graduate degree and doctorate studies. The college has a nodal function within four fields in Network Norway.<sup>4</sup> There is a total of 6500 students and 600 staff.

We interviewed the administrative staff responsible for student exchange together with the academic staff in the following departments: Economics, Culture and Social science (two persons), Humanities (one person), Teacher training (one person), and Health and social welfare (two persons).

#### 3.1 Organisation and strategy

The college has a total of twenty agreements within the framework of ERASMUS, but the activity level is relatively low. In the period 1992/93–1999/2000, 85 students were registered as having travelled abroad under the ERASMUS programme. In the mid-1990s, the annual total was about 20. In the academic year 2000/2001, just two students travelled abroad and six were received. In 1999/2000, six travelled out and nine were received. The college has very little exchange of academic staff, and are not involved in curriculum development projects or other ERASMUS activities than student exchange.

The college also participates in other SOCRATES programmes such as MINERVA and COMEINIUS. The college is involved in 15 networks within the Nordic student exchange programme NORDPLUS, and participates in the quota programme and North Sea University. The latter is a pilot project supported by the EU and a network co-operation between partners in Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Norway, where the ambition is to offer Master's degrees within three academic fields. In addition there are bilateral agreements with universities in other countries, for example courses leading to a master's degree, nursing training in Australia, and exchange for teacher trainees at Pacific Lutheran University in the USA.

In the health and social welfare subjects there is activity in association with NORDPLUS, and according to the college this programme has the advantage of being easier to administrate than ERASMUS, the educational courses are more comparative, and network meetings are also a feature. Further, the language barriers are less. It also emerges that co-operation between the individual foreign institutions can occur some years with ERASMUS, while in other years exchange can occur *outside* of the programme (with the same institution) as this is simpler.

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<sup>4</sup> See Section 1.4.

Among the specific objectives in the college's "European Policy Statement", the goal of a mobility level of 10 percent for students and 15 percent for teachers should be mentioned. It is also an objective to increase the number of courses offered in English and to establish several co-operation agreements. The college is currently preparing an international office. Three administrative staff are working full-time with tasks associated with internationalisation. One is working with ERASMUS, one has the quota programme as the special field, and one works with NORDPLUS and diverse other tasks. The administration has the responsibility for following up the bilateral agreements and the institutional contracts. No particular problems have been mentioned in connection with the guidelines or approval of agreements. The academic staff have various experiences concerning the extent to which they have received adequate assistance by the administration regarding establishing and the practical management of the exchange agreements. Some of this is due to changes in the administrative staff where a lack of continuity was stated as a problem.

Among those we interviewed, there seems to be a general opinion that the internationalisation strategy approved by the board has been satisfactory, but that the *implementation* of the strategic visions have been lacking. As one interview subject stated: "The distance between strategy and practical formulation is the problem. The visions are alright, but their connection with the various academic fields is unclear and not comprehensive." It was also mentioned that internationalisation was one of several areas of interest and which could well be given low priority in periods of limited resources.

Some considered, however, that there had been a positive development in recent years. On the part of the administration, it was maintained that there were now three posts and an international office was being established. Previously, there was just a single 20 percent post devoted to internationalisation. It was emphasised that financial resources are important to achieve anything, but also that it may also take time before the effects are registered. Those responsible for the administration expressed: "Internationalisation is expensive, and it is difficult to keep control over the effects. A long period must expire before an international culture is developed within an institution. New finance is decisive; to impose international responsibilities without adequate financial means is seldom successful". One of the academic staff was of the opinion that the leadership is now attempting to find persons among the academic staff who can work actively with student exchange and internationalisation.

The current exchange agreements are essentially an extension of the agreements entered into at the time when ERASMUS was a network co-operation. The few agreements which were established in later years appear to have been based on personal contacts. For example, an agreement was established with a German university because one of the academic staff had previously been a student there. The criteria for choice of partner are not always clear and unambiguous. One of the informants in health and social welfare stated that they could not be so exclusive that they could have specific criteria. Personal contact is established, and thereafter an attempt at co-operation is decided upon. The same informant also considered as negative that the abandonment of the network has resulted in loss of personal contacts. In her opinion the programme had become impersonal, one has lost a central forum for finding new partnerships, and this was an obstacle for participation in the programme. For the administration, it was pointed out that one could never avoid the initiative of the individual

regarding establishment of a partnership, and that partnerships initiated by the administration were rarely successful.

Agreements which are not used or which do not meet up to expectations are scarcely ever abandoned. From the administration's side it was admitted that it would be advantageous if some agreements were terminated and replaced by others, but this seems to be avoided in order not to "insult" the partner institution by terminating the agreement. Academic staff point out that there is no point in terminating a 'sleeping contract' as long as these remain relevant and do not incur any costs. Language was mentioned as an important reason for several agreements not being actively in use.

The reason that the academic staff become engaged in international work appears in the first instance to be academic interest and personal engagement. There seems to be few other incentives, but those academic staff with initiative and enterprise have a solid support in strategy documents in order to initiate measures which can contribute to internationalisation.

### **3.2 Students travelling abroad**

Information meetings are held, and some departments also have international days where previous students and occasionally also representatives from the educational establishments in other countries participate. Information is also found on the colleges' web pages. A brochure has also been prepared informing of the possibilities of studying abroad, and some departments have also prepared their own material. The academic staff appear to be of the opinion that responsibility for information lies with the administration, but some maintain that it is the academic staff who take the initiative. A couple of the informants pointed out that there are some enthusiasts who work with this and that this is not something which penetrated the day-to-day activities. One of the academic staff expressed that the marketing strategy is too ineffectual and spasmodic. From the administration's side it is maintained that there is a lack of obligation/responsibility on the part of the academic staff; they should emphasise to the students how important this is.

Several emphasise that language is a barrier to participation on the ERASMUS programme. It is difficult to enter into agreements with British universities, and the Norwegian students' skill in German, French and Spanish are rarely sufficient for them to follow courses in these languages. But neither do the colleges offer courses in languages for students wishing to study abroad. The administrative staff mention that it might well prove advantageous to try such courses. Informants from economics, culture and social studies emphasise that the college has language courses of high quality, but that there is not the opportunity for language modules in the present teaching programmes. They hold the opinion that a major restructuring will have to take place if one really wishes to attach importance to internationalisation, and that a package solution is required where consideration will also have to be given to the inclusion of language courses as an element. They consider that this will be difficult to achieve within the current three-year study programme, but will be less so within a five-year course (leading to a Master's degree).

Courses seem to have remained virtually unchanged or adapted to exchange programme requirements. One of the academic staff considered that this was due to the fact that each of the staff considered that their subject was the most important – implying that there were not particularly willing to change their timetable! Informants from health and social welfare explain that they have thematic courses, but that these are not graded. They have integrated examinations where the students are examined in many subjects simultaneously, something which would complicate student exchange. Another aspect which appears to be a hinder to exchange in health and social welfare is that ERASMUS is initially based on exchange in theory, and not in practice. The informants consider that exchange during the practice period is the most advantageous, but as this is difficult to arrange, it is desired that practice exchange is transferred from ERASMUS to LEONARDO. NORDPLUS exchange is also considered to function better in the light of its objectives.

The informant from the Humanities was a lecturer in German and was surprised that very few students took the opportunity to take the intermediate degree course (*mellomfag*) in Germany. His impression was that students felt tied to the institution and were not particularly interested in travelling abroad, even when the opportunity was present. But he also pointed out that it was probably most interesting for these students to travel abroad when proceeding to the graduate degree course (*hovedfag*).

Considering the fact that there are relatively few students from Stavanger University College who have travelled abroad, the accumulated student exchange experiences are somewhat limited. One informant who lectured in social care studies considered that exchange was extremely important for students in this subject – not only did they receive an insight into other countries' systems, but particularly because they would experience what it was to be part of a minority group within another society.

### **3.3 Incoming students**

The colleges' web pages are an important source of information for incoming students. Some departments forward information to their contract partners; others make little active effort to recruit students, but state that they are positive if someone enquires.

The School of Economics, Culture and Social studies has constructed a course held in English totalling 20 points. They state that it is relatively time-consuming to compile a course in English, but that lecturers who participate in international conferences and who are accustomed to using English as a working language in this connection, are relatively positive to holding courses using English. Courses held in English are not to be found in the others subjects. For example, education in the arts is more individual and is characterised by tutorials such that language is a lesser problem. The informant from administration stated that courses in hotel management and tourism are planned to be held in English (10 points), and the Department for Technology and Natural Sciences are planning a Master' degree course in petroleum to be held in English. He also explains that the college is experiencing some interest from students in France, for example, but that the lack of education in a relevant language (English) results in this being of little interest to these students. He has the

impression that foreign students are willing to learn Norwegian, but not to such a high level that Norwegian may be used as a teaching language.

Representatives from the School of Economics, Culture and Social Sciences have been particularly engaged in student exchange,<sup>5</sup> and maintained that they consider that it is important to participate in the ERASMUS co-operation in order to develop subjects and the School. Among other things, it was mentioned that student exchange provided the possibility to compare levels of education with other institutions. The school has had a number of incoming students, and experience has been that these are frequently intelligent and broaden the range of students in the college. But not all foreign students have the same basic skills as their Norwegian counterparts, something which can be a challenge. One of these stated. “In total, it is the challenge of attaining the required level that results in mutual and beneficial exchange”.

Several of the informants were aware that a number of gifted students have come from Eastern Europe to study at the college’s fine arts department, and that this has been a positive contribution to the college. In health and social welfare studies where students may participate in exchange during the practice periods, it was informed that it could be difficult to integrate foreign students into student group. It is not so easy to become part of student society when one is out on practice. In this study area, incoming students are seen as a problem academically, as they require extra tutoring and follow-up.

### **3.4 Summary**

Stavanger University College is a large college, and courses are offered in a broad spectrum of areas. Some of these have typically international working areas, and the college is located geographically within a region where international companies comprise a major part of local business. It seems somewhat paradoxical, therefore, that international activity in general, and ERASMUS specifically, is so low. The college’s strategy for internationalisation appears to have come in the wake of other areas of activity, and in any case it can be demonstrated that the college has not come particularly far regarding arrangements for student exchange. This may be partly due to the considerable turnover of administrative staff with responsibility for internationalisation. The establishment of an international office indicates, however, that this area may be experiencing a rejuvenation. Some initiative has been taken which, if followed up, can result in Stavanger University College becoming more strongly engaged in student exchange in the future.

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<sup>5</sup> There have been far more incoming than outgoing students in the department, and must be seen in association with the courses in English language.

## **4 Molde University College**

Molde University College was established in 1994. At the time of the interview the college had two departments: (1) The Institute of Economics, Computer Science, Social Science, and (2) The Institute of Health Sciences. At this time the first three comprised a single faculty. The College offers 23 basic courses are offered, and there is also a trial arrangement with a master's course in logistics. It has 1500 students and 125 staff.

We interviewed the international co-ordinator and academic staff from the two departments: Economic, Computer Science and Social Science (one person from economics, and one from transport and logistics), and two persons from Health Sciences (one from nursing and one from mental health care).

### **4.1 Organisation and strategy**

The college has 25 agreements within ERASMUS. In the period up to the academic year 1999/2000, 95 students were registered as having travelled abroad in connection with the ERASMUS programme., The number is relatively high in relation to the size of the college. Up to 20 students have travelled each year, but the number has been lower during the last two years. In the study year 2000/2001, 6 travelled abroad and 209 were received, while the corresponding figures for the previous academic year were 9 and 15 respectively.

The college also participates in the LEONARDO programme as well as in NORDPLUS, and has a number of exchange agreements outside the programme with about 30 institutions in Europe, the USA and Canada, Australia and South Africa. Among these is a trilateral co-operation on a master's programme in logistics, and bilateral agreements with universities in the USA within computer science and engineering subjects. Further, they have an agreement, among others, with an Australian university on exchange of nursing students. In addition they have chosen to concentrate on remote education and conduct a course in transport and impact assessment for students in South Africa.

Some of the academic staff experience that through the bilateral agreements outside the EU programmes, a closer contact is established with those educational establishments they cooperate with than that achieved through the ERASMUS agreements. The informant from nursing studies considered that the bilateral agreements with English-speaking countries were advantageous, both because the language results in more profitable benefits, and because the co-operation partners (for example in Canada) are of a high academic level. For the administration's part, the bilateral agreements are somewhat easier to manage, but the ERASMUS agreements are not particularly difficult to administer in so far as much of the work is repeated from year to year.

Regarding the college's strategy, some of the informants expressed that even though a formal overall strategy does exist, internationalisation is very much up to the individual department. A more comprehensive and integrated strategy is desired where internationalisation is more closely woven into the study plans and is dependent upon the individual person to a lesser

degree. The international co-ordinator would prefer to see a decentralisation of the *academic* content, and would also like to see the academic study advisors having a greater degree of responsibility for co-ordination within their particular field. One informant also mentioned that there are now fewer resources than previously. It was also mentioned that an previous international co-ordinators were periodically involved in other responsibilities. On the more positive side it was pointed out that the college has an international co-ordinator in a full-time post, and which they have come to depend upon. The informant from economics, transport and logistics had the opinion that internationalisation had been accorded particularly high priority. For example, travel possibilities had been relatively good, the academic staff had had the opportunity to participate in network meetings (even after the networks (the old ICPs) had been terminated), and some persons had been able to participate in language courses. The informants in health sciences report negative experiences regarding travel and considered that in general there were too few resources available for internationalisation.

With regard to the reasons for participating in the ERASMUS programme, one of the academic staff meant that participation in ERASMUS was politically motivated. Internationalisation was on the agenda of the Ministry for Education Research, and participation in ERASMUS was included in this. She also added that participation was a consequence of the fact that certain staff had engaged themselves in this and had visions. Another considered that the initial reason for his department's engagement in ERASMUS was quite incidental, and states that there was a student from Växjö who wished to study at the college in Molde. He mentioned that the college already had links abroad when they determined to concentrate on ERASMUS. The international co-ordinator commented that through this the college would be able to offer the students exceptional possibilities to travel abroad. They would have the exchange agreement approved; she also considered that it was a point in itself that the students became acquainted both with the college in Molde University College and as well as an educational establishment abroad.

Co-operation agreements have often been established through contacts at meetings and congresses. A part of these contacts existed prior to the ERASMUS network being established. The majority of present day agreements have been in existence a while, but new ones have also been made. The initiative of certain individuals and personal contacts appears to have been important in the establishment of international agreements, but academic interests also play a role. The informant from economics explains that they focus on those areas which are useful in supplementary courses, that is to say higher levels and special areas, and that they wish to become associated with experts in the field. He also considered that students did not really know what they wanted or where they wished to travel, and in consequence of this it was reasonable that the college should attempt to find relevant study places abroad. Regarding the special nurse training, they have become "hung up" in the agreements which have already been entered into in connection with nurse training, and up to the present have not developed their own strategy for finding institutions with whom they wish to cooperate.<sup>6</sup> The informant from health sciences explained that their strategy is partly based on signals given at an EU conference in which she and the director of studies

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<sup>6</sup> This must be seen in the light of the fact that special nurse training at Molde University College is considered as "temporary" – it is an offshoot of training given in the Sør-Trøndelag University College.



participated some years ago. There, the desire was expressed for the expansion of north-south exchange, and this provided the basis for a conscious effort to find co-operation partners in Spain and Italy. The international consultant considers that it is important to concentrate on enthusiastic individuals, but that agreements should be increasingly based upon an academic strategy. Previously, there was a tendency to regard *many agreements* as important, as evidence for the fact that one was engaged in internationalisation. Today, there is a desire to 'tidy up' these agreements, to find out who it is one is actually co-operating with, and preferably to concentrate on those agreements with several departments in the same institution rather than to have as many agreements as possible. Language is regarded as a serious obstacle in making use of some of the existing agreements.

Some of the academic staff state that they become engaged in international activity because it is academically rewarding, challenging and stimulating. It is also mentioned that an international profile can render the college attractive for Norwegian students, that incoming students have a stimulating effect. In the transport and logistics studies relatively many of the academic staff are involved in the English language courses. However, the academic staff in the Department of Health Sciences appears quite disillusioned. They state that there is a steadily diminishing number who are engaged in internationalisation in their department. They regard this reduced engagement as a result of the fact that the 'good visions' which existed for some years ago have not been followed up with adequate resources.

The international co-ordinator holds the opinion that international co-operation should not be regarded as extra work, but should be an integrated part of the activities. Informants at the Department of Economics, computer science, and social science, appear to be well satisfied with the support they receive by the administration in internationalisation tasks. The staff in Health Sciences are less satisfied with the division of tasks between the administration and the department, and consider that they bear the most part of the work themselves. This may be partly associated with the fact that the department is physically located at another site, and partly that the health course programme is special (including exchange taking place during the practice period), resulting in a stronger engagement on the part of the department. The present international co-ordinator, who has only recently taken up the post, appears to be aware of the need of closer association between the academic staff and the administration, including health sciences. She considers that it should be clearer as to which work tasks are the responsibility of the study advisors in the individual departments, and which are those of the international co-ordinator.

## **4.2 Students travelling abroad**

Information on exchange possibilities is given in the study handbook and on the Internet. Some departments give a presentation at a general meeting. Much of the responsibility for 'marketing' the courses is the responsibility of the academic staff. The international co-ordinator considers that it has not been a problem to encourage students to travel abroad. The college's students have contact with incoming students, and this, she considers, is an inspiration for them to travel abroad.

Regarding the arrangements for students travelling abroad, the international co-ordinator states that students are encouraged to select a course which will give them credit points during the semester they are abroad. Students in economics have one semester with a broad range of choices and it has not been a problem to encourage business students to study abroad in this period. In transport and logistics there is one semester when students may select a subject such that they may choose to undertake studies abroad, practice in a firm or another subject. The college arranges language courses for students who are likely to study abroad in that semester. Previously, there have been intensive courses in Spanish, but now there is an alternation between German and French (giving 2 course credit points in the autumn and 2 points in the spring semester).

Students' experience with the exchange sojourn varied somewhat. It appears as though the academic staff consider that the personal gain and a new perspective of Norwegian studies are the most important for lower level students. Experience with students of transport and logistics is that those who have studied abroad during their first degree often apply to study abroad again in connection with a Master's degree. In health sciences, experience with exchange in Europe is varied. Students have reported poor hygienic conditions, poor treatment of patients, and the informant expresses concern for "reversed learning" when she states, among other things, that "those factors of most concern are that the students observe how things should *not* be done in practice". She nevertheless considers that there are advantages arising from exchange, if nothing other than that students experience what nursing may be when importance is *not* attached to aspects such as ethics and communication. The students are often a bit tired of listening to so many lectures on these themes at home in Norway, but when they travel abroad they appreciate the reason why. As not too many students have been sent to southern Europe yet, the department desires to look more closely at the existing agreements. In the meantime they will attempt to prepare students better for what they may be expected to encounter.

The informant for health sciences is frustrated over what she regards as a very rigid regulation of the State Educational Loan Fund regarding language stipends, and considers that this may be a hindrance for participation in ERASMUS for nursing students. Students who are to undertake a half year abroad have the right to a language stipend while nursing students are abroad for only three months and do not come into this arrangement.

### **4.3 Incoming students**

Both the international co-ordinator and the academic course co-ordinator at the individual departments have the responsibility of marketing the college. The informant in economics considers the network co-operation to be an important means by which the college can be marketed for potential students, something which is particularly relevant for master degree students in logistics. In health sciences, they have personally presented the courses to Spanish students of the exchange arrangement and received two students as a result. In addition there are a number of small brochures and information on the college's web pages.

The international co-ordinator considers that receiving students from abroad is advantageous in so far as focus is directed towards the college's activities and – for better or worse – a critical

eye is directed towards these. Further, she points out, that it is useful for students to become aware of the conditions and circumstances at other educational establishments, and considers that incoming students contribute to this. Several of the academic staff appear to concur with this viewpoint, and maintain that incoming students contribute to enriching student life.

Those academic staff who have lectured to foreign students consider that this established a more open, better and inspiring academic environment. One of the teachers thought that incoming students had a marked effect on his teaching, exemplifying this by stating that when he has had students from Africa, he thinks more about the extent to which his lectures are possibly characterised by a 'western perspective'. Several mentioned that incoming students are often very astute. In economics it is maintained that incoming students are better prepared for the examinations and achieve better results, and that they profit from the courses. In health sciences, they have the impression that incoming students appear to be very interested in how nursing is practised in Norway, and that they profit academically from the exchange. One of the informants illustrated this by stating that one of the Spanish exchange students later returned to Molde in order to take a summer job, and that another wanted to establish a centre for the elderly in Spain based on the Norwegian model. However, she considered that the college did not gain a lot *from* the incoming students in so far as they are out on practice during their sojourn in Norway.

The opinion as to how much work is linked to establishing an international educational course in English varies somewhat. Some consider that those who have had previous international experience and who are accustomed to participate in conferences, holding lectures in English, manage this quite well. Others consider this to be extremely time-consuming the first time this is undertaken, but that it nevertheless pays for itself. Academics require to have a command of English at a high professional level. It is also noted that some of those lecturing in English are foreign nationals. Other preparatory work associated with the reception of incoming students, the informant for nursing claims, is that establishing contact with the hospital and the relevant contact nurse requires a certain amount of follow-up by the academic staff.

#### **4.4 Teacher exchange**

The college has also been involved in teacher exchange, and it is maintained that some of the staff who have participated in this are interested in further exchange. Teacher exchange appears, however, to be difficult to undertake in practice for a number of reasons. One reason is that it is quite problematic to initiate the course – one cannot merely 'exchange' courses. Another reason is the lack of resources. In health sciences the experience is that one may be encouraged to travel, but at the end of the day (or beginning, rather) there is a lack of finance. This is exemplified by two staff who were to participate in teacher exchange and hold a course together but who were then informed that they had to share the funds disposed. They were to travel and reside using the cheapest possible means, and had to have long discussions afterwards on what could be reimbursed. This type of experience is given as one of the reasons why interest in both teacher and student exchange is declining for health sciences.

## **4.5 Summary**

Molde University College is small, readily enabling an overview of its structure and organisation. The college appears to have succeeded relatively well in its focus on international activities. Examples of this are that in some areas practical results may be observed of the efforts in encouraging exchange. The distance between vision and reality appears to be less than at other educational establishments. There is, however, a number of points where improvement is desirable. For example, there is a considerable amount of work to be done in integrating health sciences in international co-operation. There is a certain awareness of this, and the international co-ordinator attached considerable importance to co-operation between the administration and the academic staff.

## **5 The Norwegian School of Management BI**

The Norwegian School of Management BI (hereafter BI) dates back to 1943, and is a private foundation. The institution offers a broad range of courses including economics and commerce, marketing, business management, auditing, estate management etc. The main seat is in Sandvika, just outside Oslo where graduate degree students attend and where doctorate courses are held. BI's administration is located here and where many of the academic staff have their offices. A management training centre is located in Oslo and in addition courses are held at an additional 18 regional colleges throughout the country. In total, BI has 780 staff and about 20,000 students of which 9500 are full-time. The rest are divided among various forms of part-time studies (short courses, further education courses etc.)

Work with student exchange at BI is essentially a function of the administration and the academic staff have little involvement in this. We have accordingly attached most importance to interviews with the administrative staff involved. We interviewed three persons from the administration: the director of studies for the Master of Science programme, and two international co-ordinators based in Sandvika. Further, we spoke with one of the academic staff at the Department for Strategy and another faculty at the Department of Economics.

### **5.1 Organisation and strategy**

BI has 41 agreements with the ERASMUS programme. Virtually all BI's student exchange in Europe occurs through ERASMUS. During the academic year 2000–2001, 77 students travelled abroad while 75 were received. There has generally been a balance between the number travelling abroad and incoming students over the years. Since 1992, 369 students have travelled abroad and 352 have been received. BI also has exchanged within the NORDPLUS programme. Further, there are some 30 bilateral student exchange agreements outside the ERASMUS programme of which the majority are with institutions outside Europe.

BI does not participate in teacher exchange nor thematic networks, but is involved in a curriculum project. The reason for the lack of participation in other parts of the ERASMUS programme than student exchange is that ERASMUS is too bureaucratic for this objective, and there is too much paperwork involved in relation to the advantages gained. The application dates assume that the teachers can plan their work tasks eighteen months in advance, something which few are able to do. Those academic staff who do travel abroad do so through other arrangements rather than through ERASMUS.

BI distinguishes itself from the majority of the other higher education institutions state university colleges in one central point: student exchange is essentially an administrative responsibility. Five persons in the central administration have internationalisation as their area, and it is these who carry out the majority of tasks connected with student exchange.

In the international office, there is a general opinion that the academic staff are not very familiar with student exchange and are hardly able to distinguish between students participating in ERASMUS and students who travel under other agreements. The academic

staff's involvement with student exchange appears to be essentially limited to approval of courses, although many of them naturally also have experience of lecturing to foreign students. One of the academic staff we spoke with informed that he had also taken Norwegian students abroad. From the administration's side the need was expressed for more information among the academic staff with respect to ERASMUS.

Concerning the college's strategy regarding internationalisation, the administration states that it has always been BI's aim to be a leading college which is renowned abroad. They consider that there are three important reasons for this. The first is consideration to competition – it is important to be able to offer students the opportunity of exchange. The second is that it is important in relation to what the students should learn – they ought to have international experience. The third reason is that internationalisation is one of BI's five strategic areas, and student exchange is one of several important elements in this strategy. The director of studies informs that internationalisation is one of the areas where they are now actively working to combine strategy and practice. He states that BI is entering a new phase having been approved by EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System), which is a system for crediting business and management education in Europe. In addition, a high level of internationalisation is an assumption in order that the department could be considered as a participant in this system.

The academic staff at the Department of Economics mention that many courses are held in English, and it is the policy that BI shall be international. However, the staff member at the department who is responsible for strategy is rather sceptical as to whether internationalisation has been given high enough priority today. She maintains that the present strategy is unclear and that poor communication and co-ordination are a problem. The academic staff are not involved, and do not, for example, know how to initiate new agreements. She considers that the international dimension receives too little consideration when important decisions are being taken.

The international office informs that there has been a pragmatic attitude towards student exchange, historically viewed. Very considerable resources are used in administration, and receiving students from abroad has been an important incitement for Norwegian students to travel abroad. Generally, the administrative staff consider ERASMUS/SOCRATES as a bureaucratic system which is more of an obstacle than an advantage. BI today is only interested in participating in just one part of the programme – student exchange.

The administration consider participation in the ERASMUS programme to be demanding, although no more so than what might be expected from investment in an exchange programme. They provide information on applications and report to the EU, with tight time-limits together with reporting to The Centre for International University Co-operation. It was mentioned, however, that there was less paperwork than previously, both because technical problems are excluded, and because a number of the forms can now be downloaded directly from The Centre for International University Co-operation's web site. The administration is of the opinion that when one disregards reporting routines and application procedures, the formalities concerning the actual exchange are simpler through ERASMUS than with exchange with the USA and Australia, for example. A certain amount of frustration was expressed concerning financing. Applications must be made a long time in advance, and only a small part of the amount applied for is granted.

Regarding the transfer from network to institutional contract, there are a number of divergent viewpoints. The international co-ordinator saw a number of advantages with the previous system, among other things, the meeting-point function. Some of the old networks continue to be used as a subject network to some extent, but many institutions do not have the resources to send people out. The fact that these meeting places are lost results in the programme becoming more impersonal, and one needs a forum in order to be able to find new partners. The director of studies considered that development had been necessary, and that ERASMUS should be regarded as a *tool*, not as a forum for finding new partners. He regarded ERASMUS as a stipend arrangement, not an administrative network. The aim should be to develop new products for which there is a demand in the market.

The exchange agreements apply for two or three years at a time, after which they are renegotiated. BI has also inherited a number of older agreements as a result of the merger with the Norwegian College of Marketing and that Oslo College of Commerce was closed. A majority of the exchange agreements today are a renewal of older agreements, but new agreements are entered into each year. The initiative to new agreements can originate in institutions abroad or from BI. One of the academic staff held the opinion that BI was not interested in more agreements in as much as these resulted in more administrative responsibility. For the administration's part, it was maintained that it was not their intention to prevent the establishment of more agreements, but it would be simpler to send more students to the same institution. They prefer therefore that the number of places to be increased *without* that this should necessitate an increase in the number of agreements. In BI's 'European Policy Statement', the expressed intention is to increase the number of co-operation partners. This document expresses support for growth in most aspects of internationalisation including the number of incoming and outgoing students, the number of foreign staff etc.

When asked about which criteria which were applied in the selection of co-operation partners, the director of studies replied that it is important that the partners are business colleges, and it is an advantage if they have a doctorate programme. The level of the partner is important, particularly at master's level. At lower levels, it is also possible to cooperate with German *Fachhochschulen*, for example. It is emphasised that an institution which is part of the ERASMUS programme is not necessarily a guarantee quality within itself.

'Sleeping' agreements are hardly ever repealed. The main reason for this appears to be that it is considered that that use may be made of these at some time in the future. It takes more than a single dissatisfied student for an agreement to be revoked. The international co-ordinators point out that BI is a net recipient of students under some agreements, and believe that an important reason for this is that the BI semester does not coincide with the semesters elsewhere in Europe.

## **5.2 Students travelling abroad**

Well-prepared and clearly set out brochures in Norwegian and English with information of the various institutions with which BI has exchange agreements, are available. On the other hand, the college's web pages are not particularly informative on student exchange, although these

are being revised. Information meetings are also held for the students, The international office has the responsibility for marketing, and in their opinion the academic staff are involved in this. The informant from the Department for Strategy considered, however, that the students were encouraged to choose Europe and an increasing awareness among the students with regard to this could be observed.

The length of the exchange sojourn is one semester. Efforts have been made for courses in economics, master's degrees and basic degree students to be able to study abroad for a semester. The administration and one of the academic staff informed that attempts have been made to adjust the courses such that those studying abroad would not 'lose out' on these (i.e. would not lose course credit points). This puts extra pressure on the obligatory course in economics in the sixth semester in order to enable the student to study abroad during the seventh semester. It was pointed out, however, that students who wished to study in Germany must travel one semester *earlier* than other students in order to fit in with the German semester, and that this can lead to difficulties in completing the obligatory courses. If the obligatory course is undertaken abroad, it is a requisite that at least fifty percent of the curriculum shall overlap. It is thus easier to take optional (as opposed to obligatory) courses abroad. In general, the academic staff have positive experiences from the students studying abroad. Even though they may not study precisely the same subject material as they would have done at home, the experience is nevertheless valuable.

The informant at the Department for Strategy held the opinion that the conditions are not particularly advantageous for exchange. She mentions that for a while, the BI semester commenced in September, and which generally concurred with the university calendar followed at other institutions in Europe. The semester was later changed so as to commence in August, a month when many European colleges had not yet completed their summer semester! One could not therefore expect as many students coming from abroad. The administration considers this to be a problem and which first and foremost affects the first degree programmes.

Special language courses are not held for ERASMUS students, but there is a 6-point language course for economists during the second year of study.

### **5.3 Incoming students**

The international office has also prepared thorough and clearly laid out brochures for incoming students where, among other things, they show the ECTS points attainable on each course. The international office informs the partner institution of the various courses available, and students travelling abroad also contribute to marketing BI. These have a PR-package with them and they are obliged to hold an information meeting on BI at their place of study abroad.

A wide range of courses in English are held, a total of eleven in the spring semester 2001. The majority are held for both Norwegian and foreign students. Problems can arise when establishing courses English, but there does not appear to be any general problems for the academic staff to lecture in English. In addition, there are a number of foreign lecturers at BI.



One of the academic staff mentioned that in order to attract foreign students it can be prudent to hold courses where Norway has special skills such as in oil and shipping for example. There are few such courses in English at the present time.

There appears to be general agreement that incoming students contribute to establishing an international atmosphere and which provides the courses with an extra dimension. One of the staff expressed that the level was enhanced by the foreign students and considered that they provided good inspiration for the Norwegian students. At the same time, she considered that BI had much to offer the incoming students, particularly because greater importance is attached to group projects than in many other countries. BI is obliged to ensure accommodation for the incoming students, and this requires considerable effort.

## **5.4 Summary**

BI has a subject field where the need for an international profile is clear. This international profile is clearly manifest and is seen, among other things, through the concentration of courses in English. BI has placed the responsibility for exchange upon the administration and has chosen not to involve the academic staff to any particular degree. This might appear as an effective business approach towards exchange activity. The Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (based in Bergen), which also organises this activity in a similar manner, is among those institutions which has the highest level of exchange relative to the number of registered students. On the other hand, it may be thought that the limited involvement of the academic staff can result in difficulties in establishing new agreements.

## 6 The Norwegian Academy of Music

Originally The Music Conservatory in Oslo, the Norwegian Academy of Music was established as a specialised university institution in 1973. The academy has 465 students today, 110 permanent staff and a number of part-time teachers. The college offers lower degree courses covering instrumental and vocal studies, music pedagogy, church music and composition. At the higher level, two-year degree courses and diploma courses are offered in several areas. In 1999, a doctorate programme was established. In addition, the institution has several further education courses. All students have to take an entrance examination which includes performing skills on the main instrument(s), music theory, aural tests and piano playing. The applicants for the first degree courses are generally considered to be highly qualified. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of students taking higher degrees.

Much of the training at the academy comprises individual tuition in instrument/voice. The courses are largely characterised by a master – scholar relationship. The basis for international co-operation is the artistic skills. In addition to the international co-ordinator, three teachers in different instruments and a teacher in musical pedagogy were interviewed.

### 6.1 Organisation and strategy

During recent years the academy has strengthened its international engagement. It participates in various international networks and has both student and teacher exchange through NORDPLUS and ERASMUS, among others. The academy's strategic plan for 1997–2002 attached considerable importance to internationalisation. The aim is to increase student mobility to 5 percent, implying that about 25 students will travel abroad each year. In recent years, the number travelling has been 10 per year. The clearest expression for the priority given by the institution to international activity is that a 50% post was established for this purpose in 1996. Responsibility was previously that of two of the administrative staff whose functions included this area. The administrative involvement has clearly contributed to the expansion of international contact, and not least to the growth of exchange under ERASMUS. It has meant much to have one person who is familiar with the various possibilities with the exchange programmes and who can market these to the students and staff. This has, however, resulted in the international activity become relatively person-based. One of the teaching staff commented: "The school's strategy – that is NN, in practice and ideologically". This was intended to reflect a positive characteristic of the person referred to.

The Academy is organised in three departments. International educational co-operation is not, however, a central issue at the departmental level, and there is a need for co-ordination. In order to have the international activities rooted in the departments, an international committee was established. As this committee is a purely an advisory body without decision-making authority, it has been of little significance hitherto. Because the international activity is increasing in extent, something which is also of consequence for resources, a need can arise for a greater degree of co-ordination at the departmental level, and concerning the school's

elected leadership. This was not, however, something which the academic staff were looking for.

Even though the school scarcely has a strategy in respect of international contacts, in practice a number of priorities have been made. First, teacher exchange has been given priority. This has resulted in the academic staff being drawn directly into the co-operation. This is important in the establishment of co-operation agreements which in the next instance can provide the basis for student exchange, and for professional co-operation. Secondly, the associated partners have been carefully selected. Until 1993–94, ERASMUS co-operation was based upon institutional network (ICPs). This was a relatively exclusive network of highly regarded institutions in Europe. Following the transfer to bilateral agreements, co-operation with those institutions which had co-operated in this network, were furthered at the same time as co-operation was established with new institutions. New contacts have been partly established on the basis of the contact which the academic staff had with colleagues at those institutions with whom it was desired to enter an agreement. A careful scrutiny is undertaken of those institutions with whom bilateral agreements have been made, and where these do not function satisfactorily, the agreement is revoked.

The academy has entered into 25 bilateral agreements within the framework of ERASMUS. This implies that the school has agreements with the most relevant institutions in Europe. There is also an offensive approach to enter into new agreements if a desire for this is expressed by the staff or the students. It was pointed out that there were certain difficulties in entering into agreements where education and training is based on fees. It has therefore been viewed very positively that agreements have been entered into with the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London.

No particular problems were reported in complying with the EU regulations. Compared to previously, the arrangements have become much more flexible and less detailed. The administration maintained that The Centre for International University Co-operation is an important resource which has made valuable contributions and contributed to solving practical problems. It was, however, maintained quite rigidly, that exchange students wishing to stay abroad for a year must undertake their sojourn during the academic year, which means that those wishing to be away for more than one semester must travel abroad in the autumn semester. The academic staff were extremely satisfied with the manner in which the administration functioned at the school. One of those interviewed praised the international coordinator: “I know of no problems with the EU bureaucracy, but if there are, then NN will fix it!”

International co-operation is nothing new at the academy. Previously, this was essentially based on informal contacts. The advantage with ERASMUS co-operation that it is based on formal bilateral agreements and that the finance is included. It was nevertheless pointed out that it could have been desirable with some form of financial bonus related to exchange of students and teachers, as is the case in both Sweden and Denmark. In as much as it is a political objective to increase exchange visits, this could be one manner of motivating the institutions. It could also provide some compensation for the extra work which exchanges always involve.

The Norwegian Academy of Music participates in a number of different networks such as NORDPLUS. In addition the staff of the academy have contact with colleagues in a number of institutions on a more informal basis. To the extent that it is necessary to make priorities, for example when foreign students wish to study in Norway for a period, those institutions with which the academy has entered into bilateral agreements are given priority. In practice, this implies priority with institutions through ERASMUS. The agreements are formulated at the institutional level; in other words, it is not specified which areas or instruments to which the agreement relates. This provides flexibility, but also that the Norwegian Academy of Music as well as other institutions which are to receive Norwegian incoming students have available capacity in respect of the specific instrument, or that extra tuition is made available internally such the exchange may take place.

## **6.2 Students travelling abroad**

When commencing at the Norwegian Academy of Music, students receive a brochure with diverse information concerning the courses. The opportunity of travelling abroad is mentioned in this brochure. The students are also informed orally about this at information meetings. In addition, all students are given a list of those institutions with which the academy has entered into agreement and which may be of actual interest. In addition, the school is a small body, something which facilitates direct contact between the international co-ordinator and the students. The academic staff hardly market ERASMUS at all, although the travel arrangements are co-ordinated with the teacher, and the teacher recommends the choice of institution and advises the students about the best time to travel abroad with respect to their progress. Even though the teaching staff are essentially very positive towards students taking a study sojourn abroad during the course of their studies, it is not regarded as something of which the majority of students should undertake. Some of those interviewed maintained that the course at the academy was very demanding in itself. A sojourn abroad is extra demanding and was therefore recommended only for “those who were well above the average”.

The students are extremely quality-conscious when they wish to study abroad. At the same time they have a relatively good overview of who are considered as the best performers and teachers within their field. Thus, the students frequently have a desire to study under a specific professor. These are normally persons for who the demand is intense and frequently do not have the capacity to take them on. The teacher’s personal network is thus often important both for opening doors to persons in demand, and to be able to recommend others who are possibly less renowned, but nevertheless experts in their field.

The academy recommends that students undertake their study abroad during their third year or the first semester of the fourth year of the first degree, or even during the graduate degree course or while studying for their diploma. While the course during the first and second years is relatively structured, there is more room for individual choice during the two final years. For students studying music pedagogy and who also desire to travel abroad during the practical part of their studies, it has been difficult to arrange a period abroad. In connection with a forthcoming revision of the study programme, a larger degree of moduling will facilitate a period abroad for this group of students.

Those students who travel abroad are away for a minimum of one semester. Teachers who were interviewed had different opinions on the optimal length of stay. Some considered that the majority should be abroad for a full year in order to have maximum gain from their sojourn, while others meant that a single semester could be quite satisfactory.

The inclusion of a study period abroad into the Norwegian educational system is not generally a problem. Teachers were drawn into the arrangements in advance and approved the programme for study abroad. A so-called “learning agreement” has been formulated and which is sent to those institutions where the students will be studying. Practice at the host institutions and the degree to which they keep to this accord, varies however. It was emphasised that exchange must be based on confidence in the host institution and that there was a degree of flexibility in this. The institutions to which the students travel are, in spite of everything, highly esteemed. The students do not learn everything that they might have learnt at home, but they learn many other things of value. When the institution has prepared a ECTS handbook, approval is largely automatic. It must nevertheless be ensured that the central elements of their Norwegian studies are included. For example, those who are studying church music, which is a vocational training where the liturgy in the Norwegian church is a central feature, must acquire the necessary skills in the specific Norwegian part of the study course. Flexibility also applies to the practical arrangements concerning the different semester start and finishing dates. This is of particular concern as many students travel to Germany. A sojourn abroad seldom results in students being delayed in completing their courses.

Regarding the academic values, the teachers who were interviewed considered it extremely important to be part of a different professional environment and to receive new impulses. Some travel in order to improve their technical expertise; others to work with a repertoire with which they do not have the same opportunity to do at home. One informant meant that the environment where the students travel to should preferably be different to that at home – but not too different! An environment which has a completely different professional tradition can be frustrating for the student and affect his/her professional development. The teachers considered that in general the students have considerable academic benefit from a sojourn abroad in addition to social and cultural advantages. There were a number of examples where students matured personally during such a sojourn.

It has always been a tradition that music students have travelled abroad. ERASMUS has provided the opportunity for many students who previously would not have considered a stay abroad now have a chance. The advantage of travelling under the ERASMUS programme is that the students acquire a document confirming this and that the period abroad is approved as part of the their Norwegian course of study. It is also much easier to become incorporated into a foreign school through an exchange programme. Further, students participating in this scheme receive an extra stipend. To what degree the host institutions take care of the social and practical requirements, for example arranging accommodation, varies.

Regarding assisting students to acquire the necessary language skills, the Norwegian Academy of Music does very little. It is emphasised to those students who are planning to study abroad, that they must ensure the necessary language ability before they depart, and in this connection the school has purchased courses on cassette which are available in the library.

### **6.3 Incoming students**

The Norwegian Academy of Music hosts more students than the number travelling abroad through the ERASMUS programme. No form of marketing is carried out of studies directed at students in establishments abroad. This is left to the institutions with which the academy has agreements. The school also has a number of students from countries which are not part of the exchange agreement.

The problem of hosting incoming students is first and foremost capacity. No attempt is made to balance the exchanges between the various institutions, nor with regard to instrument or specialisation. It is a question of capacity. When some form of mutual agreement is entered into, then the exchange is considerably facilitated. Similar to Norwegian students, incoming students from abroad desire to study with those teachers who are most renowned. Hosting incoming students also has a cost side. Part of the instrumental tuition is given by part-time staff. Such instrumental tuition costs about NOK 30,000 (3750 Euro) per student annually.

The academy has received support through the SOCRATES programme to prepare an ECTS directory which describes the content and extent of the various aspects of the courses with regard to international guidelines. Some foreign visitors have had problems in having their studies approved by their home institution, something which is associated with the fact that individual institutions and professors in these other countries do not accept that flexibility which is essential to this type of student exchange. The impression is, however, that this situation has improved.

The courses are not particularly adapted for foreign students. Much of the course comprises individual tuition or is undertaken in small groups. This type of education is frequently conducted in English, or even German or French to the extent that there may be a need for this. Foreign students who understand Norwegian follow the lectures, while others must cover this part of the curriculum through private study.

There are a number of circumstances which make the course at the academy particularly attractive to foreign students. The teachers are highly qualified. The academy has good physical facilities with good practice rooms. It is a small institution, easy to maintain an overview, and characterised by a good student environment. The teachers are generally very receptive, and the relationship between the students and staff is far more informal than what is the norm at many foreign institutions. The academy pays careful attention to the practical requirements of incoming students and all receive an offer of accommodation through the Student Welfare Organisation in Oslo. The academy also attempts to ensure that the students are integrated into the student environment through a social arrangement undertaken soon after their arrival. In addition, all students at the academy receive a list providing information about the incoming students.

## 6.4 Teacher exchange

Teacher exchange is essentially based on a one-to-one exchange in the same subject area. It is not the case, however, that exchange is harmonised with regard to dates such that the teachers may 'loan' each other's offices and undertake each other's teaching schedule. This is explained in that the institution has the responsibility for the incoming teacher and that it is difficult to step into another's course and tutoring for a short period. The teachers involved in this pairing agree between themselves on the details of the exchange. This is largely concerned with instrumental and voice training where the incoming teacher teaches one or several of the teacher's students at the host institution, either in the form of personal tuition or in master classes – practical tuition with a group of listeners/observers. In addition, the incoming teacher delivers a lecture, either in his/her special field or about the institution where he is coming from. He/she often holds a recital. There are, however, non-performing staff at the academy associated with, among other subjects, music pedagogy. Exchange of these staff can also be of significance for the teacher's research activity.

Teachers who participate in exchange maintain that it is advantageous to become aware of how other institutions prepare their courses, musically and pedagogically. This was described as being particularly stimulating professionally. Exchange provides the opportunity to evaluate the degree to which Norwegian courses compare with leading institutions in other countries. Incoming a foreign institution and to receive a positive feedback from students and staff also functions as an important acknowledgement of personal achievement. There were several examples of where teachers from the Norwegian Academy of Music had been invited as guest professors and to participate in other forms of international co-operation on the basis of acquaintance as a result of such teacher exchanges.

A number of teachers who were interviewed also maintained that the educational tradition is extremely personal, characterised by a master – scholar relationship. The teachers rarely discuss teaching among themselves. Teacher exchange, on the other hand, provides an excellent opportunity to do this. Through describing how the education and course programmes are structured at one's own institution, interesting professional discussions often arise. A number of exchanges come about following enquiries at the institutional level. As these exchanges are essentially organised on a one-to-one basis, there is considerable variation in the degree of success of these exchanges.

Teacher exchange also has a positive repercussion for the students. It provides some of the students with the opportunity of playing together with a professor who has something other to offer regarding the pure musical, technical and/or pedagogical aspects than the student's personal tutor. On a few occasions, this acquaintance may become the basis for student exchange.

The academy has attached considerable importance to teacher exchange as it has been regarded as one manner by which student exchange can be stimulated as well as other types of international co-operation. Even though only a minority of teachers have participated in this co-operation hitherto, interest is clearly increasing. In an evaluation of the extent of this at the academy, consideration must be made of the fact that many teachers are part-time orchestra musicians who have only limited opportunities to participate in this sort of exchange.

There were two circumstances in particular which were regarded as negative relating to organising teacher exchange. The EU covers expenses up to a given amount, the academy providing a supplement such that all staff travelling on an exchange visit have all their documented expenses covered. Some who had been on an exchange visit nevertheless considered that this was not sufficient as there are always some expenses which are difficult to document. Further, it was complained that it was difficult to hold control over all receipts. They preferred as system whereby expenses were covered according to fixed amounts. The academy did not, however, use the state system of fixed reimbursement (daily allowance etc.), claiming that this would result in a considerable increase in costs for the institution with this type of exchange.

Another aspect which was mentioned in some of the interviews was that teacher exchange involves considerable extra work which is not compensated in any manner. Preparation for hosting a visiting professor incorporates much work, and very little relief in respect of one's own teaching responsibilities is given during the visit. Travelling abroad also involves much preparation, not least when lectures have to be held in another language. It was considered that assistance from a language consultant would assist. Further, education at the academy is organised such that the individual student has a right to a given amount of practical tuition, something which normally implies that the teachers would have to make up for these (in respect of his own students) after he/she has returned for a visit abroad. It had not been discussed with the school whether any form of reduced teaching responsibility should be introduced in connection with this type of exchange.

Generally, it appears that the experience with teacher exchange as been good. Some problems hitherto may be linked to the lack of acquaintance with the systems elsewhere and those persons participating in the exchange. Some of the informants saw the possibility that the exchange relations could eventually be developed from that of visits and return-visits to some form of exchange where teachers could exchange offices as well as students over a somewhat longer period. This could partly reduce some of the double work by participating in exchange at the same time as providing a better professional exchange for the individual. The problem was that this was difficult to put into practice.

## **6.5 Professional co-operation and curriculum development**

In addition to student and teacher exchange, the Norwegian Academy of Music has also participated in certain other professional co-operation projects with financial support from the ERASMUS programme. Among other things, one student from the academy is participating in a project on the role of the musician in a multicultural society. One also considered that the institution ought to be able to make a contribution within IT as they had developed a course (10 credit points) in computer-based music production which is based on Internet technology. There are also plans to establish co-operation with several foreign institutions on a "joint curriculum development" project in music pedagogy. The advantage with modules which are a result of a "joint curriculum development" is that music-pedagogical subjects can be followed at the host institution. Such courses will automatically be approved by the same home institution and more objectively, may be incorporated into the students' courses.



The academy has also been involved in certain intensive programmes. For example, one diploma-level student is participating in a ten-day EU course on orchestra management. There are also corresponding courses in other areas. It was considered important to enable individual students to take advantage of such offers. Intensive courses as these are being developed in co-operation with several institutions. It is a recognition of the institution and the specific staff to be invited to participate in such intensive courses.

## **6.6 Summary**

International educational co-operation at the Norwegian Academy of Music has its basis in the performing aspects of the music studies. Little research is undertaken at the institution. Educational co-operation is therefore a central means in establishing and maintaining international contacts. The institution has given priority to teacher exchange and in this manner involved the academic staff in international education co-operation. The hope is that through the contacts which are used teacher exchange will contribute to increased student exchange and provide the basis for other forms of international educational co-operation.

## **7 NTNU – The Norwegian University of Science and Technology**

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology University (NTNU) was founded in 1996. It replaced the University of Trondheim (UNIT), which included the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH), the College of Arts and Science (AVH) and the Museum of Natural History and Archaeology. While the College of Arts and Science, the NTH and the Museum of Natural History and Archaeology continued as separate organisational units after the University of Trondheim was established, the foundation of NTNU was an organisational integration of these units. Today, the university comprises 11 faculties and 72 departments with some 19,000 students and 1150 academic staff.

With an institution of this size, it is difficult to provide a picture of activity which includes all the academic areas. In order to gain an understanding of the extent of the activities we interviewed the co-ordinator for the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme in the International Office, and academic staff who have experience with international educational co-operation within a technological environment (Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry), a human sciences department (Department of Germanic Languages and Literature), and a field within the social sciences (Department of Geography).

### **7.1 Organisation and strategy**

Every year there are about 1000 foreign students studying at NTNU. Of some 500 students who undertake part of their studies here, 330 are ERASMUS students. NTNU also has a number of co-operation agreements with universities in North America, Africa and Asia. In 1999, over 600 students undertook part of their studies abroad. Of these, 267 were ERASMUS students. Over 70 percent of student exchanges occur within the framework of the ERASMUS, LEONARDO and NORDPLUS exchange programmes. Under the SOCRATES programme, NTNU had 338 bilateral agreements with 221 educational establishments in Europe. As seen in Table 2.1. (page 24), the University of Bergen is considerably more active within ERASMUS than the other universities, while NTNU is somewhat more active than the universities of Oslo and Tromsø.

In NTNU's strategic plan for the period up to 2010 it is stated: "NTNU shall be the leading institution in Norway for technological research and education. We shall be international leaders in selected areas within our main technical and natural sciences profile. We will identify those professional areas where we have the best attributes for asserting ourselves internationally and contribute to the further development and strengthening of these." In the meantime the establishment of NTNU has aroused much attention. One of those interviewed stated that international activity in practice has scarcely been characterised by any conscious professional profiling. For example, to the extent that certain international projects fall under one of the main fields of interest at NTNU is not the result of a conscious priority. No such priorities have been made: rather, there has been an encouragement to all to become active within the area of international co-operation. When some are more active, this is associated with the general activity profile, not an institutional priority.

There is a very considerable difference between the approaches of the different departments and the extent to which they consider it important to participate in ERASMUS. The Department of Germanic Languages and Literature, for example, maintains that ERASMUS has presented completely different opportunities than hitherto for students to have a sojourn in Germany. At the Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry, participation in ERASMUS has been linked with the ambition of becoming one of Europe's – and indeed of the world's, leading environments within research and education in the field. ERASMUS co-operation in this department was seen as a useful tool for presenting the department, providing the opportunity for establishing and maintaining contact with interesting professional communities, and that this represents a form of quality assurance in so far as comparisons are made with recognised institutions abroad. The Department of Geography had first and foremost given priority in international co-operation to countries in Africa and Asia, and consequentially has little experience with ERASMUS.

The International Office does not manage or direct international activity in any manner, but attempts to maintain an overview over activities, and supports initiative from the departments. In a number of instances they also attempt to stimulate increased activity through information and a certain amount of personal contact. The International Office attached importance to rationalising the administrative work, among other things by use of the Internet, and through more standardised routines such that more time is available for personal contact and disseminating information to the departments and other interested parties.

The ERASMUS agreements are entered into at the department level, the faculty level and the institutional level, dependent upon what is considered the most purposeful at any particular time. The International Office regards itself as a service body. They support those departments and others who request information, and assistance in preparing an application. Some applicant-bodies prefer to do the most-part themselves, while others let the International Office undertake the more administrative work associated with applications and reports. Sometimes, the applicants prepare the professional content in the application while the International Office assists with the preparation of the more 'political' parts of the application, for example, an account of the "European dimension" of the project. In part of the information distributed to the departments etc. the International Office attaches importance to a brief summary of the project and actual sources of financial support. Information from the EU was considered "unusable" as it is far too detailed and heavily characterised by political EU rhetoric.

The academic staff who were interviewed were satisfied with the assistance and support they received from the International Office. It was emphasised that administrative support was important for international educational co-operation. There was little incentive, however, which was directed towards the departments or to individuals regarding becoming engaged in international co-operation. NTNU used the national budget model which, among other things, employs the course credits system, also for internal purposes. A number of informants emphasised that this budget system is disadvantageous for a number of departments and other bodies which are actively engaged in student exchange. Departments who send students abroad and who take an examination at the overseas department, do not receive credits for these, and neither do they receive financial recompense for foreign students who do not take an examination while studying at NTNU. For the Department of Germanic Languages and

Literature, which sends many students to take the intermediate course in Germany simultaneous to hosting students, few of whom take the examination here, this is an economic problem. The Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry receives more students than it sends abroad. The majority of those arriving are taking their graduate degree courses and are working on projects. In consequence they do not take any examinations here. Even though having graduate degree students working at a laboratory is very expensive, the department does not receive any financial support for these students. It was argued that both sending students abroad and receiving students incorporates much extra work and is a costly exercise. This should be compensated for in the budget model. Proposals have been made for recompensing international activity in the budget along the same lines as publishing, for example. At none of the departments where we conducted interviews was any compensation made for engagement in international activity, or consideration made in respect of the extra demands on lecture preparation etc.

In the EU, importance is attached to the political dimension of ERASMUS co-operation, something which NTNU, as a Norwegian institution, has a relatively carefree attitude towards. ERASMUS and LEONARDO are tools for stimulating increased international educational co-operation, but there is no apparent desire to give any priority to this co-operation at the cost of co-operation outside the EU area.

The advantage with ERASMUS is the formality; one is obliged to go through the agreements to find out who one's co-operation partners are. The academic standard is absolutely decisive for whom one co-operates with. It is difficult at any time to achieve a balance of exchange within the individual academic areas. In consequence, a more flexible practice has been developed whereby vacant places in one subject may be utilised in another to the extent that this is acceptable to the host institution. This applies to departments which, for example, are members of the Santander group – a network of European institutions where NTNU is an associate member. This type of flexibility facilitates a balance in exchange. Some departments such as the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature send far more students abroad than those which they host, while others such as the Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry, the situation is the reverse.

## **7.2 Students travelling abroad**

The International Office distributes material from the Centre for International University Co-operation (SiU) and other appropriate information to students. In addition, various information is supplied on the net including an overview of actual educational establishments and a number of useful links. International days are also arranged twice yearly to publicise by means of lectures, exotic food and music, the various possibilities for undertaking a part of the study course abroad. Representatives of the International Office also participate in all types of general meetings, the faculties' own arrangements and diverse committee meetings to inform about the various programmes and the possibilities of obtaining financial support.

There are very broad differences between the departments regarding the extent to which they conduct their own information campaigns. This is partly associated with the degree to which they consider it important from an academic standpoint that students undertake a part of their

studies abroad. But it is also partly dependent upon local enthusiasm. At the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature, all students are informed about the possibilities of travelling abroad at the commencement of their studies. In the course of their basic studies a special meeting is arranged where the students are encouraged to take the intermediate course in Germany, and where they are also informed about the opportunities available, method of application and financial support. At the graduate degree level, students are also given information on possibilities for travelling abroad. At the Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry, information is less systematic. Some information is given in connection with the lectures, or in direct conversations with the students. The Department of Geography does not provide any information on ERASMUS, and students who do make enquires are referred to the International Office.

Those who were interviewed maintained that the advantage of ERASMUS was that this offered a package solution. The stay abroad was approved as part of the study course at home. A grant was available and the host institution, at least in a number of circumstances, was helpful in finding accommodation and assisting the students to settle in. It was, however, indicated that not all students were interested in the complete package and preferred to travel independently. There is also a large difference between the academic fields in the extent to which they have entered into agreements which meet the preferences of the students. Last, but not least, the academic value of the sojourn abroad varies from one academic area to another.

This difference between departments regarding how active they are in informing students reflects the degree to which the departments consider it important that students have a sojourn abroad. At the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature it was emphasised that a sojourn in Germany is of considerable academic value. In addition, this provides a unique possibility to learn the language as well as providing an insight into German culture and society and which would be of great value for those students who will later teach German in schools. The possibility for a sojourn abroad provided a basis for education of what was referred to as “a new generation of teachers of German”. Students who travel abroad agree in advance as to which specific course they shall follow in order to have this approved as part of the intermediate study course or a part of the graduate degree. It was estimated that about a half of those students who had the possibility to travel under the ERASMUS programme used the opportunity for this purpose.

At the Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry, the corresponding level of agreement on the importance of travelling abroad was not found. Some considered it important while others were less enthusiastic. Exchange occurred at the graduate degree level and it was emphasised that this was an offer for the best students. Those who had problems in maintaining a satisfactory academic level were not recommended to travel abroad. Approval of courses was not considered to be a problem as the department had a flexible approach. Academically seen, a sojourn abroad was evaluated much the same as studying at home, but the students received much extra in addition. They developed personally, they learnt something of the language, they became acquainted with other cultures, and they established contacts in other countries. In addition to ERASMUS, there was also a number of students who travelled abroad under LEONARDO. It was maintained that industry considered it advantageous that applicants for posts had studied abroad for a period.

At the Department of Geography, although the number of students travelling abroad was limited, it has been normal hitherto for students to travel to a third world country in connection with NTNU agreements. In addition, the department has a formal co-operation agreement with the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. When the department had not been more active in respect of European co-operation, this was partly to do with the third-world agreement, but also that no single person at the department had been an active promoter for ERASMUS agreements. Formal approval of practice in association with the intermediate course is relatively strong to the extent that exchange is regarded more favourably at the graduate degree level. Following an approach by the University of Kiel, an ERASMUS agreement has now been established with this university. Geography is a subject with many specialist areas and the academic profile varies considerably between universities. The Department of Geography at the University of Kiel has, however, many common features with NTNU. The staff were very interested in observing how this co-operation will function. On the basis of this experience, consideration will be made regarding entering into several ERASMUS agreements.

Knowledge of the language is absolutely essential if the students are to profit fully from a sojourn abroad. It was admitted that the offers made through NTNU were not completely satisfactory. There is an offer of a course in French, and there was previously one in German. There is a particular need for a course in Spanish for exchange students. In the meantime, agreements have been entered into with institutions which provide language training abroad. The International Office attempts to the best of its ability to market the possibilities of studying a language abroad with assistance from the State Educational Loan Fund.

### **7.3 Incoming students**

In general, there is no problem in attracting students to come to NTNU. The institution hosts more students than it sends abroad. Importance is attached to providing information on the Internet as this markets the institution simultaneously to reducing the workload of replying to external enquiries. Further, those students from abroad who have studied at NTNU contribute to disseminating information at their home colleges.

Even though there is a general balance over all, there is nevertheless some considerable imbalance with regard to higher education institutions and subjects. Spain is extremely popular among NTNU students. This places pressure upon the faculties to make arrangements for recruiting Spanish students. For example, the Faculty of Medicine has planned a joint course in English for Norwegians and incoming students.

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literature has far more students travelling abroad than it receives. The Norwegian students travel to Germany, but in general there is little interest by German students to study German in Norway. However, the department cooperates with the University of Leipzig which sends students who are studying German as a foreign language for practical courses to the department (financed by a VNG stipend). In addition, the department receives a number of students from Milan. All lectures are carried out in German such that language does not present a problem when receiving students from

abroad. Having students from Germany was described as “a breath of fresh air” in the department’s teaching.

The Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry receives more students than those sent to study abroad. The exchange essentially takes place at graduate degree level. It is seen as important that the department is attractive for students coming from abroad, even though students coming to Norway do not do so on academic grounds alone. Norway is regarded as exciting, and somewhat exotic! In addition, there is a good social environment here, and the infrastructure is solid. Language is not regarded as a problem. When there is a need for this, the lectures are held in English. Some students have individual study programmes arranged on their behalf. It is a costly affair to have graduate degree students working in the laboratory, but nevertheless considered important and this is a part of the international presentation of the department. There is also a clear link between student exchange and international research co-operation.

Hitherto, The Department of Geography has not had experience with ERASMUS students, but has had a good deal of experience in hosting students from other countries. The department has its own two-year master’s degree programme financed by NORAD (The Directorate for Development Co-operation) and directed towards students from third-world countries. Previously, this programme had been organised completely separately from the Norwegian graduate degree course, and that the programme was reserved for students who were especially admitted to this course. The system has, however, become more flexible and, to a limited extent, it is now open for other students from abroad to participate in the programme. In addition, some of the lectures are also held in conjunction with graduate degree students and which has functioned positively. Holding courses in English is not considered as a problem as several of the staff come from abroad. So far, little has been done to organise the study sojourn for ERASMUS students coming to Norway.

In association with the University of Oslo, NTNU arranges summer courses for foreigners. It will now be possible to take a part of this course as an Internet-based arrangement. In addition, a small so-called “survival course” is held to teach students elementary phrases. The student environment at NTNU is considered good, and particularly attractive for foreign students. All ERASMUS students are offered accommodation through the student welfare organisation. NTNU has arranged for the approval of the courses in the students’ home countries. All courses offered are described in the institution’s ECTS catalogue which is available on the web. The database is under continual updating. NTNU has introduced a grades scale which approximated the ECTS grade scale.<sup>7</sup> Several of the informants mentioned, however, that the objective of the ECTS scale was not to unify grades between countries, but was a system for grades conversion. It was argued that in an international context there was no point in the national grades scale being identical to the ECTS scale.

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<sup>7</sup> The ECTS scale consists of 5 pass grades, A to E. In Parliamentary Report O. 27 (2000-2001), it is proposed that this scale is used as the basis for the introduction of a common national grades scale.

## 7.4 Teacher exchange

Compared with student exchange, teacher exchange has been more difficult to launch, although it is now beginning to function better. The International Office argued that with respect to the academic bodies teacher exchange is one method of maintaining professional contacts abroad and which may also be associated with research. There appears to be an absence of understanding in many of the academic areas regarding the possibilities available through teacher exchange. This exchange is often used in connection with new agreements enabling personnel from the co-operating institutions to become acquainted with each other such that student exchange can be organised as efficiently as possible.

There is a difference between the various academic environments insofar as there is an interplay between this type of educational co-operation and international research co-operation. At the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature it was maintained that there was no association between educational co-operation and research co-operation, while at the Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry it was stressed that there was a close connection. One used contacts in interesting academic environments to develop co-operation in both educational courses and research. At the Department of Geography it was emphasised that much of the educational co-operation with the third world was established in connection with, and as a result of, the lecturers' research projects.

NTNU subsidises teacher exchange through ERASMUS. In the early stages the state scales for reimbursement of expenditures were applied, but this proved to be too expensive. Today, the actual travel costs are covered and those travelling abroad receive 1000 NOK per day. There are, however, some local variations as ERASMUS funds may be combined with financial support from other sources.

## 7.5 Professional co-operation and curriculum development

NTNU is a member of the thematic network "Higher Education in Engineering" which works towards a common strategy for engineering education in Europe. NTNU is particularly involved in projects for academic co-operation and curriculum development. Based on experience, the level of ambition has been lowered as, among other reasons, this is a type of co-operation which can hardly be controlled and initiated from the centre. While it was originally the aim to have one such project in each faculty, it is now the intention to have 1 or 2 projects throughout the entire institution. In the meantime, NTNU has been heavily involved in certain individual projects. The project "Environmental Life-Cycle Engineering" (ELCE) was initiated and co-ordinated by the Department of Industrial Ecology, but is now co-ordinated by École des Mines de Paris. ELCE includes 4 Internet-based courses which are made available with contributions from a total of ten European universities. From the professional standpoint it was emphasised that this ERASMUS project has been stimulating in respect of the development of student courses at the department. Co-operation was characterised as academically inspiring, but it was regretted that the financial framework had placed restrictions on the project.



The Department of Material Technology and Electrochemistry has been involved in developing a combined doctorate and LEONARDO course, based partly on video training. The department had applied for, but not been granted, support for the development of an European module. The motivation for focussing upon this sort of development work is first and foremost that this was considered necessary if one was to be at the forefront of the international arena.

Neither the Department of Geography nor the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature were involved in professional co-operation within the framework of the SOCRATES programme. The Department of Germanic Languages and Literature co-operates, however, with the University in Trier which gives Norwegian students the opportunity to take the introductory course in German there. Through NTNU, the department is responsible for language and literature courses while the University in Trier has the responsibility for courses society and culture (*Landeskunde*). The department also has an agreement to send students to Kiel. None of these agreements are, however, associated with the ERASMUS programme.

## 7.6 Summary

The university is a large institution, and there are significant differences in the degree to which the academic bodies participate in the ERASMUS programme. One essential difference in the extent to which international co-operation is regarded not just as a goal in itself, but as a tool for achieving better skills among the students, or for becoming a leading international actor within research and education. There are also clear differences between these bodies in the extent to which educational co-operation is interesting in a research connection. One problem which was stressed, is that the financing model which is based on a points production imposes a 'fine' upon those bodies which are active with the ERASMUS programme.

NTNU has been involved in a number of projects where common subject modules have been developed in association with European universities. This type of professional co-operation is difficult to initiate from the centre, but has to be based upon those possibilities and challenges which are incorporated in the globalisation of higher education.

## 8 Concluding discussion

In the five foregoing chapters we have illustrated how ERASMUS functions in a number of educational establishments in Norway, and presented the viewpoints of the academic and administrative staff. It appears clear that Norwegian educational establishments experience many of the same challenges with ERASMUS as educational establishments other places in Europe. The programme demands a long planning horizon and requires much larger resources than those transferred from the EU. It is a challenge for the institutions to give priority to means for internationalisation and to arouse an interest in student and teacher exchange. Many consider ERASMUS to be bureaucratic and impersonal, and there is often a lack of knowledge about the institutions with which one is co-operating. This is undoubtedly an important reason that the majority of learning institutions prefer to have their own bilateral agreements with other institutions in addition to participating in the ERASMUS programme. At the same time, several of our informants emphasised that ERASMUS is unique as an implement in supporting student exchange and other international educational co-operation.

In general, it appears that Norwegian places of learning are more focussed on internationalisation than Europeanisation. Europeanisation and integration are central ideological components of the EU system, and SOCRATES and ERASMUS are a part of this. In Norway, there is a far-reaching ambivalence to the EU, and attitudes to Europeanisation as a political objective vary. This may be thought to affect interest for participation in the programme, at least at the local level. A programme with an ideological component does not necessarily inspire the academic environment – they can feel this to be a project imposed from above. If the academic engagement is to be strengthened, it may well be advisable to focus on how these different academic areas can benefit from participation in the programme, rather than focussing upon internationalisation as a goal in itself.

### 8.1 What is the point?

Interest for becoming engaged in internationalisation generally, and student exchange and ERASMUS in particular, clearly differ on a broad basis. At all the institutions we have examined, internationalisation and international student exchange are defined as a goal, and referred to in positive terms in the institutions' strategic plans. This is a trend which applies to Norwegian educational establishments in general (Olsen 1999). Implementation and integration of strategies for internationalisation in the meantime, differ broadly between the institutions and have differing degrees of relevance in respect of goal achievement. Interviews with the informants illustrate that there are broad variations between the various academic environments and the institutions both in respect of what is regarded as *the point* of international co-operation and how the administration and academic environments utilise those possibilities and challenges which are incorporated into the ERASMUS programme.

Some academic spheres are distinguished in so far as international co-operation is regarded as a *tool* by which the central academic objectives are to be achieved, and to a lesser extent as an *aim* within itself. For example, the ERASMUS exchange at the Germanic Department at NTNU was regarded as a tool for nothing less than to “educate a new generation of German

teachers”. BI attaches importance to student exchange in order to be presented as a leading school which is recognised internationally. International experience is important for students in their particular study area, and the possibility of a study sojourn abroad is seen as important for the institution in the competition for attracting students. At the Department of Material Technology and Electro-chemistry at NTNU, the involvement in ERASMUS was regarded as important in relation to the ambition of maintaining a leading position in Europe – and also the world at large – within education and research in its particular field. Being recognised, and able to be measured against the most esteemed institutions in Europe, is also a central aim of the Norwegian Academy of Music. At the Department for Economics, Culture and Society at Stavanger College, it was considered important to attract foreign students, among other reasons to ensure that its academic level was commensurate with that of other institutions, and also to ensure a broader spectrum among the student body. At the Department for Transport and Logistics at Molde College, there was a marked awareness for profiling its ‘niche’ skills which makes the college attractive in the international educational market.

In some subjects it is evident that a sojourn abroad will be academically stimulating, while in other subjects the advantages of a study tour abroad are more difficult to recognise. The majority, however, appear to be in agreement that a study sojourn abroad provides far more advantages than the purely academic, such as language skills, understanding of other cultures, and is also a personal challenge. Some of the informants expressed that personal development may be a consequence of an exchange visit and may effectively compensate for any doubtful academic value. Some academic bodies arrange for students to travel abroad at different stages in their degree course, while others first and foremost encourage students to travel when preparing for their graduate degree, or at diploma level. There are also clear differences between the bodies in the extent to which ERASMUS exchange is something which all students should be encouraged to undertake, or whether this is something to be reserved only for the best students. The objective of increased student exchange must also be seen in the light of the nature of individual subjects. The government’s aim that 50 percent of students should travel abroad is possibly under-evaluated in respect of European Languages, while such an objective would assumedly have little purpose in those subjects which have a strong national element. A question may also be raised concerning the extent to which student exchange is profitable where the exchange occurs in the practice periods undertaken outside the college. When students do not follow courses, they become less integrated into the environment of that country where they are hosted, and have correspondingly fewer gains from the experience.

In the majority of academic environments, there is a tendency for the bilateral agreements to be based upon previous ICP networks, personal initiative and pure chance. One problem for those academic areas which do not have an international contact net and little knowledge of foreign institutions is that it can be difficult to get started and to establish new agreements. The old ICP networks appear to have been important in the introductory phase, and some departments have maintained contacts with the networks on a more informal bases. One feature of those academic bodies which have a clear reason for their engagement in ERASMUS is that they have a conscious relationship to those with whom they are co-operating. While it is important for some bodies to enter into agreements with the most esteemed professional institutions which are also interesting in a research perspective, others attach importance to agreements with institutions which are attractive in respect of students’

desires for specific study locations abroad at the same time as the educational courses available and the practical aspects function very well.

## **8.2 What are the restraints, and what is that facilitates student mobility?**

Student exchange through ERASMUS has stagnated, something which may appear paradoxical. For the first, the total number of Norwegians studying abroad is an indication that interest for a study sojourn in another country is high among Norwegian students. Secondly, Norwegian students have good possibilities for financial support through the State Educational Loan Fund, and in consequence are less dependent upon an ERASMUS stipend than students in other countries. Fewer reports of financial problems are made by Norwegian ERASMUS students than by others in association with the exchange sojourn. A central question, therefore, is why several students do not avail themselves of the possibility to combine a visit abroad with their studies. Language is, of course, a natural barrier to studying in a country where lectures are not held in English or a Nordic language. Language abilities acquired at the upper secondary school are seldom sufficient to be able to follow lectures in Germany or France, for example. There are, however, a few institutions which have organised language training for students travelling abroad. Several of the informants emphasised the need for training in German, French and Spanish. It is reasonable to assume that more effort put into information could contribute to an increase in the number of students travelling abroad under the ERASMUS programme. Several of those interviewed emphasised that one of the most important advantages with ERASMUS is that it is a package solution facilitating many aspects of planning a study period abroad. Such packages are never able to meet *all* students' needs and requirements, but may nevertheless increase the possibility of *increased numbers* travelling abroad.

One basic assumption of ERASMUS exchange is that students shall have their studies abroad approved as a part of the course at home such that a sojourn abroad does not result in increased study time. ECTS is an important means for such approval. It is also absolutely essential that the departments and faculties have a flexible approval practice. In the meantime, a question may be raised whether departments should use restraint to a greater degree and give students advice in their choice of study abroad. More guidance or recommendations not only ensure that the student will have the course approved but that the advantages the exchange will be greater. It can also establish the basis for exchange which provides the student with an academic offer and a profile and specialisation that he/she may not be able to receive at home. Further, importance can be attached to accommodation and the practical arrangements. Rather than offering the broadest possible spectrum of choices, an alternative strategy is to market studies at a limited number of institutions where specific courses can be recommended and which slot satisfactorily into the studies at home. Even though there are exceptions, it appears quite remarkable that departments have not concentrated more in sending students to institutions which are able to offer different or better courses than those which are able to be offered at home. Concentrating on a core of institutions with which one is familiar may also contribute to reducing the perception of impersonality whereby, among other things, those administering the programme have more stable contacts.

The Norwegian course credits structure is very flexible concerning combining subjects from different study areas and types of institution. The structure of disciplines in the universities, with a basic and an intermediate course are, however, an obstacle for student exchange at the lower level within a number of subjects. Because ERASMUS assumes one year's study, the possibility for travelling abroad during the period of basic studies will, in the majority of cases, restrict the possibility of studying abroad to taking the intermediate degree abroad, something which may be problematic in ensuring that the student has the necessary ability in order to be admitted to the graduate degree course. With a transfer to a new degree system it is important that the opportunities are increased for students to undertake part of their lower level studies abroad.

Even though more Norwegian students travel abroad than are hosted in Norway, the exchange balance is reasonably good. If the number of students travelling abroad is to be increased, then it will be necessary to carry out a more offensive strategy to recruit foreign students to Norway. In this perspective, courses held in English will be central. Naturally enough, a number of lecturers prefer not to hold lectures in English. Nevertheless, the fact that some lectures are held in English may also be of value for Norwegian students.

Norwegian higher education establishments appear to have a potential regarding developing an awareness of which courses have a quality or profile which can attract ERASMUS students and other exchange students to Norway. Courses in English are very limited at the majority of higher education institutions. A number of master's degree courses which are marketed to foreign students have been developed. This is a model which should, perhaps, be used to attract ERASMUS students. English language programmes should also be opened up and made attractive to Norwegian students as well, such that a multi-cultural environment is established. Norway may appear exotic to some overseas students, and many educational establishments can offer good practical facilities and a good social environment. But this is not sufficient in itself. The cost level and climate can appear disconcerting for many, and if they are to consider studying here, then the academic opportunities must be solid and interesting. Higher education is becoming increasingly characterised as a product on the international market, and if Norwegian institutions fail to meet the demand, they risk losing in the competition both for foreign and Norwegian students.

One reason that more academic priorities and guidelines for student exchange are not to be found is, of course, that this is difficult to put into practice. The principle and mutual involvement in exchange may easily create problems if the system is too rigid in practice. To the extent that flexibility is built in such that reciprocity is practised at the institutional level and not at the subject level, simultaneous to being interpreted more broadly over time, will possibly provide room for widening the scope of practice.

### **8.3 Administrative and academic challenges**

Another reason for the limited initiative and priorities given to ERASMUS co-operation may be that Norwegian academic bodies participate in teacher exchange and other forms of academic co-operation to a lesser degree than many other countries. By developing personal relationships through teacher exchange, and co-operation in curriculum development as well

as intensive programmes, the institutions will have a better assumption upon which to attach greater importance to student exchange. Even though there is reason to point out these possibilities, it must also be emphasised that students may be difficult to persuade and that extracurricular considerations such as language, climate and location are often just as important when students are considering a sojourn abroad.

Experience from the various institutions suggests that the administration plays a key role in ERASMUS co-operation. It is important to have persons who can supply information, advice and practical guidance in connection with agreements, applications and reports. Continuity and competence in administration is thus a central factor. In this connection the Centre for International University Co-operation is also an important resource which receives due praise from several of the informants. Guidelines and routines may appear to be bureaucratic for those who are unfamiliar with them, even though procedures are more simplified than previously. For those who have been through several rounds of applications and reporting, the routines appear in the meantime to be surmountable. The administration also has an important function in supplying information about all the possibilities which are available in SOCRATES, and how these possibilities may be utilised. This applies both to the academic staff as well as to the students. Some institutions can benefit by developing co-operation between the academic and administrative staffs, and to work out a more favourable division of tasks between them.

ERASMUS and other student exchange programmes are frequently based on particularly interested individuals. These are often people who themselves have had experience from abroad, through a study sojourn or teacher exchange. Such enthusiasts are, of course, important, not least for stimulating interest in the programme, but it should not be the case that participation in a student exchange programme stands or falls on the efforts of one or a few persons. In order to establish continuity, it appears to be important that internationalisation is founded upon the institution, among other things through awareness among the academic staff. Further, there should be an administrative organisation which can contribute to extending this experience and to provide sufficient relief to the academic staff.

There are clear differences between institutions and the academic environments regarding the extent to which the staff are involved in ERASMUS co-operation. What is most appropriate appears to vary. In many instances, however, the academic staff must be involved in order to make the necessary evaluations. If the institutions are to engage themselves in other areas of ERASMUS co-operation than student exchange, then the academic staff must have a central role. To the extent that student exchange shall not merely provide an opportunity for just a few but be incorporated as a natural part of the course, the academic staff must be involved in various ways. Experience from other countries indicates that those institutions which stand out as particularly active in the field of student exchange have attached importance to internationalisation as being something which penetrates the whole of the institution's activity (Foss 2000).

The greater involvement of the academic staff in the various aspects of ERASMUS co-operation appears, however, to be a challenge. The strategy of the Norwegian Academy of Music in giving priority to teacher exchange as this will establish the basis for student exchange as well as other types of ERASMUS co-operation in the next round, is interesting in

this respect. Those academic staff who have been involved in teacher exchange have, for all intents and purposes, profited from this. The possibility for using this type of co-operation in order to establish and maintain professional contact which may also be used in association with research, appears to be little understood in a number of academic spheres. Even though other parts of ERASMUS co-operation are not particularly remunerative from a financial point of view, these represent possibilities for financing which can be used in combination with other forms of support.

In this study we have not been particularly concerned with the economic aspects of the various parts of the ERASMUS programme. It is nevertheless manifest that certain aspects which make the programme attractive to students, academic staff and institutions is that support is to be found for this type of co-operation even though financial arrangements in certain areas appears to be insufficient. Based on the national objective of strengthening international educational co-operation, a question may be raised as to why the national financing model fails to stimulate this sort of work. When the model which places a premium on the accumulation of course points is also used internally within the institutions, this results in those academic bodies who send students abroad and who take their examination abroad paying a financial penalty. Those institutions which host foreign students who do *not* take an examination are likewise not recompensed for this. Other Nordic countries have introduced an arrangement which gives a bonus in relation to how active an institution is in international educational co-operation. Neither at the level of the individual have incentives been introduced with Norwegian academic spheres which reward engagement in international educational co-operation, either financially or in respect of other teaching responsibilities such as relief.

## **8.4 What should be done?**

The origin of this project was a consideration of why Norwegian students, teachers and educational establishments have not been more actively engaged in ERASMUS co-operation. It is not easy to provide any lucid and unambiguous answer to this, but we have indicated a number of circumstances that can both have hindered and helped the promotion of student exchange via ERASMUS or other programmes. As already mentioned, the authorities and the institutions should consider the development of a bonus system which rewards international educational co-operation. In a number of instances, today's financial model has a counterproductive effect.

Participation in ERASMUS must be considered as a part of an institution's internationalisation strategy. As we have mentioned, the majority of institutions have grand visions of internationalisation, but the degree to which these are attempted to be implemented varies widely. In conclusion, a number of problems are presented for consideration which need to be clarified in this connection. If educational establishments desire to expand student exchange and participation in other aspects of ERASMUS, it may be of value to consider the following:

### **Essential questions**

- What is the objective of becoming engaged in international educational co-operation?

- How can ERASMUS co-operation be used as an implement for achieving the central academic objectives?
- Is internationalisation afforded sufficient priority in practice?
- Can the objectives of internationalisation come into conflict with other strategic objectives?

#### **What could be done to motivate more students to travel abroad?**

- Should all students be encouraged to travel abroad – if not, why not?
- What academic gains are to be made, and what other reasons are there such that students ought to study abroad via the ERASMUS programme?
- Is the information supplied to students sufficiently satisfactory?
- Can incoming students and academic staff be used more actively on order to motivate Norwegian students to travel abroad?
- Can courses at various levels be organised such that it is easier to arrange a study sojourn abroad (for example, through increased use of study modules?)
- Are there specific courses at foreign institutions which can be recommended?
- What do the overseas institutions offer in practical matters such as arranging accommodation, social events, etc.?
- Should language courses be arranged in German, French and Spanish, for example?

#### **What could be done in order to attract more students to Norway?**

- What do we have to offer students from overseas?
- What comparative advantages do we have that can be marketed better?
- Which subjects will be most attractive and relevant for incoming students?
- What courses in appropriate areas can be offered in English?

#### **How may the administration contribute?**

- Have sufficient means been put at the disposal of the central administration in order to ensure competence and continuity in international responsibilities?
- Is there a satisfactory division of functions and communication between the academic and the administrative staffs with regard to student exchange agreements?
- Is the institution sufficiently involved in international work, or is it essentially dependent upon individual persons?

#### **How may the academic staff be motivated to become engaged?**

- Are the academic staff sufficiently aware of the guidelines for teacher exchange and other professional co-operation, and how may this be used for establishing and maintaining professional contact?
- Are there any particular obstacles which may discourage staff from becoming involved?
- Can further incentives be introduced which will benefit international engagement?



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## Annex 1: Tables

**Table 1** *ERASMUS students travelling from Norway, by host country.*

<i>Host country</i>	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Belgium	18	37	46	38	32	25	37
Denmark	26	31	30	34	45	55	53
Finland	0	0	0	4	1	14	21
France	90	131	145	184	179	132	129
Greece	5	10	14	17	16	21	8
Ireland	11	23	44	47	42	24	24
Italy	24	29	37	42	53	43	52
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	58	100	95	126	107	108	119
Portugal	1	9	7	10	23	20	20
Spain	35	66	84	114	117	132	134
U.K.	74	180	244	333	297	248	241
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	9	9	25	49
Germany	132	168	229	211	217	185	175
Austria	0	0	5	43	27	39	39
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>1101</b>

Source: Centre for International University Co-operation (SIU).

**Table 2** *ERASMUS students coming to Norway, by home country*

Country	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Belgium	12	20	50	53	55	30	63
Denmark	6	12	12	19	18	8	32
Finland	0	0	1	10	21	10	28
France	18	27	52	66	77	102	123
Greece	1	5	10	9	13	15	11
Ireland	2	14	11	10	5	2	3
Island	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	19	47	55	73	91	97	108
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	42	82	94	112	101	81	101
Portugal	0	4	18	12	18	22	25
Spain	4	28	48	67	69	76	91
U.K.	25	62	82	89	81	64	84
Switzerland	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	2	4	12	17	31
Germany	26	64	117	177	184	189	233
Austria	0	0	0	24	31	31	50
Others	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	155	365	554	727	776	744	983

Source: Centre for International University Co-operation (SiU)

**Table 3** *Norwegian students' evaluation of various information sources in connection with planning a study sojourn in another European country. Percent (5 = very important, 1 = less important)*

	1	2	3	4	5	(N)
International Section	15	13	28	26	19	(486)
Lecturers	23	18	22	17	21	(391)
Faculty	21	20	26	21	13	(428)
Friends	15	15	26	27	17	(425)
Internet	9	13	23	33	21	(495)
Student handbooks	20	20	24	23	12	(391)
Other	21	19	34	14	12	(192)

Source: Centre for International University Co-operation (SiU)/NTNU

**Table 4** *Norwegian students evaluation of support and assistance received when planning a part-study in another European country. . Percent (5 = extremely good, 1 = not very good)*

	1	2	3	4	5	(N)
Faculty/tutor at home	12	16	28	25	19	(489)
International Section home	11	16	29	30	14	(478)
International section abroad	16	19	30	19	15	(432)
Faculty abroad	17	21	29	20	13	(421)
Tutor abroad	16	18	24	21	21	(382)
Students abroad	11	14	23	29	23	(392)

Source: Centre for International University Co-operation (SiU)/NTNU

## Annex 2: Interview guide

### 1. What is it that encourages, and what discourages participation in the ERASMUS programme?

- a) How would you characterise the institution's strategy in respect of international educational co-operation?
- b) In what manner is this given priority in practice by the institution and department's leadership?
- c) What are the reasons for the level of participation, or the lack of participation, in ERASMUS co-operation?
- d) Have any bilateral agreements or other forms of international educational co-operation been made which are not part of ERASMUS?
- e) What are the advantages and disadvantages of such arrangements compared to ERASMUS co-operation?
- f) To what extent are new agreements based on the *academic strategy* of the department, and to what extent are they based upon the *personal initiative of individuals*?
- g) Are international agreements on co-operation/ERASMUS agreements associated with academic strategy in other areas, for example areas of professional special interest, nodal points, post-graduate courses?
- h) How many academic staff in the department (or each department) are involved in ERASMUS? Is it mainly individuals who are involved?
- i) Are there any incentives for the academic staff to become engaged in international educational co-operation/ERASMUS?
- j) What is the motivation for becoming engaged in this sort of co-operation?

### 2. Co-operation in research

- a) To what extent has co-operation in research been established as a result of ERASMUS co-operation (or other form of educational co-operation)?
- b) Has co-operation in research provided a basis for co-operation through ERASMUS or any other form of educational co-operation?
- c) Is there any overlap between research co-operation supervised by the EU and that of ERASMUS co-operation?
- d) To the extent that the academic staff are engaged in international R&D and educational co-operation, why does this overlap exist?

### 3. Regulations and adaptation

- a) Do you feel that you/the academic staff receive sufficient assistance and relief by the administration, for example in the preparation of agreements, information to students and reception of ERASMUS students from abroad?
- b) Have you any viewpoints regarding the support you and the academic staff receive from the local and central administrations? Are sufficient resources available for administrative purposes?
- c) Is there much paperwork in connection with participation in the ERASMUS programme? Have any changes occurred?

- d) Are there any particular problems associated with the approval of exchange agreements? (At you own institution, at institutions with one co-operates with, or with EU regulations/routines?)
- e) What is the significance of the financial limitations?

#### **4. Student exchange**

- a) How have these co-operation agreements come into existence?
- b) What criteria form the basis for selection of a co-operation partner?
- c) Are new co-operation agreements established through ERASMUS co-operation, or is it former co-operation agreements which, for the most part are revised?
- d) The transfer from ICPs to IC – how do you consider that ERASMUS now functions as compared to previously?
- e) Have students' preferences and/or experiences been of any significance?
- f) To what extent are ERASMUS agreements revoked when these have not come up to expectations?

#### **5. Students travelling abroad**

- a) Is there any strategy for encouraging students to take part in exchanges?
- b) What is done in order to market these offers to students?
- c) Who has the responsibility for marketing?
- d) To what extent do the academic staff see it as their responsibility to encourage student exchange?
- e) What is the experience of the staff of the student's academic advantages?
- f) What type of academic advantages are we talking about?
- g) Does the ERASMUS exchange provide students with other course offers than those linked to their home institution?
- h) Do students have problems with having their courses recognised when they return home?
- i) What is your evaluation of the duration of study sojourns abroad?
- j) At what stage in their course do you consider that students gain most from an exchange visit?
- k) To what extent are the Norwegian courses changed in order to accommodate ERASMUS sojourn abroad (for example, through modifying the course)?
- l) Do these modifications have positive effect, or are they disadvantageous, for example, for students who are not participating in ERASMUS exchange?
- m) Are language or any other preparatory courses arranged for students who are to study abroad?

#### **6. Incoming students**

- a) Does this institution/faculty have a strategy for attracting students from abroad?
- b) If so, who is responsible for strategy/marketing?
- c) What are the advantages and gains of hosting students from other countries?
- d) How much work is involved in preparing courses especially directed towards incoming students?
- e) Do Norwegian students also participate in these courses?
- f) To what extent do these courses place extra demands upon the teaching load?

- g) What is the attitude of the academic staff towards holding courses using English?
- h) Are there any other circumstances associated with receiving students from abroad which require extra preparation and additional work?
- i) Are there any particular problems associated with starting a course which the co-operation institutions can approve?(ECTS)
- j) Have students who have studied in Norway problems in having the courses credited in their home country?
- k) What academic advantages for incoming students? (duration, academic content, other).

## **7. Teacher exchange**

- a) Has the department/faculty been involved in teacher exchange?
- b) Are there other forms of teacher exchange between institutions, for example in the form of guest lectures?
- c) Why/Why not?
- d) How have these co-operation agreements come into existence?
- e) What criteria form the basis for selection of a co-operation partner?
- f) Are new co-operation agreements established through ERASMUS co-operation, or is it former co-operation agreements which, for the most part are revised?
- g) What measures can be introduced in order to increase teacher exchange/make this more attractive?
- h) What are the experiences has you had with this? Significance for the teaching programme at your own institution?

## **8. Subject co-operation/curriculum development**

(Curriculum development at initiator intermediate level (CDI); of degree programmes at the higher level (CDA); of integrated language courses (ILC); of intensive programmes (IP), European modules (EM))

- a) Has the department/faculty been involved in curriculum development?
- b) Why/Why not?
- c) How did these co-operation agreements come into existence?
- d) What criteria form the basis for selection of a co-operation partner?
- e) Are new co-operation agreements established through ERASMUS co-operation, or is it former co-operation agreements which, for the most part are revised?
- f) What are the experiences has you had with this? Significance for the teaching programme at your own institution?

## **9. Thematic network**

(Promote ECTS, European dimension, educational methods, syllabus)

- a) Has the department/faculty been involved in thematic networks?
- b) Why/Why not?
- c) How did these co-operation agreements come into existence?
- d) What criteria form the basis for selection of a co-operation partner?
- e) Are new co-operation agreements established through ERASMUS co-operation, or is it former co-operation agreements which, for the most part are revised?



- f) What are the experiences has you had with this? Significance for the teaching programme at your own institution?

## Annex 3: Evaluation of SOCRATES 1

The EU Commission has commenced comprehensive evaluation of the first phase of the SOCRATES programme which was in operation between 1995 and 2000. An associated project is concerns ERASMUS and is co-ordinated by Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung og Geschellschaft für Empirische Studien i Kassel, Tyskland ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/evaluation/socrates\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/evaluation/socrates_en.html) )

The purpose of the SOCRATES evaluation was to consider the extent to which the programmes objectives had been achieved, to obtain quantitative and qualitative data to see what effects the programme has had for the target groups and educational systems, and also to evaluate the effectiveness of operational and organisational mechanisms. The main interest has been focussed upon:

- The impact of the programme
- Use of Community Funds: effectiveness of use the Community's funds to reach the objectives
- Implementation: were the structures and mechanisms for the implementation appropriate and efficient
- Dissemination: Results and processes of dissemination in order to create a multiplier effect.

The point of commencement for the evaluation was to find out the degree to which critical objections raised were justified. Examples of such criticism include:

- Excessive bureaucracy
- Lack of finance (means "too widely spread")
- Superficiality (important attached to visible actions rather than substantial changes)
- Ambiguity in the form of the activities
- Combination of over- and under-management
- Dilemma of quality versus dissipation
- The 'innovation trap' (conflict between continuing successful components vs. priority to new activities).

It was also an objective to evaluate which activities could be maintained. It was desirable to observe a broad spectrum of goal and expectations, not just formal goals, but also those of a less formal character and a 'hidden agenda'. It was desired that all viewpoints should be taken into account – those of both actors and users, not just statistics and references to documents. For many of the analyses, comparable data was available from 1990/91 such that it was possible to observe the development over time.

The Evaluation of ERASMUS comprised a number of sub-projects:

- Analysis of ERASMUS' administration databases
- Postal questionnaire to institutional co-ordinators for ERASMUS
- Postal questionnaire to academic staff
- Postal questionnaire to ERASMUS students in 1998/99
- Postal questionnaire, former ERASMUS students
- Analysis of applications and reports from the "thematic network"
- Analysis of documents and workshops with co-ordinators and partners in curriculum development and intensive programmes

The evaluation of SOCRATES 1 has drawn on two different questionnaire surveys in order to obtain knowledge about transition to the labour market, both under CHEERS (Careers after Higher Education: A European Research Study). The sample comprises 395 ERASMUS students from five countries (Denmark, Great Britain, France, Spain and Finland), and these are compared with other students who have taken part of the education abroad and students who have not participated in student exchange.

