

Erasmus impact study confirms better chances of employability

On the 12th of December 2015 I had the opportunity to attend a conference on the topic of “Development of students’ competences through the Erasmus+ programme”. It reflected the growing concern about embedding key skills into school curricula to meet today’s societal demands. Key competences are comprised of basic and transversal skills. While the status of the basic skills (literacy , mathematics, science) as well as foreign languages, is well established, the promotion of the transversal skills (IT, civic and entrepreneurship skills) is lagging behind. As a result, efforts by many European countries are currently being made to reform their curricula to integrate transversal skills.

A lot of emphasis is placed on Erasmus + programmes which help students not only gain knowledge in specific disciplines, but also strengthen transversal skills. A new study on the impact of the European Union’s Erasmus student exchange programme shows that graduates with international experience fare much better on the job market. They are half as likely to experience long-term unemployment. In fact, the study has shown that 92% of employers are looking for personality traits boosted by the programme such as tolerance, confidence, problem-solving skills, curiosity, knowing one’s strengths/weaknesses and decisiveness when making a recruitment decision. The study concludes that Erasmus students are found to be more employable and more entrepreneurial than other candidates.

At the conference, I had the chance to share my experiences and emphasise the impact of Erasmus mobility on skill development, employability, institutional development. Erasmus is an ambitious project that aims at finding answers to a series of core questions that are most relevant for the future of our graduates.

Clearly, Erasmus not only improves career prospects, but it also offers students broader horizons and social skills.

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