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International Student Mobility: European and Russian Practices

Abstract: The Russian Federation is a relatively new player in the field of international education, although a strapping one, boasting more than 296 thousand inbound students in 2015/2016 according to the Project Atlas' data. However, most of those students come from former Soviet Republics and China and aim for degree programmes. The numbers of inbound non-degree seeking students and students from the OECD countries are still sparse. Proper internationalisation became a hot and debatable topic after the creation of the Academic Excellence Project 5-100 and subsequent promotion of Russia on the international education market.

This paper aims to compare the current state of student academic mobility in Europe to its state in Russian higher education institutions (HEIs). The authors believe that the fact that Russia might be considered "lagging behind" in academic mobility can be attributed to several factors, the main one being the general lack of applicable regulation and initiatives on the national level, as well as general inexperience when it comes to mobility programs. Europe (meaning the practices on the level of individual states as well as on the level of the European Union) is chosen as a reference region for its proximity to Russia and existence of a common framework in the sphere of higher education, namely the Bologna process.

The first part of the article explains the notion of academic mobility as it is understood both in Europe and in Russia. The second chapter deals with the perceived value of academic mobility and student mobility as its part. The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of relevant international agreements (mainly documents of the Council of Europe), as well as different practices within European countries. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the analysis and history of the flagship EU exchange scheme – the Erasmus Programme. The fifth chapter delves into the inner regulatory workings of academic mobility in the Russian Federation, comparing the existing situation with the practices analysed in the previous chapters in order to draw conclusions on the state of the regulatory framework of Russian academic mobility.

Keywords: globalisation, internationalisation, academic mobility, students

Introduction

Academic mobility is one of the crucial concepts in contemporary education, which demonstrates global processes in this sphere. The internationalisation of education, which is irrevocably linked to the concept of academic mobility, has risen to prominence in the last 30 years along with globalisation processes. It is defined as an intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society¹. Even though scholars agree that having a solid stream of incoming international students and increase in international partnerships in any form is only a part of creation of internationalised university², the links between internationalisation and student mobility are obvious. It is widely accepted that internationalisation (and academic mobility as a part of it) has become one of the key drivers of education development in the last decades. However, as internationalisation is a borderline field between education as such and international relations, sufficient regulatory frameworks should be established in order to properly execute mobility programmes in such a way that they will be beneficial to all parties of the process, primarily students.

This paper's goal is to evaluate the current state of student mobility in European and Russian higher education institutions (HEIs) in a comparative perspective in order to identify possible ways to ameliorate current Russian practices in this regard.

The paper is divided into five parts, consecutively dealing with the notion of academic mobility and its value, relevant international agreements and exchange programs, the flagship EU exchange scheme – Erasmus, and, finally, Russian regulatory framework and practices as compared to their European analogues.

1 H. De Wit, F. Hunter, L. Howard, E. Egron-Polak, *Internationalisation of Higher Education*. Brussels: Policy Department, Directorate General for Internal Policies, European Parliament 2015, p. 283.

2 H. De Wit, *Global: Internationalization of Higher Education: Nine Misconceptions*, "International Higher Education", Summer 2011, no. 64, p. 6-8.

1. The notion of “academic mobility”

The Council of Europe’s Council of Ministers in the Recommendation on Regional Academic Mobility (1996) defines the term “academic mobility” as follows: “a period of study, teaching and/or research in a country other than a student’s or academic staff member’s country of residence (henceforth referred to as the “home country”). This period is of limited duration, and it is envisaged that the student or staff member return to his or her home country upon completion of the designated period”³.

A similar definition is used within the regulatory framework of the Bologna process – a process initiated between European countries for ensuring comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications. The Bologna Declaration has greatly contributed to the spread of student academic mobility and growth of its value for education. Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003.

In Russian legislation, there is no definition of either “academic mobility” or “student mobility”. However, the term “academic mobility” is used twice in the Russian Law on Education⁴:

- in Article 15, in relation to the network form of realisation of educational programmes. Under the “network form” the law understands a possibility of studying the educational programme in several educational institutions, including foreign institutions. Section 3 of this Article establishes requirements for agreements on the network form of realisation of educational programmes, one of which is “the rules for organisation of student academic mobility”;
- in Article 105, which is dedicated to international cooperation in education, international academic mobility is listed as one of the spheres of international cooperation to which the Russian Federation is contributing.

International instruments signed by the Russian Federation also mention academic mobility. For instance, the Interstate Programme of Innovative Cooperation of the CIS Member States for the Period until 2020⁵ uses the term ‘academic mobility’ without defining it. However, according to a comparison between these provisions, made by Russian researchers, the notion of ‘academic mobility’ is much better developed in the Programme than in the Law on Education⁶.

3 Recommendation No. R (95) 8 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Academic Mobility (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 1995 at the 531st meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies).

4 The Federal Law of December 29, 2012 № 273-FZ “On Education in the Russian Federation”.

5 Approved by Decision of the Council of Heads of Governments of CIS in St. Petersburg on 13 October 2012.

6 A. Babich, N. Sheveleva, I. Vasiliev, Academic Mobility of Students: Current Legal Regulation and Practice of its Application, “Law” 2016, no. 11, pp. 50-58.

Other regulatory documents scarcely mention academic mobility. For example, in the “Concept of State Migration Policy of Russian Federation until 2025”⁷ academic mobility covered only the mobility of scientists and professors for demonstration of research results, exchange of experience and other professional purposes. This concept does not include students in academic mobility process, even though the text includes provisions on governmental assistance to educational migration.

In Russian research literature academic mobility is considered an integrative term that unites all types of mobility⁸, and thus the concept of ‘student mobility’ is included in the concept of ‘academic mobility’. Some authors use the term ‘academic mobility of students’, which confirms our point of view that there is no clear boundary between academic mobility and student mobility⁹.

There are different approaches to definition of the notion of academic mobility. Some scientists define academic mobility as an “opportunity for external changes (getting new knowledge and skills to change one’s social status etc.)”. A more psychological approach is based on the assumption that academic mobility is a “characteristic of the inner freedom and internal need of a person”¹⁰. The main feature of this approach is the focus on personal characteristics, as opposed to the traditional definition concerned with people collaboration and mobility.

One more point of view on academic mobility is implying that the term combines sociological, psychological, pedagogical and cultural components. According to this approach academic mobility is an “opportunity for self-realisation and development of personal characteristics through studies in foreign universities, participation in educational programmes and receiving new experience from cultural and educational exchange”.¹¹

2. Value and positive effects of academic mobility for modern higher education

Considering current global processes, academic mobility is a necessary part of the higher education system. Academic mobility is significant both for STEM

7 Approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 13 June 2012.

8 T. Tregubova, Academic Mobility of Teachers and Students, “Kazan Pedagogical Journal” 2006, no. 2, pp. 28-30.

9 N. Vatulkina, F. Fedotkina, Academic Mobility of Students in the Conditions of Internationalization of Education, “University Management: Practice and Analysis” 2015, no 2, p. 17-26; E. Kostina, Academic mobility of students of the Higher School of Russia: a cross-cultural approach, “Philosophy of Education” 2014, no. 6 (57), pp. 64-76.

10 O. Proskura, I. Gerasimchuk, Concept of Mobility. Kinds of Mobility. Academic Mobility, “Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University” 2014, no 13 (342), pp. 94-98.

11 T. Kravtsova, Concept of Academic Mobility in the Humanities, “Review of Omsk State Pedagogical University. Humanitarian Research” 2014, no. 3(4), pp. 88-90.

disciplines and humanities as international experience contributes to capacity development and professional skills.

Academic mobility enables to obtain new knowledge and professional skills, and to develop personal qualities such as cultural adaptation. Consequently, “academic mobility of students is an extremely important process for personal and professional development, because participants face and deal with life situations, analyse them from the perspective of their own and others’ culture, helping universities to prepare qualified persons who can communicate effectively with other cultures”.¹² In general, participation in long-term international mobility is expected to gain significant labour market returns¹³ and indispensable skills – a study of alumni of the Erasmus programme states that 90% of beneficiaries of the programme regarded communication skills, adaptability and analytical skills, which they gained during their mobility period, as important for getting their first job.¹⁴

Getting to know a new culture contributes to the development of intercultural communication, tolerance and cross-cultural understanding. Students can get more understanding with foreign citizens in further professional activities through the recognition of intergroup and intragroup differences, interaction with the world around.¹⁵

That is why the correct preparation for another socio-cultural environment is a particularly important point and “the quality of exchange depends on the correct interaction of partner universities, knowledge of culture and traditions of the country”.¹⁶

Staying in another cultural and educational environment contributes to the development of skills, independence and creative activity that is a requirement for adaptation to new socio-economic conditions. Involvement in international professional and scientific environment provides an opportunity for establishing personal ties and further cooperation. In addition, language practice allows to be in demand in the labour market.

There are, as well, several mentions of negative aspects of academic mobility: migration processes, brain drain, and the use of academic mobility as a tool to increase the perceived prestige of a university with a lack of concentration on the

12 E. Kostina, *Academic Mobility of the Higher Education Students of Russia: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, “Philosophy of Education” 2014, no. 6, pp. 64-76.

13 O. Bracht, C. Engel, K. Janson, A. Over, H. Schomburg & U. Teichler, *The Professional Value of ERASMUS Mobility*, International Centre for Higher Education Research, University of Kassel 2006.

14 Erasmus Impact Study. 2014. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 116.

15 E. Kostina, *Academic Mobility of the Higher Education Students of Russia: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, “Philosophy of Education” 2014, no. 6, pp. 64-76.

16 O.U. Korneva, I.V. Plotnikova, *Academic Mobility of Students: Social Problems* “Sociological Research” 2015, no. 66, p. 114

quality of knowledge obtained by students during their participation in mobility programmes.

3. International regulation and the practices of European countries concerning academic mobility

In May 1949, following resolutions of The Hague Congress, the Council of Europe was created. It has since been one of the key actors in harmonisation and integration of national European higher education systems. There are several legal instruments created by the Council of Europe to help facilitate academic mobility in the member states.

First, in 1953 the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities¹⁷ was adopted by the members of the Council. It provided for the equivalence of those diplomas awarded in the territory of each other Contracting Party which constitute a requisite qualification for admission to similar institutions in the country in which these diplomas were awarded.

In 1955 leaders of European universities met for the first time after WW2 in Cambridge to discuss international co-operation under the presidency of the Duke of Edinburgh. That assembly later became the Standing Conference of Rectors and Vice-Chancellors of European Universities (CRE).

Shortly after, in 1956, came the European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study¹⁸ that dealt mostly with modern languages study recognition. In 1959 the member States adopted the European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications¹⁹, which provided for mutual recognition of diplomas awarded at the end of undergraduate university studies, qualifying the holders to proceed to post-graduate studies.

The next milestone was in 1969, when the member States concluded the European Agreement on Continued Payment of Scholarships to Students Studying Abroad, which provided for the scholarships awarded by a Contracting Party to a national to continue to be paid if that person is admitted in an institution of higher education in the territory of another Contracting Party²⁰.

The Council of Europe's executive body, the Committee of Ministers, also played a role in promoting European integration in higher education. In 1984 the

17 European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities. ETS no. 015. Paris, 11 December 1953.

18 European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study. ETS No. 021. Paris, 15 December 1956.

19 European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications. ETS No. 032. Paris, 14 December 1959.

20 European Agreement on continued Payment of Scholarships. ETS No. 069. Paris, 12 December 1969.

Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation No. R (84) 13²¹ concerning the status of foreign students which provided a comprehensive set of principles for the formulation of policies regarding foreign students. It stressed that students should be encouraged to spend one or two years of study abroad, depending upon the course of study.

In the 1990s the Council of Europe continued its efforts towards creating a common European higher education area. In 1990 the European Convention on the General Equivalence of Periods of University Study was adopted²². It provided a legal basis for recognition by a student's university of origin of periods spent in a university abroad, whether or not a certificate is issued attesting to them. Such recognition presupposes that there has been a prior agreement between the two universities concerned.

In 1997, the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, also known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention²³, was adopted under joint auspices of the Council of Europe and UNESCO; it also addressed the European Community as a potential signatory party. It called for recognition with a more demanding voice and was far more specific with regard to the implementation of these goals than preceding multilateral conventions.

European ministers of higher education also played an active role in the integration of European higher education systems. In 1998 at the Sorbonne University the so-called Sorbonne Declaration on the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system²⁴ was signed by the ministers of higher education of France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. It was followed in 1999 by the famous Bologna Declaration²⁵, which called for a system of three cycles, leading respectively to a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree. In the following conferences of the ministers of higher education in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005) and London (2007), the Bologna Process agenda was extended and made more detailed.

The existing academic mobility programmes can be classified as follows: they can be unilateral, bilateral or multilateral. They can exist on a national level (cooperation

21 Recommendation no. R (84) 13 of the Committee of Ministers to Members States Concerning the Situation of Foreign Students (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 June 1984 at the 374th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

22 European Convention on the General Equivalence of Periods of University Study. ETS no. 138. Rome, 6 November 1990.

23 ETS No. 165 Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Lisbon, 11 April 1997.

24 Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system by the four Ministers in charge for France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom in Paris, the Sorbonne, 25 May 1998.

25 Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education. Bologna, 19 June 1999.

between countries) or on the institutional level (cooperation between universities). They can also be divided into degree-mobility programmes and temporary mobility programmes. Degree-mobility, i.e. mobility for whole degree programmes, is prevalent among students coming to Europe from other parts of the world, while temporary mobility is widespread within Europe²⁶. For instance, *Chevening* is a British unilateral mobility programme that accepts students from 144 countries and territories to undertake postgraduate studies and pursue degrees in universities of the United Kingdom. It is funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. *Visby* and *Stipendium Hungaricum* are further examples of the same type of exchange programmes.

The *Visby* Programme provides a number of full scholarships for master's programmes in Sweden. Candidates from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine can apply. The programme is funded by the Swedish Institute.

Stipendium Hungaricum is based on bilateral educational cooperation agreements signed between the Ministries responsible for education in the sending countries/territories and Hungary or between higher education institutions. It is funded by the Hungarian Government.

Such programs can be established not only by national, but also by regional governments. An example of such programme, *BAYHOST* (the Bavarian Academic Centre for Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe), provides funding for incoming and outgoing student mobility between Bavaria and countries in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe, including Russia. As for the outgoing degree-mobility programmes in Europe, the Italian "*Master and Back*" programme could serve as an example. It was implemented in 2005 by the Italian region of Sardinia. The programme is co-financed by the European Social Fund and provides talented Sardinian students with scholarships to pursue master's degrees in the world's best universities. In 2014 a similar programme called "Global Education" was launched in Russia²⁷. In exchange for the scholarship this programme demands its alumni to work in designated Russian organisations for three years after graduation.

But, of course, temporary mobility programmes are much more widespread within Europe.

The Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (*CEEPUS*) provides for student mobility between Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia. Originally started by

26 U. Teichler, *Internationalisation of Higher Education: European Experiences*, "Asia Pacific Education Review" 2009, vol. 10, issue 1, p. 102.

27 Executive Order of the President of Russian Federation No. 967 "On measures on improvement of the HR potential of the Russian Federation". Moscow, 28 December 2013.

Austria, it is governed by the CEEPUS Agreement, the latest version of which was signed in Budva, Montenegro in 2010. According to CEEPUS rules there is no transfer of funds among Contracting Parties. CEEPUS scholarships, with the exception of travel expenses, are financed by the host country. Travel expenses are financed, where applicable, by the country of origin. Host countries and participating universities are encouraged to provide additional voluntary funding for CEEPUS scholarships.

AKTION Österreich – Tschechische Republik is an example of a bilateral cooperation programme between Austria and the Czech Republic, which offers grant funding for study and research periods in the partner country and participation in summer language schools and other summer school events.

The *Campus Europæ* programme is an example of an institutional level programme, which unites 30 universities from 20 countries. It is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, and the financial support students receive is identical to that of the Erasmus+ programme.

North2north is a multilateral regional programme which involves universities situated in the North. Denmark, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Canada, the United States, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Russia participate in the north2north programme. It is conducted on the base of The University of the Arctic (UArctic), which is a cooperative network of universities, colleges, research institutes and other organisations concerned with education and research in and about the North. The University of the Arctic was created by the Arctic Council in 2001.

All of these programmes play their role in European higher education integration, but that role is mostly supplemental compared to the Erasmus programme.

4. Key European practice – Erasmus Programme

The Erasmus programme is a true cultural phenomenon for modern-day Europe. The European press frequently speaks of the “Erasmus Generation” as the generation of 40-30-year-old Europeans who benefited from the programme and the freedom of movement it allowed within the EU²⁸. Films revolving around Erasmus mobility have even been created²⁹. The European Commission estimates that more than 1 million children – “Erasmus babies”, have been born to couples who met on exchange³⁰. The

28 E.g. Erasmus Generation. “The Economist”, Jun 15th, 2013, available at <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21579148-overcome-its-skills-shortage-germany-needs-remodel-its-society-erasmus-generation>; La génération Erasmus à la rescousse de l’Europe (2017, March 2), Le Monde, 02.03.2017, available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/campus/article/2017/03/02/la-generation-erasmus-a-la-rescousse-de-l-europe_5088465_4401467.html. (access 10.04.2018).

29 A major example is the French film “L’Auberge Espagnole” (2002), revolving around a group of people on their Erasmus mobility in Spain.

30 Erasmus Impact Study confirms EU student exchange scheme boosts employability and job mobility. European Commission Press Release. 22.09.2014, Available at <http://europa.eu/rapid/>

Erasmus programme is routinely referred to as a flagship project and one of the most successful³¹ programmes of the EU – more than 3 million students have participated in it since its introduction in 1987 and last year it celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, the same year in which the Rome Treaty celebrated its 60th. We can see that the majority of EU programmes and activities concerning cooperation and integration in the education field appeared only slightly before establishment of the EU proper.

One of the reasons why education was out of priority for the European Communities at the time was because the agenda leaned towards economic and agriculture policies, while education was considered to be a “political” topic more suited for the Council of Europe³² (as can be evidenced by its output analysed in Chapter 2). However, the 1968 student protests, as well as the 1973 and 1979 oil crises, prompted European decision-makers to place more focus on education. In 1976, the first Council decision on education was approved³³. The action programme under the approved decision included so-called Joint Study Programmes, the precursor to larger mobility schemes were operational since 1976 and financially supported the networks of university departments that exchanged students for a period of up to one year and also included some funds for mobile students.

However, the original proposal for a larger mobility programme was withdrawn after negotiations – several developed countries, who had already established their own mobility schemes were opposed to the proposal, while other countries were in favour. After several months, a compromise was reached, and a new large-scale mobility scheme called the EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) was adopted in June 1987³⁴. Regulation already included a grant support mechanism – fixed with an average of 2,000 ECU and maximum of 5,000 ECU. More than 3,200 students went on Erasmus exchange in the first year of its existence.

Another programme, Tempus³⁵, was established in 1990[10]. The Tempus programme is a true “chameleon” within EU education and youth programmes –

press-release_IP-14-1025_en.htm, projection derived from data from Erasmus Impact Study, p. 136.

31 From Erasmus to Erasmus+: a story of 30 years. European Commission Fact Sheet. available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-83_en.htm (access 10.04.2018).

32 L. Pepin, The History of EU Cooperation in the Field of Education and Training: how lifelong learning became a strategic objective, “European Journal of Education” 2007, vol. 42, issue 1, p. 122.

33 Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education. OJ C 38, 19 February 1976, pp. 1-5.

34 Council Decision 87/327/EEC of 15 June 1987 adopting the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus). OJ L 166, 25 June 1987, pp. 20-24.

35 While Tempus means time in Latin, it is an acronym as well – Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies.

each of its 4 iterations were different, reflecting changes in the political landscape of Europe. The so-called Tempus I (which ran from 1990 to 1994) focused on projects (including long-term student academic mobility) between the EU-12 and countries of Central and Eastern Europe (all of them being former Socialist countries)³⁶. The importance of the programme³⁷ is evidenced by the fact that its budget was several times higher than the budget of the original Erasmus programme. Tempus I, consisted of 3 actions – support for joint European projects, a mobility grant scheme and complimentary activities.

The field of academic student mobility during the period of European Communities ends with the establishment of these two programmes. The regulatory documents establishing them are very broad and in the majority of cases do not contain much by way of information for analysis. The biggest reason for that is the fact that clear mention of the field of education was only included in the Maastricht Treaty – in current article 165 TFEU³⁸. Before that, education was absent from the EC spheres of activity, which severely limited the tools available to EC bodies to operate in the field (as evident from the pushback to the original establishment of the Erasmus programme).

In 1994, the majority of European education and science programmes have been combined into two umbrella programmes – “Leonardo” for vocational education activities³⁹ and “Socrates” for general education activities⁴⁰. The Erasmus mobility scheme became part of Socrates. However, unlike its counterpart, which dissected the parts of the previous programmes and rearranged them within a new one, Socrates merely grouped previous programmes while adding new components. This allowed to sustain the brand of Erasmus while striving for better administrative efficiency of the process, which was a successful feat – support for student mobility substantially increased under Socrates⁴¹. The establishment of cooperation also changed – from applying as a network of cooperating institutions, and concluding agreements between and within said networks, bilateral cooperation became the operative mode

36 Council Decision 90/233/EEC of 7 May 1990 establishing a trans-European mobility scheme for university studies (TEMPUS). OJ L 131, 23 May 1990, pp. 21-26.

37 European Commission. 2011. TEMPUS @ 20 – A retrospective of the Tempus Programme over the past twenty years, 1990-2010, p. 25.

38 L. Pépin, The History of European Co-operation in the Area of Education and Training, Europe in the Making – an Example, European Commission 2006, p. 126.

39 Council Decision 94/819/EC of 6 December 1994 establishing an action programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy. OJ L 340, 29 December 1994, pp. 8-24.

40 Decision No 819/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 1995 establishing the Community action programme ‘Socrates’. OJ L 87, 20 April 1995, pp. 10-24.

41 U. Teichler (ed.), ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme – Findings of an Evaluation Study, Lemmens 2002, p. 14.

of establishing Erasmus mobility projects. The Tempus programme was then stripped of its long-term mobility scheme (which was subsequently put into Erasmus).

After being stripped of its long-term mobility scheme, the Tempus programme focused on projects related to education policy reform and capacity building within the neighbours of the EU (former Soviet republics joined after the establishment of Tempus II in 1994, and the geography kept on growing).

The Socrates Programme was replaced in the next funding cycle by the Lifelong Learning Programme⁴² (LLP), which brought about a further bundling of activities – the Socrates and Leonardo activities were merged into a single education-related programme, which contained 6 different sub-programmes, one of which being Erasmus. Financial contribution to Erasmus activities within the LLP amounted to 40% of the general budget of the programme⁴³.

The latest and most ambitious EU programme in the field of education and youth is called “Erasmus+” and it runs from 2013⁴⁴. This programme is the currently functioning one. In continuation of a unification trend, Erasmus+ became an umbrella for the majority of different youth engagement programmes, initiatives and actions carried out by the EU within one comprehensive regulatory framework. The nature of the enabling document had also changed from decision of the European Council to the regulation, which ensures its implementation in the member states and provides for more thorough regulation than before.

The adoption of one single catch-all programme helped to once again significantly ease the management of mobility activities (education and youth-related), which had been scattered in different programs under different sets of regulations. Even though the practice of using umbrella programmes is not new (Socrates and Lifelong Learning Platform being the previous iterations of the same concept), it is widely believed that the collection of all related youth, education and sport activities permits for a more synergetic regulation and evaluation of concrete actions.

Erasmus+ consists of 3 Key Actions (‘KA’) – Mobility of individuals (KA1), Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices (KA2) and Support for Policy Reform (KA3). Additionally, separate areas exist for the funding of sport activities (Erasmus+ Sport) and higher education activities in the field of European

42 Decision No. 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council Of 15 November 2006 Establishing an Action Programme in The Field of Lifelong Learning. OJ L 327, 24 November 2006, pp. 45-68.

43 Decision No. 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council Of 15 November 2006 Establishing an Action Programme in The Field of Lifelong Learning. OJ L 327, 24 November 2006, pp. 45-68. Annex B.11.

44 Regulation No. 1288/2013 Of the European Parliament and of the Council Of 11 December 2013 Establishing ‘Erasmus+’: The Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and Repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC And No 1298/2008/EC. OJ L 347, 20 December 2013, pp. 50-73.

integration (the Jean Monnet Activities). The Programme has an overall funding of more than 16 billion euros of the EU Budget for the seven years (2014-2020)⁴⁵.

What is commonly called “Erasmus exchange” or “Erasmus” currently resides under Erasmus+ KA1, the first of its sub actions provide for support for academic mobility for a period of study from 3 to 12 years in a host institution in another country. Academic student mobility with partner countries of the programme⁴⁶ is regulated by different action under KA1 – International Credit Mobility (ICM). KA1 as a whole receives the majority of funding under the programme – 2016 saw an allocation of 54% of yearly budget towards it⁴⁷. The current grant scheme takes into account the costs of living in sending and receiving countries, with the average monthly grant being around 250-275 Euros.

One of the major changes between “normal” Erasmus and ICM is the source of the funding. While Erasmus+ activities are funded from its own budget line, ICM is considered part of external affairs of the EU and uses several different sources of funding. Five funding strands called ‘instruments’ provide this budget, with each instrument covering one or several countries in the world. For example, funding for projects with the Russian Federation and Serbia is provided through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and funding for projects with the United States and Canada – through Partnership Instrument (PI). Additionally, when applying for projects under the Erasmus+ programme, applicants need to prove the “added value” of having a country-based participating partner.

This system places the accessibility to mobility under the political will of the EU, which makes it a powerful weapon in negotiations between EU and non-EU member programme/partner countries – Switzerland’s partnership for example was frozen in the programme following a referendum limiting the immigration of EU citizens into the country and it is unlikely to return until the next cycle⁴⁸. On the other hand, the system provides for the possibility of yearly adjustment and smarter targeting of funds. For example, from 2018 a dedicated budget envelope (a group of countries for which the funding is being provided) is being created for West African countries.

45 Erasmus+ Online Guide. What is the budget? European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-a/what-is-the-budget_en (access 10.04.2018).

46 Erasmus+ participating countries are split in two major pools – Programme Countries and Partner Countries, the latter of which in turn splits into Countries neighbouring the EU and all other countries of the world.

47 EU suspends Swiss Erasmus participation for 2014 (2014, February 26). Euronews. Available at: <http://www.euronews.com/2014/02/26/eu-suspends-swiss-erasmus-participation-for-2014> (access 10.04.2018).

48 EU suspends Swiss Erasmus participation for 2014 (2014, February 26). Euronews. Available at: <http://www.euronews.com/2014/02/26/eu-suspends-swiss-erasmus-participation-for-2014> (access 10.04.2018).

Management of mobility is conducted by Erasmus/mobility coordinators in the sending and receiving institutions, however, the management and evaluation of projects and, therefore the allocation of grant funding, is not being done *en masse* by the European Commission itself. Since the Lifelong Learning Programme commenced, this task has been managed by designated National Agencies (NAs), which deal with all Erasmus+ related activities within the country. In several countries, the role of NA is performed by existing educational agencies, such as DAAD in Germany of and the British Council in the United Kingdom. Several countries have different NAs for different language groups or different agencies for youth and education activities (both apply in Belgium, for example).

Erasmus+ has made an effort to tackle some long-standing problems, however, significant issues remain. Barriers to enter the programme existed a decade ago⁴⁹ and continue to exist now⁵⁰. The availability of Erasmus exchanges to students from disadvantaged backgrounds remains quite low, even with the introduction of additional top-up grants. The availability of exchange to people with disabilities, notwithstanding additional grant support, remains miniscule – 0.14% in the year 2013-2014⁵¹ with the number staying relatively the same year-on-year. The availability of exchanges to students from partner countries continues to be lower due to stricter rules for establishing partnerships and an inability to initiate the partnership from the side of the partner country's higher education institutions.

However, it is argued that, even though education is not one of the areas of competence of the EU, this belongs to a so-called supportive competence⁵², the large amount of funding and comprehensive regulatory documents concerning the quality of exchange (primarily concerning the recognition of exchange studies and host institution services) coupled with pan-European advancements in harmonisation of education systems (primarily the Bologna Process and creation of ECTS) constitutes a major contribution to the reforms in European higher education⁵³.

The current programme runs to the 2020/2021 academic year, and the 30th anniversary prompted the policy-makers as well as non-governmental organisations

49 M. Souto-Otero, The Socio-Economic Background of Erasmus Students: A Trend Towards Wider Inclusion? "International Review of Education" 2008, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 135-154.

50 M. Souto-Otero, J. Huisman, M. Beerkens, H. de Wit, S. Vujic, Barriers to International Student Mobility: Evidence from the Erasmus Program, "Educational Researcher" vol. 42, issue 2, pp. 70-77.

51 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/facts-figures_en.pdf (access 10.04.2018).

52 Article 6 TFEU.

53 A. Batory, N. Lindstorm, The Power of the Purse: Supranational Entrepreneurship, Financial Incentives, and European Higher Education Policy, "Governance" 2011, vol. 24, issue 2, pp. 311-329.

in the field of youth and education to start a comprehensive debate on the next iteration of the combined youth & education projects funding scheme.

A public campaign was launched to increase the funding of the successor to the Erasmus+ by ten times, named *Erasmusx10*⁵⁴, which tries to play on a statement by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, to be “9 times more ambitious with the future of the Erasmus+ programme”⁵⁵. Statements of support for larger financial contributions to the Erasmus+ successor programme in the next cycle were also made by France’s president Emmanuel Macron⁵⁶ and members of his cabinet⁵⁷.

The final celebration of the 30th anniversary saw the unveiling of the Erasmus Generation Declaration, which consists of 30 major points to be tackled in the future programme, amongst them further internationalisation of the programme by making it even more global than it is right now and preparing the beneficiaries of the programme for life in the modern age⁵⁸.

5. Academic mobility in Russia

Despite the fact that the Russian law on education does not contain a general definition of academic mobility, Russia’s education policy is aimed at development in this area.

Academic mobility in Russia exists on two levels — international and national, with a significant imbalance in applicable law towards the former.

In Russian Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”, academic mobility is referred to in the context of a network form of realisation of the educational programme, which was mentioned in the first part of this article. Academic mobility here is used as one of the ways of interaction between educational institutions to ensure the ability of students to study educational programmes implemented by those institutions jointly. The concept of academic mobility in this regard is discussed

54 See *Erasmusx10* campaign website, available at: <http://erasmusx10.eu> (access 10.04.2018).

55 How do you celebrate Erasmus+ 30 years? With 9 times more ambition! 2017, June 21. European Commission Press-Release. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/news/how-do-you-celebrate-erasmus-30-years-9-times-more-ambition_en (access 10.04.2018).

56 Le plan de Macron pour l’Europe résumé en dix points, « Le Figaro » 27 Sep 2017. Available at: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/2017/09/26/25001-20170926ARTFIG00105-ce-que-macron-va-proposer-pour-l-europe-dans-son-discours-a-la-sorbonne.php> (access 10.04.2018).

57 A. Robert, Pro-Europeans call for more Erasmus funding from Jan 10, 2017. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/news/pro-europeans-call-for-more-erasmus-funding/> (access 10.04.2018).

58 European Commission. 2017. Erasmus+ Generation Declaration. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/erasmus-generation-declaration_en.pdf (access 10.04.2018).

in more detail in the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science⁵⁹. The recommendations contain an indication that the development of programmes in a network form should be carried out by introducing regulations on academic mobility into the by-laws of educational institutions. At the same time, the need to develop a mechanism for credit recognition is separately indicated. Also, the recommendations serve to fix the status of academic mobility as one of the steps for development and approval of joint educational programmes.

Thus, it can be concluded that when partnerships between educational institutions are established the issue of academic mobility between those institutions should be addressed by them. Consequently, academic mobility is presumed to be one of the important forms of interaction between educational institutions.

The Russian law on education does not establish that the provisions on the network forms in the implementation of educational programs are applied exclusively to Russian institutions. Therefore, the above conclusions are valid for international academic mobility, which is separately mentioned in the text of the law. Academic mobility is an integral part of Russia's international educational cooperation in accordance with Article 105 of the Russian law on education. Development of international academic mobility is one of the priority projects of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation. As such, academic mobility is one of the focal points in the Academic Excellence Project 5-100, which is implemented in Russia since 2013 in accordance with the regulation introduced by the Russian Government following an executive order from the President of the Russian Federation in 2012⁶⁰. The main aim of this project is to raise the positions of Russian universities in international higher education institutions ratings: by 2020 at least 5 Russian universities should be placed in the top hundred in such ratings as Times Higher Education, QS, ARWU etc.

In this programme the main focus is placed on the incoming mobility programme – the creation of the necessary conditions for attracting international students is included in the task list of the “Concept of Long-term Social-Economic Development of Russian Federation until 2020”⁶¹.

The statistical data presented by the Ministry of Education and Science on the academic mobility of students for 2012-2016, demonstrates a steady increase in the

59 Letter of Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation from 28.08.2015 N AK-2563/05.

60 Executive Order of the President of the Russian Federation No. 599 of 5 May 2012. Collection of Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation, 7 May 2012, no. 19, art. 2336; The Directive of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 2006-R of 20 October 2012. Collection of Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation, 5 November 2012, no. 45, art. 6288.

61 Adopted by the Directive of the Government of the Russian Federation N 1662-R of 17 November 2008. Collection of Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation, 24 November 2008, no. 47, art. 5489.

number of foreign students attending Russian educational institutions⁶². In terms of the number of foreign students studying in Russia the CIS countries are leading – Kazakhstan and Ukraine. We see a different picture in the statistics of outgoing mobility: its numbers declined in the analysed period. It should be noted that Russian students mainly choose European countries for training.

In light of the above circumstances, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation made a decision to launch a project to increase the attractiveness of Russian education. Within the framework of this project it is planned to achieve a 3-fold increase in the number of incoming students by 2025.

In practice, international academic mobility in Russia is being implemented in several forms:

- *Implementation of intergovernmental agreements in the field of education.* Currently, the Russian Federation is currently party to 86 international agreements⁶³ with different states on the matter of cooperation in science and education, which implies, among others, a commitment to the development of international academic mobility (exchange studies as well as full-degree studies). Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003, which also permitted to advance the development of international academic mobility in Russia through greater convergence of education systems within the EHEA. The Government of the Russian Federation also defines quotas for education of foreign citizens and stateless people from the funds of the federal budget⁶⁴;
- *Participation in international exchange programs.* Currently Russian HEIs participate, among others, in such international programs as Erasmus+ (Russia is a Partner Country in the programme), North2North, etc. However, not all HEIs can provide their students with the possibility to participate in such programs. This can be linked to several factors: the financial resources of Russian HEIs do not permit to provide their students with equal possibilities to participate in such programs (especially taking into account that the average cost of living is lower in Russia and travel to host institutions costs significantly more than same-distance travel within the EU); some of the exchange programs (especially Erasmus+) do not provide for equal participation of Russian HEIs in their activities; and the fact that the curricula of the Russian HEIs is not fully unified in accordance with international criteria (mainly EHEAs) gives rise to issues with the choice of courses on mobility period and subsequent recognition of studies at home

62 The Letter of Ministry of Education and Science of Russia of 26 September 2017, no. MON-P-4472.

63 Full list of bilateral agreements in the field of higher education can be found on the website of Main State Centre for Education Evaluation – <http://nic.gov.ru/en/docs/foreign/collaboration>.

64 Adopted by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation N 891 on 10 August 2013. Collection of Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation. 14 October 2013. No. 41, art. 5204.

institutions. Within international mobility programmes the focus is being placed on individual student mobility, or so-called free-mover mobility, which is based on the personal initiative of the student and does not imply any kind of institutional support on behalf of a home university. A substantial amount of grant programmes provides for an opportunity to study for one year in foreign HEIs. However, the question of getting the free-mover period approved by the home institution (starting from the granting of leave of absence and finishing with the possibility of credit recognition) is one which is posing many difficulties for free-movers due to necessity to negotiate every miniscule detail with both institutions without being able to rely on common provisions of agreements and programmes;

- *Partnership Agreements between HEIs*. In the present day this form of institutionalising of academic mobility becomes more and more widespread. Partnership agreements, among other things, simplify the procedures on formal issues – comparability of courses' workload, rules for credit recognition, etc. These rules are being agreed to between the administrations of the universities, who are initiators of the creation of new academic mobility partnerships. This allows the student to carry out academic mobility as part of the learning process at the domestic university. These agreements can be conducted on a departmental as well as on a university-wide level.

According to the research results⁶⁵, at the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year, the number of international students in Russian HEIs amounted to 5 percent of the overall student population. It should be noted that the distribution of international students is uneven – the majority of students study in the HEIs of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

These statistics demonstrate a problem which is characteristic for the Russian education system and which is relevant for the issue of academic mobility within the country. Russia has around 900 HEIs⁶⁶, but only 1% of them are included in international rating QS World University Rankings 2017/2018. Additionally, the access to education in those “top” universities is severely hindered by their concentration in the metropolitan regions.

As was mentioned earlier, Russia practically does not have any legal regulation on academic mobility within the country. In light of this fact, examples of the realisation of exchange programs for students within Russia are singular and confined to the

65 Academic mobility of foreign students in Russia. Institute of education of HSE., 2016, Facts of Education. № 7. Available at: <https://ioe.hse.ru/data/2016/08/04/1119531130/ΦO7.pdf> (access 10.04.2018). Academic mobility of foreign students in Russia, 2016, Facts of education 7.

66 According to the Project Atlas database. Available at: <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Project-Atlas/Explore-Data/Russia> (access 10.04.2018).

practices of single universities. Several forms of national academic mobility should be noted:

- *Inter-university student mobility*. Norms on realisation of this type of student mobility are normally contained in the official documents of universities. Model agreements on student mobility between universities do not exist and are planned to be created in light of recent initiatives by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation⁶⁷. By-laws of HEIs generally allow to benefit from this type of mobility at all levels of higher education. It should be noted that this definition of inter-university mobility also includes such types of short-term academic mobility as conferences, seminars, summer schools, etc.⁶⁸
- *Intra-university student mobility*, which can be divided into:
- *Inter-campus mobility* (implemented by the Higher School of Economics, being one of the biggest HEIs in Russia with 4 campuses in four different Russian cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Perm and Nizhny Novgorod). Intra-university mobility provides students with the opportunity to study in another campus for a period of 4 to 6 months, with this opportunity limited to full-time students of the HEI⁶⁹; and
- *Mobility between academic programmes* (implemented by Astrakhan State University). This type of mobility allows the student to study individual academic disciplines or parts of them within the framework of full-time education in another university's educational program⁷⁰.

All of the above demonstrates that Russian universities have an interest in creating and expanding academic mobility programmes within the country, but it is premature to speak of real development in this direction. This statement can be supported by the large number of problems that universities will inevitably encounter when trying to create or participate in mobility programmes. Among them the financial issues and the difference of educational programmes due to which, the disciplines studied at different universities are not comparable (the European

67 HEIs Support the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science on the introduction of academic mobility. 2017, December 4. TASS News Agency. Available at: <http://tass.ru/obschestvo/4781032> (access 10.04.2018).

68 Regulations on the organization of academic mobility of students of the Higher School of Economics (Appendix to the Order of the Higher School of Economics No. 068/01/ 2806-06 of June 28, 2013).

69 Regulations on the organization of academic mobility of students of the Higher School of Economics (Appendix to the Order of the Higher School of Economics No. 068/01/ 2806-06 of June 28, 2013).

70 Order of the rector of Astrakhan State University No. 08-01-01 / 76 on Regulations on the organization of academic mobility of students of Astrakhan State University. February 13, 2015. Available at: http://asu.edu.ru/images/File/ilil6/ak_mod.pdf (access 10.04.2018).

Universities' Credit System has not as yet been introduced in all Russian universities). These problems are common for universities and require a solution at the regulatory level.

In June 2017, the Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, announced the launch of a pilot program to expand networking in the framework of academic mobility between Russian universities but, as of the beginning of 2018, the details of the future program have not been disclosed. Questions on what exactly the concept of internal Russian academic mobility planned by the Ministry of Education will be and when it will be implemented, remain open.

Conclusions

As evident from this brief study of different modes of international student mobility, there is a continuous trend for integration and harmonisation of European higher education systems, which involves both EU countries and the wider network of the Council of Europe and EHEA.

There is substantial legal basis for HE integration in the form of international treaties, concluded mostly between the members of the Council of Europe.

The Russian national legal system lacks a proper regulatory framework for academic mobility, at least in the form of general rules regarding student exchanges. As we can see, major financial incentives paired with unambiguous rules regarding the administration of the programme and the rights of participants (namely the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education) can slowly push even the most conservative HEIs in the right direction.

Even established grant schemes for obtaining state support for education abroad, such as the Russian Global Education scheme, are inadequately regulated, which, in turn, leads to a low number of participants in the scheme (relative to the funds procured for it).

Moreover, Russian participation in major mobility schemes, such as Erasmus, hinges on the fact that these programs are funded by other states, and Russia does not actively contribute to it. Therefore, they cannot be used as a method of intercultural dialogue, but as a political tool, thus harming the understanding between the youth. The creation of Russia's own programmes and mobility grant systems for exchange studies, could be an answer to these issues.

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