



The ERASMUS Impact Study Regional Analysis

A Comparative Analysis
of the Effects of Erasmus
on the Personality, Skills and
Career of students of European
Regions and Selected Countries

– Executive Summary –



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CHE Consult GmbH



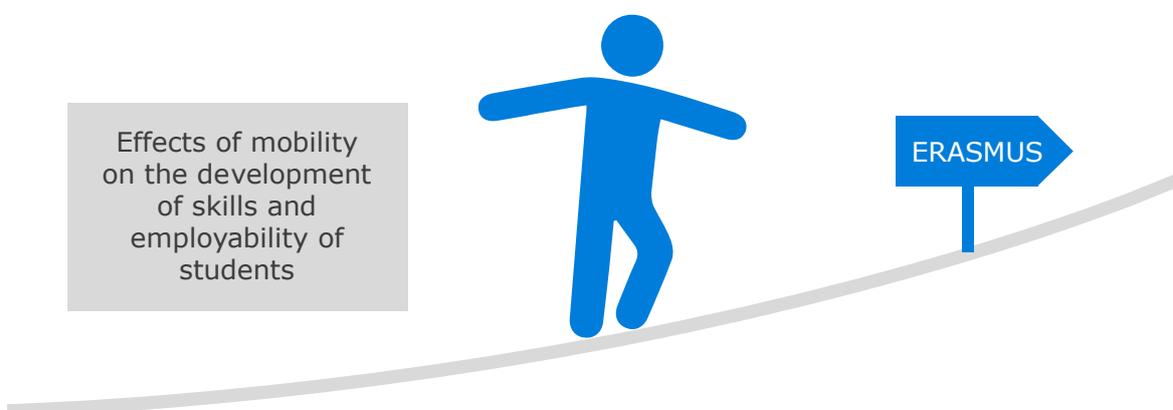
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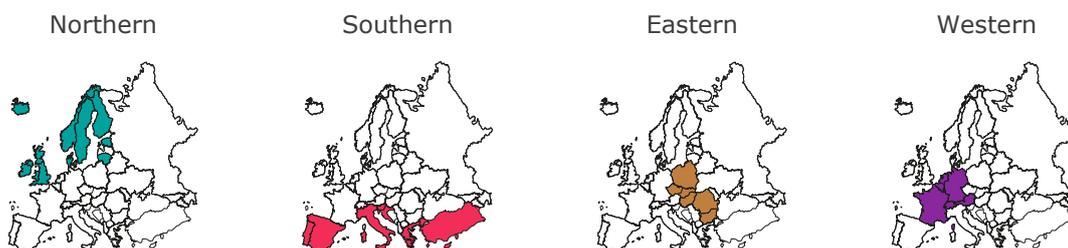
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Executive Summary



What is the objective and methodology of the Erasmus Impact Study Regional Analysis?

While the original Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) published in 2014 looked at aggregated data at the European level, this new study analyses the regional trends in the effects of student mobility under the Erasmus programme on employability, skills, careers and social lives. The analysis is based on the four regions of Europe:



Although this report uses and applies the same raw data and methodology as in the original EIS, it adds some new aspects of analysis. **In total, the sample for this study analyses 71,368 individual responses.**

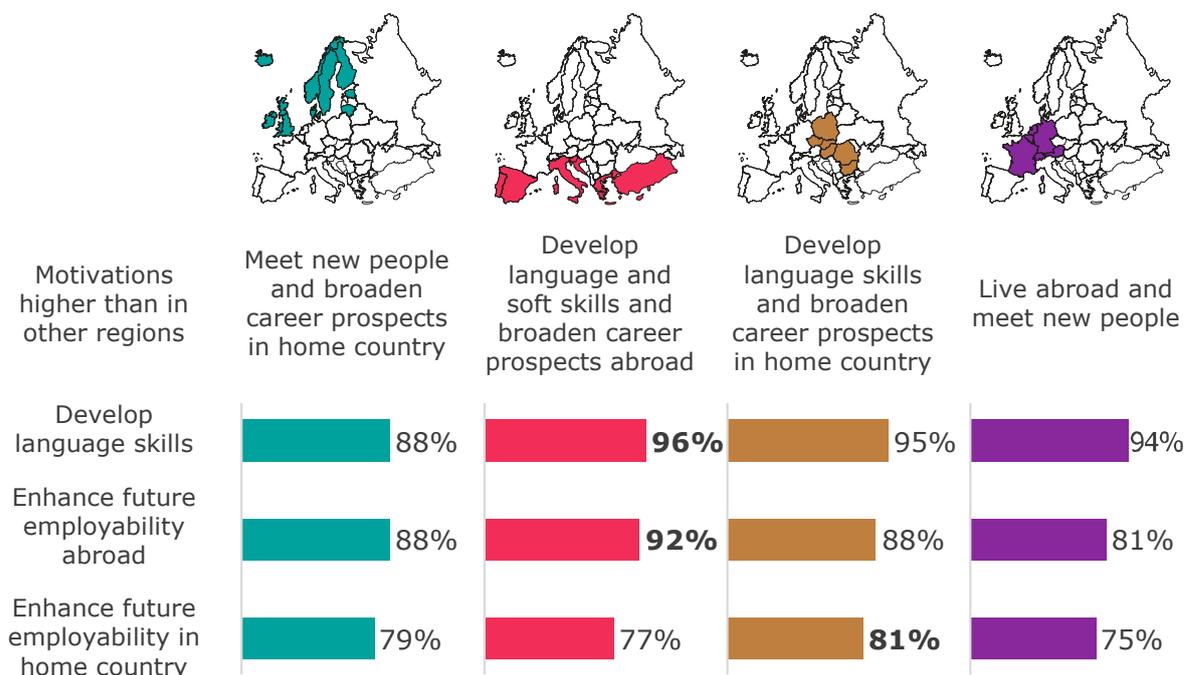
Why do students take part in Erasmus?

Overall, at least 90% of Erasmus students in all regions participate in Erasmus in order to experience living abroad, meet new people, learn or improve a foreign language and develop their soft skills. Just after comes in all regions the wish to enhance employability abroad (87%), which is more important than employability at home (77%).

Still, motivations of students can differ depending on the region. While living abroad and meeting people are of similar importance for students in all regions, they play a much bigger role for Northern-European students than other motivations, as well as for Western-European students, together with developing language skills.

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, students primarily choose to go abroad to improve their foreign language skills as well as to broaden their career prospects. Students in Southern Europe wish to develop their language and soft skills and, of all the regions, they have the highest motivation to go abroad in order to increase their future employability abroad.

Regional results for reasons to go abroad



The award of an Erasmus grant also plays a role, especially in Eastern Europe where 68% of students claim that the possibility to receive a grant is one of the major reasons to go abroad.

Erasmus appears to be much more selective in Eastern Europe (where 20% of applications are rejected) and Southern Europe (19%), whereas a substantially lower number of Erasmus applications is rejected in Western Europe (9%) and Northern Europe (7%).

A lack of financial support prevents 53% of students in Southern Europe and 51% in Eastern Europe to take part in Erasmus, which is a much higher share than in the other two regions. Financial barriers are even higher for students from a non-academic family background¹ – 57% (Southern Europe) and 54% (Eastern Europe) of students from a non-academic family background do not participate in mobility for this reason. This is why additional financial support is provided to students from a disadvantaged background since the start of Erasmus+ in 2014. The largest share of Erasmus students from a non-academic family background can be found in Southern Europe (50%).

How does Erasmus increase employability?

Based on the memo© approach, EIS measured the level of six selected personality traits of students referred to as “memo© factors”²: “Tolerance of Ambiguity”, “Curiosity”, “Confidence”, “Serenity”, “Decisiveness” and “Vigour” (problem-solving skills) before and after mobility. Across Europe, 93% of the surveyed employers confirmed that the six traits were indeed important for the recruitment and professional development of their employees. This was even the case for a remarkable

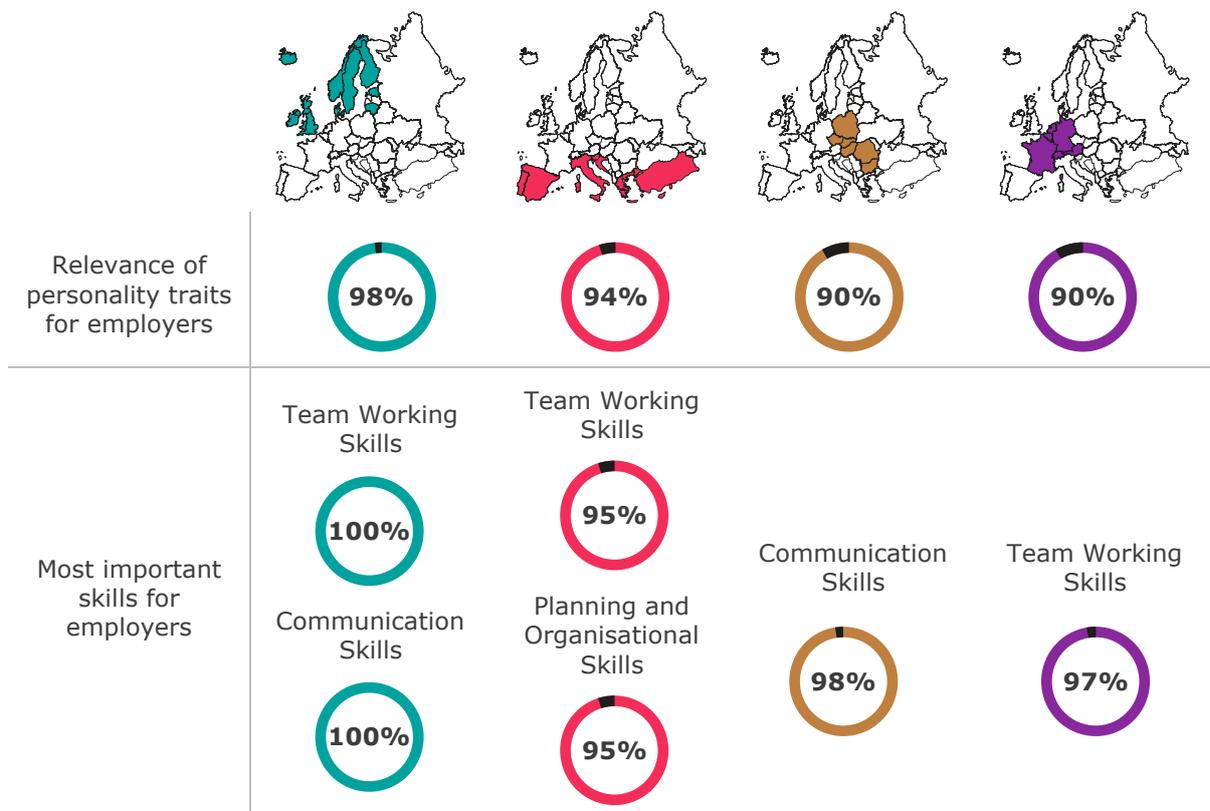
¹ Family background of a student is defined as “academic” if at least one of the parents attended university.

² For a further description of the factors, please see Annex: Methodology and Design.

98% of employers in Northern Europe, where the personality traits were valued the most by employers.

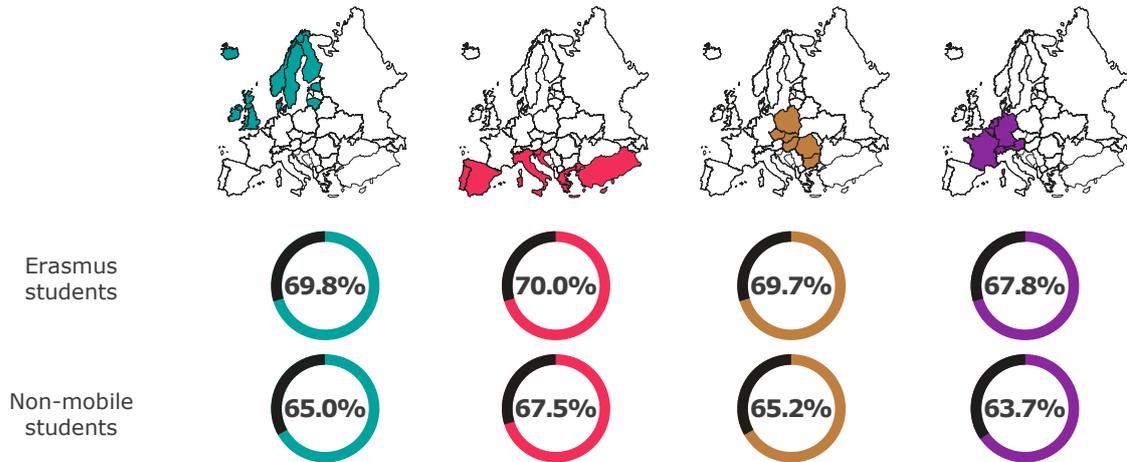
Employers in Northern Europe also value other employability-related skills more than employers in other regions. They place more emphasis on the top 5 skills – “Ability to Adapt and Act in New Situations”, “Analytical and Problem-solving Skills”, “Communication Skills”, “Planning and Organisational Skills” and “Team Working Skills” – than employers elsewhere. For employers in the Eastern region, “Communication Skills” seem particularly important, whereas “Team Working Skills” are on the top of the list for employers in Southern and Western Europe.

Relevance of personality traits and skills for recruitment



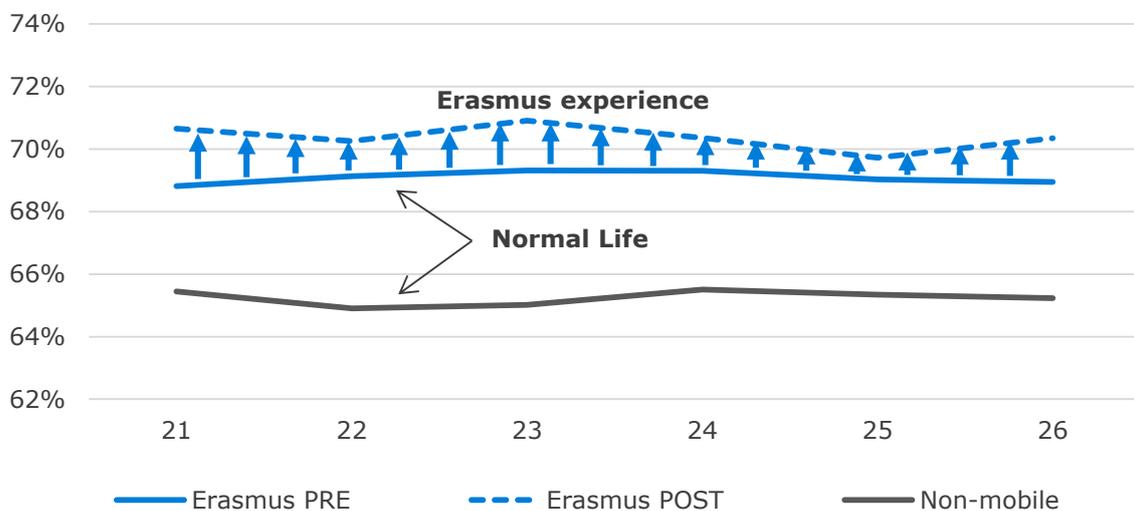
Having confirmed the relevance of the personality traits and skills related to employability, EIS analyses the impact of mobility on these traits and skills. Erasmus students show higher values for the six personality traits than non-mobile students – even before going abroad. This is valid for all four regions.

Pre-departure memo© values for Erasmus and non-mobile students



The mobility experience itself also brings about a positive change to the personality traits of Erasmus students. **The average change achieved in six months through the Erasmus programme can be considered equivalent to a personality change that would normally happen over four years of life without Erasmus experience.**

Memo© total values of Erasmus students before and after mobility compared to non-mobile students across age groups, on average across all regions



However, the level of improvement varies depending on the regions. Students from Eastern Europe have the highest memo© factors upon their return from Erasmus (71.2%), particularly in "Tolerance of Ambiguity". Students from Western Europe also show the same level of improvement, starting from the lowest memo© scores across all regions and improving in five out of six factors. In contrast, students from Northern Europe increase their memo© factors with Erasmus the least. This can be due to the fact that other forms of international experience prior to tertiary education are quite common among students from Northern Europe, which may reduce the possible effect of Erasmus during their higher education studies. Students from Southern Europe also show limited improvement in their memo© factors, except for "Decisiveness". This can be explained by the fact that they show the highest values before their departure.

Interestingly, in all regions, work placements tend to improve “Analytical and Problem-solving Skills” significantly more than studies.

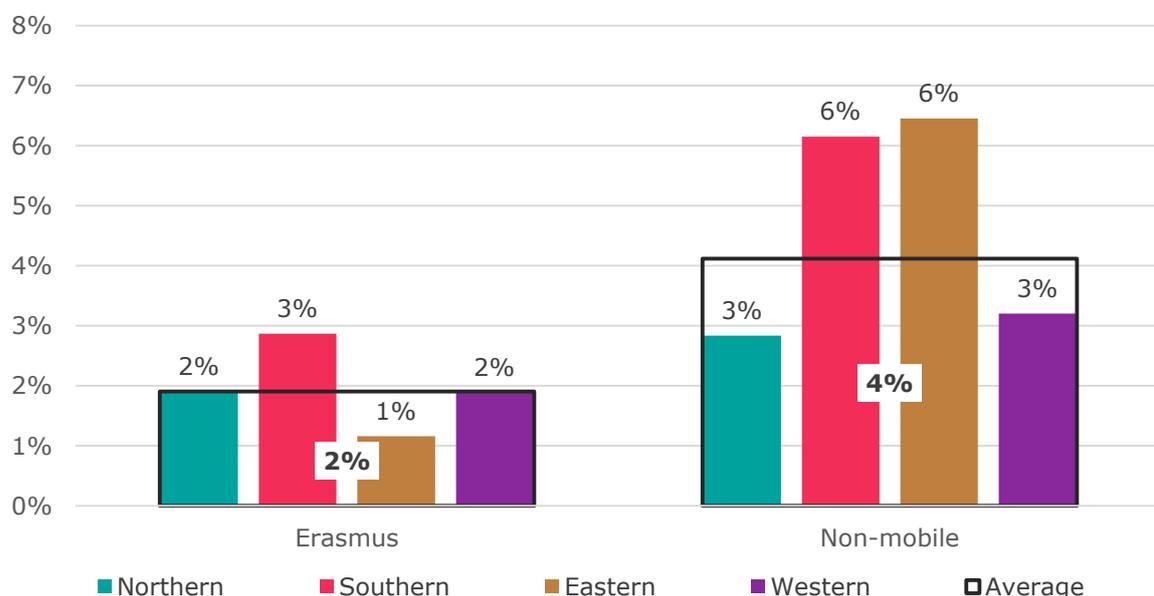
When comparing measured effects with student perceptions, Erasmus students from Eastern Europe seem to be more accurate when assessing their own development than students in other regions, as their perceived improvement is quite consistent with the measured effects. The largest difference between perceptions and measured effects can be found in Southern Europe, where students perceive greater gain than what memo© measures. Western European students are less optimistic than other regions regarding the expected improvement of their personality through a mobility experience and become the most positively “surprised” by the impact of their experience. The highest share of Erasmus students who perceived an improvement of their personality traits was observed in Spain, Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom and Estonia.

How does Erasmus influence future careers and social lives?

In addition to skills, the EIS also analyses the impact of mobility on working life and careers.

Employment rates are positively affected by mobility. Astonishingly, students in Eastern Europe reduce their risk of long-term unemployment by 83% by taking part in Erasmus. In Southern Europe, former Erasmus students are half as likely to experience long-term unemployment compared to those that do not go abroad. At the country level, this advantage of Erasmus alumni over non-mobile alumni is highest in Hungary and Portugal.

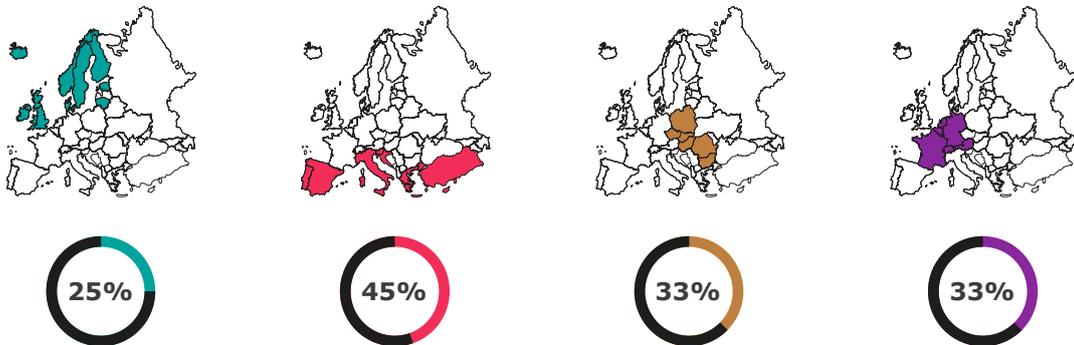
Long-term unemployment of Erasmus and non-mobile alumni (more than 12 months after graduation)



Even five to ten years after graduation, the unemployment rate of mobile students is lower than for non-mobile students. The largest difference is to be found in Southern Europe with 56% less Erasmus alumni experiencing unemployment than non-mobiles.

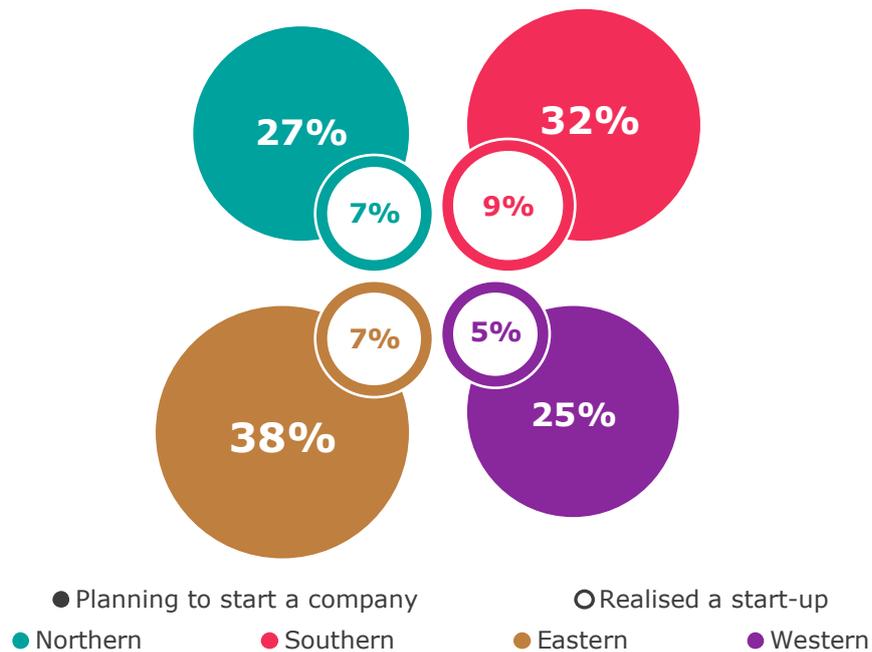
Work placements seem to have a particularly direct positive impact on finding a job, with one in three Erasmus students on average offered a position by their host company. In Southern Europe, this share even goes up to almost one in two students, with Italy (51%) and Portugal (47%) at the top.

Job offer through a work placement abroad, Erasmus alumni



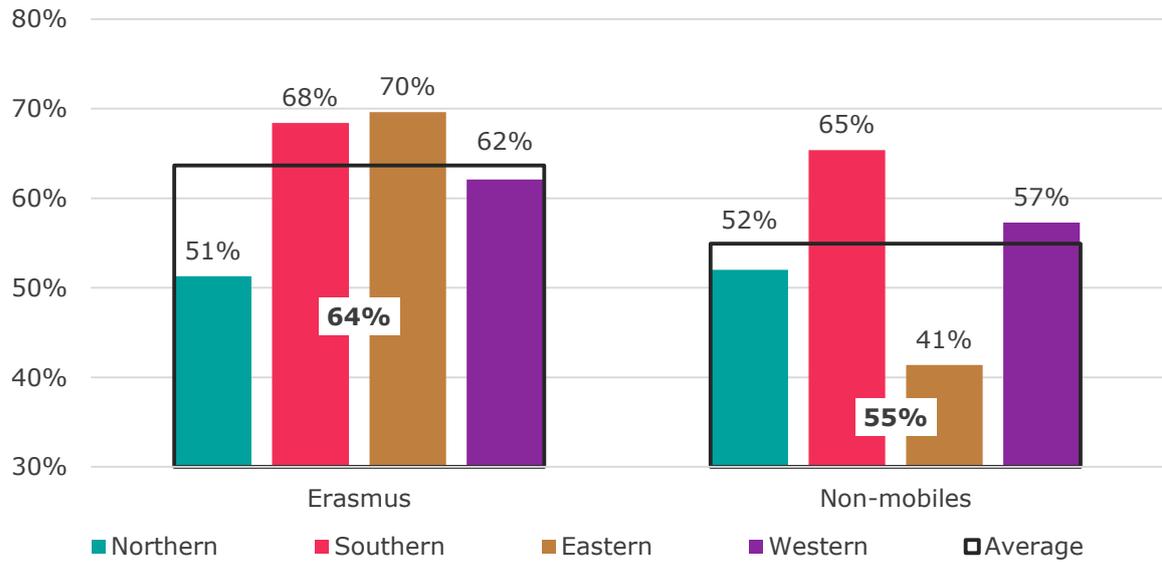
The mobility experience also fosters an entrepreneurial spirit. This is particularly the case for Eastern Europe, which has the highest ratio of alumni definitely planning to create a start-up (38%), as well as for Southern Europe, where almost one in ten graduates with Erasmus traineeship experience has already done so.

Start-ups realised or planned by Erasmus alumni



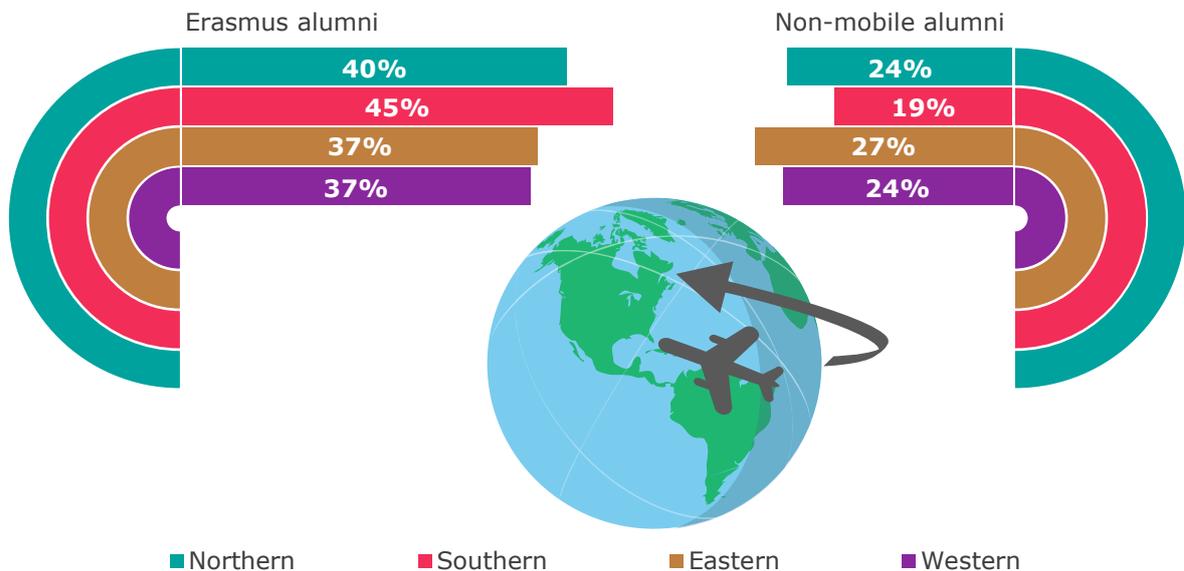
Five to ten years after graduation, significantly more Erasmus alumni (64%) than non-mobile alumni (55%) hold a management position. The difference is especially large in Eastern Europe (70% compared to 41%), in particular in Hungary, where more than nine out of ten Erasmus alumni hold a managerial position, more than twice the figure for non-mobile alumni. Furthermore, 50% of Bulgarian employers claim to give higher salaries to recently hired employees if they are internationally experienced.

Alumni in management positions five to ten years after graduation



Erasmus promotes labour mobility after graduation. Of the Erasmus alumni, 40% had moved country at least once since graduation compared with 23% of non-mobile alumni. In addition, 93% (compared with 73% of the non-mobile students) could envisage living abroad. Former Erasmus students are also more than twice as likely to change their employer as non-mobile alumni. Erasmus students from Southern Europe in particular become mobile later in life and are more than twice as likely to move from one country to the other than their non-mobile counterparts.

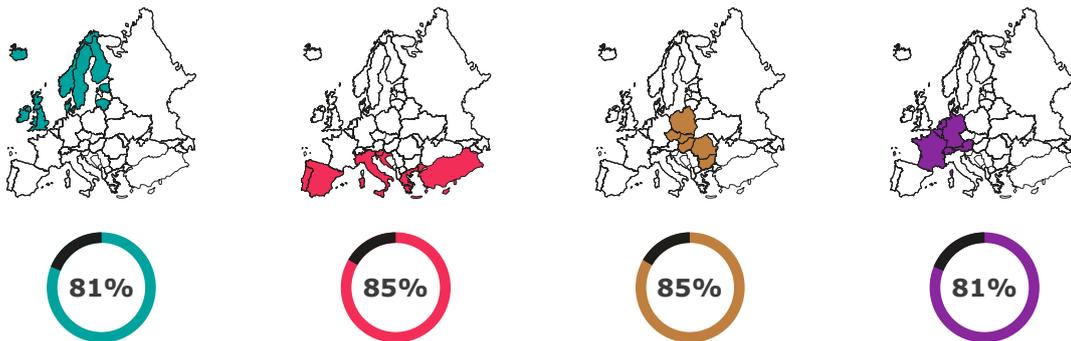
Alumni that have changed their country of residence or work at least once after graduation



How does Erasmus influence relations to Europe and personal life?

In all regions, Erasmus students as well as alumni feel significantly more related to Europe than non-mobiles. It is remarkable that the share of Erasmus students and alumni that relate strongly to Europe is very similar in all regions. More than 80% feel that their European attitude has been strengthened by mobility. This perception is especially strong in Southern and Eastern Europe (each 85%), with Bulgaria (90%), Portugal (89%) and Italy (87%) at the top, followed by the United Kingdom with 88%.

Perceived improvement of European attitude through mobility



Erasmus also influences the private life. At the time of the survey, 32% of the Erasmus alumni had a life partner of a different nationality than their own, nearly three times more than among non-mobile alumni (13%). Graduates from Southern Europe are most frequently found in international relationships (37%). Looking at individual countries, most Erasmus alumni in transnational relationships were observed in the United Kingdom (57%) and Austria (52%).

Alumni with life partners of a different nationality

