

Erasmus **GAP**

Exploring the GAP

Understanding the Micro-,
Meso-, and Macro-level Factors
Influencing Outbound Short-
term Student Mobility



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What obstacles are there? GPT answers





Project description

- Aims to explore the reasons for participation or non-participation in international student mobility – “Exploring the GAP”
- R&D&I project supported by the Erasmus+ KA2 funding framework
- Launched in 2023, with 6 partners



Eötvös Loránd
University



Literature review

Exploring the causes of the gap between mobile and non-mobile students at macro, meso and micro levels



Data collection at European level

Data collection on student mobility trends and institutional good practices of higher education institutions in different countries



Institutional self-assessment tool

Tool development that helps institutions to identify their strengths and weaknesses in supporting mobility



Data visualization and recommendations for institutions and decision-makers

Develop dashboards, guidelines and recommendations to encourage more inclusive approaches to reduce existing gaps

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What kind of student-level enablers or barriers could you define?

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Micro-level factors

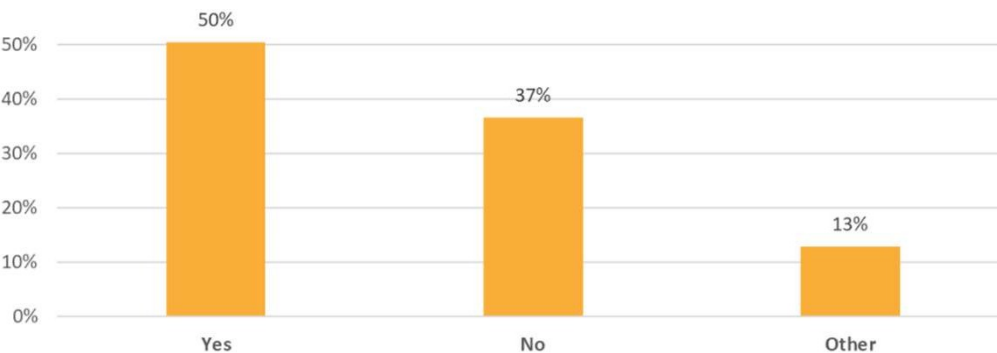




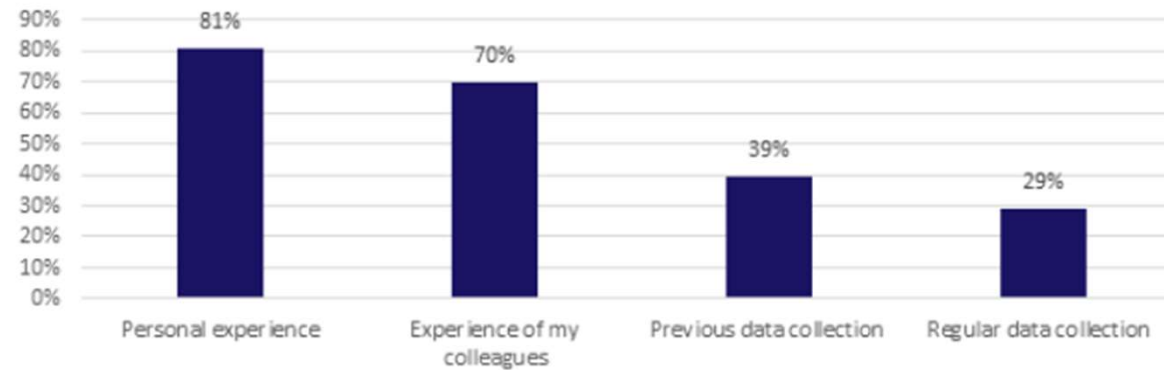
Taking micro-level factors into account in institutional strategy

- Personal experience/opinion is emphasized when assessing the role of individual factors
- Regular institutional surveys do not explore individual-level factors / results are not integrated into everyday practice
- Despite the increasing number of national and international surveys and statistical databases, a significant number of institutions do not follow them closely.

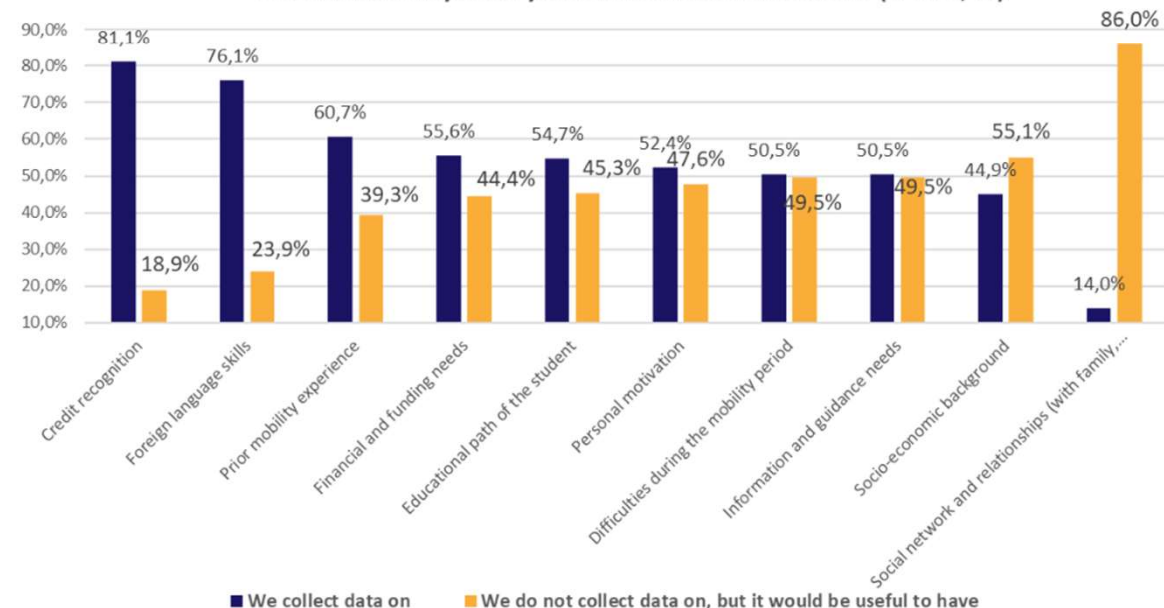
Does your institution monitor the results of international and national surveys, statistical databases related to mobility? (n=101, %)



What kind of information do you have to support your opinion? (n=101, %)




For which of the following student-related factors/characteristics relevant to student mobility does your institution collect data? (n=101, %)



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What factors enable or hinder student mobility in your higher education institution?

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Meso-level factors



- Institutional network
- Academic culture
- Teaching and evaluation methods
- Curricular issues
- Field of studies
- Academic preparation



- Institutional characteristics
- Internationalisation strategies: approaches to mobility & diversity
- Diversity of the mobility portfolio
- Regulations
- Selection criteria



- Support services - administrative, organisational, mobility guidance and preparation
- Financial support



Meso-level influencing ISM

Exploring the key institutional factors that reflect the realities of HEIs

- Most universities provide easy access to information on international student mobility (ISM).
- ISM is generally available across all disciplines and degree levels.
- Establishing a wide network of inter-institutional agreements is seen as essential.
- Less common features include high international rankings and strong integration of ISM into curricula.
- Selection for ISM is typically non-competitive.
- Funding is usually aligned with but not exceeding actual student mobility demand.

Analysis of the institutional factors that support or hinder the widening of student participation in ISM

- Enabling factors:
 - A broad network of IIAs
 - Clear information and supportive application processes
 - ISM availability across all fields of study
 - Actions ensuring that all students, regardless of socio-economic background, lived experiences, and individual access needs, can participate in ISM.
 - Early promotion during studies
- Hindering factors
 - Socio-economic diversity of the student body
 - Inadequate or misaligned funding systems
 - Competitive, merit-based selection processes





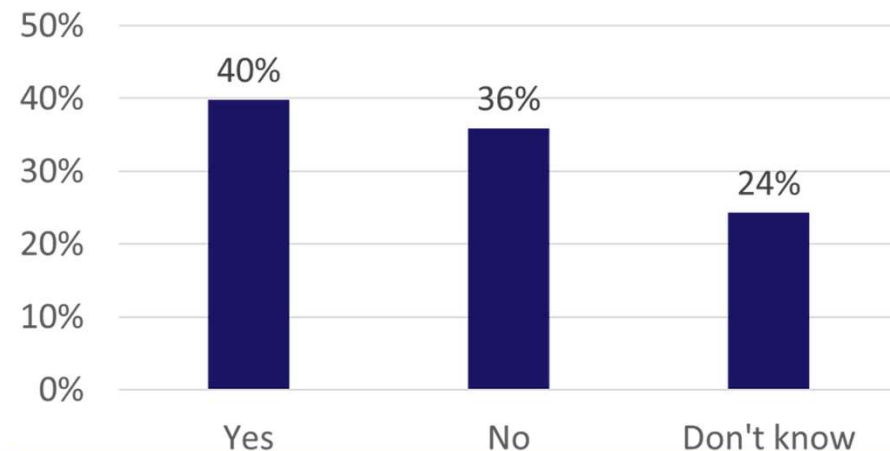
Meso-level: The role of GAP mitigation strategy

GAP mitigation strategies are uncommon and mostly found in larger, urban institutions.

HEIs with GAP mitigation strategy

- Targeted communication of mobility opportunities to different student groups
- Regular implementation of student surveys on mobility-related topics
- Active monitoring of national and international mobility trends
- Systematic data collection on:
 - Students' financial situations
 - Mobility-related difficulties and motivations
 - Socio-economic background of students

Does your university/college/school have any specific goals related to closing or mitigating the gap between mobile and non-mobile students? (n=103, %)

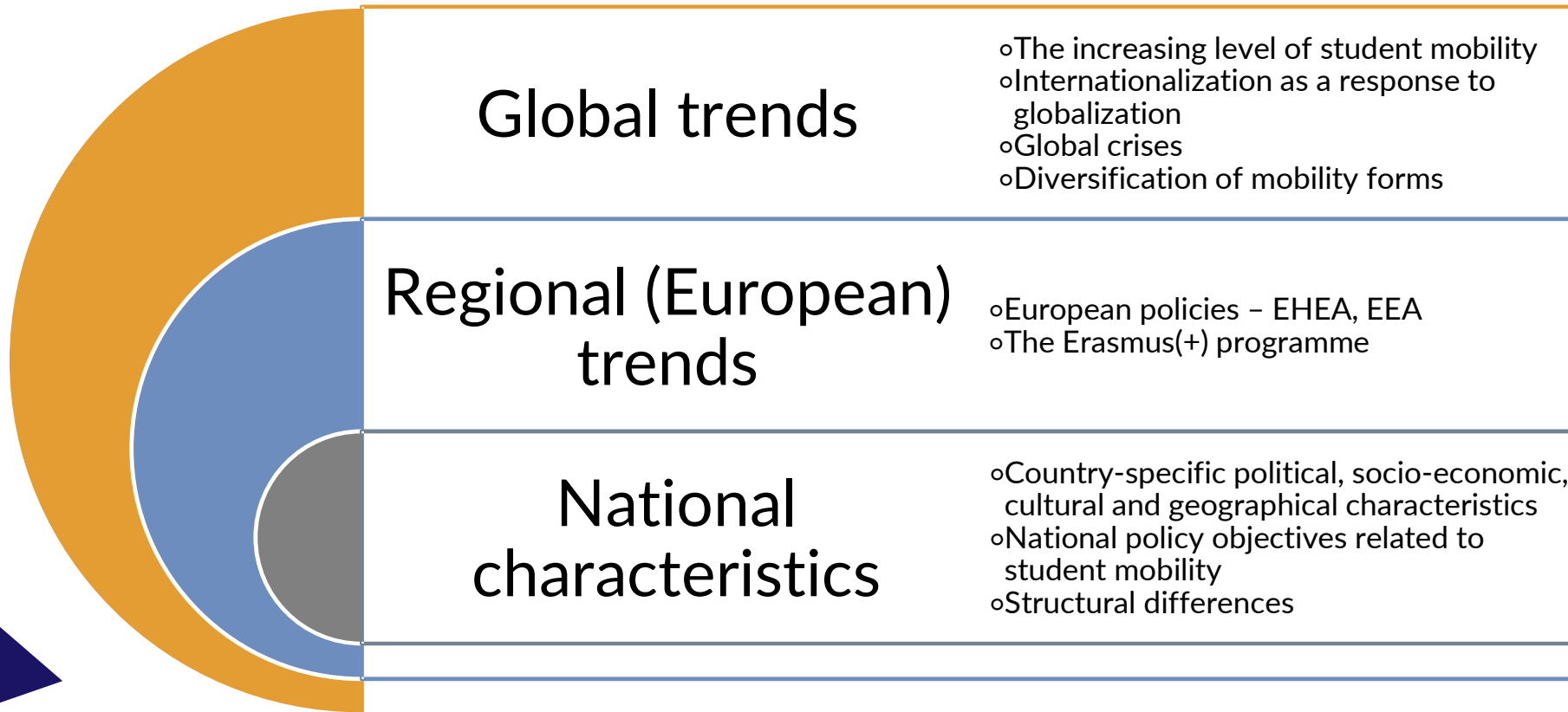


Does your university/college/school have any specific goals related to closing or mitigating the gap between mobile and non-mobile students?	Does your institution monitor the results of international and national surveys, statistical databases related to mobility?		Total
	No	Yes	
No	16 44%	20 56%	36
Yes	12 36%	21 64%	33
Total	28	41	69



What enabling and hindering factors could you identify on a national, regional, or global level?

Macro-level factors



Convergence and divergence between European and national policies on student mobility

Macro-level factors influencing ISM

2. Table. Over the last 5 years, what do you think have been the main trends and factors influencing institutional mobility strategies?

	Responses	Percent of responses	Percent of Cases
National policymaking and legislation	17	6,4%	16,5%
Diversification of the student population	36	13,6%	35,0%
European-level policymaking and legislation	44	16,7%	42,7%
Growing number of international students	44	16,7%	42,7%
Global or regional crises (COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis, political or military crisis)	48	18,2%	46,6%
Diversification of mobility formats and types (including virtual exchanges)	75	28,4%	72,8%



Conclusions

- Exploring and interpreting institutional factors is fragmented in the literature, yet it is considered highly important in terms of practice, because
 - The **institution can strengthen existing gaps**
 - Through its own operation, HEIs can **generate disparities even among students who are not “typically” considered to be part of an underrepresented group**
- Many institutions rely on staff perceptions over systematic data
- Institutions with **mobility gap strategies** are
 - more data-driven and proactive
 - respond better to crises, ensure broader inclusion, and adapt strategies over time
 - segment communication, conduct regular evaluations, and monitor external mobility trends effectively
- It is essential to
 - investigate the role of HEIs through empirical research
 - promote organisational self-assessment
 - support the organisational learning processes that stem from it

Erasmus GAP

Thank you for your attention!



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