

Do you want to be an ERASMUS Student?

Dilemmas and Problems

Ayşe Collins, Ph.D.

Bilkent University 06800 Ankara/Turkey. collins@tourism.bilkent.edu.tr

Abstract

In the 2011-12 academic year Erasmus program enabled 252 827 European students and 46 527 staff in higher education to go abroad for studies, job placements, teaching or training between 3 and 12 months in another 33 Erasmus countries (http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/history_en.htm).

Turkish higher education institutes are strongly committed to ERASMUS students and teachers exchanges to make the most out of the opportunities offered by this beneficial programme. Out of 166 Turkish Universities who applied for Erasmus programme, 162 got accepted. This is the best ratio of acceptance after England and Germany. In 2012-13, 17 000 students went abroad with the programme. In 2013-14, this number is expected to be 22 000 with a 29% increase according to the Turkish National Agency. Also, incoming students to Turkey, had 23% increase from 2011-12 (5 649 students) to 2012-13. (7 300 students). It is also important to emphasize when Erasmus program was first started in Turkey in 2004-05 period, there were only 1 142 outgoing students to 299 incoming foreign exchange students (<http://www.ua.gov.tr/en/home>). This is a fast, expanding market and needs to be focused on, in order to prevent any mistakes in its early stages.

There are studies on the effectiveness of the ERASMUS programme from different countries in order to make the system beneficial for both groups of outgoing and incoming students (Bennhold, 2006; Forsey, Broomhall, Davis, 2012; Hellsten and Prescott, 2004; Lacina, 2002; Sauzet, 2013; Van Hoof and Verbeeten, 2005). Since Turkey is new in the programme compared to other countries there are fewer studies on the issue (Yağcı, Çetin, and Turhan, 2013; Özdem, 2013; Taş, 2013).

Therefore the purpose of this study is to find out the structure and effectiveness of the Erasmus student mobility programme in Turkey. The study was conducted in one of the private universities in Ankara, Turkey. The University hosts more than 150 incoming exchange students and sends 300 outgoing exchange students in the first and second cycles of each year.

Data was collected through a questionnaire including 42 questions through two ways. In general, the study shows that both incoming and outgoing students encounter problems such as formal documents, accommodation, finance, course selection and exemption, language, communication, effectiveness of instruction, social and campus life and culture. It is believed that the results will help the system to get better to enable future educational opportunities. **KEY WORDS:** Erasmus student mobility, Erasmus programme problems, Erasmus student exchange in Turkey.