

# Universität Rostock



Traditio et Innovatio

## Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe and Germany: The State of Play

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## The Report

The Internationalisation of higher education is a well-researched topic. Since the early 2000s several major studies and academic papers have been published focussing on important aspects of internationalisation such as student and staff mobility, transnational research, branch campuses, and English-language degree programmes. However, there is a lack of publications which cover and analyse the internationalisation of European – and particularly German – higher education institutions in an all-encompassing and holistic way. This report tries to narrow the gap by giving justice to the broad spectrum of multi-faceted interests, strategies and approaches related to internationalisation. The study is based on a wide range of data sources as well as interviews and email exchanges with university and government stakeholders. The project was funded by the University of Rostock.

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## Zusammenfassung

- **Europa kann zweifelsohne als ein Schwergewicht in der globalen Hochschulbildung gelten.** 2017 waren in der EU 19,8 Millionen Studierende an tertiären Bildungseinrichtungen eingeschrieben und 1,5 Millionen Menschen arbeiteten als Lehrende an Hochschulen. 1,7 Millionen der Studierenden besuchten Universitäten außerhalb ihres Heimatlandes. Gleichzeitig bleibt die globale Dominanz der amerikanischen und britischen Universitäten seit den frühen 2000er Jahren nahezu unverändert.
- **Die weltweit führenden Universitäten verdanken ihren Status zumindest teilweise ihrer Zugehörigkeit zu – und nicht selten Führung von – transnationalen Forschungsnetzwerken.** Dies wiederum wirkt sich positiv auf die allgemeine Anziehungskraft aus. Je höher eine Universität weltweit eingestuft wird, desto mehr zieht sie talentierte Studierenden und führende Wissenschaftler\*innen auf ihren Campus. So kommt es, dass erfolgreiche Internationalisierung hauptsächlich das Ergebnis einer zirkulären Kausalität ist: Internationale Exzellenz führt zu mehr internationaler Exzellenz.
- **Auf der Basis der zur Verfügung stehenden Daten lassen sich fünf wesentliche Erkenntnisse formulieren.** 1. Es besteht ein Zusammenhang zwischen dem Internationalisierungsgrad und der allgemeinen akademischen Exzellenz: Die Mehrheit der europäischen Universitäten, die am stärksten internationalisiert sind, schneiden in globalen Rankings in den Top 200 ab; 2. Größe ist entscheidend: Die meisten der in der Kategorie Internationalisierung führenden Hochschulen sind große Universitäten – gemessen an der Anzahl der Studierenden und Lehrenden; 3. Sprache ist ausschlaggebend: ein Großteil der Universitäten außerhalb Großbritanniens und Irlands konnte in den Rankings aufsteigen, indem Englisch als Lehrsprache in einem breiten Feld an Studiengängen eingeführt oder erweitert wurde; 4. Die geographische Lage hilft: In vielen Fällen erklärt sich die hohe Anzahl der internationalen Studierenden und Lehrenden durch die räumliche Nähe zu Ländern, in denen die gleiche Landessprache gesprochen wird. Dadurch erklärt sich auch die hohe Ranking-Position der jeweiligen Universität; 5. Eine Chance für kleine und spezialisierte Universitäten: Einige spezialisierte Hochschulen der angewandten Wissenschaften schneiden bei den Internationalisierungsindikatoren erstaunlich gut ab.
- **Die Motivationen für – und Durchführung von – Internationalisierungsprozessen variieren stark mit Blick auf die Art der Universität und das nationale System, in welchem sie agiert.** In der Regel bemühen sich staatlich finanzierte Universitäten, die Anzahl der ausländischen Studierenden und internationalen Partnerschaften zu erhöhen, um ihren Ruf und Status zu verbessern. Für private und marktorientierte Hochschulen sind die Beweggründe meist stark ökonomischer und finanzieller Natur. In diesem Zusammenhang sind die Anzahl der ausländischen Studierenden und die damit einhergehenden Einnahmen ein ausschlaggebender Indikator für internationale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Allgemein ist die „Vermarktlichung“ von Hochschulbildung ein wesentlicher Grund für steigendes Interesse an Internationalisierung.

- **In Ländern, in denen die Hochschulbildung meist staatlich gefördert wird und es somit unüblich ist, den direkten Geldwert ausländischer Studierender zu berechnen, spielt die ökonomische Dimension dennoch eine sichtbare Rolle.** Es existiert ein internationaler Wettlauf um Talent, wobei hochqualifizierte internationale Studierende durch immer neue Anreize angelockt werden sollen.
- **Mobilitätsprogramme wie Erasmus+ helfen Hochschulen, ihre regionale und globale Präsenz und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit zu stärken – nicht zuletzt, weil die meisten Ranglisten, ob national oder global, die Bemühungen zur Internationalisierung als wichtige Variable in der Bewertung der Bildungsqualität einbeziehen.** Zudem ist Erasmus+ eng mit der Idee der europäischen Integration verbunden. Hochschulen beteiligen sich gerne schon alleine schon deshalb, weil das Programm als einer der positivsten, sichtbarsten und effektivsten Beiträge zur Verwirklichung der europäischen Idee gilt.
- **Trotz der Popularität von Erasmus+ und neuer Strategien der Internationalisierung bleibt die Vision eines substantiellen Anstiegs der Studierenden-Mobilität bleibt bislang unerfüllt.** Die Bologna-Folgekonferenz von 2009 legte fest, dass 2020 mindestens 20% derjenigen, die einen Abschluss in der European Higher Education Area anstreben, eine Studien- oder Ausbildungszeit im Ausland verbracht haben sollten. Dieses Ziel wurde deutlich verfehlt. So verbringen nur 4% der Studierenden an deutschen Hochschulen eine Zeit ihres Studiums im Ausland.
- **In Deutschland stieg die Zahl der zwischen 2014 und 2019 eingeschriebenen internationalen Studierenden auf nationaler Ebene um 38,1% an.** Die Werte unterscheiden sich jedoch deutlich nach Bundesländern. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern verbuchte mit 71,2% den höchsten Anstieg, während das Saarland mit 13,6% die niedrigste Wachstumsrate aufwies. Die spezifischen Zahlen sind hauptsächlich abhängig von den jeweiligen Bestrebungen der Hochschulen zur Internationalisierung. Gleichzeitig spielen auch die Landesregierungen eine ausschlaggebende Rolle.
- **Unabhängig von den spezifischen Motivationen der individuellen Universitäten für Internationalisierung ist es vor allem das Angebot englischsprachiger Studiengänge, das als wichtigste und erfolgversprechendste Strategie zur Erhöhung der Zahl der internationalen Studierenden gelten kann.** Gleichzeitig profitieren auch einheimische Studierende von englischsprachigen Kursprogrammen (English Taught Programmes/ETP), um ihre Chancen auf dem internationalen Arbeitsmarkt zu erhöhen. In den letzten 20 Jahren hat sich die Zahl der ETPs mehr als verzehnfacht, wobei sich dieses Wachstum hauptsächlich auf Nordeuropa und Zentraleuropa konzentriert. Obwohl die deutschen Hochschulen kollektiv die meisten ETPs außerhalb Großbritanniens und Irlands anbieten, ist ihr Anteil an der Gesamtzahl der Studiengänge einer der niedrigsten: 2018 wurden lediglich 11% der über 19.000 Studiengänge an deutschen Hochschulen als international klassifiziert bzw. hauptsächlich auf Englisch unterrichtet.
- **Obwohl der Anteil der internationalen Lehrenden, die an deutschen Hochschulen tätig sind, von 9,7% in 2008 auf 12,5% in 2019 anstieg, bleibt Deutschland den-**



**noch weit hinter anderen im tertiären Bildungsbereich führenden Ländern zurück.** In der Schweiz z.B. waren 2017 49% der Lehrenden an den 12 Universitäten des Landes ausländischer Herkunft, ein Anstieg von 9% 2008.

- **Im Zuge der Internationalisierungsbestrebungen umwerben Universitäten heutzutage Lehrpersonal and Forscher vergleichbar mit dem Transfermarkt im Fußball.** Auch deutsche Hochschulen nutzen Personalberater (Headhunter) bei ihrer Suche nach akademischem Talent, wenn auch in deutlich geringerem Umfang als dies im englischsprachigen Raum üblich ist.
- **Internationalisierung gilt als entscheidendes Mittel zur Sicherung der Qualität in der Forschungsarbeit, während internationale Forschung gleichzeitig das Ansehen der Universität steigert,** ebenso wie ihre Position in Ranglisten mit einem starken Fokus auf Forschungs-Outputs. Zahlen von Horizon 2020 bestätigen, dass die am besten ausgestatteten nationalen Bildungssysteme in Europa diejenigen sind, welche am meisten profitiert haben. 61,7% der EU-Gelder unter Horizon 2020 flossen an die „big five“: Deutschland, das Vereinigte Königreich, Frankreich, Spanien und Italien. Gleichzeitig haben die EU-13 (die seit 2005 beigetretenen Mitgliedsstaaten) mit Stand 2017 nur an 8,5% der H2020-Programme teilgenommen und insgesamt einen Anteil von 4,4% der H2020-Nettofinanzierung erhalten.
- **Regionale und globale gewinnorientierte Hochschulkonglomerate, Franchise-Hochschulen, Bildungsknotenpunkte und zunehmend virtuelles Lernen sind zu wichtigen Faktoren der Internationalisierung geworden.** Die wichtigste dieser Entwicklungen ist der Anstieg der sogenannten International Branch Campuses (IBC), wobei die anfängliche Motivation für den Aufbau solcher Zweigcampus mittlerweile jedoch nachgelassen hat. Zwischen 2016 und 2019 wurden weltweit nur 11 IBCs eröffnet und einige geplante Vorhaben wurden nie verwirklicht. Deutsche Universitäten waren bei der Etablierung von IBCs noch nie Spitzenreiter gewesen und es existiert derzeit nur eine kleine Zahl von deutschen Hochschulen betriebenen ausländischen Zweigcampus. Einige Projekte wurden wegen Erfolglosigkeit wieder eingestellt.
- **Es liegt noch nicht lange zurück, dass Digitalisierung ein vages Ziel darstellte und nicht als Notwendigkeit und Priorität perzipiert wurde. Inzwischen ist Digitalisierung zu einem unabdingbaren „must have“ und zur Grundlage weiterer Internationalisierung geworden.** Dieser Antrieb zur Digitalisierung wurde durch einige unvorhersehbare Faktoren wie die Corona-Pandemie noch verstärkt. Hochschulen, die bereits in großflächige Internationalisierung investiert haben, können einfacher mit der plötzlichen Umstellung zur digitalen Lehre umgehen und besser auf Wünsche und Forderungen der Studierenden eingehen als jene, die Digitalisierung bis vor Kurzem noch als ein Zukunftsprojekt ansahen oder Digitalisierung bestenfalls als nicht-essentielles Extra im Lehr- und Forschungsprozess verstanden hatten.

## Executive Summary

- **Collectively Europe is a powerhouse in higher education.** In 2017 19.8 million students were enrolled at higher education institutions (HEI) and 1.5 million people taught in tertiary education in the EU-28. 1.7 million students were classed as international, i.e. they were studying outside their home countries. At the same time the global dominance of American and British universities has remained virtually unchanged since the early 2000s.
- **The leading universities in the world owe their status at least partly to their embeddedness in – and more often than not leadership of – transnational research networks and simply the power of attraction:** the higher a university ranks in the world the more it is able to pull the best and brightest scholars and students towards its campus. That way successful internationalisation is largely the result of circular causation: international excellence breeds more international excellence.
- **There are five main lessons learnt from the available data.** 1. There is a link between the level of internationalisation and general academic excellence: the majority of the most internationalised European universities ranks among the Top 200 in the global league tables; 2. Size matters: Most of the Top 10 HEIs with regards to internationalisation indicators across all rankings are large universities in terms of student and staff numbers; 3. Language is crucial: A sizable number of universities outside the UK have catapulted themselves in the higher echelons of the internationalisation league tables by introducing or expanding English as a language of instruction for a wide range of degree programmes; 4. Geography helps: In several cases the proximity of HEIs to countries where the same language is spoken explains the substantial number of international students and staff and thus these university's high ranking positions; 5. A chance for small and specialised universities: Some specialised HEIs and universities of applied sciences perform exceptionally well on internationalisation performance indicators
- **The motivation for, and actual conduct of internationalisation differs greatly depending on the type of university and national system they operate in.** Fully state-funded public universities may strive to increase the number of foreign students and international partnerships as a matter of prestige and status. For private and marketised HEIs the incentives are often primarily of a hard economic and financial nature. In this context international student numbers and the related revenues has emerged as a key indicator for the international competitiveness of HEIs. Generally, the marketisation of HE is one the reason for the increased interest in internationalisation.
- **There is an international race for talent which includes new schemes to attract highly skilled international students.** Even In countries with mainly state-funded higher education systems where it is less common to calculate the direct monetary value of foreign students, the economic dimension is nevertheless clearly visible.
- **Mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+ help HEIs to strengthen their regional and global visibility and competitiveness** – not least because most rankings, whether national or global, include the university's internationalisation efforts as an important variable in assessing the quality of education. Erasmus+ also comprises a

strong value-based component. HEIs are generally happy to participate because the programme is perceived as one of the most positive, visible and effective contributions to the European idea.

- **However, relatively low figures for outbound mobility (in Germany only 4% of students spend a period abroad) show that the Bologna objectives have not been achieved and indeed remains a distant vision.** In 2009 a Bologna follow-up conference stipulated that “in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad”.
- **In Germany the number of international students increased by 38.1% nationally between 2014 and 2019.** However, the individual States have experienced different growth rates. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania had the highest increase of 71.2% and the Saarland with 13,6% the lowest. the specific figures are mainly related to the degree of effectiveness regarding the respective HEIs’ internationalisation efforts. Yet, State governments can also play a positive role.
- **Regardless of the specific motivations of individual universities to (further) internationalise, offering international degree programmes taught in English is the most important and ultimately also most promising strategy to boost international student numbers.** At the same time, home students also benefit from taking English taught programmes (ETPs) as this is likely to improve their prospects on the international job market. In the past 20 years the number of ETPs increased more than tenfold but this growth was mainly concentrated in Northern and Central Europe. While collectively German HEIs offer the largest number of ETPs outside the UK and Ireland, the country has one of the lowest shares: In 2018, of more than 19,000 courses that were taught at German HEIs, 11% were labelled as "international" by the universities or were mainly taught in English.
- **Although the share of international academic staff members employed at German universities increased from 9.7% in 2008 to 12.5% in 2019, the country’s HEIs still trail other leading higher education providers,** such as the UK and Swiss universities, by some distance. In Switzerland in 2017, 49% of all employees at the country’s 12 universities were foreigners, up from 40% in 2008.
- **As part of the internationalisation drive universities nowadays compete for professors and top researchers in a way almost reminiscent of the football transfer market.** German HEIs are no strangers to involving personnel consultants (“headhunters”) in their search for talent, although on a much smaller scale than in the Anglosphere.
- **internationalisation is seen as a significant means to achieve quality in research while, at the same time, developing international research boosts the reputation of universities** – and their positions in league tables which tend to put a strong emphasis on research outputs. Horizon 2020 figures confirm that the best endowed national education systems in Europe are those which have benefitted most. 61.7% of EU funding under Horizon 2020 went to the big five: Germany, UK, France, Spain, and Italy. At the same time, as of 2017, (the member states which have joined since 2004)

had only participated in 8.5% of H2020 projects (slightly up from 7.9% under the preceding Framework Programme 7, FP7) and together received a share of 4.4% of H2020 net EU funding (an increase of 0.2% compared to FP7).

- **The emergence of regional or global for-profit higher education conglomerates, franchise operations, educational hubs, and more recently, virtual learning have become increasingly important factors in internationalisation.** The most important of these developments is the growing number of branch campuses (IBCs). However, the enthusiasm for IBCs has faded. Between 2016 and 2019 only 11 new branch campuses opened globally while several IBCs under consideration failed to materialise. German universities have never been among the front runners in establishing IBCs and only a very small number maintain sizable operations abroad.
- **Only a short while ago digitalisation was considered more a goal than a necessity, but under today's changing circumstances digitalisation has become a need, a must-have, and even a condition to deepen internationalisation.** This drive has been accelerated by some unpredictable factors, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. HEIs which had already invested in large-scale digitalisation, have found it easier to cope with the sudden switch to online teaching and address the needs and demands of students than those which previously considered digitalisation “something for the future” or at best an add-on but not an essential element in the process of delivering degree programmes and strengthening research.

## 1. Does the Higher Education Powerhouse Europe need Internationalisation?

There can be little doubt that collectively, Europe is a powerhouse in higher education. In 2017 19.8 million students were enrolled at higher education institutions (HEI) and 1.5 million people taught in tertiary education in the EU-28.<sup>1</sup> 1.7 million students were classed as international, i.e. they were studying outside their home countries.<sup>2</sup> According to the UniRank database, in 2020 the number of officially recognised HEIs<sup>3</sup> in Europe totalled 2,725 (figure 1) corresponding to a share of 19.9% of all HEIs in the world. In other words: Almost one in five universities is located in Europe which, at the same time, comprises only about 10% of the world population.<sup>4</sup> Figure 1 shows the number of HEIs per country with, in this order, Russia, Germany, France, Ukraine and UK leading in quantitative terms.

The 2020 Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking lists 36 European universities among the Top 100, up from 28 in 2010/11. However, the number of European universities in the Top 100 of the rival QS Ranking<sup>5</sup> declined from 41 in 2010 to 34 in the 2021 report mainly due to the rise of Asian HEIs. The 2021 ranking features 26 Asian universities (located in China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) in the best 100 as compared to 15 in 2010, the first year the QS Ranking was published. HEIs from 20 countries<sup>6</sup> are listed among QS' most recent Top 100 indicating an ongoing process of international diversification at the highest level of excellence in global tertiary education.

At the same time the dominance of American and British universities has remained virtually unchanged since the early 2000s. In the Times Higher Education Supplement Ranking (THES) ranking in 2004 – the only such global survey at the time – US and UK HEI together accounted for 49% of Top 100 universities, and the current ratio is 51% (THE 2020) and 45% (QS 2021) respectively. Germany's position in global higher education has strengthened during the same period. Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU Munich), Technische Universität München (TU Munich) and the University of Heidelberg have firmly established themselves as the national Top 3 (Table 1). Overall, the country's share of world-class universities is roughly on par with France and the Netherlands. Looking at the full most recent league tables, 431 of 1001 HEIs (THE) and 413 of 1002 HEIs (QS) are located in Europe, among them 94 (THE)/84 (QS) in the UK; 45/48 in Germany; 45/36 in Italy; 40/26 in Spain; 36/28 in France; 15/28 in

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<sup>1</sup> EUROSTAT 2020b.

<sup>2</sup> EUROSTAT 2020a.

<sup>3</sup> Defined as a) being chartered, licensed or accredited by the appropriate higher education-related organization in each European country; b) offering at least four-year undergraduate degrees (bachelor degrees) or postgraduate degrees (master or doctoral degrees); c) delivering courses predominantly in a traditional, face-to-face, non-distance education format.

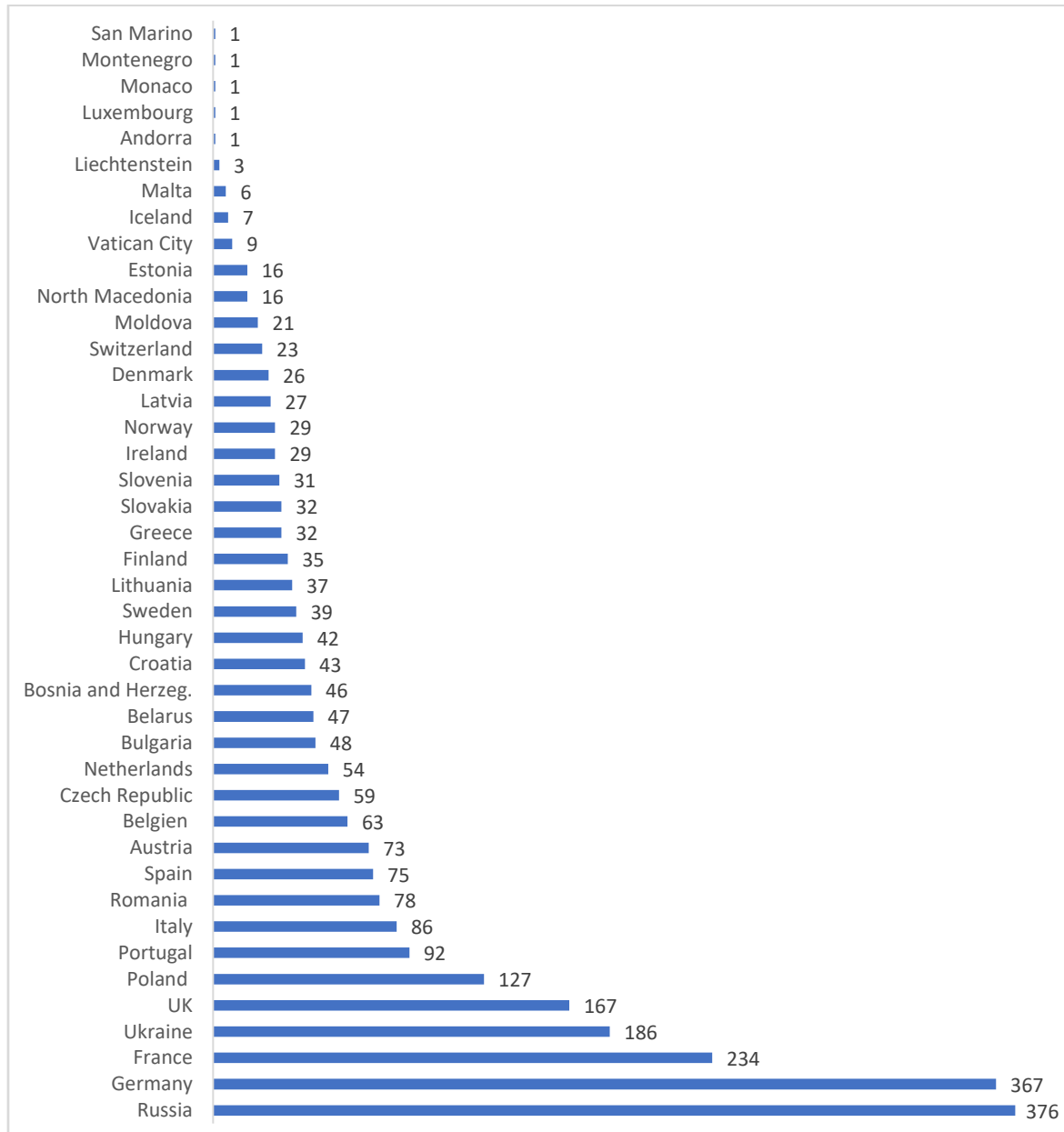
<sup>4</sup> UniRank 2020.

<sup>5</sup> The *QS World University Rankings* produced by the British company Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) were published from 2004 to 2009 together with Times Higher Education under the name "Times Higher Education Supplement Rankings" (THES). After the end of the collaboration with THE, QS published a separate ranking portal with the same set of indicators. The QS ranking is considered particularly transparent and is the only international ranking to date which has passed the audit procedure designed by the IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (IREG Observatory) and received the "IREG-approved" seal. See IREG Observatory (2020). The IREG Observatory is an international institutional non-profit association of ranking organisations, universities and other bodies interested in university rankings and academic excellence.

<sup>6</sup> Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States.

Russia; 13/13 in the Netherlands; 12/8 in Sweden; 11/10 in Switzerland; 11/8 in Austria; 9/8 in Ireland; 9/9 in Finland; and 8/9 in Belgium.

Figure 1: Number of Higher Education Institutions per European Country



Note: UniRank's figures slightly differ from national statistics. According to the German Rector's Conference, Germany currently has 391 HEIs.<sup>7</sup>

Data Source: UniRank (2020).

<sup>7</sup> German Rectors' Conference 2020a.

Table 1 German Universities among the Top 100

THES/THE Ranking			QS Ranking	
2004	2010-11	2020	2010	2021
Heidelberg (47)	Göttingen (43)	LMU München (32)	Heidelberg (51)	TU München (50)
TU Berlin (60)	LMU München (61)	TU München (43)	TU München (58)	LMU München (63)
Göttingen (85)	Heidelberg (83)	Heidelberg (44)	LMU München (66)	Heidelberg (64)
TU München (95)		Humboldt (74)	FU Berlin (70)	
LMU München (99)		Charité (80)	Freiburg (97)	
		Freiburg (86)		
		Tübingen (91)		
		RWTH Aachen (99)		

Data Source: University Rankings CH (2020)

While, arguably, the methodology behind university league tables is contested, they nevertheless provide an indicative snapshot of where individual HEI stand in the world and how countries and regions compare in terms of their status as providers of quality higher education. No matter what indicators we look at, they all point in the same direction: Europe in general, and Germany in particular, are well-positioned on the international stage of higher education. Yet, international visibility and internationalisation are not necessarily the same.

We can take for granted that the leading universities in the world owe their status at least partly to their embeddedness in – and more often than not leadership of – transnational research networks and simply the power of attraction: the higher a university ranks in the world the more it is able to pull the best and brightest scholars and students towards its campus. That way successful internationalisation is largely the result of circular causation: international excellence breeds more international excellence. Still, in an increasingly competitive global environment even top HEIs need to constantly revise and strengthen their approach to internationalisation to sustain their elevated position. The vast majority of universities, inside and outside the Top 1000, however, face the more daunting challenge of developing a stronger international outlook in the first place. In many cases, increasing the number of international students has become a core recruitment strategy or even a matter of economic survival – but internationalisation is much more than that.

“Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the [ongoing] process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.”<sup>8</sup> Shifting the focus more to the level of actions, internationalisation is best understood as the “systematic endeavour of state policy on higher education and higher education institutions to shape university organisations and management and, in particular, higher education so that they are better equipped to meet the challenges of

<sup>8</sup> Knight 2003: 2.

economic globalisation and related social changes“<sup>9</sup>. Last but not least from a normative perspective internationalisation can be seen as a purpose “to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society”.<sup>10</sup>

*Box 1: The EU Perspective on Internationalisation*

The internationalisation of higher education will help prepare our learners, whether going abroad or staying in Europe, to live in a global world, increasing their experience and knowledge, employability, productivity and earning power. While several Member States and many HEIs already have higher education internationalisation strategies in place, these are often centred mainly on student mobility: international academic cooperation is often still fragmented, based on the initiative of individual academics or research teams, and not necessarily linked to an institutional or national strategy. Effective strategies should also include the development of international curricula, strategic partnerships, finding new ways of delivering content, and ensuring complementarity with broader national policies for external cooperation, international development, migration, trade, employment, regional development, research and innovation. Developing a comprehensive internationalisation strategy means, above all, positioning a HEI, its students, researchers and staff, and national systems in all the relevant activities related to research, innovation and higher education, within the global scene, in accordance with its individual profile and evolving labour market needs and economic strategy of the country.<sup>11</sup>

In sum, internationalisation comprises

- international student and staff mobility;
- regional and global research networks and international partnerships;
- the development of curricula and the improvement of approaches to learning and teaching, such as digital learning, in line with the needs and challenges of globalisation, and
- an inter-cultural approach to the management and delivery of higher education.

Where do European and particular German universities stand in relation to these criteria? What are major achievements and where do hurdles and bottlenecks persist? Based on recent data and reports, this paper tries to provide some answers.

## **2. Performance against Internationalisation Indicators**

Since its early days higher education has been unthinkable without an international dimension. “International mobility of students and scientists was one of the generic and quintessential features of the first universities in Europe”<sup>12</sup> The history of the oldest universities in the world, such as Bologna, Oxford and Salamanca, is inseparable from the biographies of the great scholars from dozens of nations who taught and researched there. From its foundation in 1419 the University of Rostock, the oldest university in the Baltic Sea region, for example, attracted a sizable number of students from Scandinavia and the Baltics<sup>13</sup> long before the term internationalisation was coined.

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<sup>9</sup> Schreiterer; Witte 2001: 5 quoted in Leifgen; Burkhart 2019: 3.

<sup>10</sup> De Witt, Hans et al. 2015: 29.

<sup>11</sup> European Union 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Trondal 2010: 352.

<sup>13</sup> See Boeck et al. 2012 for details.



As an explicit concept and strategy, however, the internationalisation of higher education is a relatively recent phenomenon which is often associated with the Erasmus mobility programme. After an initial pilot phase of ten years, “through the explosion of enthusiastic support and effective lobbying of Prime Ministers at the London European Summit, the Erasmus scheme (and its ‘catchy’ title!) was officially approved in 1987 with a huge quantum leap in the EU budget allocated to it.”<sup>14</sup> Erasmus became a driver for a stronger strategic approach to internationalisation in higher education, similar to the Fulbright programme in the US after the Second World War.<sup>15</sup> For more than three decades, the European programmes for higher education, not just Erasmus but also, for example, Erasmus Mundus, Edulink, Tempus, ALFA, and the Intra-ACP Academic Mobility Scheme – key elements of which were united under the roof of Erasmus+ in 2014 –; transnational research programmes like the Marie Curie Fellowships and the major international research funding schemes Framework Programme 7 and its successor Horizon 2020 have been driving forces for a deepening and broadening of strategic approaches towards internationalisation in European higher education and beyond.

*Box 2: Two Views on Internationalisation*

Recent years have seen the increase in scope and scale of TNE [trans-national education]; the continued global rise of international student mobility; more and more countries with ambitions for attracting students to cross borders; and the growing importance and value of international collaboration for increasing the reach, impact and quality of research. There is hardly a country left unaffected by the global flows of students, teaching and research (British Council 2016, p. 2).<sup>16</sup>

Internationalisation is now becoming mainstreamed at the national and institutional level in most countries of the world, and in particular in Europe. The rhetoric speaks of more comprehensive and strategic policies for internationalisation, but in reality, there is still a long way to go in most cases. Even in Europe, seen around the world as a best-practice case for internationalisation, there is still much to be done, and there is an uneven degree of accomplishment across the different countries, with significant challenges in Southern and, in particular, Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Certainly, in Europe, but also in other parts of the world, internationalisation has been further reinforced by the Bologna Process. A recent evaluation of the EU support for higher education found that thanks to, “inter alia, the successful model of the Bologna Process, the EU and EU Member States are widely perceived as important sources of benchmarking for internationalisation.”<sup>18</sup> In more general terms, there “is ample evidence from all sources accessed in the evaluation that EU-funded programmes contributed significantly to strengthening the international orientation of participating institutions. The case studies and other documentary review [...] demonstrated, unsurprisingly, that networks and links under EU programmes were prolific.”<sup>19</sup> While the EU has played an important role in promoting and fostering internationalisation through both the creation of conducive framework conditions for cross-border collaboration and, even more importantly, the provision of financial incentives and means, taking advantage of the European programmes is just one of several factors in the quest for internationalisation.

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<sup>14</sup> Erasmus+ UK 2017. Erasmus is officially the abbreviation for *EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*

<sup>15</sup> De Witt et al. 2015: 43.

<sup>16</sup> British Council 2016: 2.

<sup>17</sup> De Witt et al. 2015: 28.

<sup>18</sup> Particip GmbH 2017: 84.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid: 65.

All major university ranking exercises include indicators for internationalisation as part of the overall assessment. Both THE and OS look at the proportion of international students and staff, while THE also takes “international collaboration” into account.

*Box 3: Internationalisation Indicators in the THE Ranking*

International outlook (staff, students, research):

- Proportion of international students
- Proportion of international staff
- International collaboration

The ability of a university to attract undergraduates, postgraduates and faculty from all over the planet is key to its success on the world stage. In the third international indicator, we calculate the proportion of a university’s total research journal publications that have at least one international co-author and reward higher volumes. This indicator is normalised to account for a university’s subject mix and uses the same five-year window as the ‘Citations: research influence’ category.<sup>20</sup>

*Box 4: Internationalisation Indicators in the QS Ranking*

International faculty ratio/International student ratio:

A highly international university acquires and confers a number of advantages. It demonstrates an ability to attract faculty and students from across the world, which in turn suggests that it possesses a strong international brand. It implies a highly global outlook: essentially for institutions operating in an internationalised higher education sector. It also provides both students and staff alike with a multinational environment, facilitating exchange of best practices and beliefs. In doing so, it provides students with international sympathies and global awareness: soft skills increasingly valuable to employers. Both of these metrics are worth 5% of the overall total.<sup>21</sup>

The less well-known U-Multirank comprises the most comprehensive assessment of internationalisation based on 14 criteria. According to its own account U-Multirank “is the largest and most inclusive ranking showcasing the diversity in higher education around the world. It is not a league table and does not use composite indicators, nor reputation weights. Therefore, there is no one best university in U-Multirank. The performance of a university is presented with individual scores – graded from ‘A’ (very good) to ‘E’ (weak) across the different areas.”<sup>22</sup> While some major universities are sceptical of the ranking and have not yet taken part in the complex survey carried out by U-Multirank (the large number of indicators to be collected by the universities themselves have led to concerns that the results can be manipulated by the participating HEI), it is nevertheless considered the most elaborate international ranking to date as it assesses the performance of universities according to a particularly wide range of indicators.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> THE World University Rankings 2019.

<sup>21</sup> QS 2020.

<sup>22</sup> U-MULTIRANK 2020a: 2

<sup>23</sup> Burkhart/Wittersheim 2017: 63.

### Box 5: Internationalisation in U-Multirank

*International orientation of bachelor programmes:* A composite measure taking into account (1) the existence of joint/dual degree programmes; (2) the inclusion of study periods abroad; (3) the percentage of international (degree and exchange) students; and (4) the percentage of international academic staff.

*International orientation of master programmes:* A composite measure taking into account (1) the existence of joint/dual degree programmes; (2) the inclusion of study periods abroad; (3) the percentage of international (degree and exchange) students; and (4) the percentage of international academic staff.

*Opportunities to study abroad:* An assessment of the opportunities for studying abroad, based on a student satisfaction survey.

*International doctorate degrees:* The percentage of doctorate degrees that were awarded to international doctoral candidates.

*International joint publications:* The percentage of the department's research publications that list at least one affiliate author's address abroad.

*International research grants:* The proportion of external research revenue from abroad – including public and private funding organisations and businesses.

*Foreign language BA programs:* The percentage of bachelor programmes that are offered in a foreign language.

*Student mobility:* A composite of international incoming exchange students, outgoing exchange students and students in international joint degree programmes.

*International academic staff:* The percentage of academic staff (on a headcount basis) with foreign citizenship.

*International doctorate degrees:* The percentage of doctorate degrees that are awarded to international doctorate candidates.

*International joint publications:* The percentage of the university's research publications that list at least one affiliate author's address located in another country.

*Foreign language MA programmes:* The percentage of masters programmes that are offered in a foreign language.

*Program international orientation:* International orientation of the degree programme: composite of joint/dual degree programmes, inclusion of study periods abroad, international students, international staff, teaching in foreign language.

*Foreign language long first degree programmes:* The percentage of long first degree programmes that are offered in a foreign language.<sup>24</sup>

The assessment of internationalisation only contributes a small proportion to the overall score for HEIs in the two major league tables – 7,5% for THE and 5% for OS – but it is worth taking a look at the results in their own right as a suitable proximation of where universities are positioned in their efforts to internationalise. There are five main lessons learnt from the data presented in the tables below:

- **There is a link between the level of internationalisation and general academic excellence:** the majority of the most internationalised European universities ranks among the Top 200 in the global league tables. At the same time, except for Imperial College London and ETH Zurich, none of the leading 30 HEIs in the world are among the Top 10 for “international outlook” (in 2020). In other words, a world class university is not necessarily also a world leader in internationalisation. These roles are rather

<sup>24</sup> U-MULTIRANK 2020b.

played by universities which do not quite (yet) achieve the maximum scores across all ranking indicators, but owe their elevated international status to a long history of embeddedness in global structures of research and teaching (particularly British HEIs); their unique position as world leaders in certain areas (for example EPFL in Sciences - just to mention the university's fusion reactor and Gene/Q Supercomputer – or, in Germany, KIT Karlsruhe, the largest research institution in the country which is known for its pioneer work in many fields, including informatics, and produced six Nobel laureates to date); or a particularly large number and percentage of international students and staff (for example University of Innsbruck or the University of Luxembourg).

- **Size matters:** Most of the Top 10 HEIs with regards to internationalisation indicators across all rankings are large universities in terms of student and staff numbers. In Germany the only exception of universities with the strongest international outlook and less than around 24,000 students are the private Jacobs University Bremen and the University of Konstanz with approximately 1600 and 11,000 students respectively. The Jacobs University was established in 2001 as an English-language campus with a strong strategic international orientation and ethos. In 2020 students came from 124 countries and about half of the staff is international. Almost two decades on, the president, Antonio Loprieno, still describes Jacobs University as “an educational experiment: [...] an English-speaking German university”.<sup>25</sup> The University of Konstanz benefits from its reputation as a research-intense university which has consistently been recognised as a “University of Excellence” in Germany since 2007 and also strongly promotes an international dimension in teaching. The university currently offers 20 international double degree or foreign-language study programmes.
- **Language is crucial:** While British universities – this is common sense – enjoy the natural advantage of the English-speaking environment and others flourish in a natural multilingual setting (particularly the University of Luxembourg and Swiss HEIs), a third group has catapulted itself in the higher echelons of the internationalisation league tables by introducing or expanding English as a language of instruction for a wide range of degree programmes. This applies especially to Dutch universities (the University of Maastricht is a case in point) which almost across the board have established themselves as successful competitors of UK universities by offering programmes fully taught in English and at the same level of quality. At the same time tuition fees are only about one fourth of those charged by English, Welsh and Northern Irish HEIs.
- **Geography helps:** Without trying to play down the significance of other factors, there can be little doubt that in several cases the proximity of HEIs to countries where the same language is spoken explains the substantial number of international students and staff and thus these university's high ranking positions. At the University of Innsbruck approximately one third of the students and one third of the staff are from abroad. Of the 6688 foreign students enrolled for the 2020-21 winter term, 52% are from Germany and 29% from the Italian province of South Tyrol where German is the main language.<sup>26</sup> At the Università della Svizzera Italiana (USE), the only Italian-speaking university in Switzerland, 1976 of the total 2971 students in 2019-20 (winter term) were foreign; and

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<sup>25</sup> Jacobs University 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Universität Innsbruck (2020)

73% of these international students came from Italy.<sup>27</sup> The extreme case of the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in Northern Cyprus where 83% of students are classed as foreign is difficult to compare to other HEIs considering that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is recognised only by Turkey which is also the country of origin of the vast majority of foreign students. Yet, EMU has successfully identified internationalisation as its main development and business strategy. EMU's "multinational education opportunity"<sup>28</sup> with English as the main language of instruction attracts students from 110 different countries, including sizable numbers from Africa (especially Nigeria) and Asia (e.g. Iran, Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) and has made higher education the main source of revenue in Northern Cyprus.<sup>29</sup> However, being located in a border region does not result in internationalisation by default. While the HEIs mentioned here and several others have taken advantage of their geographic position as a unique selling point, many others have not. It still requires a sound strategy and a pro-active approach to internationalisation to increase the number of foreign students even if they just cross the border from the neighbouring country.

- **A chance for small and specialised universities:** A comparison of the most recent rankings with previous data (tables 1-5) shows that while the names of the universities in the tables have partly changed, internationalisation at the top level is as much dominated by the big players today as it was a decade ago. There is, however, a small number of HEIs which have recently emerged in high-ranking positions on some indicators. In the case of Germany, Jacobs University has already been mentioned. Two other examples are Chemnitz University of Technology and Ilmenau University of Technology. Both have substantially increased their international student and staff numbers over recent years. At Chemnitz 24% and at Ilmenau 22% of enrolled students are from abroad. These are exceptionally high values for HEIs in Germany where only 10.4% of all enrolled students (302,000 out of 2.9 Million) were "Bildungsausländer" in 2019.<sup>30</sup> Bildungsausländer are students of foreign nationality who gained their qualification for admission to higher education from a school abroad. Furthermore, at the TU Chemnitz, currently every sixth academic staff member is from abroad which also exceeds the average of 12.5% at German universities (see below). Table 8 shows that specialised universities of applied sciences, particularly private ones, such as Otto Beisheim School of Management, Kühne Logistics University and Frankfurt School of Finance & Management perform exceptionally well on internationalisation performance indicators even if one keeps in mind that not all German universities participate in the U-Mutirank survey.

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<sup>27</sup> Università della Svizzera italiana (2020).

<sup>28</sup> Eastern Mediterranean University 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Güsten 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt 2019; HSI-Monitor 2020.

Table 2: Ranking according to the composite indicator “International Outlook” in the THE Ranking: Top 10 European Universities (in parentheses: position in the overall world ranking)

	2011	2020
1	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (48)	University of Luxembourg (201-250)
2	London School of Economics and Political Science (86)	Università della Svizzera Italiana (301–350)
3	University of Innsbruck (186)	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (38)
4	University of Geneva (118)	University of Geneva (144)
5	ETH Zurich (15)	ETH Zurich (13)
6	University of Konstanz (186)	Maastricht University (127)
7	Royal Holloway, University of London (88)	University of Innsbruck (401-500)
8	University of Basel (95)	Imperial College London (10)
9	Queen Mary University of London (120)	Queen Mary University of London (110)
10	UCL (22)	University of St Andrews (198)

Source: Times Higher Education 2019a.

Table 3: Ranking according to the composite indicator “International Outlook” in the THE Ranking: Top 10 German Universities (in parentheses: position in the overall world ranking)

	2011	2020
1	University of Konstanz (186)	Jacobs University (301-350)
2	Technical University of Munich (101)	University of Freiburg (86)
3	RWTH Aachen University (182)	Technical University of Munich (43)
4	Heidelberg University (83)	Free University of Berlin (117)
5	University of Tübingen (189)	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (175)
6	Goethe University Frankfurt (172)	Humboldt University of Berlin (74)
7	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (187)	Heidelberg University (44)
8	University of Bonn (178)	LMU Munich (32)
9	University of Freiburg (132)	Technical University of Berlin (149)
10	Humboldt University of Berlin (178)	University of Konstanz (201-250)

Source: Times Higher Education 2010; 2019.

Table 4: Ranking according to the indicator “Percentage of International Students” in the THE Rankings 2016 and 2020: Top 10 European Universities

	2016	2020
1	London School of Economics and Political Science (70%)	Eastern Mediterranean University Northern Cyprus (83%)
2	RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ireland (63%)	Jacobs University (76%)
3	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (54%)	London School of Economics and Political Science (71%)
4	University of Luxembourg (52%)	Università della Svizzera Italiana (67%)
5	Imperial College London (51%)	RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ireland (65%)
6	City, University of London (50%)	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (59%)
7	Maastricht University (48%)	Imperial College London (56%)
8	University of St Andrews (47%)	Maastricht University (54%)
9	UCL (46%)	SOAS University of London (53%)
10	Middlesex University (44%)	UCL (52%)

Source: Times Higher Education 2015; 2019a.

Table 5: Ranking according to the indicator “Percentage of International Students” in the THE Rankings 2016 and 2020: Top 10 German Universities

	2016	2020
1	Technical University of Munich (20%)	Jacobs University (76%)
2	Free University of Berlin (20%)	Technical University of Munich (27%)
3	University of Stuttgart (20%)	Chemnitz University of Technology (24%)
4	Technical University of Darmstadt (18%)	Technical University of Berlin (24%)
5	Heidelberg University (17%)	University of Freiburg (24%)
6	Humboldt University of Berlin (16%)	Ilmenau University of Technology (22%)
7	University of Freiburg (16%)	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (22%)
8	RWTH Aachen University (16%)	RWTH Aachen University (21%)
9	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (16%)	Free University of Berlin (21%)
10	Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin (16%)	University of Stuttgart (20%)

Note: Data for this indicator first included in the 2016 survey

Source: Times Higher Education 2015; 2019a

Table 6: Ranking according to the indicators “International Faculty” and “International Students” in the QS Ranking: Top 10 European Universities (in parentheses: position in the global ranking for these two indicators)

	International Faculty	International Students
1	École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) (15)	London Business School (1)
2	USI - Università della Svizzera italiana (17)	IE University (5)
3	London Business School (18)	The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (7)
4	ETH Zurich - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (19)	USI - Università della Svizzera italiana (8)
5	University of Basel (27)	Cranfield University (9)
6	The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (28)	École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) (12)
7	University of Geneva (32)	Imperial College London (14)
8	SOAS University of London (41)	University of the Arts London (17)
9	University of Bern (44)	UCL (18)
10	Imperial College London (44)	Maastricht University (19)

Source: QS 2020

Table 7: QS International Faculty and International Students: Top 10 German Universities (in parentheses: position in the global ranking for these two indicators)

	International Faculty	International Students
1	WHU - Otto Beisheim School of Management (91)	Technical University of Munich (141)
2	Universität Konstanz (283)	Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) (179)
3	Freie Universität Berlin (285)	RWTH Aachen University (191)
4	Technical University of Munich (288)	Technical University of Darmstadt (199)
5	Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (292)	KIT, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (230)
6	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (301)	Universität Stuttgart (278)
7	Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (314)	Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg (291)
8	University of Cologne (316)	Universität Duisburg-Essen (305)
9	Technical University of Darmstadt (334)	Freie Universität Berlin (313)
10	Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg (336)	Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (331)

Source: QS 2020.

Table 8: U-Mutirank International Orientation German Universities with the highest grades for internationalisation indicators

	Student Mobility	International Academic Staff	International Joint Publications	International Doctorate Degrees
Kühne Logistics University	A	A	A	A
Frankfurt School of Finance & Management	A	A	B	A
Jacobs University	B	A	A	A
Otto Beisheim School of Management	A	A	A	C
Saarland University	A	A	B	B
University of Konstanz	B	A	A	B
BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg	B	A	A	B

Note: Scores from 'A' (very good) to 'E' (weak)

Source: U-MULTIRANK (2020a)

### 3. Internationalisation Strategies: Prestige and Status versus Income Generation and Marketisation

The rankings and league tables introduced and discussed in the previous section seemingly suggest that internationalisation is a one-size-fits-all approach followed by all HEIs with some being more successful than others. However, the motivation for, and actual conduct of internationalisation differs greatly depending on the type of university and national system they operate in. Fully state-funded public universities might strive to increase the number of foreign students and international partnerships as a matter of prestige and status and to generally strengthen their – and their students' (!) - position within a rapidly globalising environment. For private and marketised HEIs the incentives are often primarily of a hard economic and financial nature. In this context international student numbers and the related revenues has emerged as a key indicator for the international competitiveness of HEIs.<sup>31</sup>

In many European countries existing, and often also a sizable number of newly emerging HEIs, compete for a shrinking domestic student population. In the EU-28, in the two decades between 1994 and 2014 the segment of the population aged 0-29, decreased from 41% to 33%. During the same period the absolute number of higher education entrants shrank by 19%.<sup>32</sup> Although some countries “with hitherto low higher education participation rates (e.g. Germany) often compensate for cohort size reduction via rapid growth in university access rates per cohort”, the demographic change is likely to dramatically affect the education sector in the coming years and decades.<sup>33</sup> Against this backdrop internationalisation has firmly established itself as a mitigation strategy for those HEIs which largely depend on tuition fees and third party research funding. This is even more a challenge in higher education systems which are not traditionally based on the private provision of higher education but have been subjected to a process of marketisation, which, in this context is defined “as the attempt to put the provision of higher education on a market basis, where the demand and supply of student education,

<sup>31</sup> Sarkar/Perényi 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Mihai Haj et al. 2018: 171.

<sup>33</sup> Santa 2018: 369.



academic research and other university activities are balanced through the price mechanism".<sup>34</sup> Conversely, the marketisation of HE is one the reason for the increased interest in internationalisation.

In the UK (with the exception of Scotland), maximum full-time undergraduate tuition fees for UK and EU students were increased from £3,375 to £9,000 in 2012 and currently stand at GBP 9250. For non-EU students no caps apply and in the 2019-20 academic year tuition fees were as high as GBP 39,475 or even GBP 61,435 for medical degrees.<sup>35</sup> As part of the same reform, government block grants to HEIs to meet the costs of teaching were significantly reduced and since 2015 only a small group of subjects have received direct subsidies. To compensate for the financial shortfall, government-defined admission limits on the number of students were phased out. Neither is there a cap on the numbers of international students able to come to the UK to study. Furthermore, market entry rules have been relaxed and private HEIs are now offering a small but significant proportion of under- and postgraduate courses.<sup>36</sup>

The think tank Higher Education Policy Institute calculated that international students are worth a total net amount of about GBP 20 billion each year to the UK economy through the spending on tuition and living expenses, balanced against costs, including the extra pressure on local services and non-repayment of loans.<sup>37</sup> Probably the most comprehensive recent government-commissioned study on the impact of international students in the UK presents foreign students as a commodity when it elaborates on international competition for international students and the UK's market share of the global student body or how Great Britain compares to competitor countries.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, in an environment where the student is perceived as a consumer internationalisation in many UK universities has taken the shape of a managerially led activity with an economic rationale. First and foremost, international students are recruited because they provide much needed funds.<sup>39</sup>

*Box 6: A managerial perspective on the internationalisation universities*

International HE is a significant industry in all the Anglophone countries [...] and is increasingly important to the economies of those countries, for example it is the fourth biggest export earner and is vital to the whole economy in New Zealand. International HE is also increasingly important to universities and HE institutions (HEIs) in continental Europe as well as some key educational nodes around the world; cities like Hong Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, that play host to multiple international branch campuses. The growth in the international business of HE, parallels a similar period of unprecedented growth in the levels of world trade; leading to the observation that HE is at the same time both an agent of globalisation (encouraging the sort of student movements referred to above) and a business that must respond to the consequences of globalisation. For example, UK universities now compete with aggressively marketed global competitors and an increasing number of on-line challengers. In the UK the response to this international competition expresses itself in two main ways, firstly there is an emphasis on boosting university reputations, through developing international research (and the university's position in league tables that measure research output) and secondly redoubling efforts to attract fee paying international students who are often regarded as key to the financial survival of HEIs in the UK and elsewhere. Perhaps as a result, staff working in HE in the UK perceive that the internationalisation of UK universities is purely market seeking with a near universal

<sup>34</sup> Brown 2015: 5.

<sup>35</sup> Murray 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Coughlan 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Migration Advisory Committee 2018-

<sup>39</sup> Warwick/Moogan 2013.

emphasis on recruiting international students. However, not all university internationalisation strategies have to be so commercially focused; for example, Scandinavian institutions tend to concentrate their internationalisation activities on the needs of their home students, preparing them for work in a globalised society and job market by focusing their efforts on study-abroad options. Leading French and many other European business schools concentrate their internationalisation efforts on meeting the requirements of the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation body.<sup>40</sup>

Source: Excerpts from Warwick, Philip. "The international business of higher education – A managerial perspective on the internationalisation of UK universities." *The International Journal of Management Education* 12 (2014): 91-103.

In the similar case of the Netherlands, successive governments have stimulated a market mechanism in the public sector, including in higher and further education. A report by Nuffic, the Netherlands' organisation for internationalisation in education, estimated the annual financial gain through international students for the country to be around Euro 1.5 billion.<sup>41</sup> According to the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), on average, students from other EU countries generate revenues between EUR 5000 and EUR 17,000 and EUR 68,500 and EUR 96,000 per annum in the case of non-EU students.<sup>42</sup>

The Corona pandemic has recently led to almost frantic discussions about the economic dimension of international student mobility. To quote just one of many media reports and other contributions to the debate,

With the COVID-19 crisis crushing its economy, UK universities are realising the true value of international students. As it stands, Universities UK (UUK) predicts that the UK's higher education sector will lose £790 million in accommodation, catering and conference income. This loss could balloon to £6.9 billion if its usual pool of international applicants cannot enrol [...] Whether or not we realise it, international students in the UK help subsidise expensive scientific research with their fees.<sup>43</sup>

In other countries with mainly state-funded higher education systems where it is less common to calculate the direct monetary value of foreign students, the economic dimension is nevertheless clearly visible. In Germany, Simon Morris-Lange of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration reflects a commonly held view when he says that "international students who stay in Germany as skilled workers are one of the biggest talent pathways we have".<sup>44</sup> This line of thinking is similar to other countries. There is an "international race for talent which includes new schemes to attract the highly skilled and increasing efforts to attract international students".<sup>45</sup> Germany offers an 18-month poststudy work visa for graduates from outside the EU. By contrast, the UK terminated a similar policy in 2012 (however, a new scheme will be available from summer 2021). There is a fine line between attracting international students to Germany as a strategy to reduce the shortage of skilled professionals in some sectors and encouraging or even actively contributing to brain drain. Many, therefore, prefer to highlight the soft power dimension instead. According to Marijke Wahlers, head of the international department of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), "the idea of Germany

<sup>40</sup> Excerpts from Warwick 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Onderwijs Persbureau 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Delta, Journalistic platform TU Delft 2019.

<sup>43</sup> QSI News 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Lindsay 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Mosneaga/Agergaard 2012.

being part of an international community is valued very highly [...] Of course, we invest a certain amount of money [in the education of foreign students], but what we get back is worth so much more. The international students, when they graduate, will be partners for Germany in the world; this kind of international network building is of immense importance to us”.<sup>46</sup>

There is also little disagreement about the general benefits of a diverse student body in terms of creating an inter- and cross-cultural environment and thus a global culture which increases the employability of students. While unlike UK HEIs for example, German universities do not usually use employability figures for marketing purposes, the word of mouth is a powerful tool and universities which have successfully established a global image are likely to attract more international students. However, the financial dimension is no longer completely absent. While there are – with some exception for second degrees and long-term students – generally no tuition fees at German HEIs (students just pay nominal “semester fees” to cover administrative costs), since the winter semester 2017/18, the state of Baden-Württemberg has required some non-EU international students to pay university tuition fees of 1,500 euros per semester for their first degree studies.

### 3.1 Student Mobility

There are two broad groups of international students differentiated by the purpose of their studies abroad: degree mobility and credit mobility. The former refers to entire degree programmes that students complete in a foreign country; the latter is defined as “temporary tertiary education abroad [...] within the framework of enrolment in a tertiary education programme at a ‘home institution’ (usually) for the purpose of gaining academic credit (i.e. credit that will be recognised in that home institution)”<sup>47</sup>. Credit mobility is the key element of the Erasmus+ programme. Credit mobile students are usually excluded from the enrolment statistics of the host country and are reported only in the country of original enrolment. Fee-charging universities are therefore primarily interested in degree mobility as it offers by far the greater direct economic benefits. At first glance credit mobility often appears to be a “nice to have” within the broader context of internationalisation strategies. It is telling that the Head of Policy at the *Russell Group* – an association of twenty-four leading public research universities in the UK – argued for a continued UK access to Erasmus+ after Brexit not on the basis of benefits for HEIs but solely with regards to the advantages for the country: “Visiting students make an economic contribution to the UK through the spending they make in local economies. In addition, there are important soft power benefits of having students come to the UK who then return home and become ambassadors for our country and our university system, strengthening international links to the benefit of the UK.”<sup>48</sup>

However, the relevance of Erasmus+ goes clearly beyond these general effects. As several studies have shown, mobility programmes help HEIs to strengthen their regional and global visibility and competitiveness – not least because, as shown, most rankings, whether national or global, include the university’s internationalisation efforts as an important variable in assessing the quality of education. Erasmus+, which funded mobilities for more than 4.3 million

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Matthews 2017.

<sup>47</sup> UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT 2020: 33.

<sup>48</sup> Cole 2018.

learners and more than 880,000 practitioners between 2007 and 2016, directly contributed to improving the quality, innovation and internationalisation in higher education, for example through the introduction of new teaching materials or new assessment methods, according to the programme's mid-term evaluation.<sup>49</sup> Erasmus+ also comprises a strong value-based component. HEIs are generally happy to participate because the programme is perceived as one of the most positive, visible and effective contributions to the European idea. An "important part of Erasmus experiences, is the development of a sense of European citizenship and certain integration into a notional European society".<sup>50</sup> Based on extensive surveys the evaluation found that "Erasmus+ is highly valued by its stakeholders as well as the general public, which identifies the programme as the third most positive results of the EU [...] There is also evidence of a contribution to a more cohesive Union. The Erasmus+ programme fosters positive social/civic behaviour and a sense of feeling 'European'".<sup>51</sup> Most importantly, however, the participation in mobility programmes benefits the students which should be the main motivation for HEIs to support and strengthen degree and credit mobility.

Table 9 compares the inward and outward mobility of the four leading European countries in quantitative terms. The figures include all international students, i.e. "all individuals who have physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination of a given student is different from their country of origin."<sup>52</sup> Together, Germany, France, the UK and Russia, host 22.7% of all international students worldwide. In all four cases the number of foreign students substantially exceeds the number of domestic students studying abroad. As expected, the biggest gap exists in the UK where 17.9 of the student body is classed international while only 0.7 of UK students engage in degree or credit mobility. Even Germany has roughly twice as many international students coming to the country than German students abroad. In 2009 the Bologna follow-up conference in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve stipulated that "in 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad".<sup>53</sup> The relatively low figures for outbound mobility (outbound mobility ratio) show that this objective has not been achieved and indeed remains a distant vision.

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<sup>49</sup> European Commission 2018a: 32.

<sup>50</sup> Block 2016: 274.

<sup>51</sup> European Commission 2018b: 2.

<sup>52</sup> UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT 2020: 33.

<sup>53</sup> European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2009.

Table 9: Mobility Key Indicators: Top 4 European Countries for total mobility numbers

	Germany	France	United Kingdom	Russian Federation
Students abroad:				
Total number of mobile students abroad	122,195	89,379	35,252	56,659
(%of total mobile students)	2.3	1.7	0.7	1.1
Outbound mobility ratio	4.0	3.5	1.4	1.0
Gross outbound enrolment ratio	2.8	2.3	0.9	0.8
Students hosted:				
Total number of mobile students hosted	258,873	258,380	534,734	250,658
(%of total mobile students)	4.9	4.9	8.2	4.7
Inbound mobility rate	8.4	10.2	17.9	4.3

Source: UNESCO 2020.

Tables 10-13 provide a detailed overview of the origin of foreign and the destination of domestic students. A glossary view already confirms that the mobility roads leading in and out are not the same, i.e. the preferences of incoming and outgoing students do not match up in most instances. As for Germany, only Austria and Turkey are on both the Top 10 incoming and outgoing lists. Germany and Spain are the only matching pairs in the case of France; Germany and France in the case of the UK; and Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan for Russia. Quite obviously, image and rankings are not the only factors why students decide to study in a specific country, historical ties and language (e.g. teaching in the own mother tongue), ease of access (no visa required) and the available funding and scholarships also play important roles.

Table 10: Germany: Incoming and Outgoing Mobility

Incoming: Country of Origin		Outgoing: Destination Country	
China	27,765	Austria	28,474
India	13,387	Netherlands	22,656
Austria	10,631	United Kingdom	13,220
Russian Federation	9,620	Switzerland	11,266
France	7,057	United States	6,944
Cameroon	7,050	France	6,428
Italy	6,929	Turkey	3,755
Bulgaria	6,372	Denmark	3,570
Ukraine	6,148	Hungary	3,234
Turkey	6,074	Sweden	1,889

Source: UNESCO 2020

Table 11: France: Incoming and Outgoing Mobility

Incoming: Country of origin		Outgoing: Destination Country	
Morocco	29,733	Canada	15,912
China	24,788	United Kingdom	13,089
Algeria	20,491	Belgium	10,621
Tunisia	9,832	Switzerland	10,162
Italy	9,468	Germany	7,057
Senegal	7,908	Spain	7,052
Germany	6,428	United States	6,487
Spain	5,789	Romania	2,105
Côte d'Ivoire	5,464	Netherlands	2,044
Cameroon	4,682	Italy	1,523

Source: UNESCO 2020

Table 12: United Kingdom: Incoming and Outgoing Mobility

Incoming: Country of origin		Outgoing: Destination Country	
China	96,543	United States	10,316
China, Hong Kong	16,580	Netherlands	2,723
India	16,421	Germany	2,255
Malaysia	16,350	Australia	2,235
United States	16,178	France	2,139
Italy	13,376	Canada	1,663
Germany	13,220	Bulgaria	1,595
France	13,089	Ireland	1,427
Nigeria	12,642	Spain	995
Greece	10,025	Denmark	947

Source: UNESCO 2020

Table 13: Russian Federation: Number of Incoming and Outgoing Mobilities

Incoming: Country of origin		Outgoing: Destination Country	
Kazakhstan	65,237	Germany	9,620
Uzbekistan	20,862	Czechia	5,979
Turkmenistan	17,457	United States	5,081
Ukraine	15,263	United Kingdom	3,920
Tajikistan	14,204	France	3,691
China	11,950	Finland	2,733
Belarus	11,600	Italy	2,303
Azerbaijan	11,269	Belarus	1,952
India	6,544	Kyrgyzstan	1,535
Kyrgyzstan	5,523	Kazakhstan	1,511

Source: UNESCO 2020

A closer look at the specific situation in Germany reveals that while between 2014 and 2019 the number of international students increased by 38.1% nationally, the individual States experienced different growth rates. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania had the highest increase of 71.2% and the Saarland with 13.6% the lowest. Although the 2014 baseline dates have to be considered – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania had the smallest number and thus started from a low base while the Saarland already was home to one of the largest foreign student communities in percentage terms in Germany mainly thanks to its proximity to France – the differences are striking. Given the autonomous status of German universities, the specific fig-

ures are mainly related to the degree of effectiveness regarding the respective HEIs' internationalisation efforts. Yet, State governments can also play a positive role. To stay with the example of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, in response to the low number of international students a few years ago, in 2017 both the State Parliament and Government started initiatives to strengthen the internationalisation efforts in cooperation with the State's HEIs. Subsequently, In the winter semester 2019/20 the share of international students increased to 10.4%. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture plans to provide the state's HEIs with EUR 1 million to further support their internationalisation and especially the establishment of double degree programmes. Besides, the fostering of university partnerships is almost always on the agenda of the First Minister's official trips abroad. However, as senior official in the ministry science department noted, "for the future, we consider it important to be able to attract and retain not only international students, but above all academics from abroad. There is still a lot of catching up to do. However, this is not just a task for the science department, it is a task for society as a whole. For example, Welcome Centers at the various universities are a first step. A more cosmopolitan society requires further joint efforts, which cannot be absorbed purely financially." This surely does not just apply to Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania but to Germany as a whole as well as many European countries.

Table 14: Foreign Students (*Bildungsausländer*), in 2014 and 2019, by federal state and in % of all students in the relevant state

Federal state	2014		2019		Changes in the numbers 2014-2019 in%
	Number	In%	Number	In%	
Baden-Wuerttemberg	31,743	9.1	37,292	10.4	17.5
Bavaria	27,022	7.6	42,791	10.9	58.4
Berlin	22,220	13.4	33,434	17.4	50.5
Brandenburg	5,617	11.2	7,028	14.2	25.1
Bremen	3,739	10.6	4,721	12.6	26.3
Hamburg	7,264	7.7	10,245	9.3	41.0
Hesse	19,508	8.6	24,948	9.5	27.9
Mecklenb.-W. Pomerania	2,036	5.2	3,486	9.1	71.2
Lower Saxony	12,534	7.1	19,186	9.1	53.1
North Rhine -Westphalia	50,276	7.2	68,992	8.8	37.2
Rhineland-Palatinate	8,335	6.8	11,663	9.4	39.9
Saarland	3,356	11.7	3,812	12.1	13.6
Saxony	12,242	10.8	16,477	15.1	34.6
Saxony-Anhalt	5,203	9.3	6,864	12.5	31.9
Schleswig-Holstein	3,080	5.5	4,119	6.4	33.7
Thuringia	4,673	9.0	7,099	14.3	51.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>218,848</b>	<b>8,4</b>	<b>302,157</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>38.1</b>

Source: Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung (DZHW); Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) (2020): 6

### 3.2 International and English-language Degree Programmes

Regardless of the specific motivations of individual universities to (further) internationalise, offering international degree programmes taught in English is the most important and ultimately also most promising strategy to boost international student numbers. At the same time, home students also benefit from taking English taught programmes (ETPs) as this is likely to improve

their prospects on the international job market. There are no current figures available but the comprehensive studies by Bernd Wächter and Friedhelm Maiworm note that in 2014, 54 per cent of the students on ETPs were foreign students in the nations in which they are studying. This figure was down from 65% in 2007 suggesting that ETPs have become more attractive to home students and are not just a tool to increase international student numbers. In 2014, in the case of only 10% of the ETPs were all the students from abroad.<sup>54</sup>

There are no standardised data for degree programmes taught in English at European universities. Part of the methodological problem is the challenge to define what counts as an ETP – only those entirely taught in English or also those where English is the medium of instruction for some or most units of the degree? The two most useful sources are figures provided by THE for such programmes at top 1000 universities (table 15) and the data prepared by study.eu, a private company (table 16). The latter is more comprehensive as it includes – at least this is suggested – all HEIs. Table 16 lists all countries with at least a 5% average of degree programmes offered in English.

*Table 15: Non-English speaking European countries with the most English programmes at top 1000 universities (Times Higher Education Ranking), 2016*

Country	Number of top 1000 universities (THE) offering programmes in English	Number of English programmes	Average no. of programmes by university
Netherlands	12	1034	81.2
Denmark	7	482	68.9
Sweden	12	550	45.8
Switzerland	10	413	41.3
Finland	9	240	26.7
Spain	27	426	15.7
Germany	54	835	15.5
Italy	28	230	8.2

*Data Source: Minsky 2016*

<sup>54</sup> Bernd Wächter, Friedhelm Maiworm (eds.) (2014). English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education. The State of Play in 2014. Bonn: Lemmens Medien GmbH, 2014 (ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education), 16-17.



Table 16: English-language degree programmes in EU countries

Country	Number of universities offering programmes in English	Number of English programmes	Average no. of programmes by university
Estonia	10	243	24.3
Sweden	38	817	21.5
Netherlands	27	555	20.6
Switzerland	16	324	20.3
Denmark	32	589	18.4
Finland	39	554	14.2
Norway	23	273	11.9
Lithuania	35	359	10.3
Spain	57	545	9.6
Latvia	26	248	9.5
Malta	3	28	9.3
Belgium	24	217	9.0
Austria	22	182	8.3
Italy	56	420	7.5
Iceland	9	65	7.2
Germany	169	860	5.1
France	64	321	5.0

Data Source: Study.EU (2020)

The figures presented in tables 15 and 16 can only be indicative as the results differ substantially in some cases. For example, while according to THE, 12 Top-1000 Netherlands universities offer 1034 ETPs, study.eu only lists a total of 555 such programmes across 27 HEIs. In both surveys, however, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries and Switzerland are the leading providers of degree programmes in English. According to THE, Leiden University in the Netherlands has the highest number of ETPs at any HEI in Europe outside the UK. In recent years, the Baltic countries, which are not included in the THE data but on the study.eu website, especially Estonia, have established themselves as successful newcomers in the provision of ETPs.

Regardless of the extent to which the figures are entirely reliable, they confirm a north-south divide in Europe which was also described in three major studies conducted between 2001 and 2014. During this period the number of English taught programmes (ETPs) increased more than tenfold but this growth was mainly concentrated in Northern and Central Europe.<sup>55</sup> In recent years, however, particularly Spanish universities and – to a lesser extent – Italian HEIs have started to catch up. In Central and Southern Europe ETPs Business Schools were the avantgarde in the provision of ETPs but many universities have followed suit.

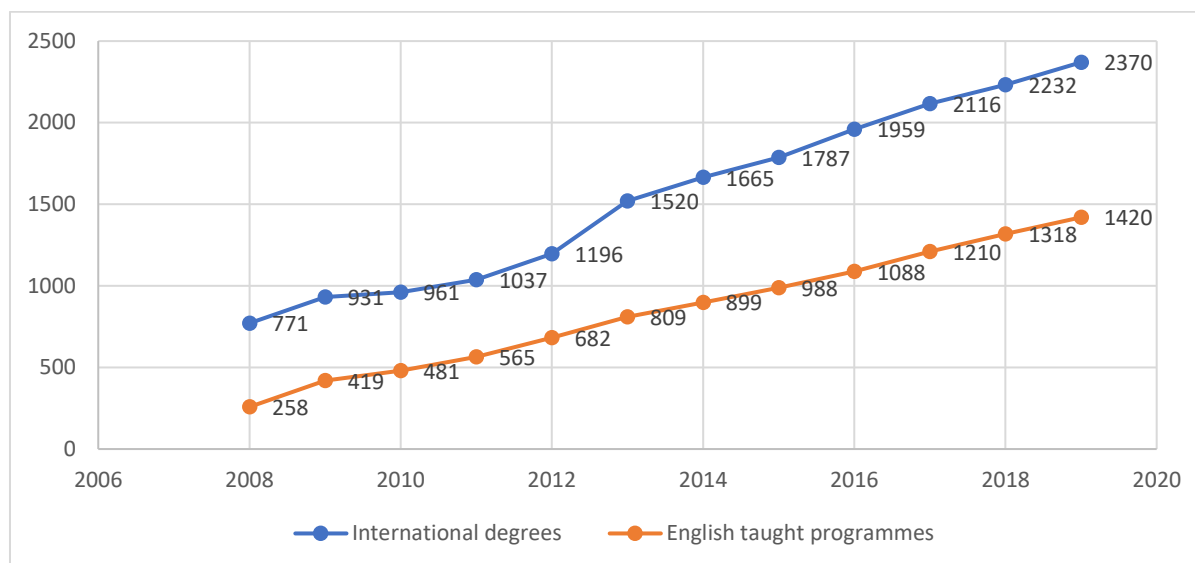
While collectively German HEIs offer the largest (or in the THE table second-largest) number of ETPs outside the UK and Ireland, the country has one of the lowest shares: 15.5% across 54 TOP-1000 HEIs or 5.1% across 169 universities covered by study.eu. According to the more comprehensive and methodologically transparent data for Germany provided by the HIS-Monitor,<sup>56</sup> in 2020 the country's HEIs offered a total of 1420 ETPs and 2370 international degrees, i.e. joint or double degrees with foreign universities in any language(s). The number of

<sup>55</sup> Bernd Wächter, Friedhelm Maiworm (eds.) (2014). English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education. The State of Play in 2014. Bonn: Lemmens Medien GmbH, 2014 (ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education), 16-17.

<sup>56</sup> The HIS-Monitor (<https://www.hsi-monitor.de>) is a joint project of Akademischer Austauschdienstes (DAAD), Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung (AvH), Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK) and Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

the former has increased more than fivefold and the latter about three times since 2008 indicating a strong trend towards internationalisation in the delivery of degree programmes.

Figure 2: International Degrees and English-taught Programmes at German HEIs, 2006-2020



Data Source: HSI-Monitor 2020

Of the 19,312 courses that were registered in the HRK-Hochschulkompass in June 2018, 11 percent were labelled as "international" by the universities or were mainly taught in English. Almost two thirds of the 392 HRK member universities (64 percent) have included international degrees in their portfolio. In terms of the total number of study programmes, the share of international study programmes offered by technical universities was the highest at 18.1%.<sup>57</sup> ETPs are an important but not the only crucial factor for technical universities to attract international students as many – particularly in engineering – also study on German taught programmes. The reputation of a degree programme and the university, its location and – very importantly – the experience of graduates transmitted by the word of mouth, which these days often means social media, are equally decisive points in any international student's decision where to study for a degree.

In 2018, 64.7% of all double degrees offered in Germany were jointly awarded with HEIs in EU-28 countries – mainly with France (25.1%), the UK (8.8%), Spain (6.3%) and Italy (5.5%) – 6.3% with HEIs in European countries outside the EU, 8.6% with North America, 5.8% with Latin America, 1.5% with Africa, 10.7% with Asia and 2.4% with Australia and Oceania.<sup>58</sup>

### 3.3 International Staff

In addition to international students the number of academics joining HEIs from abroad is seen as a key indicator for internationalisation (see section 1). In Europe, for the obvious reasons of language and position in global higher education, the UK attracts the largest number of international staff from the most diverse spectrum of countries. In the academic year 2018-19, UK HEIs employed a total of 439,955 people, 217,065 of them academic staff. Within the group

<sup>57</sup> DAAD 2019: 16.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

of all employees 53,640 came from other EU states, and 38,165 from non-EU countries. 38,080 academic staff members joined the UK from within and 29,565 from outside the EU. Hence, 26% of all staff and 31.2% of academic staff were foreigners in the UK. Out of 166 HEIs only two very small institutions, Stranmillis University College and The National Film and Television School, did not employ any foreign nationals at all.<sup>59</sup>

These figures are still markedly below some leading universities in Asia, such as the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), also in Singapore, which are perhaps among the most internationalised universities in the world and have a share of around 60% and 70% foreign faculty respectively.<sup>60</sup> In Europe the closest match are Swiss universities. In 2017, 49% of all employees at the country's 12 universities were foreigners, up from 40% in 2008. Also in 2017, 51% of professors and almost two third of lecturers were foreigners. At ETH Zürich even 70% of professors were non-Swiss. Of the 23,692 foreign academics, 56% came from the neighbouring countries Germany (30%), Italy (12%), France (11%) and Austria (3%) reflecting also the language spectrum at Swiss universities. However, Switzerland also attracted a sizable number of foreign academics from around the world, with the number of Asian academics even exceeding the total of Italian nationals at Swiss HEIs.<sup>61</sup> A small number of other European countries is also characterised by notable shares of foreign employees in the higher education sector but their situation is rather atypical as they benefit from a strong inflow of academics from neighbouring countries. For example, in the case of Austria in 2017 4,269 German nationals worked in academic positions at the country's HEIs, equalling 45% of all foreigners and 11.3% of the total academic staff at Austria's 22 public universities.<sup>62</sup> And the multilingual University of Luxembourg, which does not even publish statistics on the nationalities of their staff but simply states that it has "2,000 employees from all over the globe",<sup>63</sup> reflects the general situation in the Grand Duchy where about 70% of the workforce has a foreign nationality.

German HEIs still trail UK and Swiss universities by some distance but the share of international academic and artistic staff members increased from 9.7% in 2008 to 12.5% in 2019. In 2019, figure 3, 49,523 out of 397,763 academic/artistic employees held a foreign citizenship (figure 3)

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<sup>59</sup> Data source Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/location>; author's own calculations.

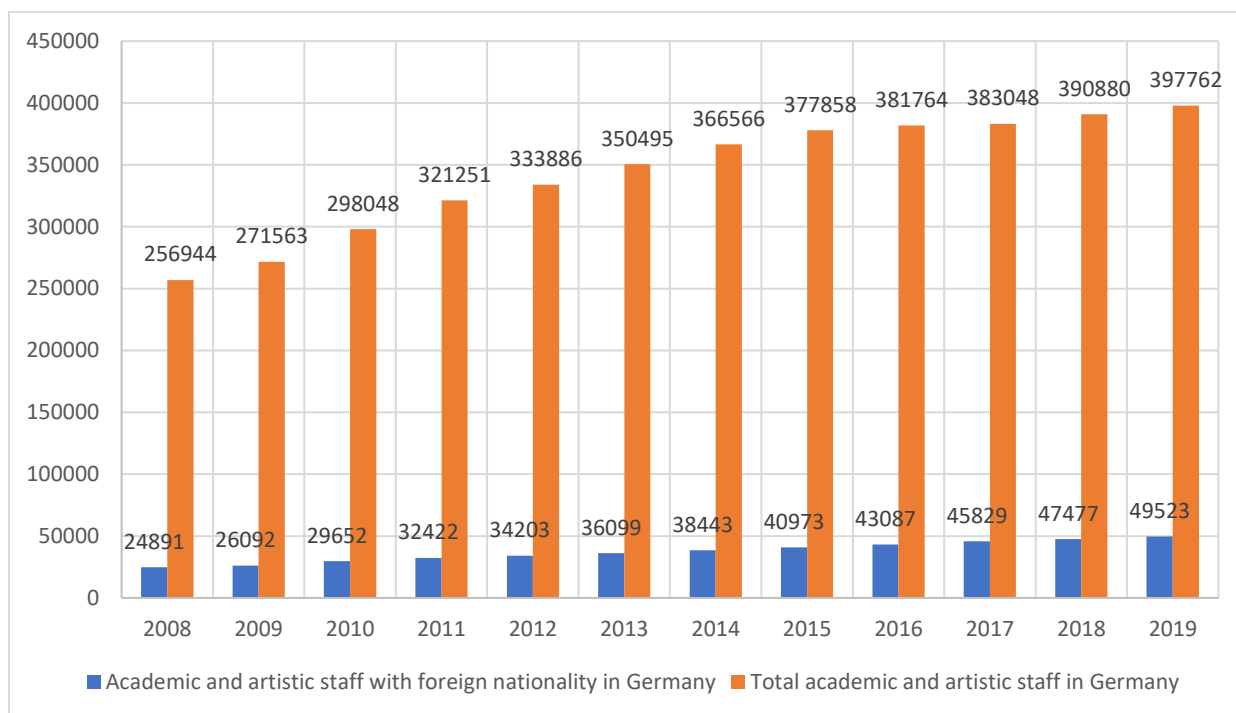
<sup>60</sup> Justin S. Sanders. Comprehensive Internationalization in the Pursuit of 'World-Class' Status: A Cross-Case Analysis of Singapore's Two Flagship Universities

<sup>61</sup> IWD. Der Informationsdienst der deutschen Wirtschaft (14.12.2018). Schweizer Universitäten: Attraktiv für alle Welt, <https://www.iwd.de/artikel/schweizer-universitaeten-attraktiv-fuer-alle-welt-411392/#:~:text=Die%20Schweizer%20Hochschulen%20sind%20ein,Schweizer%20Universitätsmitarbeiter%20einen%20ausländischen%20Pass>; Sarah Springman (20.03.2019). Inside ETH Zurich: one of the world's most international universities. Times Higher Education, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/inside-eth-zurich-one-worlds-most-international-universities>

<sup>62</sup> Forschung und Lehre (2017). Mehr deutsche Wissenschaftler an österreichischen Universitäten, <https://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/karriere/mehr-deutsche-wissenschaftler-an-oesterreichischen-universitaeten-93/>

<sup>63</sup> University of Luxembourg. 2019 Year in Review, p. 6, <https://wwwde.uni.lu/content/download/127497/1471185/file/Uni-Lu-Year-in-Review-2019-web.pdf>

Figure 3: International Staff at German Universities



Data Source: HSI-Monitor 2020.

As part of the internationalisation drive universities nowadays compete for professors and top researchers in a way almost reminiscent of the football transfer market. In the UK, for example, the “transfer window” opens widely in the run-up to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) process, previously Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), an impact evaluation which assesses the research of British HEIs and serves as a reputational yardstick and a benchmark for funding and the allocation of resources. In anticipation of a new REF/RAE round, universities often open a bigger than usual number of new academic positions for research-active staff to broaden the pool of high-quality publications for submission to the evaluation panels. Some well-endowed HEIs have pro-actively lured academics with strong research and publication records away from competitors and to their own campus. In their quest to climb the international rankings, especially but not only in China, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Middle East many universities have successfully secured the services of renowned and well-published European, Australian and American academics. High salaries and low teaching and administrative loads usually serve as strong incentives to attract foreign professors. Back in 2012, *Die Zeit* published an article entitled (in the English translation) “Sugar for the professors. Research grants worth millions, entire headhunter departments: universities give everything in the competition for the best researchers”.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, however, the article did not refer to the US or the UK, where competition for the academic elite has always been fierce, but to Germany.

At many UK universities, just like in the US, Australia, and a growing number of HEIs in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific region, it has been common practise for many years to use search firms in the recruitment of academic leaders, from heads of departments to deans and university presidents, and increasingly also professors and chairs without management duties. In

<sup>64</sup> Hoffmann 2012.

these countries headhunters are now the “dominant filters” for top positions at universities.<sup>65</sup> On a randomly selected date, 27 August 2020, two leading recruitment agencies, Wittkieffer and Perrett Laver, were – between them – running active searches for 147 positions in higher education. However, this is just a tiny part of the entire multi-billion headhunter industry. The website *higheredjobs* lists around 100 search firms active in higher education.<sup>66</sup> Yet, there is little research on the role of headhunters. Comprehensive studies do not exist and some smaller ones focus mainly on the US. For instance, over a 10-year period, the 14 public universities in the US state of Ohio spent nearly USD 25 million on search firms. Between 2013 and 2015 Ohio State University alone contracted with a dozen executive-search firms to conduct 33 searches at a cost of nearly USD 3.9 million.<sup>67</sup>

As the *Zeit* article quoted above suggests, German HEIs are no strangers to involving personnel consultants, although on a much smaller scale. In the vast majority of cases universities simply advertise professorships and follow the open and transparent recruitment and appointment procedures as prescribed by state laws and university statutes. However, this does not prevent HEIs from speaking to potential candidates directly to convince them of their own university. The Technical University of Munich (TUM), for example, set up a dedicated department whose purpose it is to “track down and woo the best researchers in the world”. According to newspaper reports executive search firms have been involved in identifying suitable candidates for Rector (President) positions and even smaller universities have used the services of headhunters. The Campus Schwäbisch Hall of Heilbronn University of Applied Science was reported to have spent EUR 46.000 Euro for the search and appointment of professors.<sup>68</sup> Information on the involvement of headhunters at German HEIs is scarce, however, and few university presidents are as open about their approach as Wolfgang A. Herrmann, president of TUM from 1995 until 2019. Asked in an interview as to how do universities find excellent academics, he answered: “We follow two paths: firstly, public job advertisements, secondly, active headhunting - i.e. a targeted search for leading researchers and academic teachers in their discipline, worldwide. If we have an unrivalled, outstanding scientist in mind for a particular professorship, we can also appoint without advertising. Of course, there are also mixed forms, which means that we also target top academics for advertised professorships. Once we stopped a top scientist here at TUM who was on his way from Münster to ETH Zurich.”<sup>69</sup>

### 3.4. International Research Collaboration

There can be little doubt that “internationalisation is seen as a significant means to achieve quality in research”,<sup>70</sup> while, at the same time, developing international research boosts the reputation of universities -- and their positions in league tables which tend to put a strong emphasis on research outputs. European HEIs are characterised not just by a strong commitment to the internationalisation of their study programmes, but also their research activities. All EU member states provide funding through different channels to encourage their HEIs to engage in cross-border research. International cooperation is also one of the most important objectives

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<sup>65</sup> Times Higher Education 2016.

<sup>66</sup> HigherEdJobs 2020.

<sup>67</sup> Wilde/Finkelstein 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Lecturio HR Magazin 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Herrmann 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Hahn Kristensena/Karlsen 2018: 19.

throughout the history of the EU Framework Programmes and their successor, the current Horizon 2020. The promotion of international research collaboration is supposed to strengthen European competitiveness globally, create contacts with scientists from outside Europe in order to provide them access to research networks, and address specific global challenges.

Framework Programme 7 (FP7, 2007-2013) had a total budget of EUR 55 billion, accounting for 3% of total expenditure for research and technical development (RTD) in Europe or 25% of competitive funding. Over the seven years duration of FP7, more than 139,000 research proposals were submitted, out of which 25,000 projects were selected and received funding. The most important groups among the 29,000 organisations participating in FP7 were universities (44% of the FP7 funding), research and technology organisations (27%), large private companies (11%) and SMEs (13%), while the public sector (3%) and civil society organizations (2%) played a minor role.<sup>71</sup> Horizon 2020 has been even bigger with nearly €80 billion of funding available over seven years (2014 to 2020). The interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 found that the programme was “producing world class excellence in science through, for example, the creation of multi-disciplinary international networks, training and mobility of researchers and the creation of research infrastructures.”<sup>72</sup> There is no elaboration, however, on the extent to which Horizon 2020 funding strengthened the international position of EU universities. The EU’s main objective is to foster the European Research Area (ERA), “the ambition to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU”.<sup>73</sup> Horizon 2020, just as its predecessor schemes, is meant to provide a catalyst for the creation of a culture of cooperation and network-building primarily within Europe, in short, the main tool for the Europeanisation of research. However, in FP7,

The shares of partners from outside Europe remained low [...]. It was lowest in terms of partners from high income countries that could be strategic partners for Europe in fostering its scientific excellence and innovations. The lack of a more strategic approach to international collaboration persisted and led to an opaque situation with different, to some extent opposing logics. Even though the integration of international cooperation across the programme has been an important move in FP7, the lack of a strategic approach with clear objectives remained a weakness.”<sup>74</sup>

According to the ERA progress report 2018,

In general, the extent of international cooperation activities between ERA and non-ERA countries is on the rise. Countries with more developed R&I systems have more collaboration opportunities, and they are also better equipped to sustain and initiate new partnerships. There is a particular need to facilitate international brain circulation by creating a more diverse set of incentives. ERA countries need to increase their efforts to attract the best international talent so they can overcome labour shortages, strengthen research capabilities, boost innovation and deal with grand challenges”<sup>75</sup>

Horizon 2020 figures confirm that the best endowed national education systems in Europe are those which have benefitted most. 61.7% of EU funding under Horizon 2020 went to the big five: Germany, UK, France, Spain, and Italy (table 17). At the same time, as of 2017, EU-13 (the member states which have joined since 2004)<sup>76</sup> had only participated in 8.5% of H2020

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<sup>71</sup> High Level Expert Group 2015:5.

<sup>72</sup> European Commission 2017.

<sup>73</sup> European Commission 2020a.

<sup>74</sup> High Level Expert Group 2015: 55

<sup>75</sup> European Union 2019:13.

<sup>76</sup> Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovakia, Cyprus, Latvia, Czech Republic, Malta, Estonia, Poland, Croatia, Romania, Hungary and Slovenia

projects (slightly up from 7.9% under FP7) and together received a share of 4.4% of H2020 net EU funding (an increase of 0.2% compared to FP7).<sup>77</sup>

Table 17: Horizon 2020 Key Figures: Top 10 Beneficiaries

Horizon 2020 Rank according to budget share	FP 7 Rank according to budget share	Country	Number of organisations involved in H2020 projects <sup>(1)</sup> and % of EU total	Net EU funding in Billion Euro and % of EU total <sup>(2)</sup>	Number of organisations applying for grants and % of EU total <sup>(3)</sup>	Success rate in % <sup>(4)</sup> (EU average: 12.02%)
1	1	Germany	17,291/13.35	8.45/16.53	95,937/12.4	15.19
2	2	UK	15,305/11.83	6.95/13.59	92,028/11.89	14.77
3	3	France	14,281/11.03	6.28/12.28	69,488/8.96	15.46
4	6	Spain	14,283/11.03	5.12/10.02	95,846/12.39	13.03
5	4	Italy	13,866/10.72	4.64/9.07	95,500/12.34	11.90
6	5	Netherlands	9,131/7.05	4.37/ 6.37	49,324/6.37	16.33
7	8	Belgium	6,829/5.27	2.8/5.47	34,959/4.62	17.72
8	7	Switzerland	4,208/37.38% of budget for Associated Countries	1.9/40.23% of Associated Countries total	22,780/31.96% of Associated Countries total	17.58 (13.7% Associated Countries average)
9	11	Denmark	3,319/2.56	1.46/2.86	20,926/2.7	15.48
10	10	Austria	4,138/3.20	1.58/3.08	22,148/2.86	12.02

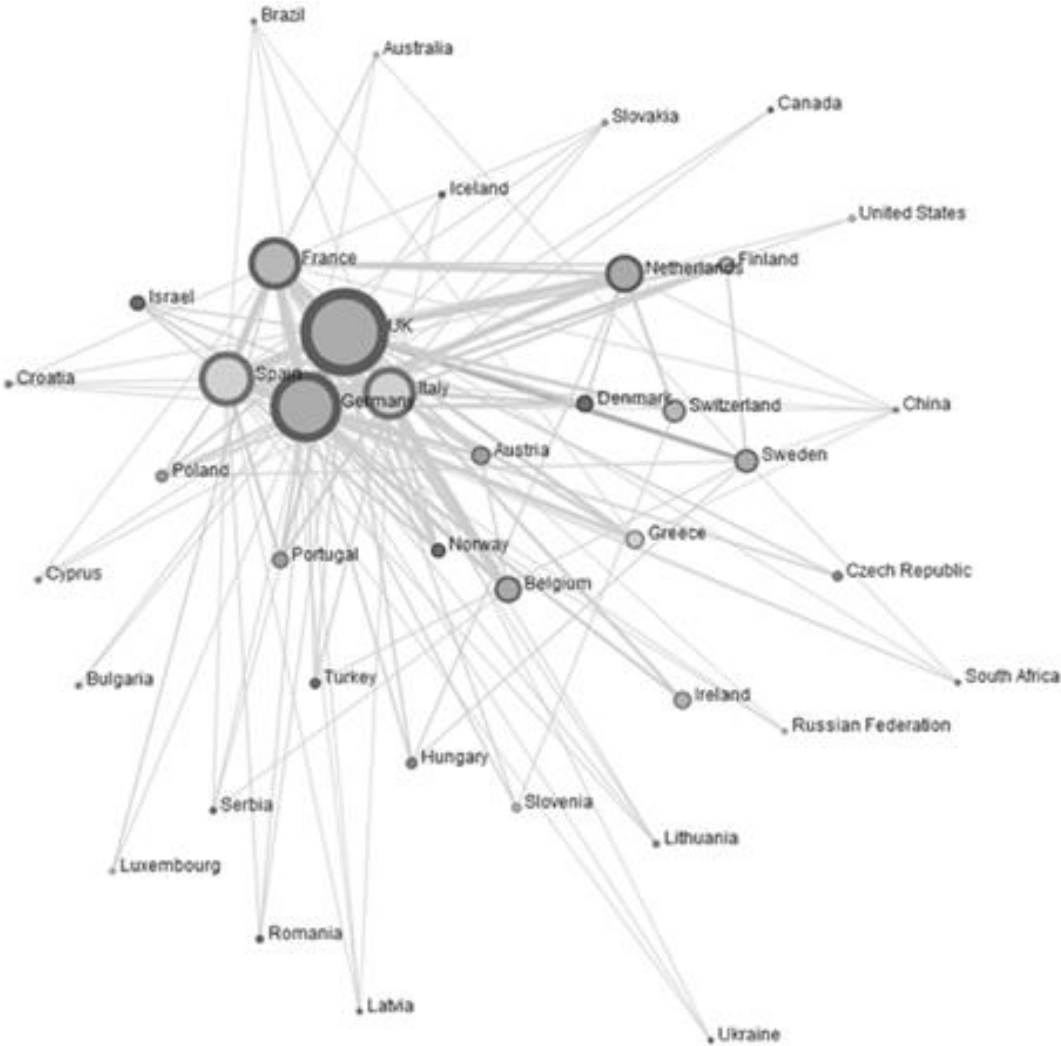
Notes: (1) One organisation applying in N; (2) Funding received by the project's participants after deduction of their linked third parties' funding; (3) One organisation applying in N proposals; (4) Ratio of the retained proposals to the total number of eligible proposals received

Data source: European Commission 2020b,c.

Figure 4 visualises the Horizon 2020 cooperation networks between countries based on the number of collaborative projects they participate in. The concentration around larger and older Member States, such as the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy and France are clearly visible. Third Countries and newer Member States are predominantly placed in the periphery of the network.

<sup>77</sup> European Commission 2017: 40.

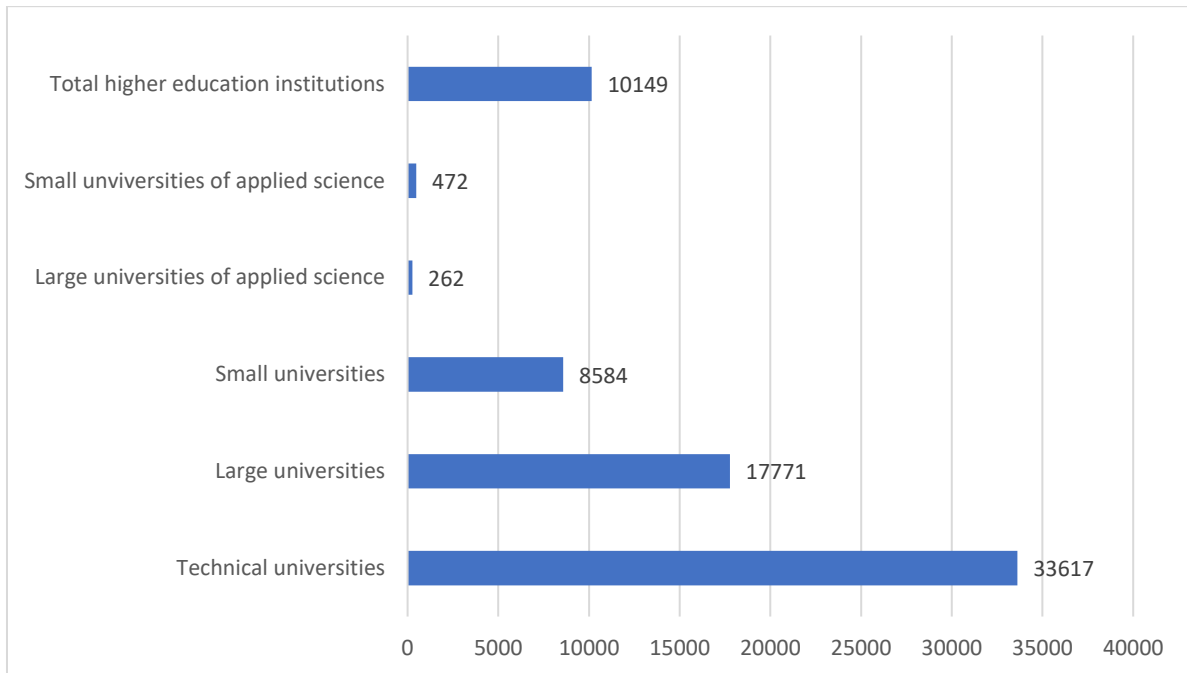
Figure 4: Horizon 2020 network at country level – based on project participations



Note: the figure includes countries with more than 20 projects and over 20 collaborations.  
Source: European Commission 2017: 93.

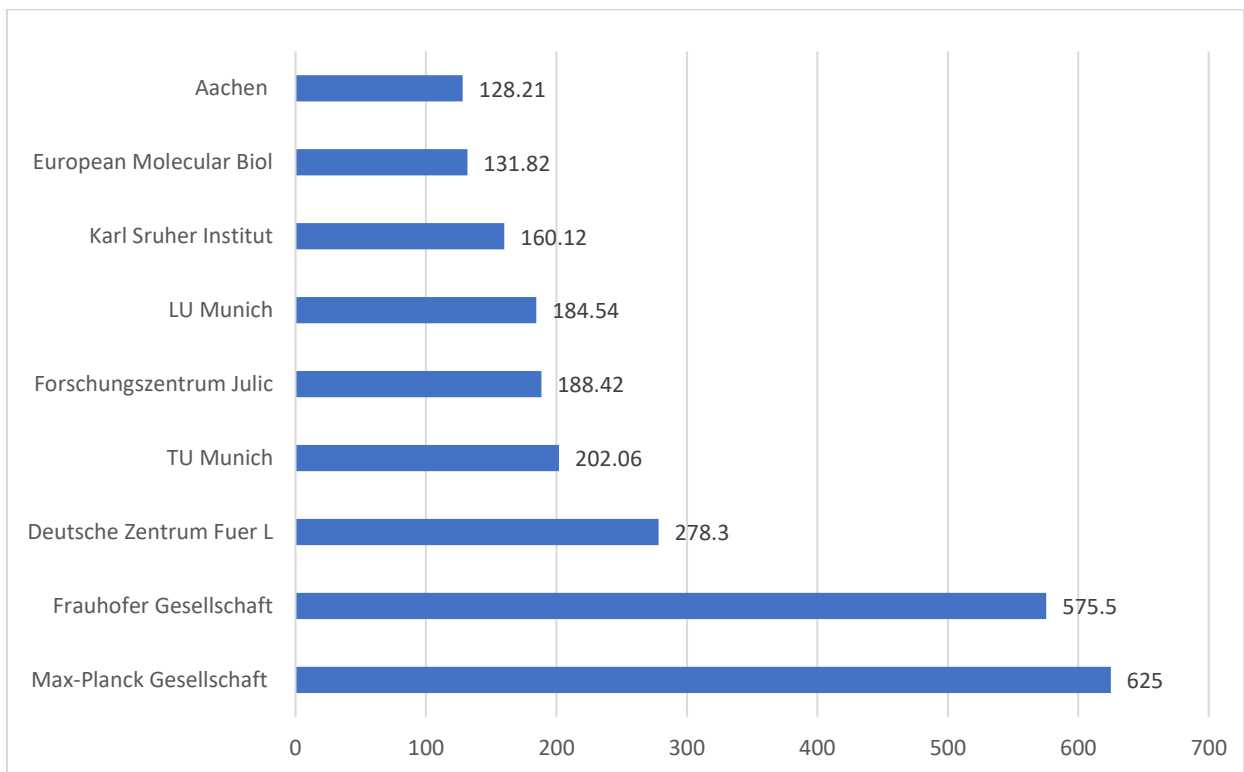


Figure 5: Horizon 2020 funds pro professorship based on contracts concluded with German HEIs in 2017 (average in Euro)



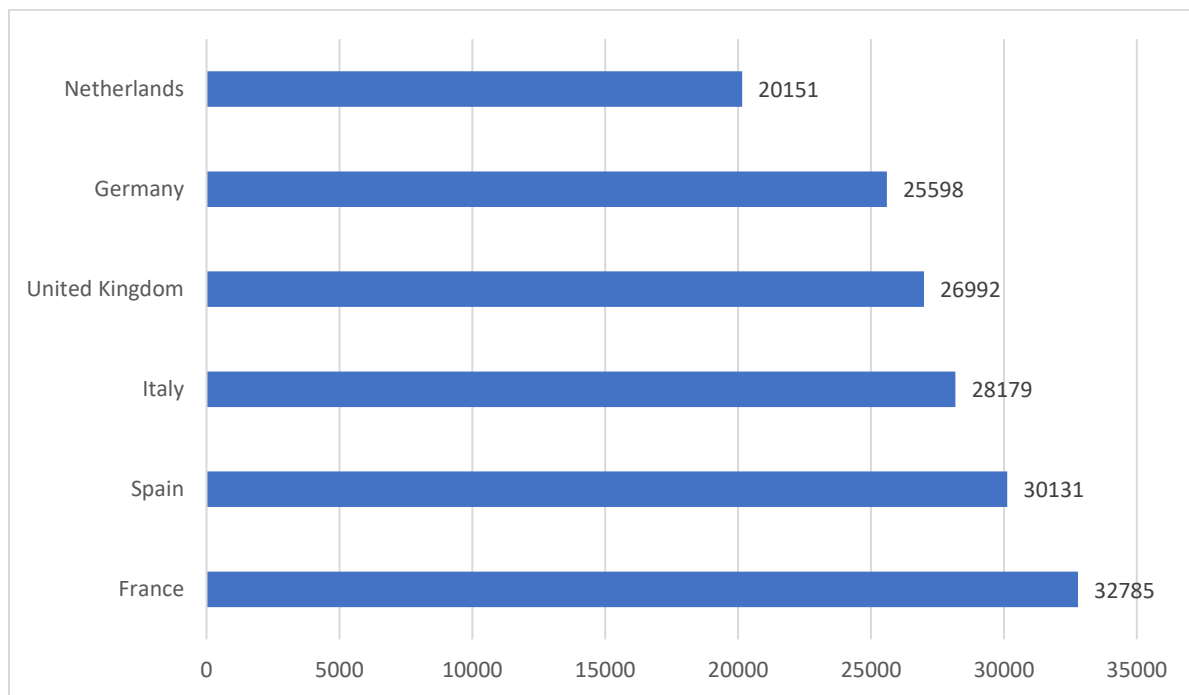
Source: Leifgen/Burkhart 2019: 20.

Figure 6: Top Organisations, EU Net Contribution in Euro million



Source: European Commission 2020d

Figure 7: Top Collaborations: Collaboration Links in the Projects where Germany is involved



Source: European Commission 2020d.

### 3.5 Branch Campuses

The recruitment of international students and staff, coupled with the development of more and more international degree programmes and a strong emphasis on the development of transnational research networks might still be the most important components of internationalisation. For some time, however, the emergence of regional or global for-profit higher education conglomerates, franchise operations, educational hubs, and more recently, virtual learning have become increasingly important factors in internationalisation.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the most important of these developments is the growing number of branch campuses. An international branch campus (IBC) is “a form of international higher education whereby one or more partnering institutions establishes a physical presence in a foreign location for the purpose of expanding global outreach and student exchange. Generally named for their ‘home’ institution and offering undergraduate and graduate programs, graduating students are conferred degrees from one or all partnering institutions, dependent on the agreement”.<sup>79</sup>

Although IBCs have received widespread public attention only since the early 2000s, they are not a new phenomenon. The first IBC was established in 1955 by the Washington DC-based Johns Hopkins University in Italy. It took another almost three decades until IBCs began to flourish from the early 1980s when a number of American universities opened campuses to serve US military and civilian personnel located abroad. In the 1990s, decreasing government funding for higher education initiated another push, encouraging HEIs from Australia, Canada

<sup>78</sup> Internationalisation of Higher Education 2015, 43.

<sup>79</sup> Wilkins, S. (2010). Higher education in the United Arab Emirates: an analysis of the outcomes of significant increases in supply and competition. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 32(4), 389-400

and the UK in particular, to seek partnerships for the founding of IBCs in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America.<sup>80</sup> According to data from the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) and the Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT), hosted at Pennsylvania State University and the State University of New York at Albany, the number of IBCs across the world grew from 84 in 2000 to 306 in 2020. In 2020, the largest “exporters of branch campuses” were: United States (86), United Kingdom (43), France (38), Russia (29), and Australia (20). The largest “importers of branch campus” were (in order of campuses imported): China (42), United Arab Emirates (33), Singapore (16), Malaysia (15), and Qatar (11).<sup>81</sup>

In the traditional conception of IBCs supplying education services “through exports and contractual mechanisms allows HEIs to gradually build experience and knowledge of the foreign market, thereby reducing the risks and uncertainty involved in the process of internationalisation. As a university develops knowledge of a foreign market, it may be willing to invest more resources and develop its activities in that market.”<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the largest receiving countries of IBCs represent high-income, emerging nations with rapidly developing economies and newly established regional financial centres. Receiving countries justify hosting IBCs by citing the institutions’ contribution to economic development and labour market as well as their being an affordable way to build domestic higher education capacity, providing access to world-class education and even building the reputation of the host country.<sup>83</sup>

*Box 7: Different Models of Branch Campuses*

Franchise Mode	A degree course is completed in two countries, for example China and the UK. The part of course taught by the Chinese partner is franchised by the UK university and it is therefore almost purely designed in the UK. The course delivered in China therefore includes service components, course materials, produced in the UK and exported to the partner in tangible or electronic forms.
Joint Programme	A single-based Joint Programme occurs when a university co-operates with a partner university on a degree course delivered entirely in the country of the partner university with the award of a degree or dual degrees from each partner’s university.
Joint Venture	A Joint Venture involves the establishment of a new separate legal educational entity established by two HEI. for example from the UK and China, operating within the territory of the host country, for example China, Malaysia or the UAE. <sup>84</sup>

Source: Xiaoqing Li & Joanne Roberts 2012

<sup>80</sup> Siltaoja, M., Juusola, K., & Kivijärvi, M. (2019). ‘World-class’ fantasies: A neocolonial analysis of international branch campuses. *Organization*, 26(1), 75–97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508418775836>, p. 77.

<sup>81</sup> Cross-Border Education Research Team (update November 2020). C-BERT defines a branch campus as “an entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign higher education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; and provides an entire academic program, substantially on site, leading to a degree awarded by the foreign education provider.”

<sup>82</sup> Xiaoqing Li & Joanne Roberts 2012.

<sup>83</sup> Siltaoja, M., Juusola, K., & Kivijärvi, M. (2019). ‘World-class’ fantasies: A neocolonial analysis of international branch campuses. *Organization*, 26(1), 75–97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508418775836>, p. 77.

<sup>84</sup> Xiaoqing Li & Joanne Roberts 2012.

The term branch campus glosses over the significant differences that exist and covers everything from delivering degree programmes (or even only parts of it) to a dozen students on a campus of a partner university to the establishment of complete new universities. An example of the latter is Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), an international joint venture university founded by Xi'an Jiaotong University in China and the University of Liverpool in the UK. XJTLU offers approximately 90 degree programmes in the fields of science, engineering, business, finance, architecture, urban planning, language, culture which are taught in English except for general and basic courses. Undergraduate students earn two degrees: an XJTLU degree from the Chinese Ministry of Education and a globally recognised degree from the University of Liverpool. Postgraduate students receive a University of Liverpool degree that is recognised by the Ministry of Education in China. The University has almost 17,000 registered students, including those who are completing study at the University of Liverpool.<sup>85</sup> Similar examples of HEIs that go beyond first generation branch campuses and have established themselves as universities in their own right are the Malaysia Campus of the Australian Monash University, a pioneer and often considered one of the most successful examples of a joint venture HEI (in this case the partner is the Malaysian Sunway Group) or Nottingham University's purpose-built in Malaysia, which hosts around 5000 students from over 85 different countries. IBCs seem to be sustainable if they manage to develop their own identity rather than defining themselves as just a satellite of the mother university, establish an active campus life and create an environment in which international and local staff and students connect. There have been dozens of IBC closures in recent years because, among other reasons, student number targets were over-ambitious, the reality fell short and universities failed to understand the local environment, including the legal and regulatory framework and levels of competition, and attempted to manage the whole operation remotely.<sup>86</sup>

For example, Wolverhampton University opened a campus in Mauritius in 2012 but announced in 2016 that it would close. Aberystwyth University established a branch campus in Mauritius in 2015 but enrolled only 40 students in its first two terms - and lost more than GBP 1 million in the process. Reading University opened in Malaysia in 2011 but had lost GBP 27 million by 2018. University College London (UCL) opened in Kazakhstan, Australia and Qatar but all three operations were terminated.<sup>87</sup> In 2010, Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) opened a branch campus in South Korea, the FAU Busan Campus. Praised as a new path to internationalisation, FAU offered fully accredited Master degree programmes in biology and bioengineering and signed several agreements with German companies and research institutes where Busan students would do their compulsory work placements.<sup>88</sup> However, despite the undoubted attractiveness of the programmes in 2018 the campus was closed due to low student demand.

German universities have never been among the front runners in establishing IBCs and only a very small number maintain sizable operations abroad. The only two German IBCs on the 2017 C-BERT list that still exist are the German University of Technology Oman, which was founded

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/about/>

<sup>86</sup> Embedding marketing in international campus development: lessons from UK universities. Vicky Lewis

<sup>87</sup> Nicola Woolcock. Universities offer job links and sandy beaches on EU campuses The Times (London). January 25, 2020 Saturday, Edition 1, Scotland, p. 14.

<sup>88</sup> FAU Busan Establishing a Branch Campus in South Korea FAU Busan Coordinator Katharina Sommer, 2013, <https://www.unige.ch/formcont/files/2414/3921/7103/presSommer.pdf>

by RWTH Aachen in 2007, and the Shanghai-Hamburg-College, established by the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg) and the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (USST) in 1998. Basically, all German HEIs prefer targeted subject and degree-specific cooperation based on well-defined partnership agreements as their strategy towards, as Lukas Graf wrote a decade ago, a “systematic positioning [...] in the global market for higher education”, a phenomenon that has gaining momentum particularly since 1999 when the Bologna Declaration was signed.<sup>89</sup>

Table 18 shows the number of international agreements and related data by State. The figures also include research-related agreements.

*Table 18: International Agreements of German HEIs by State (Bundesland)*

	<b>Total Number of International Agreements</b>	<b>Number of HEIs with inter. agreements</b>	<b>Average number of int. agreements by university (rounded)</b>	<b>HEI with the most agreements</b>
Baden-Wuerttemberg	6627	60	110	Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (590)
Bavaria	5782	40	145	Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (568)
Berlin	2191	22	100	Freie Universität Berlin (526)
Brandenburg	808	8	101	Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg (207)
Bremen	655	5	131	Hochschule Bremen (357)
Hamburg	1097	14	78	Universität Hamburg (414)
Hesse	3264	25	131	Universität Kassel (510)
Mecklenb.-W. Pomerania	575	6	99	Universität Greifswald (190)
Lower Saxony	3234	22	147	Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (643)
North Rhine - Westphalia	5997	51	118	Universität zu Köln (507)
Rhineland-Palatinate	2182	15	145	Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (546)
Saarland	393	4	98	Universität des Saarlandes (324)
Saxony	2485	16	155	Technische Universität Dresden (519)
Saxony-Anhalt	1173	7	168	Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (332)
Schleswig-Holstein	669	11	61	Europa-Universität Flensburg (135)
Thuringia	1128	11	103	Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (219)
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,260</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>121</b>	

Source: German Rectors' Conference 2020b.

<sup>89</sup> Applying the Varieties of Capitalism Approach to Higher Education: comparing the internationalisation of German and British universities LUKAS GRAF 2009. 570 European Journal of Education, Part II

Recent data suggests that the enthusiasm for IBCs has faded. Between 2016 and 2019 only 11 new branch campuses opened globally while several IBCs under consideration failed to materialise.<sup>90</sup> However, what we also see is a shift in focus. As outlined above, traditionally IBCs were seen as a way to improve the quality of local HEIs sectors in developing countries or emerging economies through the example they set and the competition they offered. At the same time the “mother universities appreciated the opportunity to create regional research bases, increased their access to international students, boost their global reputations and perhaps even made some money along the way.”<sup>91</sup> Only a few years ago the growth of branch campuses and franchise operations by foreign universities was such a decisive and visible trend that a 2014 report by the British Council and DAAD described IBCs as “a significant component of higher education in a number of developing countries”. Back then 20% of students enrolled in a first degree in the UK studied in fact at an offshore campus.<sup>92</sup>

The idea of taking Western “world-class education” to non-Western developing countries has never been uncontroversial and was even branded as neo-colonialism by some.<sup>93</sup> India, for example abandoned the idea to allow foreign universities to operate in the country and has focused on the creation of domestic “institutes of eminence” instead.<sup>94</sup> At any rate, long gone are the days when North American and European universities were the undisputed leaders in global higher education. As briefly addressed in the first section of this paper, a clear divide between the North and the global South no longer exists and HEIs in China, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and elsewhere have firmly established themselves among the best in the world. Achieving this status and position took more than just knowledge transfer via branch campuses.

While the opening of new branch campuses particularly in the Middle East, Southeast and East Asia seems less attractive than a few years ago, several UK universities have strengthened ties with European partners in a quest not to get cut off from EU research funding and to offset the negative effects of Brexit on international student recruitment. Coventry University opened a campus in Wrocław, Poland, where courses began in September 2019. In 2015 King's College London (KCL) and TU Dresden established the transCampus initiative in medicine, a “wide academic platform from which students from both universities can move freely and benefit from the respective academic programmes”,<sup>95</sup> and two years later announced the aim to create KCL’s first European branch campus, in Dresden. At the same time Technical University Munich was planning to open a campus in London as a joint venture with Imperial College London.<sup>96</sup> In 2018 the two universities agreed on a strategic partnership, which, inter alia, comprises a joint PhD program at the interface of artificial intelligence, health care and robotics. The University of Oxford has strengthened its collaboration with HEIs in Berlin and formed an Oxford/Berlin Research Partnership as a strategic response to Brexit with Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and the university hospital Charité. “As a key feature this arrangement includes a legal and physical presence of the University of Oxford in Berlin. The intention for the British partner is to create a legal structure

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<sup>90</sup> The Times Higher Education Supplement 2019.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid..

<sup>92</sup> De Witt et al. 2015: 48.

<sup>93</sup> Siltaoja/Juusola/Kivijärvi 2019: 76.

<sup>94</sup> The Times Higher Education Supplement 2019.

<sup>95</sup> TransCampus 2020.

<sup>96</sup> The Times Higher Education Supplement 2019; Deutsche Welle 2017.

to enable access to EU research funding, of which the UK has been a net beneficiary during membership. As access to these funding pots are likely to be restricted in the future, the foreign presence is intended as a way to keep access to joint EU resources.”<sup>97</sup>

### *Box 8: Case Study: Lancaster University’s Leipzig Campus*

So far Lancaster University (LU) is the only public British HEI to have established a full campus in Germany. LU was named International University of the Year by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020 for its track record of “exporting British higher education to the world, while at the same time offering opportunities to their UK-based students to incorporate a global learning experience within their degree programmes”.<sup>98</sup> The university already runs an IBC in Ghana, established an academic partnership with the Malaysian Sunway University in 2006 and has a joint institute with Beijing Jiaotong University in China.

LU’s Germany campus is located in Leipzig, opened its doors for the first cohort of Foundation Year students in September 2019 and has now commenced four Bachelor programmes in Accounting and Finance, Business Management, Computer Science and Software Engineering, all thought to be particularly attractive for foreign students from Asia, especially India and China. Hence, the campus caters not primarily to Germans but international students who strive for a UK degree without having to face the hassle of post-Brexit uncertainties regarding student visas and fees. Brexit played a major part in LU’s decision to open the campus.<sup>99</sup> The university hopes that work opportunities for graduates in Germany (the possibility of a 18-month post-study work visa), and the ability for students to explore most parts of the EU on their study visa are strong selling points for their Leipzig degrees which are fully accredited by Lancaster University and are said to meet the same standards as the programmes taught at the main campus in the UK.

LU’s partner is not a local university but the Australian education services provider Navitas, which currently caters for some 80,000 students at approximately 120 colleges and university campuses in more than 30 countries.<sup>100</sup> In Europe the company already cooperates with the University of Twente and The Hague University of Applied Science in the Netherlands. The initial agreement with LU is for ten years until 2029. There can be little doubt that Navitas’ shareholders and LU’s senior management want the for-profit-campus in Leipzig to generate a healthy surplus. This, however, remains a gamble not just due to the Covid-19 uncertainties but also because operating a full IBC in Germany is uncharted territory.

As in the case of most IBCs around the globe, studying at a branch campus is less costly than at the main campus. Annual tuition fees for an undergraduate degree at Leipzig amount to EUR 9,000 for EU students and EUR 15,000 for non-EU students, while at Lancaster they are GBP 9,250 (EUR 10,115) for UK (and currently also still EU) students and GBP 21,900 (EUR 23,946) for all other students. From the 2021-22 academic year onwards, EU (and Swiss) students will no longer be eligible for home fee status and UK student loans, and LU has already confirmed that students from EU Member States will be charged the same tuition fees as other non-UK students for Lancaster-based degree programmes. However, fees at Leipzig will remain unchanged. In addition, student finance and fee reduction schemes as well as scholarships are available.

Yet, it remains to be seen if these incentives are enough to attract students to Leipzig given that the same subjects can be studied – increasingly in English – at a broad range of renowned HEIs in Germany and other EU countries at a small fraction of the cost. Other critical make or break factors are the extent to which LU Leipzig will be able to shed the typical “teaching only” image of satellite campuses and establish itself also as a bona fide research centre, and as to whether or not the small campus – more precisely a suite of rooms – can create an authentic “university feeling”. Part of the latter would also be the emergence of LU Leipzig’s own full-time faculty. Currently the programmes are taught mainly by academic staff hired from other HEI’s on a part-time basis. Furthermore, the Brexit dividend of a Germany-based campus might evaporate once the dust has settled and new agreements have been put in place to link UK universities once again to the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.

<sup>97</sup> Kleibert 2020.

<sup>98</sup> Lancaster University 2019.

<sup>99</sup> Veltzke. 2020: 16.

<sup>100</sup> Marketscreener 2020.

#### 4. Outlook: Internationalisation and Digitalisation

Only a short while ago digitalisation was considered more a goal than a necessity, but under today's changing circumstances digitalisation has become a need, a must-have, and even a condition to deepen internationalisation. This drive has been accelerated by some unpredictable factors, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. HEIs which had already invested in large-scale digitalisation, have found it easier to cope with the sudden switch to online teaching and address the needs and demands of students than those which previously considered digitalisation "something for the future" or at best an add-on but not an essential element in the process of delivering degree programmes and strengthening research. As the European Association for International Education (EAIE) stipulates

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis is only the latest in a series of stress tests for international education in recent years. From terrorist attacks on major European cities, to authoritarian governments moving to limit academic freedom, to the slow-burning climate crisis, our values and our viability as a sector continue to confront new challenges and will likely continue to do so in the future.<sup>101</sup>

It is undeniable that digitalisation offers great opportunities as well as poses substantial challenges for the internationalisation of higher education. Thanks to digitalisation, researchers and students can easily and effectively access qualitative and quantitative sources of information. Digitalisation allows us to break through barriers and enables us to cooperate across the globe in virtual environments. Technology and digitalisation combined are the key components in this changing world. Digital solutions can improve the quality of teaching and learning, can reform assessment and recognition, and specially can promote internationalisation and mobility, and interconnectivity and intercultural exchanges. At the same time, however, "the fast production of information and evolution of technologies also make it challenging to simply 'keep up' and to know how to best plan for the future".<sup>102</sup> Additionally, the prevailing shortage of systematic and standardised approaches to digitalisation creates inequalities and hinders the integration of individuals and institutions into a digitalised international higher education area. A paper by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and DIE (German Development Institute) makes the interesting preposition that digitalisation is particularly important to give justice to, and strengthen the role of, contemporary learners in higher education as "prosumers" - i.e. both producers and consumers – of knowledge.<sup>103</sup>

A virtual conference "Moving target 2020": re-thinking global exchange in higher education", organised DAAD in October 2020 on the occasion of the German EU Council Presidency, identified five dimensions of internationalisation with regard to their digital transformation:

##### *Box 9: Five areas of the internationalisation-digitalisation nexus*

1. **Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnerships:** How does digitalisation re-frame international collaboration between higher education institutions?
2. **Mobility and Exchange: Physical – Blended – Virtual:** How are student and staff mobility schemes transformed by blended and online formats?
3. **Administrating Internationalisation Digitally:** Data Ecosystems and Data Sovereignty: How can digital infrastructures and shared data standards help streamline administrative processes and student data transfer in the European Higher Education Area and beyond?

<sup>101</sup> European Association for International Education (2020)

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> DAAD/DIE 2018.



4. **Attractiveness of HEIs in a Global Knowledge Society:** How does digitalisation foster internationalisation; how can it help attract and retain international top talents as well as raise the attractiveness of institutions, regions or countries?
5. **Knowledge Transfer, 'Third Mission' and Open Education:** How can global knowledge transfer be supported in a digitally connected world, especially to address challenges that transcend national boundaries?<sup>104</sup>

Not all of these questions are new and several HEIs can be considered the avant-garde of the internationalisation-digitalisation nexus. A good example in this regard is the *Glocal Campus* – a joint project of the University of Jena (Intercultural Business Communications; University Clinic), the Bauhaus Universität Weimar (Media Studies) and the Technical University of Ilmenau (Computer Science) – that put in place an international virtual learning platform. 80 universities from 28 countries are already members of the network. This platform enables the exchange of online resources between universities on a global scale, including virtual intercultural simulation games, online seminars and media projects.<sup>105</sup>

At the regional level the Erasmus+ programme has set an agenda for HEIs in the digital era. Under the umbrella “Erasmus goes Digital”, the European Commission (EC) has launched a project with the objective of boosting digital skills through traineeships: Digital Opportunity Traineeships (DOT). This initiative follows the idea that students of all disciplines should be educated in digital skills, not just those who choose an ICT career. The pilot project (2018-2020) is financed by Horizon 2020 and implemented through Erasmus+ and intends to provide cross-border Erasmus+ traineeships for up to 6,000 students and recent graduates. Almost 3,000 students have already benefited from the initiative and the main sending countries are Germany, Spain and Belgium.<sup>106</sup> At the same time, there are several initiatives supported by the EC that address the digitalisation of the exchange process management at HEIs, such as Erasmus without Paper (EWP) and Online Learning Agreement (OLA) and the European student card initiative.

Last but not least, the “White Paper Bologna Digital 2020” forms the basis for a new vision of European higher education in the era of digitalisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It follows the vision that in 2030, universities and colleges of higher education offer courses of study that are much more flexible and offer different learning pathways recognising the diversity of the student population. They are central institutions of lifelong learning, on campus and on digital platforms. The university will be a networked and open institution in 2030, which cooperates much more closely with other universities as well as the community and jointly develops and provides educational programmes.<sup>107</sup>

In conclusion, it is undeniable that collaboration is the key success factor in teaching, learning, research and mobility at the interface of digitalisation and internationalisation in higher education. At the same time, digitalisation goes beyond the notions of efficiency, capability, performance, employability, mobility, internationalisation, etc. Digitalisation is a new reality and we cannot dismiss the fact that HEIs are dealing with students who are learning in a very different way than previous generations. Furthermore, digitalisation affects the way that we as individuals and institutions are interacting with society. Through treating internationalisation and dig-

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<sup>104</sup> DAAD Kenia 2020.

<sup>105</sup> Global Campus 2020.

<sup>106</sup> European Commission 2019.

<sup>107</sup> Rampelt/Orr/Knoth 2019.

italisation as the two sides of the same coin, universities can pro-actively embrace the opportunity to champion important changes such as both the integration of students from less privileged backgrounds and HEIs from countries which still lack the technology to respond to new needs and necessities in teaching, learning and research. Digitisation is a path that many higher education institutions have already taken, but there is still much to be done to make universities real actors of social change.

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