STUDENT MOBILITY IN PROGRESS.
REFORMS IN ANATOLIAN UNIVERSITIES

A thesis submitted within the Bilgi/Viadrina Master of European Studies

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To my beloved grandparents

Für meine lieben Großeltern

ABSTRACT

This thesis an attempt to investigate the implications of current Europeanization trends in the Turkish higher education system with respect to cross-boarder student mobility triggered by the introduction of the Erasmus program and the Bologna Process. The theoretical framework of the Europeanization concept from Börzel and Risse (2000) explores how certain European forms of governance and guidelines have created the setting for institutional policymaking and actions, visualizing the structural and ideological changes at Turkish universities. This work attempts to pursue the developments, particularly of five Anatolian sample universities, in the wake of the European processes. A fundamental objective of this investigation is to determine the relevant actors and mechanisms, which foster or impede implementation and development. Particular attention is paid to the structural re-organization of their international activities and the actors' perceptions towards the processes.

Keywords: Europeanization, short-term student mobility, Erasmus, Bologna, Turkey

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Masterarbeit versucht die Auswirkungen der gegenwärtigen Europäisierungs-tendenzen im Türkischen Hochschulbereich in Bezug auf grenzüberschreitende Mobilität von Studierenden zu reflektieren, die durch die Einführung des Erasmus Programms und des Bologna-Prozesses initiiert wurden. Der theoretische Rahmen des Europäisierungskonzepts von Börzel und Risse (2000) soll dabei strukturelle und ideologische Veränderungen an türkischen Universitäten sichtbar machen, die unter dem Einfluss der Europäischen Prozesse entstanden sind. Ein wesentliches Erkenntnis-interesse liegt darin herauszufinden, was diese Prozesse vor Ort bewirken und welche Akteure und Mechanismen auf universitärer Ebene eine Umsetzung positiv oder negativ beeinflussen können. Ob und wieweit Anpassungsprozesse an die Europäischen Vorgaben tatsächlich stattgefunden haben, soll am Beispiel der strukturellen Umsetzung an fünf anatolischen Universitäten und den Ansichten der beteiligten Akteure praktisch erläutert werden.

Stichworte: Europäisierung, Mobilität von Studierenden, Erasmus, Bologna, Türkei

<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u>

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1 INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND FIELD WORK EXPERIENCES

The transcendence of national borders by university students has always been a typical characteristic for internationalization processes in higher education institutions (HEIs) all over Europe as well as in Turkey. However, the last five years provide evidence of a substantial increase of transnational flows of students and staff, collaborative research and cooperation between Turkey and the rest of Europe. As a result, a larger structural reorganization of international activities within Turkish universities began. Primarily, two pan-European processes enabled this rather new orientation: the active involvement in the Bologna Process after 2001 and the full participation in the European Union's flagship mobility program Erasmus in 2004, which both emphasize cross-boarder mobility. Within the Erasmus program and the Bologna Process, launched respectively in 1987 and 1999, the general European higher education arena has undeniably changed in terms of mobility actions, albeit with varying impact on the participating countries.

As the Erasmus mobility was new in Turkey, it was interesting to trace how the general success of the program in Europe caused spill-over effects on the institutional organization and made inroads into the daily practices of the university actors involved. Consequently, it came into question "how and to what extent" those new European elements would be integrated into the Turkish higher education system. Indeed, the respective implementations proved to be quite significant in Turkey. In the course of the years, Turkey became the fastest growing of all the European participants in numbers of outgoing students within the Erasmus program. At the same time, the Turkish university system and consequently their degrees, quality, teaching and studies became more visible within Europe. In particular, local Anatolian state universities benefitted from those processes, otherwise having been significantly disadvantaged compared to the private and metropolitan universities in terms of the degree of internationalization. The consequent responses at university level took a variety of forms through cooperation and competition by trying to discover new niches in the emerging international higher education market apart from the traditional academic work. Thereby, I assume the growing networking in and outside Turkey to be a direct result of the Europeanization process. The reason for selecting this time span is its significance in terms of the change brought along, in spite of being a fairly new process in Turkey.

Here, particularly the development and structures of inward and outward physical mobility deserve a closer look, which substantially increased due to the Erasmus programs' inherent equality principle. Moreover, the process can be observed as it unfolds, revealing ideas for future development and studies. For this reason, the major aim of this work is to explore how certain supranational forms of governance exercise influence on national and consequently local policymaking and actions. Nonetheless, the main discussion in this thesis should deal with the implementation of the European mobility policies within the local universities, illustrated by selected aspects and indicators. Thereby, Turkey constitutes a particularly unique and interesting case, since there are different power relations and ambitions towards Europe compared to those existing in current European Union (EU) member states. Internationalization of Turkish HEIs, therefore, seems to have a higher relevance than in other European states. Hence, at the core of this work lies the attempt to identify the institutional responses to the European mobility schemes and the extent to which those responses foster or impede change. Additionally, attention will be given to the perceptions towards the processes and the re-structuring of resources in the organization of mobility. The evaluations are based on findings from five case universities, namely Süleyman Demirel University (SDU) in Isparta, Uludağ University in Bursa, Erciyes University in Kayseri, Çukurova University in Adana and Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara as a metropolitan control case, as shown on the map.

Figure 1: Map of Turkey with the sample universities.
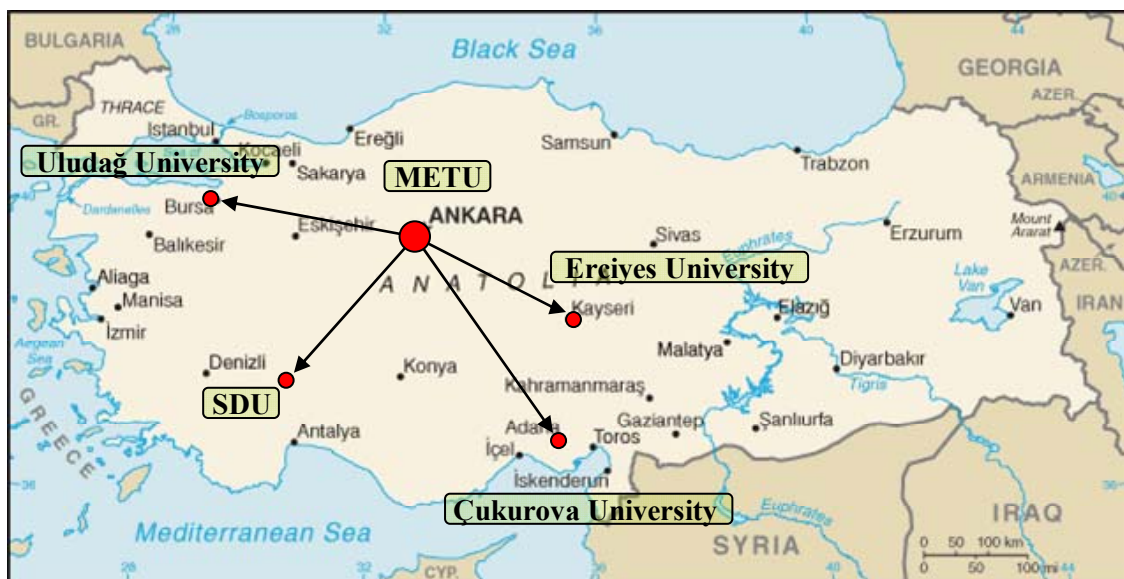
Source: **University of Texas Libraries (2008).**

The task of analyzing the reasons for domestic change due to the European programs requires more detailed elaboration about the relations between the structural and cultural-cognitive elements that led to certain adaptations at the university level. Hence, I found the Europeanization concept from Börzel and Risse (2000) highly suitable, since it distinguishes several aspects, classifying the inputs, the mechanisms for change and the consequent outcomes.

Applied to mobility, this study considers the external conditional framework, such as the pan-European normative and regulatory policies regarding student mobility and the respective institutional responses. It is important to note that this thesis should be read as a micro-level example as part of a broader process, concerning the issue of "how and in what way" mobility flows play a major role in the contribution to further internationalization strategies and transformation in Turkish HEIs. In order to guide the reader, it will also portray the actors' perceptions to the proposed changes and their scope of authority to offer a better insight into their social agency and position in the system. An analysis of the relevant core indicators that determine institutional adaption is an effective approach to explain the extent of change. These core indicators include the following areas: quality assurance, aspects of teaching and learning, international recognition and transfer mechanisms, administration of international students as well as networks and cooperation.

With respect to the scope of this thesis, it consists of five main chapters. After the general introduction, the next chapter introduces the reader with the analytical framework of the Europeanization theory, discussing the available conceptual terms for research on higher education within the project's context. The next chapter will briefly go into the European and Turkish situations, giving information on policies, conditions and actors, considered to set the basic structural preconditions for domestic change. Chapter four and five constitute the main body of this thesis, giving a closer look behind the rationale and logic for change at the university units. In order to present a more detailed exploration of the Europeanization processes at the Anatolian universities, chapter four will first discuss the ideas and expectations of the involved actors shortly after the introduction of the European programs. A substantial focus will then be placed on the local settings, concentrating on the main mechanisms and actors involved in the process and how to they enable domestic change.

The fourth chapter is organized along the Europeanization framework from Börzel and Risse (2000). Hence, it illustrates the role of the most relevant "mediating factors" in the institutional transformation process, namely the "formal supporting actors", the "cooperative informal actors" and the existing "veto points". Then there will be two different approaches to explain the factors how actors and institutions extend their activities to the European stage. Firstly, the "redistribution of resources" will present the underlying power structures in the system. Secondly, the "socialization processes" will attempt to follow how the relevant actors internalized the norms and values into their daily working practice. The fifth chapter will show the multi-sidedness of the outcomes, classifying them into five units that the interviewees commonly referred to in relation to student mobility.[1] At the end, this chapter will briefly recapitulate the course, the content and the extent of adaptations at the selected Anatolian universities according to the European frameworks for mobility. Lastly, the conclusion will offer an outlook and recommendations for the future on behalf of the actors.

Before moving on to the methodology and my field work experiences, it is important to consider the motivations to write this thesis on student mobility in Turkey. First and foremost, I tried to examine a feasible and relatively unexplored example in the area of highly skilled migration. Thus, a central aspect to be considered was the availability of measurable data, which provides a sound basis for later comparison, even if the chosen universities differ in their individual settings and profiles. Consequently, I relied on the well-documented Erasmus mobility program. Secondly, I wanted to build on the results drawn from my earlier academic writings about similar processes in Germany and other countries in Europe. With regard to Turkey, I found it appealing to examine European policies influencing national institutions in a time when positive attitudes towards Europe have become somewhat ambivalent or even are deteriorating. In this respect, it is important to keep in mind my background as a German graduate investigating Turkish processes in HEIs with little authoritative experience with the case of Turkey prior to this project. Nonetheless, approaching this thesis using a qualitative method enabled me to obtain a close insight with fruitful outcomes.

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[1] Simultaneously, these internationalization indicators coincide with categories employed in other studies, e.g., the Trend reports (2005, 2007), Huisman and Wende (2004, 2005), Luijten-Lub (2007), Kelo (2006), Davies (2007), Teichler (2007b) and European Commission (2008d). Brandenburg and Federkeil (2007) also devised a comprehensive set of measurable indicators for the internationalization of HEIs.

Data for this project was first gathered through the review of a wide range of literature, university-specific documents and publications available on the topic. For a general overview about the institutional theory in the field of higher education I mainly relied on studies from Veiga (2005) and Enders (2004), which both discuss conceptual and empirical tools for higher education studies. For the Europeanization of HEIs in the wider European space, I primarily consulted publications that emerged from the HEIGLO project that investigates institutional responses to Europeanization, internationalization and globalization across Europe (Huisman and Wende 2004, 2005; Luijten-Lub 2007) and the subsequent CHEPS project on the impact of higher education governance and curricular reform in 32 European countries (File and Stensaker 2006; Huisman, Witte and File 2006). Furthermore, I consulted Altbach and Knight (2007) as well as Kehm and Teichler[2] (2007), which also discuss internationalization at HEIs. The recently published CHEPS-INCHER-ECOTEC report (European Commission 2008d) is especially worth mentioning, since it explores on a statistical basis the impacts of Erasmus on educational quality improvement, openness and internationalization in European HEIs similar to those investigated in this thesis. All those studies include details about the Erasmus program and the Bologna Process. Specific data related to Erasmus mobility was mainly drawn from studies provided by the European Commission and their Erasmus website. Details about the Bologna Process were derived from the official Bologna websites as well as from the Trend reports (Reichert and Tauch 2005; Crosier, Purser and Smidt 2007).

Central background papers employed in this thesis that point out contemporary trends in the Turkish higher education system are the World Bank report (2007), the EUA evaluation study carried out by TÜSIAD (2008), Hatakenaka's study (2006) and the monograph from Mızıkacı (2006), which all offer an extensive overview about Turkey's education system and developments, also with relation to the Bologna Process and the Community programs.[3] Key developments in Turkey on the Bologna process stem from the annual Bologna templates (Ertepınar 2005, 2006; Demir 2008). Information about the Erasmus program originates from the website of the Turkish National Agency and the Council of Higher Education. For additional information about the sample universities, I consulted their respective websites.

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[2] Teichler's innumerable studies on internationalization, above all about the Erasmus program, are noteworthy, following the higher education developments in Europe over the last three decades.
[3] With "Community programs" I refer to the EU actions for mobility, for example, the Erasmus program.

After the initial literature review, I developed questionnaires for semi-structured interviews with the most important formal actors that are involved in the Erasmus program and the Bologna Process at the university level. In the next step, I designed a quantitative online survey for the informal actors, namely the incoming foreign students. In every aspect, it was very helpful to conduct small-scale tests at Istanbul Bilgi University, interviewing actors and sending out first questionnaires. However, during the course of my project it became obvious that comparing the data obtained in Bilgi – as a private university – would be somewhat difficult, since their structure, constitution, budgets, autonomy and many more essential issues contrast starkly with those at the state universities. Nonetheless, I integrated some of the data and ideas obtained from the participating actors into this thesis, since the underlying motivations of the actors are actually not that different. Furthermore, I appreciated to be able to present my work in the middle of the project in a colloquium at my home university. The discussions enabled me to adapt and adjust the questions for the interviews and questionnaires, whereby it was most fruitful to experiment with the form of the questions, such as open or closed ones. Furthermore, I considerably reduced the questions to the most conclusive points. Due to the valuable suggestions from the colloquium discussion, I also designed an additional questionnaire for the outgoing students.

Regarding the organization of my project, I set up the interviews in a period of four weeks, having two to four days for each institution. Everywhere I was cordially received and the interview dates were perfectly prepared. Sometimes the interviewees even offered to let me follow their entire daily routine, even though it was in the busy exam period. Moreover, they often facilitated my visit, providing me good personal advice and organizational assistance. In some cases, they even helped me to discover their local traditions and treasures. It is noteworthy that once I was on site and the actors better understood the project, they also offered to arrange spontaneous interviews with high level authorities responsible for international relations. As a result, at all sample universities I conducted interviews with senior level policy planners, for example, the vice rector for international relations, key staff at the international offices, department and/or faculty coordinators. With each interview, the issue of Europeanization crystallized around major points, albeit approaching it from very different levels. That allowed me to better understand what the label "Europe" is about at university level in the everyday life.

The actual face-to-face interviews were particularly interesting, especially how the participants gradually became more candid and open in their statements during the course of the conversations. While at first giving a more general overview of their universities, activities and daily work, one specific question elicited a more personal opinion. Once I asked them how they would suggest handling the European programs, if they had the necessary authority to change anything, many opened up and shared very good information and ideas. As agreed with the interviewees, I have thus anonymized these outspoken views, because they may provoke controversy, as they might contradict official policies or views of their workplace.

Challenges in data collection or arranging interviews occurred solely at the beginning with the Turkish National Agency. Furthermore, their internet resources were not up-to-date and their phone line was constantly busy. This was mainly due to the fact that there were only four administrators responsible for the entire Erasmus program for all participating HEIs in Turkey, who were heavily overloaded with work. Nonetheless, after a couple of months into my project, they enabled me to participate in the national Erasmus meeting that takes place every semester, when important stakeholders from all the Turkish HEIs and the National Agency assemble. As a result of this event and the conversations in the associated workshops, I could fill in many missing links and data. Additionally, I struggled with finding similar theoretical applications related to that topic in Turkey, leaving many remaining questions unanswered. The fact that I kind of ventured into uncharted territories meant that I was confronted with the uncertainty whether or not the Europeanization concept provided the appropriate theoretical framework with respect to the Turkish case. Without a doubt, the peak of the uncertainties concerned the amount of multi-dimensional material I had acquired during my library research and field work. After six months, I had collected uncountable contextual documents about other European countries and Turkey, 10 pages field notes as well as 140 pages of transcribed interviews and conference notes based on over 15 hours live discussions with over 20 institutional actors. Consequently, I had to confine the results, categorizing the apparently loose fragments into a closer framework. In that moment, the selected theory proved to be the right choice, since it was on the one hand open enough to integrate most elements that I had assembled so far and on the other hand strict enough to limit the investigation to the essential indicators that constituted conclusive evidence of change.

Although my overall project was quite intensive in time, the time for the specific interviews was limited. Therefore, the opinions presented in this thesis can only give anthropological "snapshot images" from the moments I observed the respective universities and conferences. For the same reason, it is important to point out that the interviewees' ideas and interpretations are mostly subjective in nature and therefore restricted to a certain context and time. The same applies for the assessment of the exchange students' views from the questionnaires. For this study I relied on 29 internet-based questionnaires from incoming students plus an additional 28 questionnaires from outgoing students from METU, Çukurova University, Uludağ University and from pre-test questionnaires from Istanbul Bilgi University. Since there were no responses or public evaluations from Erciyes University and Süleyman Demirel University, the ideas presented here from the student questionnaires can only be considered as a limited basis for generalization and an insufficient sample size for sound scientific conclusions. Nonetheless, the presented quotations will allow an interesting insight into some of the actors' thoughts.

2   EUROPEANIZATION FRAMEWORK

The overall goal of this chapter is to explain the certain approaches and models that I employ in this thesis and to clarify my research problem. For that reason, it introduces the reader with the analytical framework of the Europeanization theory, discussing the available conceptual terms for research on higher education within the project's context. What I seek for is to provide a framework to understand the relationship between European policies and the relevant adaptations at Turkish higher education institutions. With respect to this relationship, the chosen framework will basically help to trace "how and in what way" Europe matters for the universities and actors involved, explaining the direction and extent of change in the structures of national institutions.

2.1   INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

For a theoretical framework, my first thoughts considered the prevalent political and sociological theories of institutions, which investigate the influence of the EU politics and policies on mainly its member states, and in some cases candidate states.[4] In other words, such studies mostly examine the connection between the structural "outputs" of the specific countries in comparison to the European "inputs". Following Alexiadou (2007: 108), institutional theory offers explanations for organizational change and argues for the significance of institutions in shaping particular trajectories of organizational policy, practice and individual action. The conceptual terms of reference from Radaelli (2003: 30) thereby distinguish the Europeanization effects from the manifold other processes at work in the local contexts, as following:

> Europeanization consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies.

It is important to note that Europeanization is generally taking place at an intersection of multi-level policy and multi-level governance, namely in the supranational, national and local (in this case institutional) context.

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[4] There are several types of definitions of the concept. For a summary of the most prominent political Europeanization concepts, see Axt, Milososki and Schwarz (2007).

In order to examine the influence of Europeanization (top) on the national or local systems (bottom), generally the "top-down" approach is applied. Although the predominant part of the studies uses the top-down perspective, recent studies also consider a "bottom-up" perspective, since the Europeanization processes has proved to be "more complex than just the simple reaction to Brussels", as Axt , Milososki and Schwarz (2007: 137) affirm. Hence, interests are formed by the mutual interactions and discourses among the participants, which again influence on the political structures and processes at the European level.

When it comes to find empirical tools for the study of processes of Europeanization impacting HEIs or national education systems, similar approaches are used. Those studies examine the top-down policy making and implementation, the "governability" of higher education systems as well as bottom-up processes models. As these processes mutually influence each other, the term "governance" thus includes both political guidance (hierarchical control) and cooperation (horizontal self-organization) at the same time (Enders 2004: 372). Power relations and modes of interaction in this process are categorized along the conceptual model of Scharpf (2000) by their level of institutionalization, such as:

a) *Mutual adjustments*: national governments continue to adopt their own policies, but they do so in response to, or in anticipation of, the policy choices of other governments.
b) *Intergovernmental negotiations*: national policies are coordinated by agreements but national governments remain in full control of the decision-making process.
c) *Hierarchical direction*: competencies are completely centralized and exercised by supranational actors without the participation of member state governments.
d) *Joint decisions*: interest intermediation is carried out through a mutual decision making process between governments and the supranational actors.

Besides the Europeanization theory, also Scott's model (2001) is widely used for the studies on institutions like HEIs, which analyzes the formal rules, regulations and structures as well as the informal norms and values, sorted into three categories, namely the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements.[5] Nonetheless, I expect the Europeanization concept from Börzel and Risse (2000) to fulfill those analyses equally well, but with a more precise terminology.

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[5] Veiga (2005) offers a detailed description of the analytical model from Scott (2001).

Additionally, the Europeanization theory merges elements of governance theory and higher education policy analysis. While the concepts from Börzel and Risse (2000) and Scott (2001) are similar in their methodological strength in illuminating change, they use a different language. For example, they both consider the regulatory frameworks of the organization and the actor's perceptions as crucial elements on how organizations respond to changes and consequently how they adopt them. Moreover, they both try to specify the extent to which they foster or impede change. However, I found the language of the Europeanization concept more persuasive and its structure more useful, being bounded within a manageable framework.

Before I begin to apply the Europeanization model to the Turkish higher education context, it is crucial to distinguish two important points about the theory and terms used. Firstly, the usual Europeanization literature and studies mainly focus at the national, not at the local level policy implementation. Nonetheless, I found the theoretical notions perfectly appropriate for the local context in Turkey, and I simply applied them accordingly. Secondly, it is important to determine how the term "Europeanization" will be used in this thesis. Generally, three terms are employed when analyzing transnational dimensions in higher education, namely Europeanization, internationalization and globalization[6] (Huisman and Wende 2004). In this thesis however, I confined the scope of the study to a "filtered" internationalization limited to the European space (Wallace 2000: 381). Hence Europeanization is a regional sub-section compatible with processes of internationalization, along the following definitions:

> ***Internationalization***: refers to the increasing interconnectedness of national education systems without boundaries between them and the authority of national governments over these systems brought into question (Huisman and Wende 2004: 27). It is seen as a steerable policy process in response to globalization in terms of cooperation and enhanced competitiveness (Wende 2002: 15).

Applied to the university level, Europeanization processes promote the convergence of institutional standards towards European standards, for example, through mobility, cooperation in teaching and research, joint curricula and joint programs (Luijten-Lub et al. 2004: 251).

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[6] Globalization refers to the increasing interdependence and "integration of flows and processes over and through boundaries", challenging the role of national governments (Huisman and Wende 2004: 27). Little influence can be taken on this external process on behalf of the individual actors.

2.2 EUROPEANIZATION MODEL

The institutional Europeanization model from Börzel and Risse (2000) introduces a conceptual tool that guides the study along various stages. It starts with the European structural guidelines, which cause first national political programs and then national institutions to react. Specific "mediating factors" at the formal and informal level thereby influence the direction of institutional adaptation. This systemic approach orients itself on the understanding of an institutional "adaptation ability". This is based upon the premise that domestic change is only likely to occur when there is an incongruence, a so-called "policy or institutional misfit", between European and domestic policies, processes, and institutions as well as lacking strong resistance at particular "veto points" (Börzel and Risse 2000: 3). The compatibility between the European and the domestic policies thereby determines the degree of the "adaptational pressure" for the states and institutions (Börzel and Risse 2000). The less the compatibility between European and national level, the larger is the necessity for a change in politics. However, adaptation pressures that cause policy or institutional misfits are "insufficient conditions for change" (Börzel and Risse 2000: 12). Grabbe (2003: 317) identifies a "number of variables that determine the EU's impact in a given policy area", besides the adaptational pressure, which are specific to the context of candidate countries like Turkey. Grabbe (2003) names five influential mechanisms to shape institutional development and policy making, such as:

1. *Models*: provision of legislative and institutional templates – EU framework that will be "downloaded" (*acquis*, harmonization)
2. *Money*: aid and technical assistance from the Community budget for the implementation of the EU models
3. *Benchmarking and monitoring*: setting standards, providing best-practice examples and identifying weaknesses (screening reports, regular annual progress reports, method of open coordination)
4. *Advice and twinning*: EU civil servants who give advice to the national ministries and/or public administration about standards
5. *Gate-keeping*: access to negotiations and further stages in the accession process.

Furthermore, according to Börzel and Risse (2000) there must also be mediating factors, which play an important role in the direction of the adaptation process. Börzel and Risse (2000: 10) identify four different mediating factors for domestic change: 1) a "low number of veto points and veto players" in the respective political system, 2) the

presence of "supporting formal institutions", 3) the presence of "cooperative informal institutions" and 4) the existence of "change agents or norm entrepreneurs". Moreover, Kaiser (2002: 67) differentiates between: "designers" (mentors, which look for methods of resolution); "campaigners" (value transmitters, which introduce the reforms to the appropriate policy makers and the public) and "decision makers" (participants, who are formally involved in decision-making processes).

The Europeanization model also clarifies how Börzel and Risse (2000: 10) differentiate the "logics of domestic change". The left section states that Europeanization leads to "domestic change" by rearranging resources, whereas the right side shows that change is caused by socialization processes, collective standards and the development of new identities. Both processes often work simultaneously, dominating different phases of the adaptation process, either promoting or impeding it (Börzel and Risse 2000). For the framework of this thesis, I adapted the model in the following manner:

Figure 2: Europeanization model applied to the university context.
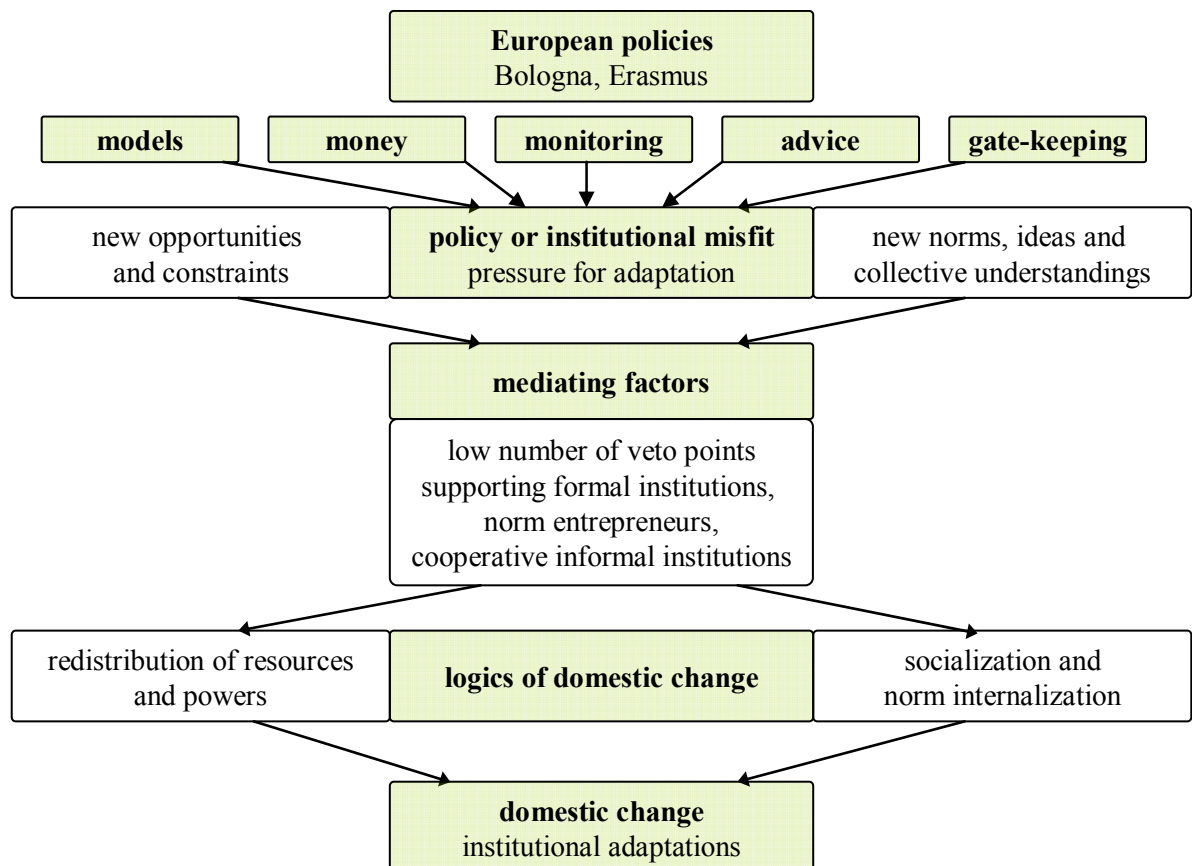
Source: **modified after Börzel and Risse (2000); Grabbe (2003).**

My contribution to this model was to find measurable indicators that define the extent and direction of domestic change in Turkish HEIs with respect to the European policies on student mobility. By those measures, I attempt to identify a certain convergence of domestic adaptations towards European practices and a shift in power relations among university actors. While determining metrics for change, I am strongly aware of the complexity of the study. Hence, I face the challenge to separate the relative impact of the external and internal influences on daily logic and practice into measurable results. For reasons of space, my choice of indicators should therefore be considered as limited examples, constituting only part of a broader social and institutional reality with respect to international student mobility. For that reason, internationalization indicators, such as internationalization strategies, consequent marketing, specific international research collaboration and project-related funding will not be considered.

Along the Europeanization model, the degrees of domestic change caused by different factors are categorized in the following forms: "inertia" (no change), "absorption" (small change), "accommodation" (moderate change) or "transformation" (high change) (Börzel and Risse 2000). Radaelli (2003: 37) adds the category of "retrenchment", which designates a kind of Counter-Europeanization.

Figure 3: Extent and degree of Europeanization

retrenchment	inertia	absorption	accommodation	transformation
-	0	+	++	++
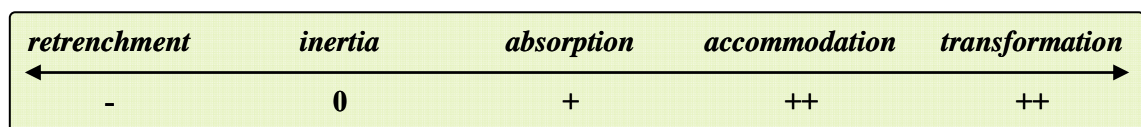
Source: **Börzel and Risse (2000); Radaelli (2003).**

Depending on the policy area in question and the domestic context of the systems concerned, the degree of Europeanization might vary remarkably.

3   BACKGROUND OF THE MOBILITY ACTIONS

This chapter gives a brief overview of the relevant international and national contexts, since the particular policies, conditions and actors set the basic structural preconditions for the implementation at local level. Explaining the background of the programs in Europe and Turkey proves to be significant to understand the framework in which the HEIs operate.

3.1   EUROPEAN LEVEL INITIATIVES FOR STUDENT MOBILITY

At this point, it will be useful to illustrate the countries participating in the various European processes, as seen in the following map:

Figure 4: Participating countries in the Erasmus program and the Bologna Process (map)

Erasmus Europe   *Bologna Europe*
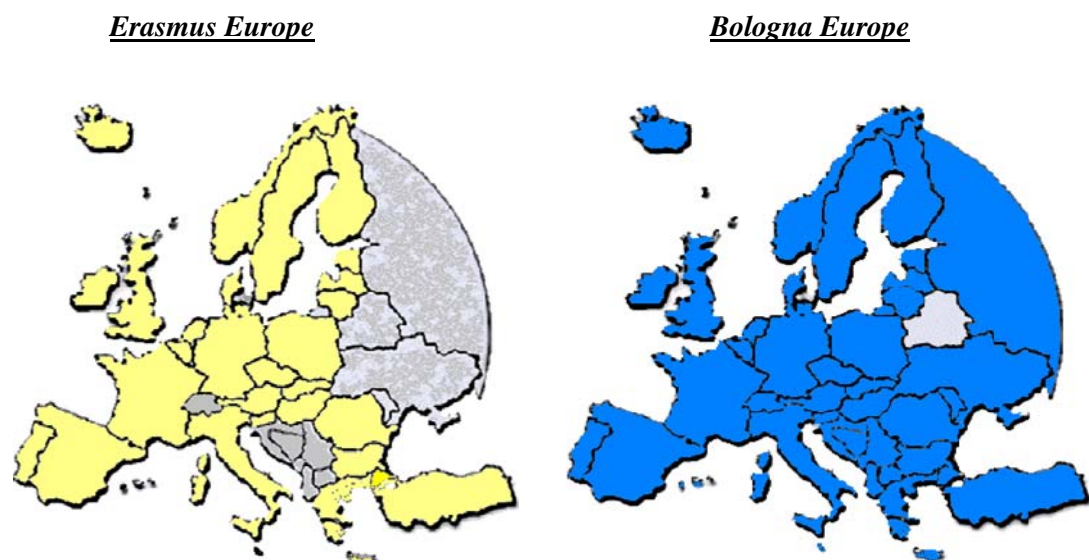
*Source***: Wuttig (2008).**

As of December 2008, 31 countries take part in the Erasmus program, namely the 27 EU member states, the 3 European Economic Area countries Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway as well as the candidate country Turkey. In the Bologna Process, as of December 2008, 46 European states and several supranational organizations and international bodies, for example the EU Commission, are full-fledged members. The Republic of Belarus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus do not take part.[7]

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[7] For a detailed participant list, see the Bologna website.

3.1.1 Erasmus in Europe

Until the introduction of the Erasmus program, little progress in the area of higher education was made at supranational level in Europe. At the time, it was perceived that political competences of the European Community should not be expanded (Heinze 2005). Once the so-called European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus) was introduced in 1987, it succeeded like a "Trojan horse", which opened the door for cooperation-based reforms of transnational higher education (Tauch 2004: 54). Twenty years later, the Erasmus exchange program is the EU's most important showcase for higher education mobility, since it has substantially increased the magnitude of organized short-term student mobility (Teichler 2007a).

Regulated and financed by the EU, the scheme has undergone manifold re-structuring and extension in width and depth over the years, achieving widespread "brand" recognition (European Commission 2008a: 7).[8] As a result, Erasmus plays an important role in the Europeanization processes of higher education in the EU. The main idea of the program is that students from all over Europe are able to study free of tuition fees at other European universities, in the best case with additional financial support from their host institutions, enhancing pan-European exchange and understanding amongst people.[9] With respect to the content, the Erasmus program expanded from an initial focus on student and staff learning mobility towards the enhancement of "cooperation at curriculum level and policy development at institutional level" (Huisman and Wende 2004: 17). In the last couple of years, there is an increased focus on employability, competitiveness and deepening "the sense of European identity and citizenship" (European Commission 2008a: 7).[10] The Erasmus program thus serves as means to create a pan-European network between highly qualified people, open for European-wide cooperation and cultural exchange. Furthermore, Erasmus funds the creation of university networks in all fields of study as well as measures for the recognition of academic achievements abroad over the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement.

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[8] By now, Erasmus is a subprogram integrated in the 2007-2013 Lifelong Learning Program of the European Commission. From 1995 to 2007 Erasmus was integrated under the Socrates program.
[9] For a complete list of the varied objectives of student mobility, see Teichler (2007a).
[10] For a chronological analysis of the EU-policy development on the issue of student mobility, see Cheiladaki-Liarokapi (2007).

As of December 2008, around 90% of the European HEIs (more than 3,100) in 31 European states fully participate in the Erasmus Program (European Commission 2008d: 18). However, this form of mobility, where exchange students remain registered at their home university while taking some courses abroad, touches only roughly 3.5% of the overall student population in Europe (European Commission 2008a: Annex A). Nonetheless, there was and still is a considerable contingent of the so-called "free-mover" mobility or "independent learning" mobility, in which students register for a whole degree or program at a university abroad (European Commission 2008a: 13).[11] Although growth has been continuous, recent numbers indicate a slowing of the growth or the stagnation of Erasmus mobility in some countries (European Commission 2008a: Annex A). According to the Report of the High Level Forum on Mobility, the current target to reach 3 million mobile students by the end of 2012 is "seriously in question" (European Commission 2008a: 7). Therefore, it will be a challenge for the European Commission to reach its ambitious goal to realize the "fifth freedom" of knowledge, including the exercise of free educational mobility (European Council 2008: 5). As can be seen in the table of beneficiaries of the Erasmus program, around 1.7 million students have studied abroad through the organization of the Erasmus program so far, and the number is estimated to rise to about 3 million exchange students by 2012/13.

Figure 5: European-wide beneficiaries of the Erasmus program (2004/05 – 2012/13)
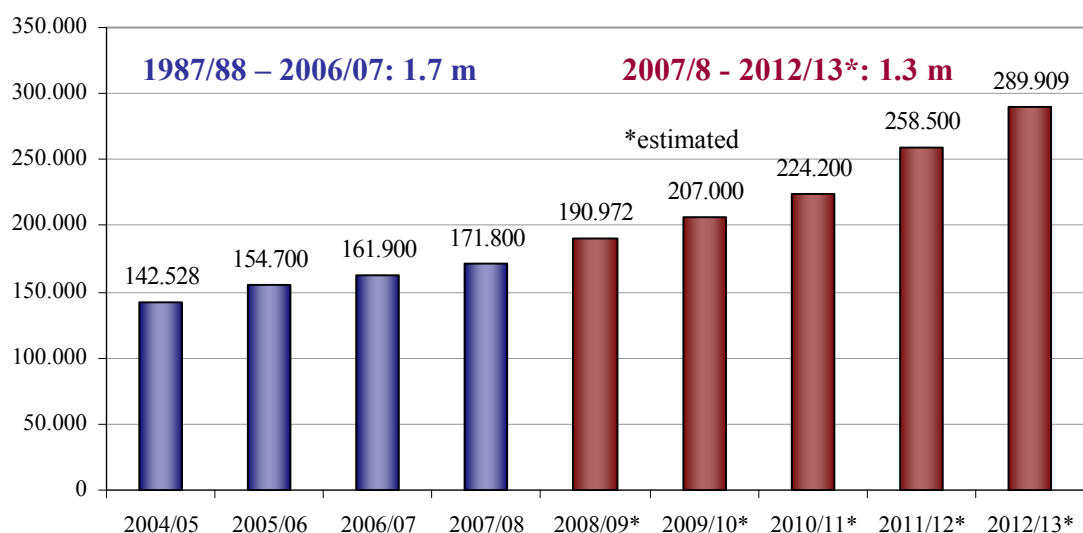
Source: **Wuttig (2008).**

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[11] Currently, the free-movers actually outnumber the Erasmus mobility to a considerable extent, as shown in the EURODATA project (Kelo, Teichler and Wächter 2006). For the 2002/03 academic year, the study estimates around 578,000 European university students to undertake independent learning mobility in comparison to approximately 123,000 Erasmus students.

Interestingly, during the late 1990s, a growing awareness arose that despite the successes of the Erasmus program improving "intra-European mobility", the situation concerning "extra-European mobility" was less satisfactory (Wende 2007: 2). Emerging internationalization and globalization processes brought the topic of competition and for the first time structural harmonization to the fore of the European agenda. This is valid when it was considered that higher education in Europe was losing competitiveness relative to that in the US in terms of attractiveness for foreign students and its "investment in human resources" due to quality differences and less efficient degree structures (Marginson and Wende 2006: 38). Consequently, a common argument on behalf of the European states was to strengthen the attractiveness of European universities. This new paradigm of competitive elements – governing in the European higher education field – carried new dynamics into cooperative educational activity. It resulted in substantive bottom-up initiatives amongst institutional and national stakeholders. With the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, an important cornerstone for the harmonization of the architecture of the European higher education system was created. A direct conversion of appropriate reforms in the respective countries directed further attention to the process, which finally found its expression in the 1999 Bologna Declaration. This document was the basis for fundamental structural changes as outlined in the next section on the Bologna Process. Veiga (2005: 3) even argues that without the success of the Erasmus program, it is "impossible to imagine the explicit objective of the Bologna Process to build the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)". Likewise, both processes strongly correlate in terms of their respective "agenda settings, infrastructures and goals", especially relating to the modernization of the higher education systems and mobility (European Commission 2008d: 4).[12]

In order to theoretically define the mode of interaction in the Erasmus program, it is somewhat complicated, since it includes both top-down and bottom-up elements. However, a "hierarchical direction" in policy implementation in this area can be observed, since the European Commission exercises control over the policies that regulate the Erasmus mobility schemes (Enders 2004: 375). This mode of interaction indicates a "completely centralized" decision-making at the European level without the participation of the EU member states (Scharpf 2000: 14).

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[12] For a detailed explanation on how Erasmus impacted on Bologna, see European Commission (2008d). For a complete list of the so-called "Action Lines" of the Bologna Process, see the Bologna websites. For the objectives of the Erasmus program, see the Erasmus website.

There is evidence that Turkey is only a "consumer", and not a "producer" of the policy-making process with respect to Erasmus (Grabbe 2003: 313). Nonetheless, the EU education policies do not require a particular fixed institutional model or a specific approach on how to adopt the rules and shape mobility schemes. Consequently, Turkey has greater autonomy in achieving the requirements that are necessary for the adaptation and implementation of the mobility programs, guaranteed by the "subsidiarity principle" laid down in the Maastricht Treaty (Alexiadou 2007: 103). Hence, as with all the other participating countries, Turkey has the capability for flexible adaptation according to its needs. Indeed, the activities of the European Community in comparison to other areas, such as economy, are limited within the higher education policy, where they do not provide legally-binding directives, but non-compulsory recommendations, consultations, communications or other working documents (Huisman and Wende 2004).

However, the European Community has some indirect influence relating to mobility, cooperation and language promotion as well as to the questions around accreditation. Therefore, at national level certain structures are required, such as a National Agency, which needed to be established to function as an institutional interface to European organs and manage the decentralized funding and disbursement of the national Erasmus organization. The source of funding is another important aspect that provides for joint, instead of purely hierarchical control. Both Turkey and the EU together provide the financial means for the mobility grants. A consequent uneasiness with the use of these terms is underlined by Alexiadou (2007: 102) stating that:

> Member states of the European Union are not seen as passive recipients of policies from the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. Rather they engage in a complex process of selective adoption of policy measures that suit particular purposes, [...] and possibly reject those elements of policy that do not fit national priorities or timelines.

To sum up, the mode of interaction in the Erasmus program is twofold. On the one hand, the rules remain centralized at the EU with a moderate top-down implementation for all participating countries including Turkey. One the other hand, the grants and the program implementation are carried out in a decentralized fashion by the National Agencies in the respective countries.

3.1.2 Bologna Process in Europe

The Bologna Declaration applies as the official launch of common higher education reforms in Europe, introducing a policy of convergence towards a single European space by 2010. The main idea of a Europeanization under the "Bologna aegis" is to enhance the external competitiveness of the EHEA by means of an internal optimization of the national higher education systems and policies. As with the Erasmus program, the Bologna Process is also suited to a continuous expansion, concerning the number of the participating countries, the procedural structures as well as the contextual topics (Witte 2006: 124).[13] Thus, the number of signatory countries rose from the initial 29 to 46 by 2008. As stated earlier, Erasmus and Bologna clearly converge in their mobility goals. They both strive to facilitate the mobility of people, enhance the transparency and recognition of qualifications through instruments such as the ECTS and Diploma Supplement, standardize academic evaluation and ameliorate quality improvement. On the one hand, the Bologna Process promotes the Lifelong Learning Program, the successor of the Socrates program, intending to eliminate the remaining obstacles to the exercise of free mobility (Bologna Declaration 2000). On the other hand, the Erasmus mobility helps to enhance "competence in the field of languages and intercultural understanding", at the same time promoting the creation of a European education area (European Commission 2008b: 80). The European Community for example integrated the Bologna Process in their overall "Education and Training 2010" program, developing a wide range of parallel initiatives embodied in the so-called "Lisbon Strategy" (Wende 2007: 3).

It should be emphasized that the documents in the Bologna Declaration and following process are voluntary political agreements, which do not represent legally binding regulations and are only voluntary declarations of intent. These non-binding patterns were a crucial element for the Bologna Process in order to "overcome the reluctance towards standardization and harmonization" in Europe, especially in the area of higher education (Marginson and Wende 2006: 35).[14] Hence, in the case of the Bologna Process, the mode of interaction is realized by "intergovernmental negotiations", which

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[13] The policies, the so-called "Action Lines" of the Bologna Process are constantly extended throughout the medium of ministerial meetings in the follow-up conferences that take place every two years.

[14] The legal character of the education field in the EU was regulated in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, making it subject to a "banned harmonization" (Article 149 EC) in order to circumvent interference of the European Community in national educational systems (Müller-Solger 1999).

"constitute the lowest level of institutionalization" (Scharpf 2000: 13). In this way, national policies are coordinated by agreements at the European level, while the national authority retains firm control of the implementation process into their own framework (Scharpf 2000). Furthermore, the Bologna Process takes place parallel to and mainly outside of the EU institutional settings, although the European Commission is certainly one of the principal impulses in the EHEA. In the Bologna Process, the political coordination is accomplished through the "open method of coordination", providing the member states with adequate instruments to initiate international cooperation in order to enhance mutual policy learning (Gornitzka 2005). Therefore, the implementation of policies can also be seen as "mutual adjustments", because they are based on multi-level negotiations and interactions in a constant learning process (Scharpf 2000). Yalçın (2005a: 231) further argues that although the formal Bologna documents hardly contain legal relevance, a "high degree of political commitment prevails between the states". Accordingly, the case of non-compliance would signify a strong incongruity for the policy and a consequent "loss of face" should not to be underestimated, since the national ministers themselves had been intensively involved and eventually signed the agreements. The consequent "normative pressure" thus explains a multiplicity of appropriate reforms all over Europe as well as in Turkey to a varying extent (Gornitzka 2005: 7). As an outcome, the European guidelines and the European Commission seem to influence the process by affecting the function of national policies and HEIs.

Nonetheless, Teichler (2007a: 9) rightly reminds that the national policies continue to play a substantial role "regarding the extent to which mobility is encouraged". Despite all the visibly increasing transnational interaction, it is thus important to keep in mind that the governments of the member or candidate states retain the most important reference framework with regard to their higher education systems. Hence, the mechanisms of the institutions are largely the product of a national culture. Enders (2004: 365) accentuates that "the universities' regulatory and funding context was, and still is, national; their contribution to national cultures was, and still is, significant". Undoubtedly, universities are predominantly shaped and managed at national level, indeed, in Turkey with a strong "orientation towards the prominent western university models" (Yalçın 2005a: 147). Thus, the following section explains how Turkey promoted and integrated the European policies into its national framework.

3.2 NATIONAL RESPONSES: THE TURKISH CONTEXT

The Turkish higher education system is currently in a "larger process of reform and modernization" to improve their quality and their external attractiveness in order to attract foreign students (Roman, Mızıkacı and Goschin 2008: 131). According to the TÜSIAD study (2008), many stakeholders involved in different areas ranging from the policy to the institutional level believe that the system needs a fundamental change. Although Turkey has come a long way in establishing a more efficient system of higher education moving into a "mass system with institutions spanning the whole country", further progress needs to be done (Hatakenaka 2006: 3).

According to EUROSTAT data, there has been a remarkable growth in Turkey's student population, of almost 60% between 1999 and 2006, as a result of a continuously increasing youth population (World Bank 2007: 3). In the academic year 2006/07, there were around 2.5 million students enrolled in 85 public and 30 foundation (non-profit, private) universities (Demir 2008: 2).[15] Notwithstanding such an expansion, Turkey is far from fully absorbing the demographic bulge. In order to ensure equitable access, further modernization is required. As a result, the general gross enrollment (30%) and consequent attainment of degrees (11%) in higher education remains low by international standards (World Bank 2007: 12; OECD 2008). The Turkish Council of Higher Education set a target envisaged in its higher education strategy to strive to reach a rate of 65% gross higher education enrollment by 2025, increasing from the current rate of 30% (Council of Higher Education 2006: 15). The TÜSIAD evaluation (2008: 5) further argues that the growth in numbers has not been accompanied by either a commensurate "increase of funding" or the "necessary structural changes".[16] Another major structural constraint pertaining to the contemporary system is its high level of centralization at the Council of Higher Education[17] with an extensive regulatory policy load. In that way, the external regulations set by the Council heavily intrude into the internal university management, constraining their institutional autonomy (TÜSIAD 2008).

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[15] As of 2008, the number of HEIs increased to 94 state and 36 non-profit foundation universities (Demir 2008: 2). For more statistical data, see the Turkish Council of Higher Education website.

[16] For further details on the higher education policy recommendations for Turkey, see World Bank (2007), Barblan, Ergüder and Gürüz (2008) and the homepage of the Council of Higher Education for annual reports, e.g. the report on the "Higher education strategy for Turkey" (Council of Higher Education 2006).

[17] The Council of Higher Education is a "constitutional, non-political state body responsible for the organization, planning, recognition and supervision of all HEIs" (European Commission 2007b: 294).

For this reason, flexible adaptation measures on behalf of the HEIs are strongly limited. According to the Eurobarometer survey (2007: 28) "nine out of ten Turkish respondents believe that universities need more autonomy from public authorities". The quest for real institutional autonomy and an effective subsidiarity principle is therefore still unresolved (World Bank 2007).[18]

Neither this diagnosis nor the corresponding prescription to reform are new, as in the words of Enders (2004: 366), but the structural possibilities and opportunities for progress within the European context "lend fresh wind to national debates on higher education reforms". Therefore, the Turkish state and ministries voluntarily participated in the European initiatives, such as the Bologna Process and the Erasmus program, because the European processes' goals seemed to fit in with the policy path of the Turkish government and the Higher Education Council. Uğur (2001: 218) asserts that this fact is particularly important, since Turkey has hardly ever come to "accept European integration as a reference point for the formulation or legitimization of reforms" before. On the contrary, he underlines that "Turkish policy-makers have consistently tried to de-link any partial reform from Turkey's European integration" (Uğur 2001: 218). The Bologna Process, in particular, was seen as a useful strategy to gain international recognition and greater possibilities of development and networks for Turkey, since it provides strong bottom-up mechanisms (Yalçın 2005b). The large agreement with the process was at the same time justified because it was a voluntary agreement with a high potential of self-organization based upon nationally grounded preferences. This allowed a favorable consensus in support of Europeanization to emerge. The Bologna movement was carried by a "vision towards optimization, which fascinated and mobilized accordingly" (Yalçın 2005a: 211). In Turkey, education experts saw it as an "opportunity to reassess the system's values and aims" (TÜSIAD 2008: 12).[19] Thereby, especially the Council of Higher Education had strong motivation to accomplish modernization of the national higher education system, and Bologna served as an impulse for strategic change.[20]

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[18] For an extensive analysis on autonomy issues in Turkey, see Barblan, Ergüder and Gürüz (2008).

[19] One of the interviewees underlined that "the government is known as conservative, but still they somehow want to be part of Europe and education is perceived as one of the easiest ways to be a part of Europe". Thereby, he referred to the heavily debated head scarf issue in the constitution.

[20] Besides the Council of Higher Education and the National Agency, the Ministry of National Education, the Rectors' Conference and the Interuniversity Board are decisive formal stakeholders that shape the ideas in the field of higher education. For details about those agents, see European Commission (2008c).

As a result of this initial enthusiasm, reforms became possible, which might not have been possible before. Taken as a whole, the European programs provide a suitable platform to discuss and legitimize political decisions, which align European elements with the national higher education system.

3.2.1 Bologna Process in Turkey

Whereas the time span between the introduction of the Erasmus program and the signature of the Bologna Declaration constituted more than a decade in Europe, in Turkey both processes were introduced almost simultaneously. Up to now, both programs were strongly interlinked, starting with their administration on behalf of the National Agency, which is responsible for both actions. After Turkey signed the Bologna Declaration in Prague in 2001, some standards to fulfill the requirements of the Bologna reforms were implemented top-down by the Council of Higher Education, while others were individual commitments by each university. In the Bologna Process, the Council of Higher Education establishes the legislative basis for the enforcement and application of objectives, i.e. it renders diploma and degrees comprehensible to facilitate international recognition and helps to design an independent quality assurance system with input from all stakeholders. The Council of Higher Education is also a so-called "collective member" of the European University Association (EUA).

The consecutive policy adoptions initiated at national level mainly related to quality evaluation, such as "creating a national framework for qualifications compatible with the overall quality assurance framework within the EHEA" (Mızıkacı 2006: 98). This is noteworthy because the heterogeneous structure in Turkish HEIs regarding the quality of education generated a pressure for adaptation to the European quality assurance systems. Another important change in the area of higher education, besides quality, was to overcome the obstacles influencing the mobility of students and staff. Thereby the participation in the EU programs was considered an important "bottle-opener" in order to activate more outbound mobility in Turkey (Uludağ University 2003: 10). Major structural adaptations, however, did not seem to be relevant in Turkey in order to facilitate mobility, since the system already provided the necessary three-cycle degree structures when joining Bologna. Since 1981, the Turkish HE system consists of three main cycles: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate (European Commission 2007b: 294).

Actually, this orientation gave Turkey a competitive advantage over other European countries that had to adjust to the Bologna degree-structure. Thus, for Turkey, the central problem was not structural in scope, but "making them qualitatively comparable to the other countries" (Yalçın 2005a: 163).

3.2.2 Erasmus in Turkey

> When somebody turns 20 years old, he or she has not achieved so much in life. Life is just beginning; the same is valid for the Erasmus program. I realized that Turkey joined Erasmus later on, in a way you join a train which has been on the rails for some time and we can learn a lot from each other in this respect.

Beginning with those words of the EU Commissioner in his speech in the national Erasmus meeting in 2008, it is interesting to shed light on the implementation of the Erasmus program in Turkey. Without a doubt, the most important condition for change was the candidate status for admission to the EU in 1999, which entitled Turkey to participate in the Community programs according to the Association Agreement. In the beginning of 2000, the European Parliament and the Council thus decided to include Turkey in the second phase of the Community programs in the field of education, namely the Socrates program, which comprised Erasmus. With respect to mobility, there was no doubt that the European policies were compatible with the Turkish settings, and the necessary adaptations (ECTS, Diploma Supplement, Lisbon Convention, etc.) could easily be realized (Roman, Mızıkacı and Goschin 2008: 138).

The implementation of the Erasmus program inevitably required the application of several preparatory measures in order to comply with the external parameters set by the European Commission.[21] During the preparatory phase, Turkey established a regulatory framework and a specialized administrative structure, also ensuring "the training of staff in order to provide the necessary information campaigns for the potential participants and beneficiaries" (European Commission 2006a: 4). For that reason, the Turkish National Agency was set up in 2003 as an independent public entity, "reporting on the one hand to the European Commission and on the other hand to the national authority"

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[21] One important achievement in the course of Turkey's accession – due to the EU criteria – was the cancellation of the seat of the military representative in the Council of Higher Education in 2004 (Ertepınar 2005). For this reform the government received much credit, since it was an important step to eliminate the military influence in academic life and civilian affairs more generally. The Council of Higher Education has furthermore "played an important role as a buffer organization to ensure that higher education is free of political influence" (TÜSIAD 2008: 8).

(European Commission 2006a: 4).[22] It manages the programs' decentralized activities, including "project selection, contracting, payments to beneficiaries, project monitoring and reporting to the Commission" (European Commission 2006a: 7). With respect to the Bologna Process, the National Agency selects the so called Bologna promoters and coordinates the activities respectively.

Supported by the continuous "information campaigns from the National Agency", all Community programs in the field of education "met right from the start with a strong interest among students and young professionals" (European Commission 2005: 117). A second elementary step in Turkey's involvement in the Erasmus program was to accomplish a pilot project in 2003/04 with 15 HEIs. After successfully completing the preparatory phase, Turkey then fully participated in 2004. Legislative changes brought about were the mandatory introduction of the ECTS and Diploma Supplement application since the end of the 2005/06 academic year (Demir 2008).

Another condition for Turkey was to allocate complementary funds to the EU grants in order to guarantee an increasing outflow of Turkish students. Turkey thus contributes around 20% of the money for the mobility grants given to the students (Demir 2008: 44). It is noteworthy, that Turkey decided to provide "one of the highest Erasmus grants so that students from lower economic background can also participate" (Demir 2008: 43). At the same time, the government tried to "facilitate the portability of grants and loans" in order to increase the number of potential beneficiaries (Mızıkacı 2006: 101). This resolved a major barrier for cross-boarder mobility on behalf of the Turkish students, constantly affecting most of the participating countries. [23] Additionally, some universities provide extra financial support to ensure better opportunities for students (Demir 2008: 44). As can be seen in the following figure of beneficiaries of the Erasmus program in Turkey, around 15.000 Turkish students have studied in Europe through the organization of the Erasmus program so far, and the number is estimated to rise to about 60.000 exchange students by 2012/13. This reveals that studying in Europe became more accessible for the Turkish students due to Erasmus.

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[22] The functions of the National Authority are carried out by a "Steering and Monitoring Committee" under the political responsibility of the Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister (European Commission 2006a: 4).

[23] Due to the consecutive extension of the Erasmus program, the amount of grants has been squeezed all over Europe, whereas the average grant per month provided to students remains well below the established target (European Commission 2008a: Annex A).

Figure 6: Turkish-wide beneficiaries of the Erasmus program (2004/05 – 2012/13)
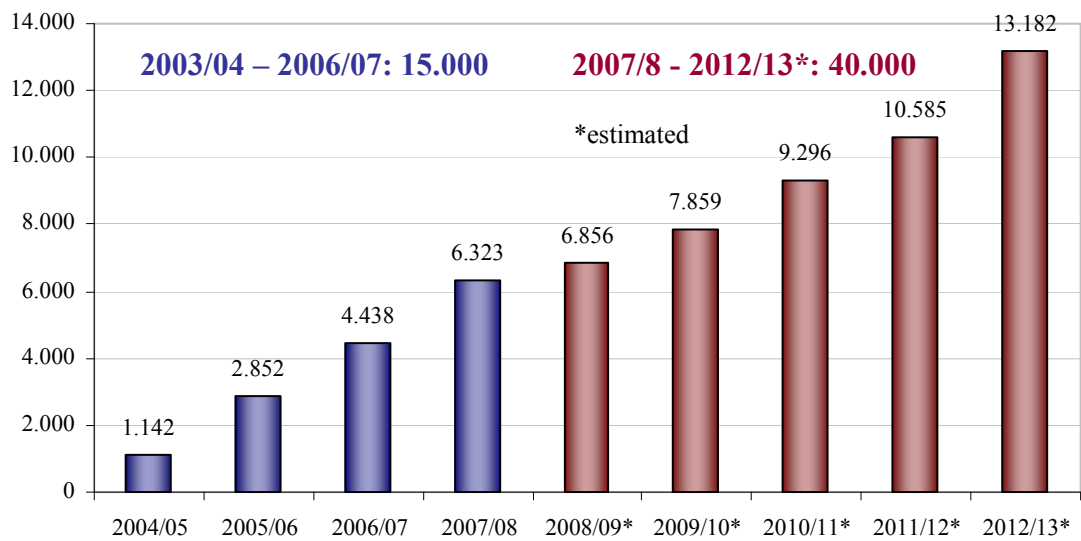
Source: **Ülgür (figures 2004/05 – 2007/08) (2008); Birtek (estimated figures) (2005).**

In sum, this chapter aimed at presenting the initial conditions and implementations of the external context. As the institutions and institutional actors are expected to have a specific role in how domestic adaptations take place, the next chapter will cover the developments inside the universities after the launch of the EU mobility program and the Bologna Process.

4   EUROPEANIZATION PROCESSES AT ANATOLIAN UNIVERSITIES

This chapter offers a closer look behind the rationale and logic for change at the university units. In order to present a more detailed exploration of the Europeanization processes at the local Anatolian universities, the chapter will first discuss the ideas and expectations of the relevant actors shortly after the introduction of the European programs. A substantial focus will be then placed on the local settings, concentrating on the main mechanisms and actors involved in the process and how to they enable transferring European methods and standards into the Turkish higher education system. Therefore, it singles out the importance of the most relevant "mediating factors" in the institutional transformation process, namely the "formal supporting actors", the "cooperative informal actors" and the existing "veto points" (Börzel and Risse 2000). Lastly, there will be two different approaches to explain the factors how actors and institutions extend their activities to the European stage. Firstly, the "redistribution of resources" will present the underlying power structures in the system. Secondly, the "socialization processes" will attempt to follow how the relevant actors internalized the norms and values into their daily working practice.

4.1   INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES: THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

The interviews provide evidence that the individual actors of the institutions positively welcomed the European processes, because the possibility of participation in the European programs presented a starting point for new reform efforts. That is because the Turkish HEIs were also at crossroads, and many of them strived to catch up to leading institutions by trying to enhance their competitiveness and improve their position. As mentioned earlier, the local Anatolian state universities had an especially difficult challenge relative to the elite state and private universities. These leading elite institutions wield considerable resources for relatively fewer students, competing for the best academic talent, attracting the strongest students, while recruiting the best university researchers and instructors (Yalçın 2005a: 135). Internationalization thus served as means of improving the institutional profile within the local or national environment, in addition to sustaining or developing the international prestige. Consequently, great hopes were attached to the European programs and each university intended to make the most of the opportunity for the benefit of its own institution.

Although there had been some research cooperation in Turkish universities with the UK and Germany prior to 2004, until then it was difficult for the university stakeholders to conceive how to establish connections with Europe, due to the high structural barriers to the European higher education system. Hence, the development of the selected local universities has been particularly interesting, since they started from scratch with their exchange programs with Europe. A first step for the local universities was upgrading or establishing a central international office, which mostly operated in close connection with the highest decision making body at the HEIs, for example, the vice rector for international relations. This enabled the HEIs to be recognized be the National Agency as eligible institutions for Erasmus activities and consequently solicit a European University Charter (EUC) from the European Commission. Once the universities obtained this charter, they were entitled to apply for the funds. After the sample universities had obtained their EUC, they also introduced the ECTS and Diploma Supplement as means of facilitating transparency and international mobility.

From the interviews, the ambition to achieve international recognition was obvious and in particular in the beginning their institutional atmosphere seemed highly reform-oriented.[24] The actors in Kayseri and Adana were keen on taking part in a broader international network as a local university. With that they tried to provide a link between their local communities with the wider European or international context. Simultaneously, interviewees from Isparta understood internationalization as means of raising their profile within the national higher education system. While the internationalization strategy from Uludağ University even called the Bologna Process the "golden opportunity" to increase mobility at their institution, they seemed fully aware of the need for agility in order to converge towards European standards (Uludağ University 2003a: 2). However, there were various obstacles to overcome such as inadequate financial resources, insufficiently benchmarked and accredited curricula, inactive former agreements and weak international networks. The lack of proficiency of the students and staff in foreign languages also impeded faster progress. All the local universities examined identified the same set of problems.

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[24] The universities' internationalization strategies offer an interesting insight how the universities expected to capitalize their individual strengths. For more details, see EUA (2003, 2004, 2006a, 2006b), Uludağ University (2003a, 2003b, 2003c), Çukurova University (2006), Erciyes University (2006) and METU (2005).

METU in contrast, as a major elite state university located in Ankara, had extensive experience with respect to internationalization long before Erasmus. When considering the number and the diversity of their international students by 2004, they had clearly been the number one in Turkey, attracting students from all over the world. They had many exchange agreements with American, Australian, Japanese and Canadian universities organized through a central international office. A decisive factor for their attractiveness is magnitude and quality of their instruction in the English language. Additionally, the prestige of the institution and its reputation for excellence and quality education are "especially important to prospective students" and "crucial to attracting applicants in Turkey" (Öz 2005: 340, World Bank 2007: 33). METU indeed stands out in terms of excellence and profile, and enjoys a well-established recognition that allows them to draw top students, academic staff and leadership. Their long-standing reputation within and outside Turkey in addition to the favorable location in the national capital are great advantages on which they could rely for the upcoming Europeanization process. Hence, the other local universities had to make extensive efforts in order not to remain in the shadow of such prominent competition in the European programs.

4.1.1 New opportunities and constraints

Visible Europeanization processes at the university level began first after the Turkish Minister of Education had signed the Bologna Declaration in 2001 in Prague. At that time, all universities visited, as well as many of the other ones, launched a general assessment of their internationalization strategy, institutional mission and profile. The vice rector from Adana remembers that his university understood six to seven years ago that "if it can not get the total system outward orientated, then curriculum enhancement, new programs on offer, faculty development and up-to date research would suffer in the future". As it was the case in many other European countries, in particular, the local universities thus progressively searched for competitive advantages when developing high-level services for both outbound and inbound exchange, based upon the principle that the "attractiveness of an institution depends on the structures in place" (Kelo 2006: 204). Kelo (2006: 23) further argues that for an institution to be attractive to international students, the "universities need to demonstrate that they can adequately respond to their expectations and offer good academic quality and support services". Starting early, especially Uludağ University engaged in an extensive self-assessment

procedure, including a fundamental overhaul of their course structures and a re-organization of the entire curricula. They believed certain objective quality standards or accreditation (preferably international) to be specific tools to increase the mobility and employability of their students. Being able to demonstrate their quality provided an opportunity for the university to strengthen its image. The other universities also reported structural evaluations, trying to learn from best practices from other institutions in Turkey, while cooperatively sharing experiences and promoting their institutions.

Perhaps the most important opportunity for the local universities was the possibility to obtain the necessary funds for student exchange and its administration. Among the EU programs, particularly Erasmus represented a significant opportunity to acquire substantial additional resources.[25] Hence, Erasmus seemed to be the most convincing lure to get the universities on board, not only at the local level, but throughout Turkey. This becomes apparent when looking at the rising number of universities applying for an Erasmus charter in the following years, which was necessary for active involvement. The next figure illustrates the number of Turkish HEIs, which have been assigned an Erasmus charter compared to the total number of Turkish HEIs. The average participation rate thereby has reached approximately 88%, which is consistent with the average European participation rate of around 90% (European Commission 2008d: 18).

Figure 7: Turkish HEIs assigned with a EUC compared to the total HEIs (2004 – 2009)
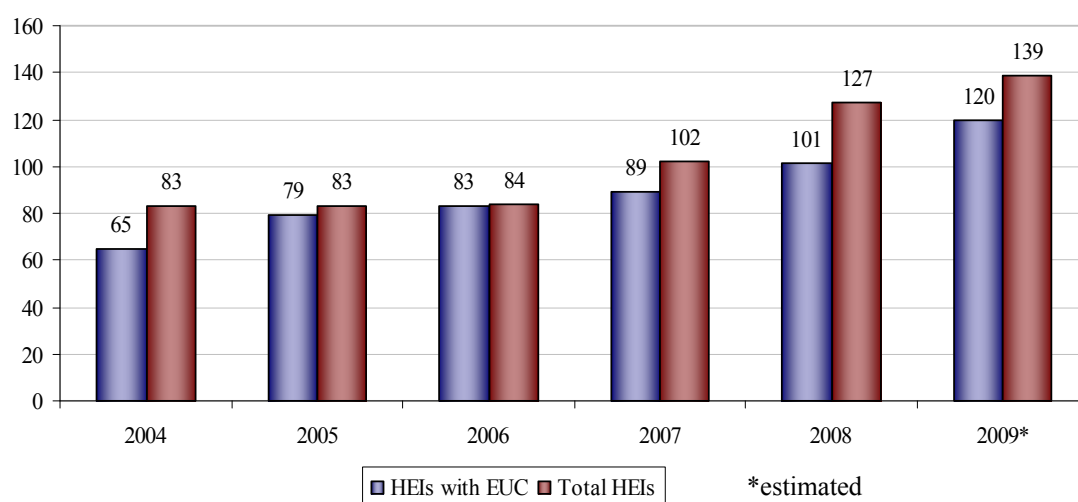
Source: **Ülgür (2008).**

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[25] For an overview of the amount of funds allocated to the universities over the years, see the website of the National Agency on the annual budget allocation for the Erasmus mobility actions.

With respect to either opportunities or constraints in the new processes, a further considerable point many interviewees mentioned links to the importance of location and the prestige of the universities. Generally, hierarchies of elite and mass universities in the Turkish university system are strongly related to their geographical location, whereby the metropolitan universities enjoy manifold advantages over the remote ones with a local or regional profile. Yalçın (2005a: 147) attests a great range in quality and corresponding national reputation with a "strong East-West divide" depending on their locations and settings, despite their structural similarity to Anglo-Saxon systems.[26] Interestingly enough, "Europe had up until the Bologna Process neglected most (elite) universities in Turkey, which had mostly been aligned with the USA until then"(Yalçın 2005a: 149).[27] Therefore, the majority of Turkish universities had been unfamiliar to European institutions and the new collaborations were expected to create a greater competition, offering new opportunities to the local universities.

The new processes presented a chance of formal equality, such as the placement of all universities of the country according to the same criteria from the Bologna and Erasmus standards. However, this structural equality did not seem to prevent an aggravation of the qualitative differences and hierarchies especially in the subsequent networking process, because the "European universities are more likely to cooperate with the best universities in Turkey rather than with the unknown ones" (Yalçın 2005a: 148). In this respect, the local universities commonly argued that promoting their universities to Europe was much more difficult in face of the "centers of excellence", specifically concerning the initial search for partner institutions and strategic expansions in order to establish bilateral agreements. This highlights a unique point for Turkey, that not only the Turkish participants play an important role, but also the other participating countries and institutions. Similarly, according to the European Commission (2007c: 260) the "lack of awareness of the quality of higher education in Turkey" is a decisive factor for the students deciding about a stay in Turkey. In this process especially the local Anatolian universities need substantial external promotion if the inward and outward mobility flows are to be more balanced.

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[26]The endeavor to open private universities in the last decade confirms this trend of preferring the metropolis. Out of 22 new foundation universities (established between 1994 and 2006) 15 were in Istanbul, 4 in Ankara, 2 in Izmir and only 1 in Mersin (Council of Higher Education 2006: 63).
[27] Turkey is a strong exporter of mobile students for Europe and the US (Yalçın 2005: 150).

4.1.2   New norms, ideas and collective understandings

In order to find out "how and in what way" universities wanted to initiate their internationalization in the beginning it was very helpful to consider the ideas among the relevant actors. Generally, people in this process could be categorized in three major clusters. The first group, the pioneers, consisted of the first activists and the early adopters, such as a handful of people in favor of globalization (with the EU as part of it) with few conservative national objections. They were open to individual and European developments, which might be good for the national progress. Most of them recognized great opportunities connected to this process thus sweeping away their concerns. Especially young lecturers, foreign-born Turks, foreign language lecturers or the ones who had experienced long-term stays abroad were committed members of this group. A substantial number of these actors have been involved in internationalization processes since the very beginning of the introduction of the European programs. Their curiosity and the possibility of something new sparked first actions, because Erasmus offered them new possibilities for contacts abroad. Some department coordinators also mentioned that their professional role as Erasmus coordinator could be helpful in ascending the academic hierarchy of the university. Therefore, personal job opportunities presented an exceptional asset for their academic careers. Nevertheless, it is yet to be seen if these hopes will be fulfilled. The second and largest group was at first relatively neutral. It included both critics and supporters of Turkey and Europe due to a greater ignorance or distance to the European processes. A considerable number of them became active after further information about the programs. The third group constituted the opponents to the European processes, due to cultural hesitation towards Europe or ideology disputes, such as Armenian discussions, Anti-Western discourse, inward-focused conservatism or brain drain. They generally remained passive.

When asking the actors about the first years, it gave the impression that hesitation basically outweighed the enthusiastic anticipation of the European programs. Overall, the faculty and department coordinators seemed more skeptical compared to the other stakeholders. This hesitation was to a large extent related to the "missing information" about the European HEIs and their systems. The lack of previous contacts allowed certain mistrust towards the European academic community, for example about the quality of their methods of teaching or the compatibility of their curricula.

Surprisingly, this was especially valid at METU, where the head of the international office remembered that there was at first a strong reluctance on behalf of the academy to establish bilateral agreements necessary for Erasmus. The modest results of their pilot project demonstrated this strong informal resistance, by sending only one outgoing student to Germany when nine places were available. Thereby, the academics envisaged difficulties in finding European partners with a similar research-oriented curriculum and workload offered in English. Moreover, a department coordinator noted that the European universities trail in international rankings and therefore concluded that the European HEIs' performance and quality is inferior to that at the Anglo-Saxon or Japanese universities. Whereas the quality of European higher education was in question, the superiority of the long-established cooperation with several of the international elite universities especially in the United States was recognized at METU. Besides the Turkish structural and curricular compatibility with the American system, the Turkish professors and their colleagues abroad had comprehended and acknowledged each other's reputation and academic performance. It is noteworthy that about 75% of the professors at METU had acquired their degrees in the US or the UK partially explaining the Anglo-Saxon affinity. The "non Anglo-Saxon Europe" then challenged this existing effectively working system by offering quite heterogeneous quality, contents and teaching methods. This statement goes hand in hand with the "global elite discourse" that came along with the aim of the Bologna Process, emphasizing that Europe needs to "reach out internationally to achieve excellence" at their HEIs (Wende 2007: 1). Despite the hesitation of several academic faculty members at METU, as a leading flagship university in Turkey, they somehow managed to reconsider some of their initial skepticism towards the initiatives with the European universities. This will be described with more detail in the chapter on mediating factors.

Similar reluctance was also expressed within the local universities' academy. As mentioned above, academic skepticism towards the European system often pertained to the heterogeneity of institutions in Europe. In practice, this complicated comparing the learning outcomes of courses taken abroad with the courses taken at home. To give an example, academics spoke of the *Fachhochschulen*, the so-called "universities of applied sciences" in the German speaking countries, which were treated like "real" universities in the Bologna Process, despite their different structure and workloads.

This topic arose at the national Erasmus meeting in Adana where the coordinators were not certain how to compare "apples and oranges" and consequently how to translate their students' achievements abroad with their own teaching. As a reply, the EU Commissioner emphasized a crucial point that the system is based on trust, good will and personal decisions. He suggested the following:

> I would look at what a *Fachhochschule* produces and then make a decision, if you want to work with them or not. But there has to be some common trust in this system. If universities stay in an ivory tower, then it will not help the mobility in Europe at all. I would say if a certain country decides to change the law in this respect, look if there is a quality assurance agency, if there is accreditation at work, get an impression from what they do, if they have got their course catalogue published. At the end, by all means, collaborate with them. Perhaps I am being social here, but that is how we are building trust and Bologna as well.

The Commissioner's thought relates to a basic element of the process, namely to create trust. He implied that Erasmus and Bologna might offer a sophisticated model, but without trust, it cannot work. Therefore, in order to be successful, the HEI actors need to establish a certain trust amongst the individual members, which is most likely to develop when the partners get to know each other. That way, the European processes can finally contribute the expected benefits and increases in institutional attraction gain.

4.2   <u>Mediating actors fostering or impeding change</u>

Based upon the premise that the responsibility for adaptation at the institutional level rests with the agents, it is worth considering the most powerful mediators in the process of Europeanization and internationalization at the Turkish universities. In that way, it is helpful to identify according to the Europeanization concept from Börzel and Risse (2000) the various underlying position, power structures and agency of these key actors in the HEIs. It is important to keep in mind that their tasks or positions do not present clear cut entities, but overlap to a great extent. The following figure depicts their categorization in the Europeanization concept (in italic letters), their authority according to their position, their status in the university system (grey box) and their social agency (white box). The upcoming four sections on formal and informal actors use specific case studies to explain how the decision makers, campaigners, designers and informal actors either foster or obstruct change within the European processes.

Because the "veto points" category of the Europeanization concept can be found among all of the four actors' categories, the discussion of these will be integrated to the specific cases in their respective sections. In case of too many veto points or veto actors, the capacities of the participants who want to promote change, are weakened (Börzel and Risse 2003: 64). Heinze (2005: 76) thus identifies a "low number of veto points as a necessary and sufficient condition for transformation".

Figure 8: Mediating factors enabling or impeding change in Turkish HEIs.

supporting formal agents

decision maker
→ full signature authority

Rector, Senate, Administrative Board
provide and redistribute material and ideological resources in order to positively exploit the reforms, set the overall university standards for internationalization

norm entrepreneurs

campaigner
→ centralized or de-centralized authority

designer
→ academic recognition authority

International Offices	**Faculty and Department Coordinators**
introduce the reforms internally and externally, centralized point of reference for international reforms and actions	mentor and look for methods of resolution of the academic administration of mobility, translate the reforms in the departments

cooperative informal agents

informal actors
→ authority about the choice of participation

Students
cause a re-definition of the present interests and identities by persuading new appropriate attitudes

veto points

actors or positions
→ impede progress in the HEIs

financial restrictions, rules and regulations, lack of official authority, missing information, speed of the implementation process, individual motivation, language competency

Source: **modified after Börzel and Risse (2000).**

4.2.1 Decision makers: rector, senate, administrative board

Rectors in Turkish HEIs generally take active leadership positions in chairing both the senate and the administrative board, which are "key resources for the strategic management of the university" (TÜSIAD 2008: 7). According to the Europeanization theory, the effectiveness of the change strongly depends on the "discourse and the preferences of the decision makers" at the national and local level, in this case the rectors (Heinze 2005: 20). Hence, it can be concluded that the quality of institutional policy formulation clearly depends on the goals of the highest authority of the HEIs, "enabling institutional change while at the same time contributing to an understanding of the process" (Heinze 2005: 27). This means that the decision makers correspond to the *conditio sine qua non* for institutional change (Witte 2006: 492).

When considering the Turkish case, the European drive has indeed been welcomed by both political elites and the leaders of the individual institutions, which assumed to heighten their educational profile (TÜSIAD 2008). In all sample universities, particularly the rector was called the most influential key figure in the official process of internationalization. For that reason, the rector was often characterized as a captain that needed to be on board, if the European journey was to be successful. Additionally, the senate and the administrative board play a major role at Turkish HEIs for student mobility. For example they take decisions about setting the number of courses instructed in a foreign language as well as establishing the criteria for student exchange.

How the decision makers determine the direction of change can be observed in how strongly the rectors encouraged the stakeholders during the last years to implement the internationalization process. For the sample universities, it can safely be concluded that the EU mobility programs and the Bologna Process have received full support from their rectors since the start of the programs, which in turn set the stage for a successful implementation for their institutions. For example at Uludağ University, the reforms initiated by their rector were recognized by the positive reviews of internal and external evaluations, resulting in a re-election for a second term in 2004. Thereby, the distribution of power and necessary instruments played quite an important role, manifesting in either a closed centralized control of the internationalization process or a decentralized administration with more authority at the administrative level.

In one decentralized case, the rector delegated an informal signature authority[28] to the head of the international office, relying on his expertise. As a consequence, this authority enabled the entire office to realize a speedy implementation of the available EU educational programs, including numerous projects in cooperation with the regional stakeholders. When I asked the head of the international office how their workplace was set up in the initiative phase, he replied as following:

> Of course, we first talked this issue with the rector of the university in 2004. I prepared a physical list of students and staff, so he accepted the list. He helped a lot in terms of finance, in terms of authority. In the first meeting of the deans, the directors of the university, he said, I remember: Whatever the international office says, it is my saying.

In one centralized case, certain incentives as well as sanctions turned out to be effective instruments for motivating and enforcing change in the faculties and departments. The rector made clear that anyone, such as a dean, wanting to keep their position should accomplish at least one active international network or agreement in the next 3-4 years. In this case, it is noteworthy to point out that the rector as well as the Council of Higher Education have the broad authority to transfer faculty members and administrative staff, and to initiate dismissal proceedings against staff and students, without further objective criteria, rules or limitations according to Articles 7/l and 13/b-4 of Law 2547 (Human Rights Watch 2004: 17).[29] Another critical factor determining international affairs is the political stance of the rector with respect to the government policies. An interviewee recalled that at his university the stance of the rector and his working attitude impeded the realization of initiated partnerships with the US due to political problems at the national level, as such:

> We discussed about what programs would be possible, but nothing has started yet, because of some political issues with the US. There were some conflicts, a few years ago, very stupid ones. [...] We have a very nationalist rector here. It is one of the leading Turkish rectors. It is hard if you have this kind of rector. It is good, but it is hard to work with, because if he is milder with everyone, then it is easier. For example, he is not getting along very well with the current government. So we had some disadvantages because of this. There shouldn't be this kind of things, but it happens in Turkey. When you are not good with the government and you are not thinking in parallel with the government, you get less money and everything.

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[28] Formally, the signature of the rector is needed for the approval of the EU projects. However, the international office in this case is able to decide on their own after an evaluation of the projects and sign on behalf of the rector, even when those projects comprise high sums.
[29] The entire higher education system in Turkey including the short cycle of higher vocational schools is governed by the Higher Education Law No. 2547 of October 1981 (European Commission 2007b: 294).

Besides the differential power relations, the provision of space to the international offices was another salient example on how much the rectors had put efforts to shape their universities at the administrative level. The rector and administration provided newly established and equipped offices up to entire buildings to all but one local university and METU. In order to give the reader a more detailed discussion on that topic, the next section further investigates the international offices, revealing interesting insights about opportunities and challenges for them in the process.

4.2.2 Campaigners: international offices

At all universities visited, the international offices most commonly constitute the centralized point of reference for international matters. The international offices carry out various administrative duties, considering the organization and promotion of student and staff mobility in and outside university as the most important ones. They provide information and service, accumulate and administer all related official documents, calculate and arrange budgets, write reports and sometimes even select suitable bilateral agreements. As campaigners the international offices are responsible for promoting the basic logic, mission and vision of the new international processes and communicating these to the key stakeholders, namely their academic faculty, students, other administrators as well as among the regional stakeholders outside university, such as the chambers of commerce, local officials, such as the mayor, student unions and civil society groups. Information was, and still is, a key element for motivating actors to participate and to contribute, since interviewees repeatedly stated that people who do not know about it remain passive and sometimes even reluctant. Therefore, the international offices hold regular seminars on the EU programs for the above-mentioned stakeholders. Additionally, they enable their visiting students to obtain a wider access on course contents, translated course syllabuses, brochures and multimedia resources about their university over their websites.

The retrospective views of members in the international offices mostly relate to the speedy implementation and the extensive "missing information" about the new bureaucratic procedures and partners at the beginning. Actually, there was little time for the administrators to make preparatory exchanges and visits in order to acquire the essential information and familiarity with the European HEIs and systems.

However, information was obtained over the internet or at national meetings, seminars and expert groups organized by the National Agency as well as at international meetings, for example, in the European Erasmus coordinators' conference, the so-called ERACON. It is important to note that the national Bologna promoters strongly contributed to clarify the "missing information" about the European HEIs and the program procedures. During numerous site visits, they helped with the local application of the program contents, such as how to set up and implement ECTS and DS and how other institutions coped with it. Likewise, an interviewee indicated that also the national Erasmus meetings were highly important for sharing experiences, best practices, mistakes to avoid and the information about new program structures. By now, all of the examined local Anatolian universities have at least one coordinator for the ECTS and/or Bologna.

The heads of the offices were very well aware of the fact that their staff must fulfill certain curricular conditions in order to be effective. These basic requirements became obvious when considering that all administrators had at least good written and spoken command of a minimum one foreign language, experiences abroad and a good hand in dealing with students. The commitment to the job was a further point to be considered, because in the first couple of years most administrators were only part-time employees. Therefore, they had to carry out the international matters as an extra duty without further financial remuneration. Finding personnel willing to participate under those conditions proved to be a particular challenge. This also explains a rather low participation rate. Nevertheless, the few ambitious academics entrusted with this job managed to establish the procedures quite professionally. The international coordinators' continuous help and intercession in the process turned out to be for most interviewees an indispensable source of motivation to do this work. Over the years, they additionally became mediators between proponents and opponents of internationalization within their university, knowing well the opinions, motivations and power relations among stakeholders. As a result, they have grown to be strong intermediaries, most likely also being close to the rector. Typical characteristics that describe these actors include: high diplomacy, indispensability, constant availability (24/7 per E-mail) and dedication to work long office hours.

Although they are busy, these international coordinators usually volunteer overtime for extracurricular activity. As a result of their engagement, they are central to the university's progress. Without those key figures, the Europeanization processes would have definitely been slower, as the department coordinator in Bursa comments:

> They are problem solvers. You know, when you have a problem, they try to solve the problem. Some directors, like you say actors, [...] go and solve this problem. They try to help you and give all information. This motivates us. That's why we work hard. So this is important.

After a couple of years "learning by doing" on how to deal with the official documents, correspondence and proposals, how to find partners, how to make agreements, etc., most interviewees report the management of their offices as running smoothly. Satisfactory answers about the programs were to a large extent provided by "word of mouth recommendations" from other actors. By now, most of the actors in the international offices claim to have the most expertise on the European topic of any resource throughout the university. Nonetheless, administrators often advocate for less bureaucracy; one even mentioned that "there is no place for bureaucracy in this process". The interviewees encounter the growing magnitude of mandatory official documents and paperwork as a significant veto point, since it hampers their motivation, due to the time-consuming procedures attached to them. Extra administrative staff for these duties would be highly appreciated, so that the coordinators could focus more on the external promotion of the university, which remains an important task for the local universities up to now.

As a matter of fact, most international offices which I examined promote activities with a predominantly, but not exclusively, European context. They often focus on the available EU programs and short-term mobility rather than on the overall international programs, including degree students offered at university level. In the future, however, most actors desire a broader orientation internationally and globally, not only within Europe, but also towards Asia. Over the years, most offices have considerably increased in size, personnel, scope of action and professionalization. The ideal international offices comprise clearly separated subgroups and respective working spaces concerning the administration of the different Community actions under the Lifelong Learning Program.

Ideally, they also provide a specialist for the budget and a central secretary receiving and distributing the incoming demands accordingly. The offices which do not provide these standards, due to a lack of human and financial resources, aim to accomplish them in the future. Interestingly enough, in the control case of METU the international office is the smallest one in terms of size, employing up to five full-time administers, plus irregular part-time staff in one medium sized room. This "unhealthy working environment" creates manifold problems for the staff and students, according to Şahin's findings (2008: 102). According to her survey about the services provided by the international office at METU, it becomes clear that "more than half of the outgoing students experienced problems while being served by the office" and did not receive adequate answers about the bureaucratic procedures (Şahin 2008: 101). Hence, for an effective administration also adequate office space and technology are indispensable parts of the overall project.

4.2.3   Designers: academics, program coordinators

Together with the international offices the academic coordinators form a group of central norm entrepreneurs, although being placed within two different units at the university. Huisman and Wende (2004: 25) describe them as the "higher education grass-root level representatives" and assign them an equally influential agency, although the coordinators at the faculty and department level have a less centralized position. Again, their tasks in the Europeanization processes are wide-ranging. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of their position is the combination of teaching, research and the coordination of Erasmus. This inevitably involves the application of quite a few assignments, which will be given particular attention in this section.

As a matter of fact, full-time academics in Turkish state universities have to give at least 10 lecture hours per week. In most cases, however, they have to do more, due to a lack of personnel and massive student intake in recent years, unbalancing the student-staff ratio.[30] Since the expansion took place without providing a corresponding increase in the budget allocation, this has caused "strategic problems" within the contemporary higher education system all over Turkey (Demir 2008: 48).

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[30] According to data from Hatakenaka (2006: 75), the general student-staff ratio at Turkish HEIs of 33:1 is one of the highest among similar countries. In certain fields the ratio is considerably higher.

The TÜSIAD report (2008: 12) also stresses that the salary of the academic staff in Turkey is so low that they prefer to "take additional teaching loads to supplement their income". This means that the salaries and the heavy workloads are obstacles to greater involvement in extracurricular projects, such as the Erasmus coordination. Indeed, the coordinators I interviewed attest the job to be very demanding, affecting their core teaching, research and furthermore their private relations outside university.

The interviews provide evidence that there are larger discrepancies with respect to the performance of the different departments concerning the academic administration of the Erasmus program. While a number of departments simply refused to cooperate, others were eager to establish active European partnerships, albeit for several departments it was even the first time to "internationalize" and orient outwards. To become consistent with international institutions, several departments started by radically overhauling their standards, course structures or in some cases, their curricula. By measures such as compiling comprehensive course catalogues and searching for equal partners abroad, the academics established the structures necessary to take part in the Erasmus program. In most cases, contacts initiated for bilateral agreements highly depend on the personal contacts of the coordinators or convincing presentations and information packages sent out to universities in Europe. The head of the international office in Bursa is strongly aware of the difficulties attached to this interaction. He said with a smile that "Turkey is not one of these classical European countries. It is a European country, you will see when you go around, but people do not want to become partners with Turkey."

As shown in the figure on mediating factors, the designers' predominant power concerning student mobility is the active creation and implementation of bilateral agreements and all relevant tasks related to them. This is significant in many respects, because they not only chose to initiate and establish the agreements with the European partners; they also academically guide their students before, during and after their exchange. The latter becomes vital for students, since courses are subject to frequent modification and uncertainty, concerning their content, ECTS credits, and the subsequent recognition and re-integration into the curriculum at their home institutions. Nonetheless, as the questionnaires show, the academics seem to demonstrate a great flexibility in recognizing the courses taken abroad.

In some cases they also try to seek information about the universities' course contents communicating directly with the partner universities. From the 28 questionnaires received from the outgoing exchange students at METU and Uludağ University only two mentioned having significant problems with course credit recognition and four were ambivalent, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, whereas all others reported satisfaction with their recognition.[31] Simultaneously, most outgoing exchange students reported being quite satisfied with the general academic advising of their coordinators.

However, the on-site academic coordination of the incoming students in Turkey displays both positive and negative aspects. The academic matters that received most attention from the incoming exchange students were the differences in teaching methods and course contents, the lack of courses available in their major and the problems related to the scientific use of a foreign language. Whereas some comments criticized the academic and scientific content of the courses or the didactic methods used by the academic faculty, others appreciated experiencing exactly these differences because they offer an interesting insight into different teaching styles. Additionally, the students often appreciated the availability of the staff. In sum, most incoming exchange students seem to be satisfied with the academic faculty, because they did not express further criticisms on that topic.

Most of the coordinators I interviewed were between 30 and 45 years old, they had extensive experiences abroad and an excellent command of foreign languages. Besides being highly engaged at the university level in either Erasmus or other EU project coordination, some also affiliated with the national Bologna network as promoters. Most of them lecture around 20 hours per week in addition to coordinating dozens of students, a responsibility that takes more than half of their time. The more students or programs that they coordinate and the higher in the university hierarchy they are, the more time they attest to spending on their daily work with the administration of international affairs, such as handling official documents and E-mail correspondence. Önderoğlu (2008) reaffirms in her study on the Erasmus administration in Turkish universities that "this logical consequence should not be underestimated, because the overload sometimes leads to inertia and resignation on behalf of the coordinators, which

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[31] The five categories used in the questionnaires are "not satisfied, rather dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, rather satisfied and satisfied". For more details, see the questionnaires in the annex.

can contribute to malfunctioning of the Community programs at those universities".[32] This problem became obvious in one interview where the institutional coordinator stated that it is a voluntary system, where the professors even give extracurricular courses for incoming Erasmus students. Unfortunately, she did not sense any national or international support for her extra work. Although, she had applied for an academic Erasmus exchange in Sweden, where she was recruited to give lectures for one semester, she was denied the opportunity to go, since the places for staff exchange at her Turkish university were limited. As a result of her double workload and lacking rewards, her motivation declined and was supplanted by resignation. For the future she clearly stated that she will slow down, as following:

> We have worked too much, it is tiresome. You see these are my courses [*pointing big stacks of books covering her desk*]. Every week I have 23 hours of course lecture and then I have 100 students in Erasmus, I have friends and colleagues outside and all that free of charge. This is too much of being a voluntary thing. In my next two years plan, I just sit down, this is enough. [...] I am the most sending, and most working, but I have no words in my international office, neither in the National Agency. When I say something, no one listens to me. They say: 'No, this is not the rule. Rule is me, I am ruling here'. What are you talking about? I am doing it here. Let's talk about the rule, about the criteria to send academics, for example. But they said no, we cannot do it. Ankara does not let us do it. Ankara does not know as well as we do. Sure they know about money and the state and ambassadors. They talk about the necessary statutory framework providing the possibilities, but I am talking about the educational mobility.

Having said this, she did not see her knowledge and information acquired in the process sufficiently valued and suggested introducing a criteria system for coordinators, who are active in the internationalization process in order to ensure a more sustainable academic commitment. Those benchmarks could then identify and reward successful coordinators, for example with the possibility of staff exchange or other career incentives. Whether the academics chose to administer the Erasmus coordination voluntarily or not, the double workload explains the more critical attitudes towards the European programs in contrast to the moderate opinions of the international offices. A considerable number of Erasmus coordinators claim the lack of "real credit" for their extracurricular professional engagement as a strong impediment for an overall commitment to the programs. Indeed, best practices of leading departments are often the result of individual efforts of a handful of motivated volunteers rather than the department as a whole. In this respect, it is not a shared culture yet, at least among the coordinators.

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[32] Within her project Önderoğlu visited and examined 44 Turkish international offices, also regarding the academic coordination at departmental level.

The staff might have overtly or tacitly accepted rules, but participation at this level remains low. This strongly points to the evidence of only partial transformation at departmental level, namely accommodation (Börzel and Risse 2000). In spite of this, the ones who actually do engage in Erasmus draw their personal motivation not from possible financial incentives, but from their personal ideology. [33] Their motivation largely rests upon those ideologies, such as trying to bring their university to the fore. Some interviewees felt that they needed to do this, because few others would, or they saw their work as an indispensable asset for their students as well as for themselves with respect to their future employment prospects.

Likewise, the office environment gave evidence of the amount of how extensive the Erasmus program coordination affected their daily work. When visiting the offices of coordinators with more than 50 outgoing students, I could see enormous stacks of books and folders related to Erasmus plus their individual course readings. In most cases, the telephone rang constantly and students kept coming in for advice. This setting itself depicted busyness in its purest form. While some had meticulously organized their offices and available time, also for my interviews, others seemed clearly overloaded. It is not only a matter of time, but another significant veto point for both international offices and coordinators relates to the lack of sufficient authority to carry out their duties. While the universities by now claim to provide enough experts capable of managing the programs effectively, their workload does not reflect in an adequate administrative authority for the program. This was often considered as a waste of high potentials limiting their academic pursuits and creativity, impeding further positive progress. Here, the top-down approach is clearly visible determining the scope of action and expansion. One department coordinator found it misleading that "we are responsible, but not responsible", referring to zero signature authority, for example, for bilateral agreements. She saw herself as an executive without the appropriate steering tools. In another centralized case, an institutional coordinator added that:

> I cannot send any official letter to another university in Turkey. I have to send it through the office of the rector, through one of the vice rectors. [...] We should have some official position as coordinators, not only the institutional coordinators, but also the department coordinators – all of us.

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[33] Even though this thesis does not offer an analysis of their underlying motivations and consequent strategies, I suppose that an elaborative analysis of such could be of greater interest for further research and subsequently contribute to devise mechanisms in order to increase the university-wide involvement.

Therefore, it is highly recommendable that the Turkish institutions develop a merit system to reward the continuous efforts of their academics and assign certain authority in the future. The most important issue for the academics is to be more flexible with their core teaching. In terms of wages paid to employees, they also indirectly advocated a more satisfactory reward for their work. Therefore, the Council of Higher Education should introduce a decree which offers program coordinators the possibility in which the teaching load is reduced, to compensate for increased coordination responsibilities in order to better balance both assignments. The next paragraph illustrates how academic organization takes place on a concrete example, because the particular development of the motivation among the academics at METU deserves further scrutiny.

Despite the failure of METU's initial pilot project mentioned earlier, the current Erasmus outgoing students largely outnumber the exchange students destined for the US, which have reduced by more than half compared to four years previously. The international office members assume that the demand for participation in programs in Europe gradually increased thanks to the grants. Nevertheless, without the agreements established by the academics and program coordinators there would not have been any exchange at all. Slowly, but more confidently instead of complaining about not being able to find partners with comparable curricula, they started to lower their aims and acknowledged differences with regard to academic performance. While this established both certain continuity in their daily work and a legitimization of their powers, at the same time it enabled them to lead to a smoother comparison of courses. This particular example of abandoning a position in order to adapt to the new circumstances serves to illustrate how socialization takes place.

Although making progress, there remains a significant conflict between the esteem of the international experiences the students gain and the skepticism towards recognizing the courses taken abroad as a full equivalent at METU. Thus, the coordinators retain their power over the approval of the courses for the Learning Agreement and their later recognition. From the interviews it became clear that sometimes two or three European courses together are required to be counted as one course at METU. Therefore, some courses need to be re-taken by the students the following semester. According to Şahin's findings (2008: 102), more than one third of the outgoing students face recognition problems. However, it is expected that the coordinators recognize on return

all satisfactorily completed study achievements from abroad specified in the Learning Agreement between the home and host university. This constitutes one of the most important "preconditions for eligibility of a university or department for the Erasmus support" (Teichler 2003: 330). Hence, this issue needs to be improved in the future at the respective institutions. To summarize the academic involvement, the European programs themselves have increasingly become known and openly publicized among the community at large, resulting in a greater understanding, especially at departmental and faculty level. As a consequence, the lack of information has considerably inhibited, providing more satisfying answers and increasing the amount of shared knowledge among all stakeholders. However, the academic coordination remains a difficult issue, trying to balance between the advantages and disadvantages of the programs.

4.2.4 Informal agents: students

Students are key partners within the academic community, also for mobility. The informal, nonetheless powerful part of the Europeanization process largely depends on the students' willingness to go abroad, because they themselves are actually directly active in the physical mobility. In practice, various reasons impeded Turkish students to go to Europe until 2004, for example, the lack of available programs funding exchange. External scholarship programs set high expectations, such as the DAAD or Marie Curie Actions from the EU or internal fellowships from the Turkish government. Consequently, they have been reserved for a very small elite segment of the student body. However, the policies of the Erasmus program aim at making cross-boarder mobility available to a broader range of students. This detail constitutes a central opportunity for the normal Turkish students, underlying the fact that funding is a decisive point, since the average student in universities is only able to provide little money for self-sustenance, not to mention for a stay abroad. Hence, students tried to take advantage of this opportunity and participated via student associations like the AISEC, already prior to the introduction of the EU programs. A student representative from METU recalled compiling a report on "why and under what conditions Turkey could be part of the Community programs", although not being a member state yet. Other student organizations and initiatives, such as AEGEE or ESIB later on became active, in the process, for example by participating in the national Bologna meetings.

Based upon the premise that Turkey is a country with rigid immigration rules, this can safely be assumed to be another major veto point for outward mobility. In general, stays abroad are not as common in Turkey as they are in Europe due to stricter visa regulations. As a result, many of the students have never been abroad; some even have not experienced significant travel within their own country. Consequently, factors like visa restrictions imposed by national legislation inhibit choices on mobility initiatives (Kelo 2006). Also the latest Bologna template (Demir 2008) refers to this long-outstanding obstacle, which the National Agency had to overcome if mobility was to be fully accomplished. An institutional coordinator explained that:

> If you are German, then a 100% you have been once in France or ten times in Denmark or in Austria or Switzerland. That is very normal. It could be a holiday program; it could be an exchange, something like that. But for someone in here, maybe he has never even been to Istanbul. When he hears for the first time that he is going to be in Sweden, it is a unique information. The students believe that this creates a very important niche in their career life, which is why they are interested in this topic.

This inexperience with foreign travel points to the fact that most outgoing students need strong guidance in their pre-application process, because the lack of information might be a reason why students decide against transnational mobility. In order to tackle the problem of "missing information", internet forums or Erasmus clubs were set up to provide an easy access to diverse materials. At Uludağ University, for example, such a platform for current and prospective students was created. This type of resource seems particularly helpful for the prospective exchange students, especially when dealing with the paper work, visa applications and gathering information about the host university and the host country. Other points that might inhibit the students' motivation to take part in the program revolve around their language competency, the extensive bureaucratic structures in home and host country and financial insecurities (HIS 2006).

According to the outgoing questionnaires, the students viewed the new academic and socio-cultural experiences as positive factors motivating their participation in the mobility. The major personal motivation that influenced the students' decision to join an Erasmus exchange was to live in a foreign country and gain international experience, which all but one mentioned. Hence, a stay abroad was seen as a significant opportunity to expand their personal horizons. Furthermore, the possibility of learning and practicing a new language, meeting new people and enhancing future employment prospects ranged high on the motivation scale.

The host city or country also seemed an important aspect for the outgoing exchange students. Additionally, cultural affinities, geographic proximity, mutual recognition of study achievements, quality of education, reputation and prestige of the host institution, as well as availability and affordability of accommodations played an important role for the students opting for or against an exchange. In spite of their initial hesitation, the students somehow quickly adopted the idea of going abroad as a vital chance for their career and personal life. Once the first cohort had returned, the word of mouth amongst friends and fellow students spread rapidly, which turned out to be the most effective element to promote interest. The section on student mobility will give the reader a more detailed insight into their perceptions of the proposed changes. It will shed light on the issue to what extent students contributed to the emergence of new norms and ideas towards Europe, consequently transforming local practices.

As the prior sections about mediating factors show, there are several ways the university agents incorporated the necessary rules and norms in order to accomplish the European programs. It can be concluded that regardless of the stakeholders' standing in the university hierarchy; all contribute to a certain awareness of the different systems and ongoing internationalization processes through their social, academic and personal feedback. This is the first step to change the European and Turkish images and knowledge about each other. Hence, stakeholders at all levels endorse the change with their active promotion of the new European mobility schemes. Similarly, depending on particular local circumstances that determine the power structures, there is no optimal way to allocate power and resources, as the upcoming sections will reveal.

4.3 <u>Logics of change</u>

4.3.1 Redistribution of resources and power

To approach the subject of "redistribution of resources" one might strongly think of the financial means provided by the EU for the Community programs. Indeed, this was exactly the first thought of the interviewees. Almost all actors linked their ideas to the EU budget, which is obviously a powerful reason for or against action and consequently the number of exchange students. Thereby, the issues ranked from the amount of the grants, to the flexibility and rules of application up to their provision.

A department coordinator at METU explained that "being part of the EU funding schemes has led to a drastic increase in the availability of funds for international projects, collaboration, and mobility". As a matter of fact, many of the stakeholders believe that the mobility programs would not be working without the funds. This is especially true in times where financial support from the Turkish government is being restricted, sharpening the institutions' need for new sources of funding. Nonetheless, what had been expected as the biggest opportunity in the beginning phase with more than enough budget provided, turned out to be a tricky issue after all. The negative facets indicated in the interviews mostly relate to the practical application at the local level, such as the budget cuts occurring during the prior two years coupled with the "chronically-late" payment of grants. The latter veto point concerns the immense bureaucratic cost it takes to obtain the grants.[34] In some cases, students even departed before financial issues were settled.

Indeed, one of the most important veto points pertains to the budget cuts since 2006/07, which jeopardizes the entire project, leading to new hesitation towards the program. In the last years at all the universities observed, budget cuts from 20 to 40% occurred reducing the initially planned number of places for student exchange. As a result, the international offices faced immense problems, because they had to create mechanisms of fair selection to cancel the participation of students, who had already been chosen for exchange programs. That is because, when the decision about the amount of the budget arrived, mainly in June or later, the selection processes for the following year had already been completed. In order to tackle the problem, at METU for example, the international office cancelled the support of the outgoing exchange students who had made the least individual financial commitment. The ones who had already acquired their visas and flight tickets could go. The rest were selected based on merit, measured in grades. In Kayseri and Isparta, they decided to send all of their outgoings, cutting their assigned stay in half or at least by some months. The international office in Adana was especially concerned with re-establishing the enthusiasm of their outgoing exchange students, trying to offer them zero-grant alternatives. Although many of the outgoing students could not afford to go without the financial support of the grants, a

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[34] It takes several months from the initial planning phase to the actual receipt of money. First the international offices issue the budgets for their university and then send it to the National Agency, where the national budgets are collected and later on submitted to the EU. Following a centralized revision of the budget in the Commission, it is then returned to the National Agency, which allocates it to the respective universities.

slight increase in participation among non-grant students could be observed. The Erasmus coordinator in Adana attested to having "many students with broken hearts and hopes" after they were given notice about their cancellation, since they had believed that they would be able to go once they had finished their applications. Another great disadvantage of the budget cuts was that some of the cancelled students were expected as researchers and nascent engagements were cut off in the initiation phase.

The particular reasons for the budget cuts were twofold. Primarily, they were partly due to a constant rise of total participants nationwide; therefore, the individual institutions each got ever smaller shares of the total. Secondly, the EU had set fixed increases of budget rates until 2012 (around 10% per year) leaving little space for improvement. In the national Erasmus meeting in Adana most participants from the international offices perceived this as a major disadvantage, because the fixed amounts of financial resources leave no flexibility. Moreover, people argued that it forces Turkey to grow at a slower pace than it had been in the previous years. In particular, small universities were complaining, because the current number of their outgoing students is small, but the demands for increased participation were not offset by corresponding increases in the EU budget. Since their budget did not increase accordingly, they inferred that their development would be strongly constrained. As a result, a certain discouragement can be observed on the parts of both general administration and academic coordination with respect to the budget cuts, as an institutional coordinator in Adana explains:

> From the numbers and the budget as I saw from the meeting, I do not see a future with the fixed budget, by saying 'This much is enough for you, keep your position'. For me, I do not have any plan for the next 2-3 years to make new agreements. We have done loads, we have a done a double-major program in the European Mediterranean University in Slovenia. We have opened a program called 'Development Studies and International Logistics'. We have talked to friends in Europe and we made a multi-national, multi-cultural program and we put it as an EU project in accordance with the Bologna Process. [...] In this faculty we can manage at least 90 students a year, but they are not providing enough budgets for us. [...] Initially, it was 90+ outgoing students for all the five departments, but we could only send around 60. We have been cut too much this year by almost 40%, according to Ankara's budget.

Conversely, the same coordinator saw certain positive aspects in limiting the rapid growth in student numbers and grants. She argued that while the budget cuts perhaps impede the potential growth on the one hand, on the other hand they might stabilize the current situation, focusing on the outcomes and emphasizing to improvements of the quality instead of solely the quantity.

Also the vice rector at Çukurova University assumed that it is more important to evaluate the current situation and consequently improve the programs. Moreover, he stressed that the good will of the main actors towards the program is not enough. Therefore, comprehensible and qualitatively valuable outcomes should be enacted not only in Turkey, but all over Europe. In this respect, the vice rector requested Euro-compatible learning outcomes, which become obligatory conditions in order to obtain the European grants. He argued that at the beginning a certain flexibility and "generosity" is fine, but later on rigorous program rules should be obeyed by all university actors involved, especially in quality assurance issues, in order to guarantee a well-functioning Europeanization process.

Despite these arguments around obtaining the budget for the students, the available Erasmus funding system is not solely related to student mobility and therefore offers alternative financial resources, namely for teaching mobility, staff training and mobility organization. Nonetheless, during the interviews it became clear that the budget for administrative mobility remains largely underdeveloped, whereas the budget for student and teaching mobility is often fully explored. The budget further includes funds for accompanying measures, such as Erasmus intensive language courses, multilateral projects and networking processes, such as marketing, site visits and participation in conferences (European Commission 2008d: 20). The organizational part of the budget also allocates funds to establish a fax and phone line open to international calls. Surprisingly, this issue was discussed in great depth in a workshop about "how a good international office should work" in the national Erasmus meeting in Adana, because few universities had applied this part of the budget so far. It might seem trivial, but for the offices, not being able to make a phone call or send a fax resulted in manifold problems. In Adana for example, international phone calls were restricted to the office of the rector until August 2008. The Erasmus coordinator called it downright "blushingly embarrassing" that they had to send their faxes for their bilateral agreements through the rector's office and not their own office. The inadequate state of communications resources has therefore been a topic of frequent complaint. In view of that, especially for the international communication, the internet with web-based resources and E-mail contacts were mentioned as indispensable tools for acquiring and spreading information.

Additionally, the adequacy of office technology and space also determined the effectiveness of knowledge and information transmission. For sure, it is up to the skills of the participants if they can transfer information effectively, but as mentioned earlier it is important for the participants to work in an adequate environment.

Another vital argument for the redistribution of resources in favor of the international offices is the fact that besides being in contact with the European universities for all types of proceedings, they communicate directly with all the administrative and academic units within their own university. Thus, Önderoğlu (2008) concludes that the international office is the "most powerful entity, controlling all important documents and technical information on the Community programs". As a rightful outcome, she recommends to integrate this office unit within the legal structure of the university and assign full-time administrative, instead of academic staff. Both aims relate to the fact that the international office units are usually not placed within the organizational schema of universities and therefore operate only through the rector without a "genuine" portfolio and administrative staff and with limited independent financial means. Therefore, the legal status of the offices should be clarified and enhanced.

In a similar vein, Önderoğlu (2008) suggests to "reorganize resources at the academic level", developing reward mechanisms for the extra workload of the coordinators, as discussed earlier in the section on academics. These recommendations go hand in hand with the ones from the High Level Forum on Mobility. They stress that "payment formulae within the program should reward the 'mobility-openness' of regions and institutions" and be subject to compliance with certain benchmarks (European Commission 2008a: 22). For that reason, incentive structures should be devised to encourage the staff and faculties to promote student mobility and act accordingly.

Additionally, the number of positions as coordinators should be increased according to the activities in order to stabilize the current situation which relies on a few highly dedicated individual members instead of the entire staff. An ideal coordination at departmental level would thus divide the workload for Erasmus into manageable units including all lecturers. The vice rector of Çukurova University added that the coordination should become part of the whole university system and academy, as such:

> This project of Erasmus cooperators is a very good idea for the start up point, but I believe that for the future one has to put several incentives to engage the entire faculty. [...] That is a structural weakness of the model, which is not only true for this country, it is true for Europe. I think there should be more efforts how this could be widespread within the institution, so later on this becomes the culture of the departments. [...] We started this game by: How we can internationalize the education process, and to do that it has to be part of the culture, and this can never work with one or two faculty members. [...] I believe that the success of a university should not be only measured of mobility cases, but how many people are involved in that respect.

In order to get everyone on board, the vice rector lastly referred to an analogy between the language of the system and the participation rate. He identified the language as a powerful resource for participation, because the boundaries are defined by the specific jargon used in these Europeanization processes, not only by the pure foreign language. He declared the particular vocabulary an inseparable part of the programs, which is consequently to be spread throughout the whole university, if the participation rate amongst academics is to rise. He asserted that this current weakness might take a couple of years to overcome, and it will initially slow down the process. Nonetheless, once people "speak in terms of Europe" and understand the logic of the system, then it will be sustainable. As a result, enhancing the quality from within will enhance the quality of the total outcome with less hesitancy about the process and more dynamic.

4.3.2   Socialization and norm internalization

There is no doubt that actors and their perceptions have a decisive role on the adaptation of new elements, especially when it comes to the extent to which they are adopted (Huisman and Wende 2005). Hence, the actors constitute the backbone of the reforms, and for an honest implementation, cultural transformation is needed. The vice rector in Adana affirms that, for example, "obtaining accreditation is not like filling in a form to get a passport, but a cultural element" that needs to be transmitted and applied in the peoples' minds and practices.

However, "social learning" is maybe the most difficult aspect to grasp in this process and elsewhere, because it is quite complex to trace – just by somebody's actions – whether he or she has internalized certain practices or not. For a theoretical approach, I found the classification from Ayata and Erdemir (2008) particularly helpful to understand the transformations at three levels, such as 1) human resources, 2) values and 3) the political environment concerning student mobility.

With the first point, they are referring to "an emerging new class of highly mobile, internationalized academics with an increased experience and competence in international research, involved in international dialogue via Erasmus mobility, conferences, exchanges, and research". Concerning the second point of the transformation of values, they speak of "major cleavages within academia with respect to standards and institutional capacities. Lastly, the third point relates to a larger political awareness, with the outcome of an increasing availability of funding for international projects from EU, ministries, Council of Higher Education, TÜBITAK or the university itself. As the practical evidence for socialization is more difficult to grasp due to the complexity and time-frame, I will touch upon this issue only briefly, leaving this topic open for further research. In contrast to the socialization, the more technical indicators in the process also reveal how adaptation has taken place over time. Therefore, the next chapter will explain the transformation processes with concrete examples at the universities.

5 INDICATORS FOR DOMESTIC CHANGE AT THE INSTITUTIONS

This chapter will show the multi-sidedness of the adaptations at the sample universities, classifying them into five units that the interviewees commonly referred to in relation to student mobility. With each interview, the issue of change due to student mobility crystallized around these points, albeit approaching it from very different levels. These indicators include the following core areas: quality assurance, aspects of teaching and learning, international recognition and transfer mechanisms, administration of international students as well as networks and cooperation. As those indicators determine institutional adaption, they help to explain the extent of change.

5.1 Quality assurance and accreditation

According to findings in other European-wide studies, "internationalization and particularly Europeanization present important drivers for quality improvement in national higher education systems" (Luijten-Lub 2004: 257). Similar thoughts are widely held in Turkey. The Eurobarometer survey (2007: 30) claims that that "nine out of ten higher education actors in Turkey agree that as a result of the new competition in the European processes, the quality of their institutions will improve". Hence, in order to sustain and enhance their quality, the most significant step was the need to reform their systems according to international standards. Indeed, remarkable progress has taken place at Turkish HEIs concerning quality assessment, especially in relation to the Bologna Process. The following example of developments at Uludağ University illustrates the magnitude of the change induced by quality improvement.

Starting in 2000, in the wake of the Bologna process, Uludağ University began to generate comprehensive self-evaluation measures at rectorate level together with the corresponding departmental councils in order to centralize the information management (Uludağ University 2003b). For the implementation of international standards in their curricular system, they set up mechanisms of accreditation, while drafting concepts and acquiring resources through an internal "University Accreditation Council", which was unique in Turkey up to that time (Öz: 2005: 339). They encouraged all faculties to improve their study programs through a curriculum revision and to apply for accreditation through external agencies.

In this phase, the external EUA Institutional Review Program was a crucial element that helped them to benchmark their quality against that of universities across Europe.[35] The institutional coordinator commented as following:

> For example, all the programs of the Education Faculty are in European standards now, because five or six years ago in the university senate we changed all the lectures, all the course programs in the departments. After this change, if you want to offer a new course, then the head of the department goes to the senate and he says in power point: 'This is the new course we want to open, these are the ingredients, this is the parallel course at an English university or at other faculties in the US or the world.' This is the idea. Afterwards the senate approves it. Otherwise you cannot offer a new course. It is called benchmarking. All courses are benchmarked with European or American universities. That is standard. In Erasmus it was one of our strong points.

For that reason, Uludağ University was even chosen to serve as a best practice example for the implementation of the Bologna guidelines within the EUA "Quality Culture Project" (EUA 2003: 4). According to their strategy, it was particularly important for the rector that their accreditation projects and the accompanying core ideas were introduced as a dominant theme permeating all spheres of the university (Uludağ University 2003b). Thereby, the senate and the rector played a decisive role, because they decided to take responsibility for all the accreditation expenses (Öz 2005). As a result, external accreditation bodies had been consulted and independently audited most of their departments. Uludağ University has continuously strived to enhance its quality, referring to quality assurance as "V.I.P.", which the head of the international office translated as "visibility, internationalization and promotion". Nonetheless, he pointed out that this process took about three years to persuade the university stakeholders. Moreover, he argued that with a well-selected 20% staff increase, they have achieved a 50% increase in quality. The head of the international office also said that the professors retired were strategically replaced with motivated young academics, which generate enough scientific studies in order to attract EU research projects, as following:

> There were professors who have done nothing in the last twenty years, so they had no chance to do these kinds of things like research projects. So they saw the picture, and they saw that they will be out of this picture. There would be young professors and lecturers getting everything, and they would not get any assistance. This was difficult for them of course, but because they were really doing nothing, they were not helping the youngsters. They were just stopping everything. Now they retired or they went to private universities. Some of them really retired, so that was good for us.

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[35] All of the examined universities have actively participated in the EUA; METU, Uludağ and Erciyes University even for over ten years. SDU and Çukurova University have completed their program in 2006. For more information about the universities' evaluations, see EUA (2003, 2004, 2006a, b).

Overall, in relation to quality assurance there has been a visible "transformation" taking place regarding the implementation of new standards and comparable curricula, in particular at Uludağ University. The interviewees at the other universities confirmed that an important point with respect to student mobility is that the local universities feel internationally recognized and as a result receive more international attention. Achieving conformity with international standards and certifying their departments is thereby considered as an essential prerequisite in order to draw more students. This is especially true for the Erasmus mobility, because internationally accredited departments seem to generate a higher demand for bilateral agreements and prospective students.

Indeed, the area of quality seems to be an important area for further improvement. In this respect, the national Bologna promoters are currently elaborating parameters to measure quality outcomes in cooperation with some Turkish HEIs (also in coordination with Uludağ University). As a result, a national qualifications framework and a quality assurance system are being developed to be made available later for implementation at all universities throughout Turkey (Demir 2008: 16).[36] Within approximately three years, the developed criteria for evaluation will be made an obligatory part of the Turkish curricula. A national Bologna promoter at Çukurova University summarizes the quality processes as follows:

> I identify quality with the change at a university. In this context, there must be a perceived threat for the realization of change. [...] We do not perceive the threat in a correct way. Ten years ago, the rate of unemployment among university graduates to the general unemployment rate was 1:4. Now, it is equal. Everybody should infer lessons from this fact. [...] I consider quality as a means for change. The problem is that everybody wants change for everything except themselves. Such a change can not occur. [...] Therefore, the issue of quality is very important for universities. [...] I am in love with Erasmus because it makes me change.[37]

When it comes to the evaluation of quality improvement, it can safely be concluded that the diverse endeavors undertaken at the local level to enhance the attractiveness of the universities constitute the most central changes in contemporary Turkish HEIs.

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[36] For now, the general quality assurance systems in Turkey is based on institutional evaluation, carried out once per year in a monitoring process by universities and external evaluation institutions (Demir 2008: 36). The Council of Higher Education thereby acts as the national accreditation agency and national information center with regard to academic mobility and recognition.

[37] *Remark from the author*: According to the Turkish Statistical Institute TURKSTAT (2008), the labor force participation rate for persons having education below high school was around 48% (72% for male and 23% for female) while that having higher education was approximately 78% (84% for male and 71% for female) by September 2008.

5.2 Teaching and learning

5.2.1 Modernizing curricula and curriculum development

Huisman and Wende (2004: 19) argue that the "support for student mobility could be an indirect means for curricular change", based on the strategy of networking. According to this view, ideas and practices acquired by exchange students or through networking with faculty colleagues abroad, could over time introduce new alternatives to the traditional curricular coordination. Curriculum development in this sense can include the modification of courses, modules or curriculum frameworks, ranging from new course materials, new teaching methodologies, new subjects to interdisciplinary approaches. However, changes in the form of modernization of curricula as a side effect of student mobility remains hardly observable in Turkish state universities so far. According to the CHEPS report on curricular reforms "Turkey has only gradually reformed its curricular structures", mostly guided by the Turkish Council of Higher Education (Huisman, Witte and File 2006: 175).

With respect to integrating the student mobility into the overall curricular framework, it still remains an exceptional additional component rather than an integral part, because a relatively fixed schedule of obligatory courses per year limits the time frame for stays abroad. Simultaneously, an exchange becomes a source of insecurity and uncertainty for students, if the educational credits earned abroad are not recognized as valid or satisfactory course requirements necessary for graduation. Hence, the concern about missing or delaying graduation constitutes an important veto point. Nonetheless, the findings of the Eurobarometer survey (2007: 24) indicate that "in Turkey the majority of respondents agree that mobility should be integrated as a compulsory part of the curriculum". However, it is not foreseeable that stays abroad, especially during the undergraduate phase, become an obligatory part in the Turkish curricula in the near future. Only in a slowly growing number of joint-degrees, mobility is an essential component of the curriculum.[38] A modification of the curriculum allowing a greater flexibility and variation in the choice of courses would thus help to further increase the mobility in the Europeanization process.

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[38] The regulation on joint/dual-degrees in higher education came into force in December 2006. According to the Bologna template (Demir 2008: 42), there are currently "38 joint-degrees and 10 joint programs" carried out at all Turkish HEIs.

5.2.2   Instruction in English by Turkish academics

The language of instruction is a crucial factor for the international attractiveness of the HEIs. Especially when commonly spoken languages, such as English, are used for instruction, it yields an additional means of fostering internationalization. Consequently, English instruction at universities is generally seen to greatly facilitate international mobility. Nevertheless, except METU, none of the local universities provides general English instruction to their detriment to the attractiveness and success of their international programs. The vice rector in Isparta confirmed that having instruction exclusively in Turkish keeps international students and researchers from coming to their university. Therefore, they started to offer or expanded their offer of courses taught in English. In this case, it is important to take into consideration that the number of courses instructed in foreign languages is restricted according to statutory law (Uludağ University 2003b: 10). The head of the international office at Bursa emphasized that:

> The ones like METU, they can give everything in English. So they were lucky. They were of course in central positions, Istanbul, Ankara. [...] They already had these kinds of projects before Erasmus, so they just had to change the name. [...] The people knew about them, they already had international students. So it was much easier, but in our case we only had incoming students from these Turkic countries or from the Balkans or from Africa. [...] Yes, we have the disadvantage of the language.

In practice, academic courses given in English were set up at the local universities simultaneously with the introduction of the Erasmus program. First of all, it is a condition in Erasmus that if the university applies for the mobility program and consequently wants to obtain a EUC, some courses should be offered in English. Secondly, with a growing number of incoming foreign students, the professors adapted their language of instruction according to the demand; notwithstanding their language capacity, which in some cases remains limited.[39] As a consequence, some professors hold their classes in English and Turkish or split them twofold, giving extracurricular courses for foreign exchange students. The latter is a result of the problems Turkish students faced, because they are unfamiliar and thus uneasy about using a foreign language at the academic level together with the international students, who seem to have better English language proficiency.

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[39] Meanwhile giving courses in English is rather new at local universities, a big part of the academic personnel is not unfamiliar with English instruction, since most of them have international experience and gained their Master or PhD degrees abroad. However, professors who did not have international experience or the necessary language proficiency were automatically excluded from those processes.

Nevertheless, the academic and scientific use of a foreign language is also a commonly problem repeated frequently in the questionnaires amongst incomings. Hence, writing papers and taking exams in a foreign language causes academic difficulties to all of them, whereas the incoming group usually overcomes these difficulties more easily due a more extensive foreign language education in most parts of Europe. The uneasiness with foreign languages on behalf of many Turkish students relates to a deficiency in their secondary school system, where foreign languages do not play a major role, except in private schools or "Anatolian High Schools", which are limited to selected students. Besides to compensate for different language abilities, diverse learning methods and working attitudes among the students are also a reason for some professors to give extra classes for foreigners, as one department coordinator explained. The professors, who lecture both Turkish and foreign students in the same class, attest to a fruitful and inspiring working environment blending different perspectives and approaches. All in all, the fact of lecturing in English for exchange students can be considered a logical outcome of the Erasmus program at local Anatolian universities.

5.2.3   Foreign language courses

Language as a major tool for communication; especially in the intercultural dialog it is an indispensable key to mobility. That makes language particularly important for mobility at all stages. A considerable number of studies related to student mobility have identified the "lack of knowledge about the respective cultures and languages of the host countries" as substantive barriers for participating in exchange programs (European Commission 2008: 14). This is also valid in Turkey, where the education of foreign languages is well below the European average. Learning two foreign languages at secondary school level even remains very rare in Turkey.[40] Repeatedly, Turkish reports refer to a substantial problem on the agenda to tackle, namely to improve earlier foreign language learning starting at secondary level (Council of Higher Education 2006; TÜSIAD 2008; Demir 2008). Also in the interviews, people affirmed that Turkey needs students with the command of at least one foreign language to make them more responsive to the contemporary challenges. That is because in Turkey a great deal of students start higher education without a satisfactory knowledge of a foreign language, not to mention two as targeted by the EU (European Commission 2008b: 100).

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[40] For detailed numbers on the average of foreign languages learned in Europe in lower and upper secondary education, see EUROSTAT 2006.

As indicated by the Eurostudent III evaluation study, around 38% of Turkish students claim to have fluent or very good skills in one foreign language, whereas the percentage of student proficient in two foreign languages is only at around 1% (HIS 2006: 84). The report correlates those results to the requirement of only one foreign language at secondary education, a situation which needs to be changed urgently. There is an indisputable relation between the foreign language ability and international mobility. As a consequence, the HEIs have to bridge those deficiencies in order to prepare the students and enable them to go abroad to participate in educational exchange. Hence, the universities are "expected to develop effective ways" to ensure an appropriate language learning (Council of Higher Education 2006: 184).

At Çukurova University, for example, they established preparatory German language courses for their outgoing students destined for German speaking countries. However, since the courses were initially realized with funds from the Erasmus budget, problems of incompatibility with the Turkish taxation system arose. Foreign language teachers were paid for lecturing, which was an income in Turkey that must be taxed by the Turkish fiscal system. However, conditions of Erasmus funds prohibit taxation of the money provided.[41] As this incompatibility of rules could not be resolved, the foreign language courses were suspended. At this point, it seems advisable to adjust the Erasmus program and national law to guarantee better results.

Besides the low level of foreign language instruction in Turkey, it is important to take into consideration that opportunities for international exchange for students and staff remain strictly limited.[42] In a similar vein, experience abroad among the faculty of the foreign language departments was not common until recently. Generally, most of the local universities do not offer more than three languages: English, French and German, if any at all. Interestingly enough, in the last two decades the trends have focused on the languages of the emerging powers of Asia, with special interest in Chinese and Korean, as well as Russian[43], which are considered as good investments for the future.

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[41] Universities may "generate their own income from various sources, but they are still obliged to follow external regulations on handling surpluses and deficits" (TÜSIAD 2008: 6).
[42] The draft report by the Council of Higher Education (2006: 10) noted that about 60% of the general academic staff have foreign language problem and about 42% of them have never visited abroad".
[43] The Russian language, for example, is important especially in the tourism and trade sector, where Russians constitute the second biggest tourist group coming to Turkey in 2007. For up-to-date numbers on foreigners arriving in Turkey, see the website of the Foreign Ministry in Turkey.

Also the government strongly encourages "teaching more than just English", namely the languages of the EU countries, the Middle Eastern and Caucasian countries, as well as Japanese, Russian and Chinese (Council of Higher Education 2006: 183f.). The head of the international office in Kayseri approaches the issue by saying that:

> We believe as administrative staff and the Korean staff that the Chinese and Korean language will be the future. [...] It is not just Europe itself. We also have agreements with the US and with all the former Eastern Soviet countries, plus Korea.

Albeit this trend of other foreign languages in Turkey, English remains the *lingua franca*, especially in the Erasmus exchange, which resulted in a narrow focus on English at the institutions. As the students mainly demand English, one-year preparatory elective courses were introduced in most curricula at all universities investigated in this study. For the future, there is a growing tendency for making these courses an obligatory requirement for all students, even for the vocational schools. The department coordinator in Bursa attested the additional instruction in English as an excellent resource to provide their students with further confidence in themselves about their abilities and consequently encouraging their students to go abroad. Therefore, English has and will retain a strong influence on the future of the Europeanization process, concerning the quality and number of participating exchange students and contributing to a better exchange of information and research possibilities.

5.3   International recognition and transfer mechanisms

5.3.1   ECTS and Diploma Supplement

In order to realize mobility with acceptable results, instruments like the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement were devised to improve the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad. They are meant to enable a better "translation of the obscure terminology" of foreign qualifications in order to raise trust in those academic achievements and the respective institutions (Veiga 2005: 4). The ECTS was introduced in the Erasmus program in 1987 and the Diploma Supplement in 1997 in the EU Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications. As both systems proved to be successful to tackle the problem of transparency, they were integrated into the Bologna Declaration in 1999 to "establish enough common criteria to allow for mutual recognition" (Huisman and Wende 2004: 26).

With respect to the Turkish case, the ECTS has been introduced in 2001 and made mandatory since the 2005. In spite of this, it is used "only for student mobility within the Community programs" at all but one university (Reichert and Tauch 2005: 21).[44] Hence, the ECTS is applied only for the course catalogues, explaining both local and European credits for the Erasmus students, while the customary local credit accumulation system is retained for degree programs of the regular students. In all HEIs examined, the ECTS system is therefore only coupled with the Erasmus program. This is based upon the premise that the Turkish HEIs already had a well-established credit accumulation system in use since the 1980s. This advantage over other countries should have actually facilitated the integration of the ECTS into the university's internal system. Nonetheless, there is a substantial difference in the way of credit accumulation. In Turkey, the credit system is based on theoretical or practical contact hours per week, whereas the ECTS system is based on independent workload. However, at all local universities visited, they created a separate post for the implementation and coordination of both recognition mechanisms. As a result of their endeavors, for example, Süleyman Demirel University was the third university in Turkey in compliance with the Bologna Action criteria as indicated by the vice rector. Uludağ University was also one of the first universities in Turkey, which prepared their institution for the ECTS application. SDU and Uludağ University also seem to be strong candidates for the ECTS award in 2009, which considers only examples of best-practice from all Europe. Amaral, Veiga and Mendes (2008) underline that it is crucial to highlight those best-practice cases as examples, which in turn could inspire a more general improvement at other universities in Turkey.

Difficulties occurred at a practical level, for example, when setting up the Learning Agreement, which determines the courses that need to be taken abroad. In the national Erasmus meeting in Adana, a fierce discussion on the ECTS application took place, criticizing that some European HEIs did not consistently make use of the ECTS points. Problems were reported in countries such as Hungary, Germany, Spain or Italy. Coordinators could sometimes only find courses on offer with only one or two ECTS or fractional credits such as 2.15 ECTS. From the conference audience, one person quoted a striking example for this problematic use of the ECTS guidelines.

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[44] Only Anadolu University transformed their entire internal degree credit system to the ECTS scheme. For a more detailed analysis on the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement in Turkey, see the Trend reports (2005, 2007) and the national Bologna templates (2005, 2006, 2008).

She said that a correct application of these minimal points would result in an unrealistic overwhelming course load for the exchange students, because reaching the minimum 30 ECTS per semester would require the student to take up to 15 courses or more. Many more participants as well as all department coordinators in the sample universities reported similar problems. Hence, the need to standardize, not necessarily the course contents, but the application of the ECTS all over Europe is a pending challenge. The EU Commissioner responded as such:

> The case is true, even within one country you can have 8 courses for 30 ECTS or 3 courses for 30 ECTS. ECTS is about the university's autonomy and at many European universities there are still slight differences. This is something the new label will not repair. It is something that the Commission is stressing all the time, it is something that the Bologna Ministers know, but here you see that the difficulties of the Bologna Process is that it is a national process, meaning that every country has formulated the same directives, but at the end it is up to them, what they are going to do about it. In some countries everything can be arranged by national law that universities follow-up. In other countries, the university autonomy is more important than the national education law. We are now in a situation where sometimes you have to compare apples with pears and say that they are both 20 ECTS points. The new Diploma Supplement label will then show that at least there is some kind of common practice.

With respect to this comment, the international office coordinator in Adana emphasized that universities all over Europe should retain their local identities, nevertheless, the ECTS should not be part of that identity. In the view of the conference participants, a complete standardization in the ECTS system, instead of harmonization, would secure better results and tremendously ameliorate the practical application. With regard to this topic, the EU Commissioner reminded the audience that the ECTS, including the regulatory system for the learning outcomes, will be newly institutionalized in the near future, setting certain conditions for the new ECTS label for all European universities. He stated that in four to five years time, a synchronized ECTS application will become obligatory in order to obtain or renew the Erasmus Charter and associated labels. Thus, a clear top-down pressure from the European Commission is expected to trigger the demanded European-wide institutionalization.[45]

The Diploma Supplement gained specific momentum with the Bologna Process in 2003, when the recognition initiatives were extended to provide every student from 2005 onwards with an international Diploma Supplement free of charge in a widely spoken

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[45] The data from previous European-wide studies indicate that around 20% of the students do not receive appropriate credit; thus, significant challenges all over Europe remain (European Commission 2008: 14).

European language (Reichert and Tauch 2005: 20). The main idea of the Diploma Supplement is to offer an internationally "comprehensible" self-description of the study programs including a detailed description of the acquired competencies (Teichler 2007b: 17). Concerning the Diploma Supplement in Turkey, few comments have been given from the stakeholders at the visited institutions. Regulations have been enacted at the national level in 2005, but not universally implemented or realized. Even so, the range of languages in which the Diploma Supplement may be issued appears noteworthy, namely in English, German French or Turkish. In most cases the international offices cooperate with the registrar's office to issue the documents.

From the interviews, it can be inferred that the Diploma Supplement is most of the time issued only upon demand, for students who have graduated after 2005. On the part of the students, there seems to be an increasing demand for a Diploma Supplement. Nonetheless, the implementation of the European directives at the local universities remains rather slow.

5.3.2 Academic advising and recognition

In Turkey, the recognition of foreign qualifications is regulated by law and appears to be an institutional responsibility on behalf of the academic faculty.[46] Particularly for Erasmus, academic advising and course credit recognition has been judged to be a difficult challenge, due to lack of key information about different approaches in teaching (such as whether the emphasis is more or less research or practical oriented), grading systems and course contents at the partner institutions. Even though the courses in the collaborating universities might have comparable workload, there seems to be a tremendous unease of integrating and later recognizing the courses taken abroad into the Turkish system. Without a doubt, most academics encourage their students to take similar courses abroad as a major rule for later recognition. However, after the exchange, a lot of determination was, and still is, needed to recognize courses for degree credit, since the programs abroad are subject to frequent change and might turn out to be very much different than initially expected.

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[46] In this manner, it is important to distinguish the use of the term "recognition" referred to in the Bologna Process from the one used for Erasmus mobility. The former labels the transfer from a diploma acquired abroad into a national equivalent. For the Erasmus practice, this is however not the case, since the students only need to get certain external courses (and not entire degrees) transferred into their institutional curriculum scheme.

With a supposedly European-wide harmonized ECTS system, official recognition of courses taken abroad should be quite effective. Nevertheless, many of the Erasmus coordinators at all sample universities face extensive challenges and spend much of their time with the administration of the courses in the Learning Agreements. In case of the earlier-mentioned disproportionate and unrealistic ECTS points for course rating, it renders a successful exchange impossible for students. In order to resolve this problem, faculties and department coordinators mostly show discretionary judgment about the academic performances of the student or the workload of the courses. Hence, the academic coordinators have demonstrated the necessary flexibility to make successful participation possible, because for students taking part in international educational exchange, learning transcends the purely classically academic issues to include the language and culture of the host country. In Kayseri, the department coordinator confirmed that they are mainly counting the ECTS credits of the courses abroad and not so much examining the contents for direct substitutability, because the programs remain very different. This has enabled them to recognize the courses taken abroad for degree credit more easily. Additionally, one Bologna promoter pointed out that because of the uncertainty about the value and standing of various grades in the foreign university systems, it is not always obvious how to transfer the grades given abroad into the local system.

> The problem is the transformation of grades, because if you transfer this transcript according to ECTS, then you should know their own system. For example, think of The Netherlands. In their system, I guess the top grade is 13. And their own students get at most eight. Our student goes there and gets eight and gets the transcript, not with ECTS, but their own transcript. That means 8 out of 13. And if the professor here does not know this situation (even if he knows the situation), you should do the formal legal procedure. So this means, like CC or at most CB for us, but he should get A, because he got the top grade. So if, for example, the transcript is not given according to the ECTS grades, then it is a real problem and this is a real problem with our partners.

Overall, this illustrates how difficult it is to evaluate learning outcomes from abroad.

5.4 Administration of international students

The availability and range of services offered to exchange students determine to a great extent how students benefit from their international experience at the institutions. This is valid for both outgoing and incoming students.

In order to familiarize the incoming and outgoing students with their host institution, the information provision and organization is a crucial element before, during and after the exchange. Generally, services provided for the outgoing students consist of the provision of orientation material, seminars and information about their future university, the provision of grants, as well as counseling on accommodation and visa matters. The site visits showed that all sample universities provide those services to some extent. In Bursa for example, in order to establish their bilateral agreements, it is a common practice for a clear preference for universities with satisfactory and convenient options for accommodations, as the head of the international office emphasizes:

> Accommodation is a problem, because most of the universities in Europe are within the cities and they do not have a big campus, they do not have lots of dormitories. So we concentrate more on the universities with a high number of dorms.

The outgoing students at Uludağ University that replied the questionnaires indeed reported a high satisfaction with those services of their international office. However, as stated earlier, Şahin's findings (2008: 101) indicate that more than half of the outgoing students at METU experienced problems while being served by the international office.[47]

With respect to the administrative services of the international offices for the incoming students, all local universities provide comprehensive material, such as student guides or handbooks in the form of brochures, presentations and short movies, institutional websites and mailing lists. Moreover, they all offer more or less comprehensive English and Turkish information on their websites, such as course catalogues including the course contents. In one case, the course catalogue even indicates courses recommended particularly for international students. Another highly appreciated point is the orientation week, which is effective to help inform newcomers about studies and life at the host institution. In order to linguistically integrate the students better also outside the classroom, all universities included in this study offer Turkish language courses. These enable the incoming students to get a basic language foundation for daily survival. Other services include academic and practical support. Occasionally, an Erasmus club provides additional assistance outside formal university structures, organizing social and cultural events and tours around Turkey.

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[47] For a more comprehensive insight into the picture of student services at METU, see Şahin (2008).

In order to give the reader a better insight, the example of Süleyman Demirel University is particularly illustrative, because their international office stands out for best practice support for the incomings. Their most outstanding practice is their "special treatment" for their incomings. First of all, before the exchange students arrive, they put them in contact with the academic departments where they will be studying. They also arrange accommodation for the first week and make sure they will be greeted and picked up from the airport or bus station. The vice rector highlighted that:

> For every single Erasmus student we are going to the bus stop with one special car. We are taking them to their hostels, hotels, apartments, everywhere they want, and we introduce them to the administration or students of the faculty; one by one.

For the first weeks, the incoming students are then provided a Turkish guide, as is the case for most universities examined. The department coordinator of SDU emphasized that this partner support is based upon the premise that they want to help their incoming students to integrate as smoothly as possible, teaching them the basics about their locale and the necessary language skills. Other than offering outstanding services for their incoming students, the outgoing students also receive special care at SDU. The vice rector emphasized that the first group of outgoing students was even invited by the rector to a reception prior to their departure, presenting them with gifts, all of which was publicized in local media. She underlined that "we are in Anatolia basically, and this was a big event". This clearly shows that "going to Europe" meant something significant for a small town like Isparta, which was not used to having European contacts before the introduction of the European mobility programs. Although new to the program, the head of the international office felt that they had a good start with a well-equipped staff and office space, which was provided by the rector. Thanks to their continuous efforts, the number of Erasmus bilateral agreements has dramatically increased, offering wider choices for their students. However, much of their administrative services still depend on a handful of people with the invaluable personal connections and good will.

To summarize about the provision of administrative services, the site visits provide evidence that technically speaking, all universities offer an excellent counseling and support for both incoming as well as outgoing students, with the latter being in a more highly developed stage, due to the greater experience of higher numbers served. By now, most of the offices provide the necessary office space, including a professionalized staff.

5.5 Mobility, networks and cooperation

### 5.5.1 Outgoing student developments

> Turkey is the fastest grower in the Erasmus program and it is impressive to see that there are about 1.800 students more each year. You are giving the program a big boost by that. This is an injection that Erasmus needs. In Europe the numbers are stabilizing or even decreasing. If you look at Turkey, it causes an overall increase in the program. The financial support will be slightly better every year until 2013. I hope your students will remain like now. I want to congratulate you to this result, because it is your efforts that spark off the eventual increase of Turkish students.

Starting with the words of the EU Commissioner at the national Erasmus meeting in Adana in 2008, it becomes obvious that the outgoing students are the key actors for the Erasmus program in Turkey. While in the first years professors needed much convincing to send their students, the students later increasingly demanded themselves to go abroad. That is because most of them acknowledged that certain obstacles and challenges exist. The interviewees consistently stated that, together with the Bologna promoters, the students are the best advertisers for the program. Hence, the students greatly contribute to introduce and multiply the idea that Erasmus and the exchange with Europe is a good idea and practice.

No matter what problems students faced, the notion of a stay abroad supported with full financial assistance spread like a wildfire, resulting in an extraordinary increase in outgoing students at all universities examined. Despite the remarkable growth, Turkey's Erasmus placements are limited. This is a crucial point, because the overall grants only cover one third of the total demands on behalf of the students (Demir 2008: 45). As mentioned earlier, the European Commission has also fixed Turkey's Erasmus budget for the whole 2007-2013 period, limiting growth to certain extend. The universities have highly criticized this in the national meeting in Adana, because European Erasmus placements are stagnating or even declining in Europe, and Turkey has largely helped to compensate for this decline. However, these unbalanced flows might have been questioned from the European side, receiving large numbers of students while sending few. In this respect, Teichler (2007a: 7) points out that Erasmus students do not pay tuition fees and as "higher education is funded to a substantial extent by national public means in the European countries, one cannot expect a willingness to fund an unlimited growth of foreign students".

Concerning the destinations, there is a great range of interest for a variety of geographical regions. Most Turkish students prefer to go to Germany, Poland, Italy, The Netherlands and France as the following figure illustrates:

**Figure 9: Turkish outgoing students at the top 10 destination countries (2006/07)**
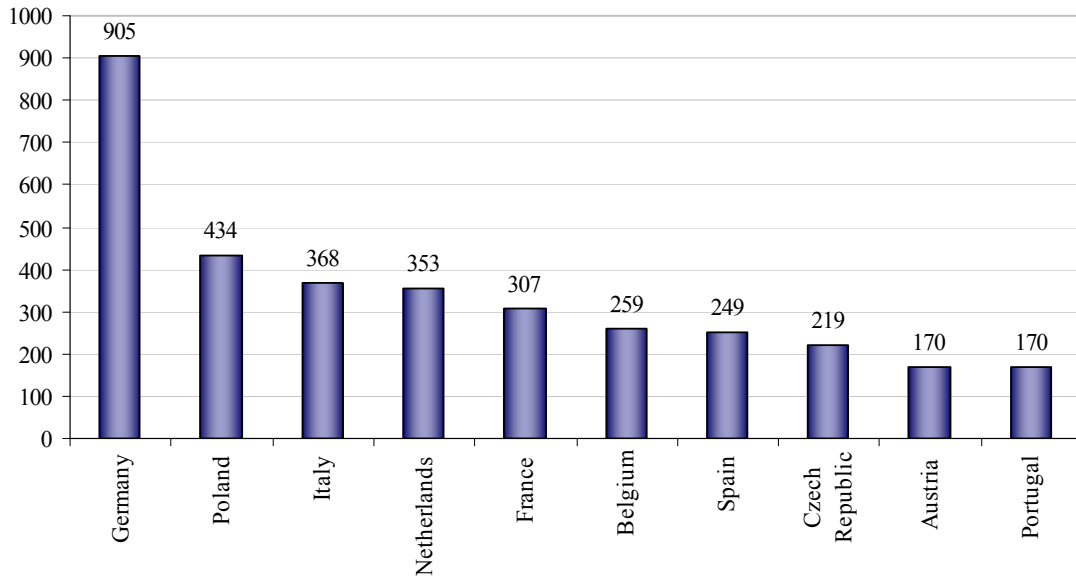
Source: **Ülgür (2008).**

Furthermore, there is a growing demand for the countries with a lower cost of living in the East or South. The latter are either perceived as an exotic opportunity or thought to be a springboard for a later stay in Europe, for example for a graduate degree program. Thereby, the outgoing exchange students are even willing to accept courses instructed in a language they had not been familiar with before.

As suggested earlier by the head of the international office at METU, students' wishes are certainly coupled to the grants provided. Several interviewees attested that the financial conditions indeed give rise to the numbers of outgoing students, because many of the students do not request a particular region, but rather for the amount of months or grants they can stay abroad. Simultaneously, most of the outgoings did not decide where they wanted to spent their exchange precisely, due to a lack of knowledge or experience abroad. The Erasmus coordinator in Adana illustrated this by recounting how some students got excited about their names being matched with an "exotic" university in Europe in the selection process. Generally, outgoing students were only randomly matched with their choices.

Nevertheless, a growing number of students seem to assign priorities to where they want to go. Some even gather all necessary information for their coordinators, so they can set up bilateral agreements with the respective universities in Europe. As seen in the following figure, the participation rates for outgoing students are consistently growing at all universities considered in this study. In terms of numbers, however, the participation rate for Erasmus students compared to the other students enrolled at the HEIs remains very low.

Figure 10: Erasmus outgoing students at sample universities (2004/05 – 2008/09)
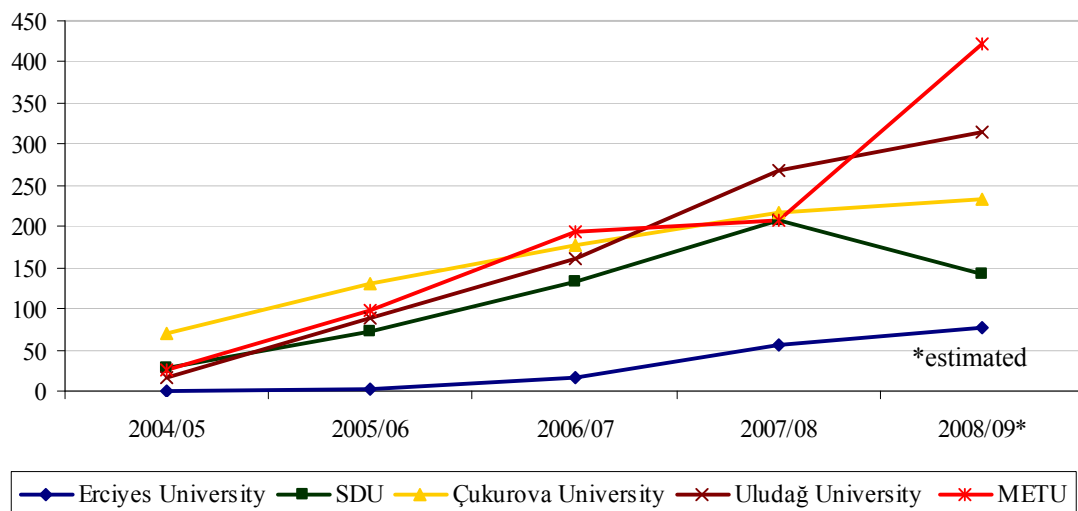
Source: **Questionnaires filled out by the international offices.**

In order to map the students' opinions about their stay with respect to their academic, administrative and socio-cultural circumstances, the following paragraphs explain the results of the survey of the outgoing students in combination with the opinions from the Erasmus administrators.

At the academic level, major challenges for the outgoing exchange students are the language barriers in and outside university, the lack of suitable courses according to their major as well as the lack of knowledge about the host countries' higher education systems and institutions. Interestingly enough, according to the questionnaires, most students decided on a program at a particular university based upon the opinion of fellow students or friends, not exclusively because of its academic performance or prestige. In this case, the power of the students' social advertisement is clearly visible.

Regarding their opinion of the administration of their stay, the obstacles created by the visa matters are particularly tricky. The Erasmus advisors in the international offices attested to losing around ten percent of the students due to visa problems deriving from difficulties in the embassies and their procedures.[48] For example, participants mentioned long waits for an appointment to apply for a visa, which in some cases can take up one to two months. Additionally, some countries, The Netherlands for example, require an income guarantee for a valid visa and residence permit, in this case a deposit of 4.000 €, which many of the Turkish students cannot afford. The visa procedures therefore constitute a major deterrent for the institutions to send their students to those countries, despite prior bilateral agreements. For the latest Erasmus mobility program introduced in 2006/07, namely the internship placements[49], it was even harder to apply for visas. The Erasmus coordinator in Adana emphasized that it is "almost impossible to obtain working visas for exchange students, especially for male students, having not completed their military service, not married, at an age ready to emigrate". Nonetheless, this enlargement of the Erasmus program to the internship exchanges offered a long-awaited connection with the job market. The Erasmus coordinator at METU affirmed that the internships abroad are responsive to the job markets' demand through a greater employability of the students' skills.[50] A couple of students confirmed this statement in the questionnaires, by saying that they almost gave up their plans while applying for visas. One found it misleading that:

> Me and most of my friends had a big problem about getting a visa from the consulate of Spain, in spite of having an invitation letter from the exchange university. We had to postpone our flights and waste time and money.

In terms of their socio-cultural integration, the most valuable experiences, according to the questionnaires, relate to the contact to local students, the atmosphere of the host city and country as well as traveling in Europe in general. It is noteworthy that almost all Turkish students were looking for different perspectives, be it culturally or academically. One outgoing student reflected on her choice to go abroad in the following words:

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[48] According to the latest Bologna template "significant progress" has been made with visa regulations thanks to increased communication at a high political level; however, the problem persists particularly with certain countries (Demir 2008: 44).

[49] The so-called Erasmus Business Placement module has been transferred from Leonardo to Erasmus (European Commission 2008a).

[50] For an elaborative study on the connection between university and the job market in Turkey, see Deliveli et al. (2007). For a European-wide study on the professional value of the Erasmus program, see Bracht et al. (2006).

> Firstly, I wanted to learn what Europe is, and what are the differences or similarities between Turks and Europeans? Maybe I wanted to feel something different in some way and these statements carried my dreams to reality about going abroad. I expected from the exchange program to give me a huge opportunity for my life, like improving myself and gaining a wide point of view and at the end of this program, so broadly speaking, I experienced a lot of things that I wouldn't get in Turkey.

An institutional coordinator emphasized that this exchange often resulted in more critical thinking and evaluation of their home institutions and working styles by the students. Several other interviewees used the word "confidence" to describe the students after their exchange. They perceived them as more open to intercultural developments, ideas and in comparison to students who had not gone on an exchange abroad. As a result, international experiences are highly valued, not only in the higher education system, but also later on in the employment market. Indeed, among Turkish employers a significant experience abroad, foreign languages and cultural skills are highly valued as the study from TEPAV (Deliveli et al. 2007) confirms. Moreover, experienced advisors in international affairs mentioned the necessity of selecting good students to go abroad, because they would be a kind of ambassadors representing Turkey and their university abroad, which is particularly important for the less well-known universities. The Erasmus coordinator in Adana added that "our students present a different image to Europe than the *Gastarbeiter* image" and attached strong personal hopes to that process.

5.5.2 Incoming student developments

Not only the number of outgoing students, but also incoming students to Turkey had been limited prior to the introduction of the Community programs, as infrastructures for facilitating exchange were underdeveloped. Before 2004, for the most part, student mobility took place after graduation, completing a whole degree in Turkey, such as a Master or a PhD, instead of just spending a semester. In the first years of the Erasmus program, many incoming students supposedly had Turkish background. Yet, incomings with different backgrounds soon seized the new opportunity to come to Turkey. Showing certain reciprocity, the main countries sending the most exchange students to Turkey, are almost the same ones that receive the most Turkish exchange students. Concerning the overall Erasmus exchanges in Turkey, the incoming rates demonstrate a steady increase of over 550 students per academic year. However, the patterns at the local universities vary considerably.

Figure 11: Incoming students to Turkey from the top 10 sending countries (2006/07)
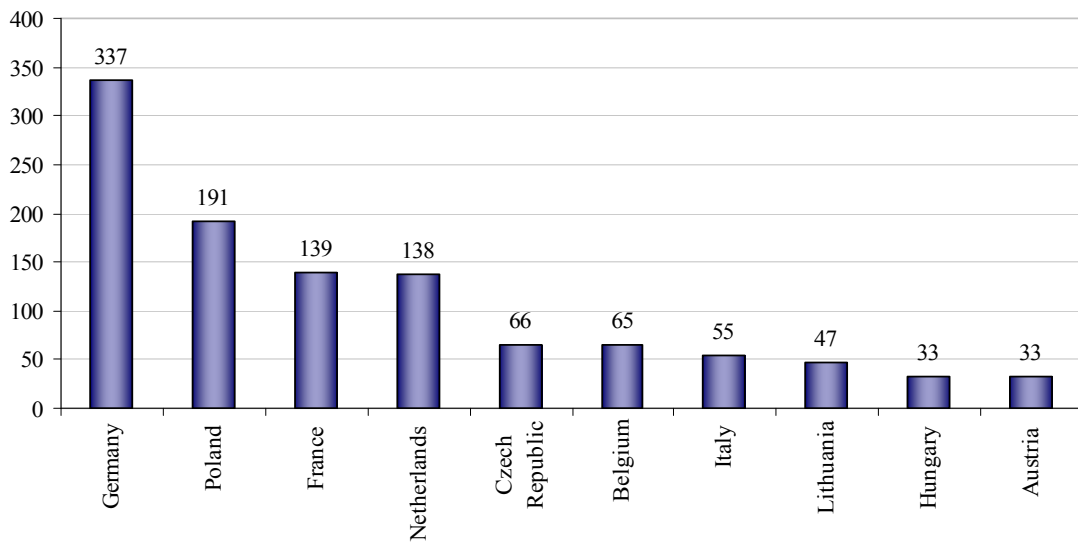
Source: **Ülgür (2008).**

In order to understand how the location of the universities matters, it is worth looking at the numbers of incoming students at the respective universities. For the local universities, it becomes obvious that despite being consistent with European mobility standards, the interest among incoming exchange students has turned out to be low due in part to the less prominent locations in non-major cities.

Figure 12: Erasmus incoming students at sample universities (2004/05 – 2007/08)
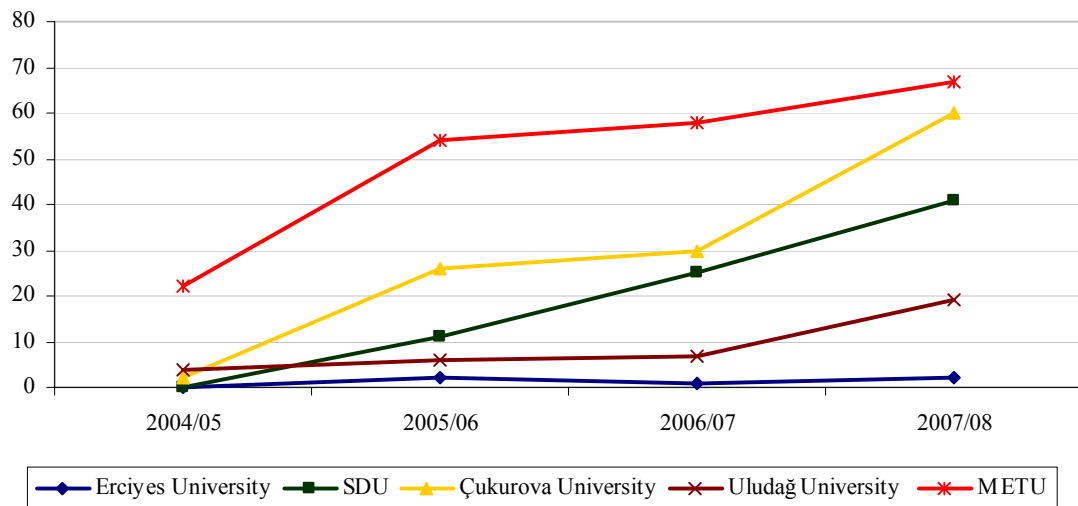
Source: **Questionnaires filled out by the international offices.**

Often the interviewees mentioned if their university was located in Istanbul or Ankara, the number of incoming students of many departments would catch up rapidly, resulting in more balanced flows of incoming and outgoing students. While such an experiment

with a direct and controlled comparison to test these claims does not exist, some indirect evidences can be revealed by comparing mobility flows of the local and metropolitan universities with each other. Comparing the inbound and outbound exchange, Kayseri and Bursa have vastly more outgoing students compared to incoming students, at a rate of around 25:1, whereas Isparta takes a middle position with a less extremely unbalanced rate of 7:1. METU and Çukurova are perfectly typical of the overall Turkish average with a strong increase in incoming students. Their outgoing-incoming ratio is around 3:1. Regarding these data, it can safely be concluded that the demand among prospective incoming students is strongly associated with the university's location, as was initially assumed by the actors. Thus, Istanbul has clearly maintained its lead as the favorite destination, followed by Ankara and then by other universities mostly on the coastline.

Istanbul is considered as the most appealing city, in terms of being simultaneously cosmopolitan and European as well as oriental, offering central access to a variety of cultural and social activities not found in other parts of Europe. Nevertheless, this same argument can also be used at local Anatolian universities, arguing that their university and location can be an excellent gateway for further discovery of numerous historical and cultural sites in Turkey. Compared to the big cities, the less prominent smaller ones offer significant advantages such as an easier access and contact to the local culture, a more affordable cost of living and an oftentimes a superior standard of personal safety for a more trouble-free stay. Furthermore, the living expenses in Turkey prove to be much lower in non-major Turkish cities than in many other European countries.[51]

Another attractive factor in order draw international students to Turkey is its warm and pleasant climate, especially in the south and along its coastlines. The vice rector from Süleyman Demirel University made an analogy about the warm climate affecting the warm hospitality, by saying that "Isparta climate has an academic climate with a very special hospitality for each exchange student". She also implied that if other Mediterranean countries could attract Erasmus students, so could Turkey. Regardless of that being located in a less prominent town is a significant factor in affecting student choices, responding to students' needs, providing service and support and word of mouth promotion amongst exchange students greatly helped to advertise the universities.

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[51] For a table on European-wide cost of living for Erasmus students, see Carbonell (2008).

The interviews provide clear evidence that incoming students are more likely to come to local universities when their needs are fulfilled. Highly appreciated was also the provision of the necessary information about academic and socio-cultural conditions in English. The personal reasons why students decide for an exchange in Turkey parallel to the motives of outgoing Turkish exchange students. Many of the incoming students called Turkey an exceptional opportunity for an exchange, whereas the exchange in Europe is a more common idea and practice. Most responses pertained to gaining international experience, improving a foreign language and cultural competences as well as enhancing their future employment prospects. Incoming exchange students at METU also favor the instruction given in the English language and their high academic standards. In Adana, it seems more common that students go there based on the positive opinion and recommendations of fellow students, who had studied there in the years before. The Erasmus coordinator recalled that one former incoming student promoted back at the home institution her experience with the highly practical approach with the patients acquired during an exchange term in the medical faculty at Çukurova University. This kind of informal positive recommendation triggered an increase in the number of incoming students in that department from 1 to 11 for the following term. This example demonstrates how different teaching methods can spark further interest. In order to map the students' opinions about their stay with respect to their academic, administrative and socio-cultural circumstances, the following paragraphs explain the results of the survey of the incoming students and the responses to the questionnaires.

At the academic level, differences in teaching methods are perceived somewhat ambiguously. On the one hand, they are considered as an opportunity to experience different approaches. On the other hand, variations such as different workloads and organization of the lectures pose difficult challenges. Consequently, it is crucial for the students that the academic faculty makes their academic expectations and teaching methods clear so they can adequately respond. Moreover, in Adana students perceived the limited selection of available courses provided in English as somewhat negative. A positive academic aspect is the almost excellent faculty accessibility with extensive availability of the lecturers for cooperation and support with academic and sometimes also personal matters.

Regarding their opinion of the administration of their stay, most incoming students were generally satisfied with the assistance and support of the international offices particularly with respect to university-related areas, such as the orientation program, the Erasmus club and the service infrastructure provided. Problems for exchange students usually pertained to cultural differences, language difficulties, homesickness and the organization of accommodation and visa. At the HEIs visited, difficulties arose primarily in the administration of non-academic affairs, such as the organization of residence permits or arranging accommodation in the metropolitan cities.[52] In Isparta, Adana and Bursa problems with accommodation are not as apparent since off-campus apartments outside university and special dorms for exchange students are more easily available than in the metropolises.

In terms of their socio-cultural integration, the most valuable experiences according to the questionnaires relate to the rich culture and atmosphere of the host cities, traveling in Turkey in general, the great culinary traditions and the interaction with local people. Most students were highly satisfied with experiencing the Turkish culture and the contact with Turkish people, due to their warmth and kind hospitality. Nonetheless, using Turkish did not come easy for the incoming exchange students due to their modest language skills. This mainly relates to the question about previous experience and contact with Turkey by the students; 27 out of 29 students answered to having had only very limited knowledge of the Turkish language before their exchange. As a consequence, contacts with the locals sometimes remained a bit shallow or caused misunderstandings in the negotiation of daily life, easily creating a feeling of exclusion, while being treated as a foreigner. Nonetheless, depending upon the length of their stay, most of the students considerably enhanced their Turkish language skills by the end of their stay. For the metropolises, an additional impediment is the huge population and the large number of inhabitants and the consequent anonymity and security problems. The latter is especially valid for women, especially with an appearance atypical to Turkey, particularly those with light to fair coloring. Likewise, the Erasmus coordinator in Isparta remembered that the first incoming exchange students were received very curiously by the local Turkish community, because they were not used to seeing foreigners in town, thus creating a new topic of discussion.

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[52] Although the Turkish National Agency has communicated directly with the Ministry of Interior Affairs to "issue unconditional residence permits" to incoming Erasmus students, there seem to remain some minor difficulties (Demir 2008: 44).

One last point the incoming students mentioned, was the revision of images of Turkey, which indirectly affects the impression of Turkey in the rest of Europe. In that way, a key element in the process is getting to know better the unfamiliar and foreign through interaction with local students and inhabitants. The incomings attested that when they spent their time in Turkey, barriers in their minds towards Turkey easily fell, because most experiences were vitally positive, including important unexpected and surprising aspects. Particularly, with respect to the academic quality, many students were surprised about the demanding high-quality educational environment, specifically at METU and at some departments of the local universities.

With respect to the socio-cultural ideas, especially in South-Eastern universities like Adana, incoming students were surprised by the contrast between the rather serene reality that they experienced and the initial expectations about Turkish daily life, derived either from tourist experiences or worrisome media coverage of strife in Kurdish regions. Almost all noted a marked change in their attitudes about Turkey as well as in their opinions about the host countries while being abroad. An exchange student in Adana summarized her reflections as follows:

> Before I left for Turkey I was strongly influenced by the stereotypes about Turkey, its culture and its people. I came to Turkey and experienced everything on my own, discovered the country, got to know the people. Now I have my own opinion about the people living in this country as well as their culture. Those opinions are both subjective (connected more to what I personally experienced) and objective (connected to the general knowledge I gained). I no longer trust in stereotypes nor evaluate people using those stereotypes. Now I know that one cannot have an opinion about a given country nor its people without visiting it and living there for some time.

After the initial culture shock was overcome and the students adjusted to the Turkish cultural norms and language, by the end of their exchange period, almost all of them (27 out of 29) recommended a stay in Turkey. I estimate this feedback to prompt important socialization processes in the future, also outside the university, since the students share with their families and friends relieving them from their previous fears and doubts about Turkey. This transformation of conceptions as a product of the exchange is an important part of the overall socialization process.

5.5.3 Networking trends

In Turkey, the major networking trends for sure do not stop at Europe's borders. Turkish universities had their own mobility schemes long before Erasmus or Bologna. Historical ties exist especially with the linguistically, culturally and geographically close Turkic countries, the so-called Turkic Republics, such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.[53] As a result, the Turkish government has a long-standing tradition to provide scholarships for students from the Central Asian as well as from the Balkan countries (European Students' Union 2008). Over the years, Turkey has played an influential part in shaping their developments with respect to higher education (Roman, Mızıkacı and Goschin 2008). Turkey further stresses its bridge function for those regions, because it believes to have particular responsibilities for the widespread population of Turkic descent, especially in issues of higher education.

These pan-Turkic concerns[54] reveal for example in Turkey's present cultural and scientific institutions abroad in Central Asia, such as the International Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, the International Turkmen-Turkish University in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and the Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. This also explains in some way the composition of the foreign students enrolled in full degree programs in Turkey, of which the Central Asian students make up more than 50% of all foreign students. With respect to those "Turkic" students, the basic distinction with the other foreign degree students is that they are practically treated as domestic Turkish students. That means that not the international office, but the normal student affairs office and the registrar's office are responsible for their student services. The interviews provide evidence that the international offices generally do not deal with these students with their services.

As with the Central Asian countries, the Balkan countries are particularly interesting for Turkey because they also had previously belonged to Ottoman territory.

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[53] For more information, see the website of the European Students' Union on the "Lets Go Campaign".
[54] Pan-Turkism was first developed as a political ideology by the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) regime in the early twentieth-century Ottoman Empire. Turkification policies aimed at uniting all Turkish and Turkic people in Anatolia, Caucasia and Central Asia under a single nation based on "Turkish blood". They were meant to establish the unconditional supremacy of the Turkish ethnic identity in nearly all aspects of social and economic life, also in education (Aktar 2003). In the early years of the Turkish Republic, this ethno-religious project provided the base for the definition of the level of Turkishness (Çağaptay 2006). Those particular ideologies partly persist up to today in Turkish politics.

The department coordinator in Bursa indicated that Erasmus is a great factor in re-establishing cooperation and joint-programs with countries of the Balkans, stating that:

> We really have to increase the relationship with the Balkan countries, because despite differences we are so close culturally. Then, there will be more projects coming from there, because we have a lot of things in common that we are talking about. When I visited Bulgaria and Greece, people act almost the same, but if I visit countries like Norway or Finland, they are different. The Netherlands and Germany are different, but the Balkan countries, with their working style, their talking style, their culinary style, all are very similar.

Indeed, in the case of exchange with the neighboring countries, it is assumed that due to the students' closer cultural and linguistic background, they are Turkish enough to blend in with the domestic Turkish students without requiring extra student services. What merits attention, however, is the fact that other culturally close countries, such as countries in the Middle East are not favored for exchange, because they are perceived as being backward. Nonetheless, visiting scholar programs from these countries are present at some universities. METU, for example, introduced the Erasmus Mundus program [55] in 2006/07, integrating Iran and Iraq into their mobility schemes. Interestingly enough, the topic of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has hardly been mentioned at all, although a considerable mobility between HEIs in Turkey and Cyprus exists. That is because "the governance system of the Turkish Council of Higher Education also applies for universities in Cyprus" (Roman, Mızıkacı and Goschin 2008: 136). Nonetheless, until the beginning of 2009, Northern Cypriot universities have been excluded from the Community programs and the Bologna Process.

With respect to the universities examined, the following table on the number of international degree students illustrates the growth of their foreign degree students enrolled in full degree programs. It shows that while SDU and Çukurova University have relatively few foreign degree students, the other universities and especially METU have large populations of foreign students matriculated in full degree programs. The vice rector from Isparta though assumes that the number of students from the Turkic Republics will rise from 40 to about 400 in the near future thanks to newly established programs, which are supposed to attract a substantial number of additional incoming foreign students.

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[55] The main aim of this new EU program is to promote Europe as a center of excellence and to attract students from all over the world, offering scholarships to third-country nationals in top-quality Master's courses (European Commission 2008d: 58).

Figure 13: International degree students at sample universities (2003/04 – 2007/08)
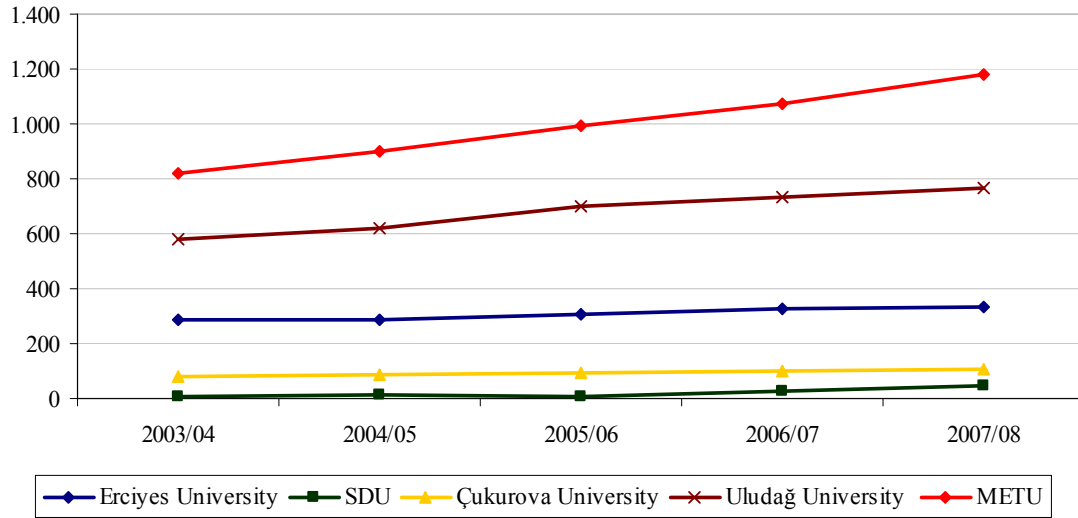
Source: **ÖSYM.**

However, the European exchange programs and the new competition for bilateral agreements have seemed to tilt the balance in favor of Europe, as explained by the head of the international office in Bursa:

> Now because of Erasmus, everything was concentrated on Europe in the last four years. Before, lots of connections were there with the Asian countries, these Turkic Republics, Central Asia, but nowadays it is rare with Asia. More people want to go to Europe, they want connections with European countries, European partners, European projects. The second largest interest is for the US.

Reflections about general networking trends in Turkish HEIs have become obvious when asking about the geographical regions of interest, where the actors have wanted to enhance their cooperation. The destinations are diverse, ranging from Europe (especially the Balkans) over to Asia (China, Korea, Japan, Turkic Republics) as well as the US. Taken as an average of the total mobility networks maintained by the universities investigated for this study, Europe as a whole takes the largest share with a rate of approximately 70%, Asia with 20% and the US with 10%. Thereby, the Turkish-American cooperation is considered mostly for independent "free-mover" mobility by graduates or post-graduates or based on research projects. Moreover, there is also a growing interest for prospective partners in the Eastern European countries like Lithuania or Poland in order to explore more "out of the ordinary" terrains.

Besides Erasmus, various other programs with European or international partners, such as summer or winter universities, joint-programs or joint conferences have been on the rise in recent years at all universities investigated.

As Kayseri believes, other attractive geographical regions might well be found at one's doorstep. In the last three to four years, the international office of Erciyes University has established a strong connection with the regional stakeholders, combining EU research projects, of a total budget of around 12 Mio. €.[56]

Lastly, improvement in domestic mobility, in terms of inter-institutional cooperation between Turkish HEIs, remains an unfinished task for the future. So far, student or staff mobility between institutions is rarely exploited in the fields of teaching and research, if all. One student questionnaire pointed out that improving internal domestic mobility of students would be of great benefit, since it offers similar advantages as international mobility. Likewise, the TÜSIAD report (2008) suggests that this potential should be further exploited by encouraging interaction between universities in Turkey, not only in terms of research, but also of actual exchange among students and faculty. By this means, they also recommend increasing the support for existing programs via bilateral agreements between universities and to set up academic and research staff mobility schemes. The ECTS could thereby serve as system for credit transfer and recognition also for domestic mobility within the country. As a matter of fact, the Council of Higher Education enacted the "National Mobility Project" starting in 2009/2010, which aims to provide exchange of students and staff domestically (Demir 2008: 53).

As a result, networking reinforced through the EU programs appears to have triggered a greater collaboration regionally, nationally and internationally. Therefore, the mobility factor has had a considerable effect on the institutions and its benefits are obvious. It is to be seen in the upcoming section what progress the European programs have created to sustain themselves and to continue their mission in the future.

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[56] For a comprehensive list of all the international activities at Erciyes University from 2004 until now, see Erciyes (2008).

5.6 Evaluation of the mobility programs at institutional level

As explained in the previous sections, HEIs aligned their internationalization endeavors with the national and European policies. Above all, Erasmus paved the way for approaching Europe and creating a further internationalization at the local Anatolian universities. The international activities thereby strongly depended on the EU funds linked to the Community programs, which accelerated and directed the progress. As an outcome, the permeability of the European systems was therefore improved, and it is now possible for more and more Turkish students to spend a semester abroad or even complete an entire program at a European university with much less complications. At the local universities investigated for this study it is particularly interesting, because the international aspirations developed exclusively in relation to the EU regulatory framework and the aim to foster Erasmus mobility. It is important to keep in mind that the upcoming evaluation only gives a brief snapshot of the selected universities' achievements of the last five to six years and the current status of the universities in terms of internationality.

As assumed in the beginning of the project, the Europeanization process in the control case of METU has indeed been going quite smoothly, despite initial hesitation on the part of a significant share of the academic faculty. Moreover, due to their privileged position and previous experiences of the preceding two decades, they easily integrated the structural procedures into their larger internationalization strategy. Practically, their internationalization efforts translated into regular meetings and evaluations. As a result, after a couple of years of experiences, the European activities were even "placed in the center of their strategic internationalization plans" (Şahin 2008: 104). A growing mutual awareness among the actors, especially the students, helped to stimulate a greater dynamic and more action at the department level. Nonetheless, several obstacles remain, expressed in frequent criticism and mistrust about international projects and funding. Furthermore, the staff in the international office has been re-structured according to the different EU programs and has grown proportionally with the rising number of outbound exchange students. The "insufficient office space", for the organization and accommodation of the growing number of students and to fit their staff more adequately, is a problem that needs to be solved in the future (Şahin 2008: 105).

As mentioned earlier, popular exchange destinations shifted from Anglo-Saxon countries to Europe, almost creating a balance in flows of both inbound and outbound students with the respective countries. For the future, the head of the international office sees the volume of outgoing exchange students stabilizing at around 500 students annually, roughly where they currently stand. Additionally to the Erasmus program, METU was the first university in Turkey to integrate the Erasmus Mundus scheme.

The basic line of demarcation between METU and the other local universities is the difference in experiences and resulting international prestige. Most of them, for example Süleyman Demirel University, even started their European mobility activities from scratch. Consequently, they needed stronger promotion than centrally located leading national universities like METU in order to realize the exchanges in practice. For that reason, Süleyman Demirel University, amongst the other local universities, has in this process left no stone unturned and acquired experience with all financial possibilities that the EU would offer to their university. For example, they became involved in the Erasmus Intensive Language Courses, just as Çukurova University and METU had done. In Isparta and Bursa the key actors further mentioned a big increase in the quality of academic performance, reflecting on the overall accomplishments of the universities. SDU's participation by outgoing exchange students has been estimated to peak at around 300 outbound students per academic year, whereas the demand for incoming exchange students is expected to continue to rise, according to the trend over the last years. Although, being eclipsed by the nearby Akdeniz University in Antalya with respect to the total numbers of Erasmus participants, the continuous marketing and promotional efforts by the academic faculty, such as with site visits, promotions and presentations, have paid off and have strongly contributed to attracting international projects, also particularly from the Turkic Republics. For the future, they wish to attract more international graduate applications and post-doc research.

Erciyes and especially Uludağ University had both had prior mobility programs and were somehow familiar with a certain type of international students. Therefore, they could rely on pre-existing structures and procedures. Nonetheless, they had to adapt them to the new circumstances and rules. At the same time, both universities have been taking part in the EUA evaluation program, the Bologna process and ECTS preparation since the very beginning around ten years ago.

The international office of Erciyes University stands out in terms of how intensively they market and promote their university. The office hosted countless meetings and conferences, inviting experts to inform their stakeholders within and outside university about the ongoing processes. One positive outcome of these meetings is a closer cooperation of the university with the regional industry and other potential stakeholders, which did not work well before 2004. For the future, this collaboration could even help to contribute to cooperative education with internships and guest lectures, introducing practical components. This would be advantageous for both parts, helping the businesses get good qualified international human resources and helping the students get the skills and experience that employers actually seek. The head of the international office at Erciyes University holds the Erasmus program not as an ends in itself but rather as an important means to internationalization. For both universities, while the number of inbound exchange students remains low, the number of outbound exchange students is steadily increasing to rise to about 300 peak. For the future, they expect to attract more incoming students, by working to improve their organization.

In the realm of Europeanization at Uludağ University, the continuous endeavors for quality management and international accreditation decisively have shaped their adaptation to the mobility programs. An excellent point for Uludağ University is that they have the whole university committed in trying to improve their entire academic performance. A crucial element in this process was the academic leadership of the rector, campaigning for the introduction of a system of academic quality management. Although, this allowed a smoother integration into existing organizational structures, their lack of official authority was often called a big hindrance. One of the measures, recommended by the EUA Review Team in 2002, namely the support the English language proficiency of the students and staff by the foreign language schools, has been realized in a growing offering of courses instructed in English. Furthermore, English preparatory classes and subject-related proficiency courses in English have also been introduced in some of the curricula. Meanwhile, international exposure to different European languages has increased for students of all faculties through the access to regular exchange through Erasmus or other joint-programs. Erasmus thereby has been serving as a strong incentive for students to increase their interest and strengthen their skills in foreign languages. Similar efforts can be observed at all of the institutions, which also by now provide more English courses for their general student body.

Additionally, Erasmus has brought about an intensification of their contacts to the Balkans establishing joint summer programs with Bulgaria and Romania. They also launched joint-programs with Leeds Met University in the UK and the European Mediterranean University in Slovenia. Furthermore, the Community programs brought about the first international conferences of such a magnitude to Uludağ University.

Likewise, for Çukurova University the vice rector reaffirmed that the rapid growth and consequent competition created a very lively atmosphere for internationalization amongst his colleagues and students. After the participation in the Erasmus Pilot Project in 2003/04, they demonstrated rising numbers of exchange students, both outbound and inbound. Outstanding aspects of Çukurova University are the coordination of mutual changes within their systems and their partner universities. For example, one Portuguese University launched English instructed courses for the first time after making a bilateral agreement with Adana. For Çukurova University compulsory English language courses are intended for all departments in the near future.

As an additional point that applies to all of the local Anatolian universities visited for this study, is the scale of construction activity which included improvements to the buildings and infrastructures with substantial renovations and completion of brand new facilities. In Bursa, the number of faculty buildings has even doubled in the previous eight years. At Süleyman Demirel University, state of the art new laboratories for nanotechnology have been installed to match international standards, which are aimed at attracting more international researchers.

In sum, the local Anatolian universities have particularly benefited from the European programs and developed various initiatives in order to improve their visibility. The greatest contribution to institutional development due to mobility is related to the professionalization of academic and administrative student services, such as the counseling for students who are interested in studying abroad. Therefore, at all of the local Anatolian universities strong adaptations have taken place, although the transformation is yet incomplete. Most of the other interviewees also noted with approval that a transformation of human resources took place over the last years.

6   CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

This final chapter will offer an outlook and recommendations for the future on behalf of the actors, concluding the findings of my project. With respect to the Erasmus program, the main suggestions for improvement pertain to the content, procedures and financial aspects of the mobility program.

As discussed in the section on resources, the budget has been a central point of critique, no matter if criticism has revolved around the amount, distribution or application of the financial means. One frequent claim has been to adjust the budget flexibly according to the demands of the outgoing students. By this means, not only the number, but also the quality of students should be raised. With regard to the procedures, most administrators at the international offices pledged to simplify the internal and external organization of mobility, since the amount of bureaucracy often impeded the launch and realization of worthwhile projects. In that way, bureaucracy also has been producing heavy burdens in the normal administrative management, namely in the case of the late budgets, as discussed earlier. For that reason, both international offices and Erasmus coordinators have claimed to be able to work more effectively if they would be delegated more official authority. This could make the whole process less bureaucratic and consequently faster and more efficient. In a similar vein, they also suggested employing administrative assistants for the routine management of official documents for students, which comprises the major workload, so they could concentrate on the main aspects better.

Furthermore, several interviewees considered it useful for certain administrative staff to specialize in the details of the various European programs in order to have strong expertise as central points of references. Specific subgroups could then help or train the academics to fully develop their potential in EU matters. In a similar approach, the department coordinators suggested surrendering locally diverse degree credit accumulation systems and to standardize the application of the credit transfer system all over Europe in order to guarantee a more efficient mobility organization. With respect to incompatibilities of the Erasmus rules with the national laws, the actors have also requested the government or the EU to take the necessary steps to reconcile the rules.

Moreover, the faculty and departmental coordinators of Erasmus called for an adequate balance between the accountability and the amount of administrative responsibility. This could be realized through a compensation for extra lecturing hours, offering financial incentives for the additional administration workload, plus providing adequate working conditions, such as fully-equipped offices for the coordinators. Nonetheless, it is seen as a central aspect to outfit all university personnel especially at the departmental level, with basic knowledge on the European programs, in order to better balance the administrative workload and to guarantee a sustainable information flow. As the academic faculty members function as important agents in the application of the European policies, it is obvious that the more active they create and sustain the Europeanization process, the greater becomes their university's international visibility.

The offices also pledged for a regular pan-European evaluation system concerning the quality control within the Erasmus program. They claimed that it is not only a matter of having an Erasmus Charter awarded, but also maintaining their standards to adhere to those criteria. They have emphasized examples of quality criteria, for example the provision of good websites, course catalogues, foreign language instruction, active agreements, good practices with the grants and student administration. Comparable statistics on those parameters could then professionalize the assessment of the quality of the outcomes. Actors suggested setting evaluation, reward and sanction mechanisms according to the performance by the universities. Financial rewards could then help to improve the respective universities in their research, administration and social activities.

In the eyes of the outgoing students, the lack of information about Europe is seen quite critically, and they requested more informative seminars about Europe and the Community programs. Knowledge acquired in those meetings could then contribute to better informed decisions and more conscious choices about programs and destinations for international educational exchange. For the future, it was recommended to make the Erasmus experiences more transparent, compiling the information and publishing it on a single European platform, which could serve as a forum for the exchange of practical information at the same time.[57]

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[57] Such intents are realized, for example, over the ESIB and the ESN project available online: www.20erasmus.eu.

For the future of the Erasmus program in Europe, some actors have proposed examining the demographic situation, which has projected a decline in native student populations at the European HEIs and have suggested adjusting the program accordingly.[58] As Turkey has enough students who will apply to HEIs in the next years and Europe seems to expect fewer students in the upcoming decade, they suggested increasing the number of placements and grants for the Turkish students in order to fill those gaps. Mızıkacı and Baumgartl (2007: 15f.) as well as Gürlesel (2007: 53) attest that "Turkey with its large young population can fill the gap" for the coming decades. For Europe, the High Level Forum on Mobility (European Commission 2008a: 9) is "aware of the context of demographic ageing and therefore strongly encourages highly skilled immigration from third countries or countries with a strong youth population". At the same time, Gürlesel (2007: 53) suggests "formulating policies that will raise the quality of education within Turkey" in order to fully exploit this potential.

With regard to a further improvement of the overall mobility throughout Europe, especially the international offices stressed the need to offer more courses with instruction in English all over Turkey and Europe because courses in languages other than English present a high barrier for exchange. At the same time, foreign language courses should be a compulsory element of education for all students. On behalf of some formal actors, it was also requested to include the students in the decision making process, since they are the most immediate targets of the program contributing to its success to a large extent.

Lastly, the universities seem to have acquired some freedom in exploring their options within the range of possibilities of the Community programs. It would be recommendable if those decentralizing practices would lead to further institutional autonomy. Hence, an important change within the Bologna Process is "the possibility of adjusting the centralized structures of the contemporary Turkish higher education system" and consequently guaranteeing a greater relative autonomy, removing the bureaucratic rigidities of the current complicated structures (World Bank 2007: 9).

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[58] The High Level Forum on Migration assumes that "in the years until 2020 the European youth generation will diminish from 90 to 81 million, reducing by 9-10%" (European Commission 2008a: 5). In order to keep Europe competitive enough they "suggest an expansion of the existing mobility programs, primarily the Erasmus program, to reach 450.000 annual mobile students in 2012, 900.000 in 2015 and 1.400.000 in 2020" (European Commission 2008a: 21).

To conclude, the presented work is an attempt to analyze how the Bologna Process and the Erasmus program and their implementations have shaped the internationalization processes at the selected Anatolian universities. As the study reveals, the look at the institutional environment shed light on the organizational responses at the formal and informal level. As a result, it can safely be concluded that the institutional responses are undeniably linked to those processes. Thereby, it is not always clear how exactly the institutional impacts are shaped by the regulatory framework, but it is possible to some extent to track how certain European elements are being transferred into the mainstream higher education policy and congruent practice.

In particular, the scope of Europeanization emphasized the change of the institutional structure shaped by policy transfer, which enabled an insight in the legitimization of power structures concerning the administration of student mobility at the different universities. Moreover, this work showed that those developments are worth monitoring, considering the vast changes that already took place as a result. The multi-causal explanations within the Europeanization concept made the direction and extent of the process visible. Hence, in order to analyze the European influence on institutional systems, the Europeanization concept from Börzel and Risse (2000) fits well, since it is geographically defined (viz. in the formal-logical sense more transparent) and strongly institutionalized.

Overall, it can be assumed with a high probability that "Europe" is an important unit for institutional and societal developments, because the European mobility programs paved the way for greater cross-boarder activities at the sample universities. Europeanization trends have triggered a wide range of mobility initiatives and actions at the universities, even if they are developing at different paces and trajectories with the stage and extent of implementation varying. All universities have created a number of tools to professionalize the organization of student mobility, both to the benefit of students and the institutions, even if the coordination between the units involves certain difficulties. Problems of language, financing, resources and autonomy shape opportunities for mobility so that there are wide disparities in the actual opportunities available. These problems can and should be resolved. Nonetheless, the basic preconditions for internationalization are present and stable. People have become familiar with it, and by now most actors openly support it.

The process is therefore strongly linked to the willingness and motivation of the actors and the availability of resources, starting from the top to the bottom. This means that the European processes have introduced not only conceptual structural changes, by transferring resources, models and standards, but have also changed attitudes of the actors, who have since internalized certain norms. It can be concluded that both processes have started to disseminate the awareness to the higher education community and society at large, and translated this awareness into concrete action. The thesis illustrated that this growing awareness stimulates international cooperation and competition, student and staff mobility, cooperative research and foreign language instruction, as well as trends towards structural convergence in institutional patterns, study programs or curricula. Taken as a whole, the connections between the European policies and the local responses have become obvious.

The findings of my study provide evidence that for the future, a general trend towards further diversification of international programs is expected to continue. My conviction is that if mobility is kept high in scale, it can generate sufficiently competitive potential to affect the necessary restructuring of qualitative aspects within the HEIs. Hence, I expect the European processes together with the Turkish adaptations to foster potential developments, transforming part of the existing system. I believe that if internal standards improve, then the external perception of the standards should progress commensurately. However, the process is subject to new developments at all times, since the European programs are constantly in progress and Turkey's strategies are also open for change.

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ANNEX 1A: PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN CASE STUDY VISITS

University

Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul
Exchange student coordinator at the international office
Head of the international office, Erasmus institutional coordinator
16 incoming Erasmus students (on-line questionnaires)

Middle East Technical University, Ankara
Department coordinator at the Faculty of Social Sciences
Coordinator for incomings at the international office, national Bologna promoter, student representative
Head of the international office
2 coordinators for incomings at the international office
Coordinator for outgoings at the international office
7 incoming / 3 outgoing Erasmus students (on-line questionnaires)

Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta
Head of the international office
Vice coordinator for the international office, departmental Erasmus coordinator for the Faculty of Textile Engineering
Vice rector for international relations
Erasmus coordinator at the international office

Uludağ University, Bursa
Head of the international office, institutional Erasmus coordinator, national Bologna promoter, member of the EUA evaluation team
Departmental Erasmus coordinator at the Faculty of Education
Erasmus coordinator at the international office
25 outgoing Erasmus students (on-line questionnaires)

Erciyes University, Kayseri
Head of the international office
LLP Institutional Coordinator, departmental Erasmus coordinator at the Faculty of Education
Erasmus coordinator at the international office, Secretary General
Erasmus coordinator at the international office
Departmental Erasmus coordinator at the Faculty of Business Administration

Çukurova University, Adana
Chief Erasmus coordinator at the international office
Erasmus coordinator for incomings at the international office
Institutional Erasmus coordinator at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences
Vice rector for international relations, EUA evaluator for Brussels, EUA Steering Committee President, national Bologna promoter, QA & Accreditation committee member
6 Incoming Erasmus students (on-line questionnaires)

ANNEX 1B: FOREIGN DEGREE STUDENTS AND ERASMUS STUDENTS AS % OF THE TOTAL STUDENTS AT ALL TURKISH HEIS AND THE SAMPLE HEIS

Table 1: Profile: Total students at Turkish universities (2003/04 – 2006/07)

Indicator/Institution	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of national students*	1.935.886	2.062.896	2.299.487	2.407.330	2.484.794
Number of international students*	14.693	14.794	15.481	15.893	16.829
International students as % of all university students	0,76%	0,72%	0,67%	0,66%	0,68%
Erasmus outgoing students	125	1.142	2.852	4.438	6.323
Outgoing students as % of all university students	0,01%	0,06%	0,12%	0,18%	0,25%
Erasmus incoming students	17	299	828	1.321	2.000**

Source: **ÖSYM and Ulusal Ajans websites.**
* does not consider military academies and other institutions than universities.
** estimated

Table 2: Profile: Students at Erciyes University (2003/04 – 2006/07)

Indicator/Institution	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of national students	26.316	27.662	30.064	27.765	26.409
Number of international students	289	287	308	324	334
International students as % of all university students	1,10%	1,04%	1,02%	1,17%	1,26%
Erasmus outgoing students	0	0	2	16	55
Outgoing students as % of all university students	0,00%	0,00%	0,01%	0,06%	0,21%
Erasmus incoming students	0	0	2	1	2

Source: **ÖSYM, Turkish National Agency websites, Questionnaires.**

Table 3: Profile: Students at Süleyman Demirel University (2003/04 – 2006/07)

Indicator/Institution	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of national students	31.987	35.673	41.360	32.897	34.679
Number of international students	8	14	9	28	45
International students as % of all university students	0,03%	0,04%	0,02%	0,09%	0,13%
Erasmus outgoing students	0	29	72	132	207
Outgoing students as % of all university students	0,00%	0,08%	0,17%	0,40%	0,60%
Erasmus incoming students	0	0	11	25	41

Source: **ÖSYM, Turkish National Agency websites, Questionnaires.**

Table 4: Profile: students at Çukurova University (2003/04 – 2006/07)

Indicator/Institution	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of national students	29.884	31.819	32.792	33.064	30.307
Number of international students	79	90	92	99	104
International students as % of all university students	0,26%	0,28%	0,28%	0,30%	0,34%
Erasmus outgoing students	15	71	131	178	217
Outgoing students as % of all university students	0,05%	0,22%	0,40%	0,54%	0,72%
Erasmus incoming students	0	2	26	30	60

Source: **ÖSYM, Turkish National Agency websites, Questionnaires.**

Table 5: Profile: Students at Uludağ University (2003/04 – 2006/07)

Indicator/Institution	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of national students	39.879	40.233	41.452	40.350	39.209
Number of international students	578	618	699	734	768
International students as % of all university students	1,45%	1,54%	1,69%	1,82%	1,96%
Erasmus outgoing students	0	17	88	162	268
Outgoing students as % of all university students	0,00%	0,04%	0,21%	0,40%	0,68%
Erasmus incoming students	0	4	6	7	19

Source: **ÖSYM, Turkish National Agency websites, Questionnaires.**

Table 6: Profile: Students at Middle East Technical University (2003/04 – 2006/07)

Indicator/Institution	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of national students	20.581	21.070	21.669	22.110	22.630
Number of international students	819	899	991	1.073	1.177
International students as % of all university students	3,98%	4,27%	4,57%	4,85%	5,20%
Erasmus outgoing students	1	25	99	194	208
Outgoing students as % of all university students	0,00%	0,12%	0,46%	0,88%	0,92%
Erasmus incoming students	0	22	54	58	67

Source: **ÖSYM, Turkish National Agency websites, Questionnaires.**

Central question:

How do members of the international offices from local Anatolian universities view their actual and upcoming state of internationalization (*mobility processes*) within their university?

Opening question:

Starting in the academic year of 2004/2005 Turkey has been fully integrated within the ERASMUS program. On the national level various information in form of publications were offered by the *Ulusal Ajans*. On the regional level several adaptations have also taken place. To start the interview I would like to ask you to remember that initiative year and tell me "why and in what way your university wanted to offer student mobility and the respective service?" and "who was supposed to be involved in the development of such services?"

1. What do you think were the **crucial motivations to participate** (decisive factors)?
   - Did you have **positive expectations** particularly for your university? Which ones?
     (i.e. external funding opportunities, prestige gain…)
   - Do you remember any **concerns about the program** and have you talked about them with colleagues? (What have been the **central challenges** for your university?)

General targeting:

2. Meanwhile three years have passed. In your opinion, how do you see the **situation today**? How did your university respond to the changes?
   - Which concrete **activities were launched** to enhance the mobility of incoming and outgoing students due to the program?
     (best-practice examples, curricular changes, promotion & marketing)

Thematic targeting:

3. Can you identify which **internal circumstances** (decisive elements) influence on the mobility of students at your university? (power structures)
   - **autonomy** of the university in the decision making process (pressures?)
   - **applicability** of the **policies and conditions set by the EU program** at university
     → **practical resources** (i.e. time, money, office space)
   - **main actors** at your university that enable change (rectorate, your colleagues, students)

   - How do you describe your professional situation?
     Have you been working or studying abroad yourself?
   - Did you take part in international conferences? (to learn about planning and coordinating mobility)

4. How do the **external circumstances** influence your activity and which effects do they have on the mobility of students? (power structures)

   - **location of the university** (regional dimension) (*If your University was in Istanbul, …*)
   - **prestige /recognition of the university outside** (employers, future students)
   - **national ministries**

5. *Please estimate the changes in mobility that have taken place at your university in the past five years.* What **developments do you expect in the future**?

6. In which **geographical areas** would your university most like to enhance its international attractiveness?

Projective question:

7. If **you were one of the initiators** of an international program, what measures would you take/suggest in order to further improve the student mobility?

Final question:

8. Are there any further important points in relation to our theme that we did not mention yet?
9. Can you advise anyone specialized in the related field that I could talk to?

Before you begin, please indicate the following:

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Gender: ☐ Female   ☐ Male
Age: ---------
Nationality: ---------
Name/city of my home university: --------- / ---------
Major or area of studies: ---------
Level of studies during exchange: ☐ BA   ☐ MA   ☐ PhD
Name of host/exchange university: ---------
City/country of host university: --------- / ---------

Start of questionnaire

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. **How long was your stay?**   --------- months //   **of which academic year?** ---------

2. **Through which program did you study abroad?**
   ☐ Program offered by my host/exchange university
   ☐ Socrates/Erasmus Program
   ☐ Bilateral agreement between host and home university
   ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ---------

3. **If you received a grant/scholarship, please specify the amount:** --------- Euros/month

4. **Besides your main scholarship, please mark other sources of financial support.**
   ☐ Personal revenues (job, savings, etc.)
   ☐ Family support
   ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ---------

5. **Please indicate the most important personal reasons to go on this exchange.**
   (*Please choose up to 3 answers*)
   ☐ To live in a foreign country and gain international experience
   ☐ To practice/learn a foreign language
   ☐ To be independent
   ☐ To meet new people
   ☐ To be able to profit from a scholarship
   ☐ To enhance my future employment prospects
   ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ---------

6. **What are the factors that most influenced your choice of the academic program abroad?**
   (*Please choose up to 3 answers*)
   ☐ Country/city where the university is located
   ☐ Scientific reputation of the faculty
   ☐ Establishment of contacts/networks with foreign scientists
   ☐ Prestige of the host university
   ☐ Courses taught in English
   ☐ Opinion of people who have studied there
   ☐ Programs offered
   ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ---------

7. **What made you go abroad and what did you expect from your exchange?**

    ----

8. **Which country did you want to go to and why?**

    ----

9. **Did you have contacts to people or your host institution prior to your exchange?**
    (*several answers allowed*)

    ☐ Yes, academic and/or professional contacts
    ☐ Yes, personal contacts in the respective country/area
    ☐ No

10. **How did your family support your exchange?**

ACADEMIC MATTERS:

11. **Please evaluate the following academic aspects of your home university in Turkey before and after your exchange.**
    (*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	Very dissatis-fied	Rather dissatis-fied	Neither dissatis-fied nor satisfied	Rather satisfied	Very satisfied	Not ap-plicable
Provision of foreign language courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic advising for the courses abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
General academic support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Re-integration into your program in Turkey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recognition of your courses taken abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (*Please specify*): ----------	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

STUDENT SERVICES & ADMINISTRATION:

12. **Please evaluate the following administrative aspects of your home university in Turkey.**
    (*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	Very dissatis-fied	Rather dissatis-fied	Neither dissatis-fied nor satisfied	Rather satisfied	Very satisfied	Not ap-plicable
General help from the International Office	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of the International Office	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of updated information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help with selecting the host institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help with official letters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help with the Visa/residence permit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help by searching for accommodation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (*Please specify*): ----------	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. **Please evaluate the following socio-cultural aspects of your stay abroad.**
    (*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	Very dissatis-fied	Rather dissatis-fied	Neither dissatis-fied nor satisfied	Rather satisfied	Very satisfied	Not ap-plicable
Accommodation in the host country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial situation in the host country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of a foreign language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Socio-cultural atmosphere of the host city	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
General lifestyle in the host country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Contacts with local students in Europe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Contacts with other locals outside university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (*Please specify*):	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

14. **Please indicate your level of integration into the host society during your exchange.**
    (*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	No integration	Limited integration	Some integration	Mostly integrated	Fully Integrated
Studies, scientific research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social life in the host country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. **How do you evaluate your knowledge of the host country's language?**

	Very Limited	Solid basic knowledge	Inter-mediate	Advanced	Mother tongue
Before going abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the end of my exchange	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. **Would you recommend your friends to go for an exchange in your host university?**
    ☐ Yes, fully
    ☐ Yes, with some restrictions
    ☐ Yes, but with major restrictions
    ☐ No

17. **For the future, what would you suggest in order to further improve student mobility, assuming that you could change anything necessary?**
    ....

YOUR COMMENTS:

18. **Please use the space below to share important ideas which have not been mentioned yet concerning your exchange. Please add any comments to this questionnaire as well.**
    ....

Thank you very much for taking your time!
Please return the completed questionnaire by Email to: *maja.stolle@googlemail.com*.

Before you begin, please indicate the following:

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male
Age: ⸻
Nationality: ⸻
Name of my home university: ⸻
City/country of home university: ⸻ / ⸻
Major/area of studies: ⸻
Level of studies during exchange: ☐ BA ☐ MA ☐ PhD
Name of host/exchange university: ⸻
City/country of host university: ⸻ / ⸻

Start of questionnaire

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

19. **How long was your stay?** ⸻ months // **of which academic year?** ⸻

20. **Through which program did you study abroad?**
    (*Please refer to the exchange which you completed in Turkey*)
    ☐ Program offered by my host/exchange university
    ☐ Socrates/Erasmus Program
    ☐ Bilateral agreement between host and home university
    ☐ Governmental program
    ☐ Arranged by myself
    ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ⸻

21. **Is your exchange incorporated in your respective study program?**
    ☐ Yes (Please specify obligatory/facultative: ⸻)
    ☐ No

22. **If you received a grant/scholarship, please specify the amount:** ⸻ Euros/month

23. **Besides your main scholarship, please mark other sources of financial support.**
    ☐ Personal revenues (job, savings, etc.)
    ☐ Family support
    ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ⸻

24. **Please indicate the most important personal reasons to go on this exchange.**
    (*Please choose up to 3 answers*)
    ☐ To learn about different cultures
    ☐ To meet new people
    ☐ To practice/learn a foreign language
    ☐ To be independent
    ☐ To live in a foreign country and gain international experience
    ☐ To be able to profit from a scholarship
    ☐ To enhance my future employment prospects
    ☐ Other (*Please specify*): ⸻

25. **What are the factors that most influenced your choice of the academic program abroad?**
(*Please choose up to 3 answers*)
- [ ] Country/city where the university is located
- [ ] Scientific reputation of the faculty
- [ ] Establishment of contacts/networks with foreign scientists
- [ ] Affordable tuition fee of the host university
- [ ] Prestige of the host university
- [ ] Courses taught in English
- [ ] Opinion of people who have studied there
- [ ] Programs offered
- [ ] Other (*Please specify*): ....

26. **Did you have contacts to people or institutions of Turkey prior to your exchange?**
(*several answers allowed*)
- [ ] Yes, academic and/or professional contacts
- [ ] Yes, personal contacts
- [ ] No

ACADEMIC MATTERS:

27. **Please shortly evaluate the *academic aspects* of your host university in Turkey.**
(*i.e. Scientific use of a foreign language, Workload/ level of courses, Differences in teaching methods, Acquisition of special academic knowledge not offered in my home country, Course offers in my subject area, Academic advising, etc.*)

most positive academic aspects

....
....
....

most negative academic aspects

....
....
....

STUDENT SERVICES & ADMINISTRATION:

28. **Please shortly evaluate the *administrative aspects* of your host university in Turkey.**
(*i.e. International Office, Erasmus Club, Orientation Program, Course Registration, Help with Visa/ Residence permit, Accommodation, Advising for the use of facilities -library, computer labs-, Tuition fees, Language courses, etc.*)

most positive administrative aspects

....
....
....

most negative administrative aspects

....
....
....

29. **Please shortly evaluate the *socio-cultural aspects* of your stay in Turkey.**
    (*i.e. Accommodation, Financial situation, Socio-cultural atmosphere of the host city, Contacts with local students and other locals outside university, Travelling in the host country, Climate, Alimentation, General lifestyle, Insights into the host culture, Using the native language, etc.)*

    most positive socio-cultural aspects

    ----

    most negative socio-cultural aspects

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

30. **Please indicate your level of integration into the Turkish life in the following aspects during your exchange.** (*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	No integration	Limited integration	Some integration	Mostly integrated	Fully Integrated
Studies, scientific research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social life in the host country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

31. **How do you evaluate your Turkish language knowledge?**

	Very Limited	Solid basic knowledge	Inter-mediate	Advanced	Mother tongue
Before going abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the end of my exchange	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

32. **Would you recommend your friends to go for an exchange in your host university?**
    - ☐ Yes, fully
    - ☐ Yes, with some restrictions
    - ☐ Yes, but with major restrictions
    - ☐ No

33. **If you were one of the initiators of an international exchange program with all the necessary authority, what measures would you take in order to further improve student mobility?**

YOUR COMMENTS:

34. **Please use the space below to share important ideas which have not been mentioned yet concerning your stay abroad. Please add any comments to this questionnaire as well.**

Thank you very much for taking your time!
Please return the completed questionnaire by Email to: *maja.stolle@googlemail.com*.

ANNEX 2D: QUESTIONNAIRE – INTERNATIONAL OFFICES

Before you begin, please indicate the following:

Name of your university: ....
Public/Private: ....

Filled in by:
Name/Surname: ....
Job title/Position: ....
E-mail: ....

Start of questionnaire:

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

35. How many academic staff are employed at your university? ....
36. How many full-time students are enrolled at your university? ....
37. How many part-time students are enrolled at your university? ....
38. When was your university founded? ....

39. What is the highest level (or equivalent) to which your university trains students?
    ☐ Bachelor (first cycle)
    ☐ Master (second cycle)
    ☐ Doctorate/PhD (third cycle)

40. Which community do you see your institution primarily as serving?
    ☐ Regional
    ☐ National
    ☐ European
    ☐ World-wide

41. Does your university have a coordinator for international programs?
    ☐ Yes (*Please specify since when*): ....
    ☐ No

42. Does your university keep central records of students who come to study from abroad, and who leave to study abroad?
    ☐ Yes, central records are kept of all these students
    ☐ Yes, but only for students on official study exchange programs (i.e. Erasmus)
    ☐ No, information is kept only by faculties, schools or departments

43. Does your institution participate in international academic networks (COIMBRA, EUA, etc.)?
    ☐ Yes (*Please specify*): ....
    ☐ No

44. Does your institution participate with international organizations outside university (NGO's, etc.)?
    ☐ Yes (*Please specify*): ....
    ☐ No

45. Does your institution participate in regional networks?
    ☐ Yes (*Please specify*): ....
    ☐ No

CREDIT SYSTEM AND RECOGNITION:

46. Does your institution use a credit accumulation system for all BA and MA programs?

☐ Yes, ECTS

☐ Yes, but not ECTS

☐ Not yet, but we intend to develop one in the future

☐ We do not intend to implement one

47. Does your institution hand out a Diploma Supplement (DS) to the graduates?

☐ Yes, to all of them

☐ Yes, to most of them

☐ Yes, to some of them

☐ Not yet, but we intend to develop one in the future

☐ No, we do not intend to implement one

48. The recognition of student achievements from foreign institutions works well at your institution.

☐ Yes, fully (*Please go to question 16*)

☐ Yes, to a considerable extent

☐ Yes, to some extent

☐ No, this is not the case

49. Please estimate if change (and when) will take place regarding the recognition of student achievements from foreign institutions in the future.

☐ I expect (further) changes in the upcoming 12 months.

☐ I expect (further) changes in the period up until 2010.

☐ I do not expect changes.

STUDENT MOBILITY:

50. Would you say that your university has sufficient autonomy to make decisions and manage its international mobility affairs in the best interests of students?

☐ Yes

☐ No

51. International student mobility works well at your university.

☐ Yes, fully

☐ Yes, to a considerable extent

☐ Yes, to some extent

☐ No, this is not the case

52. Please indicate the three most positive aspects of the exchange programs at your university.

- ---------
- ---------
- ---------

53. Please indicate the three most negative aspects of the exchange programs at your university.

- ---------
- ---------
- ---------

54. The following factors can be considered as hindrances to or drivers for the improvement of student mobility. What do you think of their roles in the decision making process?
(*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	Hindrance	Slight hindrance	Slight driver	Driver	Do not know	Not applicable
Governmental legislation/regulation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Central management at my institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academics at my institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional organizations in the respective areas of study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employers in the respective areas of study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Increasing competition between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adoption of measures regarding the recognition of other HEIs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
European policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others: (*Please specify*):	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please specify the following numbers upon their availability:

55. Active bilateral agreements/partnerships in which at least one mobility has taken place

2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**

56. Active ERASMUS partnerships in which at least one mobility has taken place

2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**

57. Active joint/double/multiple programs in which at least one mobility has taken place

2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**

58. Summer/Winter university programs

2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**

59. Incoming international exchange students (*Please specify ERASMUS in brackets*)

	2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**
BA					
MA					
Ph.D.					
Total	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

60. Outgoing exchange students (*Please specify ERASMUS in brackets*)

	2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**
BA					
MA					
Ph.D.					
Total	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

61. Does your institution incorporate mobility into the respective study programs/curriculums?

☐ Yes (*Please specify*): ┄┄┄┄┄

☐ No

Please specify the following numbers upon their availability:

62. Courses taught in a foreign language

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

63. Total course offers

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

64. Foreign languages offered at the university

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

STUDENT SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION:

65. Which of these services does your institution provide for its students? (*several answers allowed*)

☐ International Office (*Please specify the foundation date*): ┄┄┄┄┄

☐ Internationally-oriented Career center

☐ Academic orientation services

☐ Course catalogue/information package in English

☐ Actions to reduce language barriers, i.e. language training

☐ Lectures on intercultural learning

☐ Accommodation facilities

☐ Sports facilities

☐ Social and cultural activities (cinema clubs, theatre, music etc.)

66. Number of the administrative posts for mentoring international students

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

RESOURCES:

Please specify the following numbers upon their availability:

67. The universities' own funds for international mobility activities

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

68. Total Erasmus budget

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

69. Do you expect that the emerging European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will provide better opportunities for: **Students** (*several answers allowed*)

☐ All students at your institution
☐ Most out-going students from your institution
☐ Most in-coming students to your institution
☐ Mainly the more affluent students at your institution
☐ None

70. Do you expect that the emerging European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will provide better opportunities for: **Higher Education Institutions** (*several answers allowed*)

☐ All institutions part of the EHEA
☐ Mainly the institutions most competitive on the European higher education market
☐ Mainly the most prestigious institutions
☐ Mainly institutions within the larger countries in the EHEA
☐ None

71. The European mobility reforms in Turkey will have positive impacts on:
(*Please tick the most appropriate box*)

	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Do not know
Access to mobility programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graduation rates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employability of graduates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
General mobility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cost-effectiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

72. If you were one of the initiators of an international exchange program with all the necessary authority, what measures would you take in order to further improve student mobility?

----

73. Please use the space below to share important ideas which have not been mentioned yet concerning the mobility programs at your university. Please add any comments and reactions to this questionnaire as well.

Thank you very much for taking your time!
Please return the completed questionnaire by Email to: *maja.stolle@googlemail.com*.