



Set of recommendations from Forum number 5 on “*Student mobility*” UNICA Student Conference 2017

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Recommendations #1 on recognition of credits

The presentation held during the UNICA Student Conference 2017 can be found here:
<https://prezi.com/view/KlmbolbPCoMgBCSkKolc/>

Recommendation to UNICA, UNICA Universities and ESN:

- To work on the creation of such a platform that will help the recognition of credits
- To apply for an Erasmus+ Grant KA2 Strategic Partnership to fund such a project

Recommendations #2 on lack of information

Future outgoing students lack information about mobility.

Our idea is to create a platform that would gather all the details (through a questionnaire managed by UNICA) they will need to be prepared for their future experience.

Although there are already various websites trying to reach this aim, we concluded that none of them are exhaustive. In order not to create another platform, we propose to take the existing ESN project website “Mov’in Europe” (<http://movineurope.esn.org>) and to improve it with the following recommendations.

Recommendations to ESN

- Improving their Mov’in Europe website by adding extensive information on it
 - Info for each university
 - Bullet points
 - Interactive feedback (videos, ...)
- Receive the UNICA mobility questionnaire and send it back with the student's' response
- Promoting less known mobility programmes
- More advertising of the “Mov’in Europe” project to gain visibility

Recommendations to UNICA

- Create a standardised online form (UNICA mobility questionnaire) for each mobility programme
 - Mainly rating questions/yes-no questions
 - Fewer written questions
 - Shouldn't take long to fill out
 - Should include topics such as
 - Healthcare
 - Legal support and administrative support
 - Transportation
 - Accommodation
 - Leisure
 - Facilities
 - Budget
 - Possibilities to learn the native language
 - Visa issues
 - Culture information
 - Course quality information
 - Personal support and tutoring
- Send the blank questionnaire to the students' associations
- Collect data from questionnaires, evaluating and publishing the statistics of the exchange experience on the website

To enable the feasibility of the project, we suggest ESN and UNICA to apply for an Erasmus+ Grant KA2 Strategic Partnership.

Recommendations #3 on student accommodation

EUROPEAN STUDENT ACCOMMODATION DURING MOBILITY

The student accommodation market is very fragmented market. **Many students struggle when they try to find accommodation for their mobility periods.** Student accommodation is also one of the least supported aspects of student mobility. It is often hard for an incoming student to find out where to find any platforms or ways to look for accommodation.

We have identified the best-case scenario below, with the creation of a European-wide platform. However, since the idea would require a high amount of resources and a long-term plan to be implemented, we also identified one concrete minimum recommendation that can be implemented right away.

THE IDEAL HOUSING PLATFORM

Ideally, there is a need for a completely new platform that would work as a hub for European student accommodation. Other option would be to evolve already-existing platforms, such as HousErasmus+.

The platform would gather information for different housing options in Europe, for example including:

- Private flats
- Non-profit organisations
- Dormitories
- Host families
- Student-to-student-renting
- Short term housing (e.g. during the Summer season)
- Flatmate finder
- Trustworthy private companies' endorsement
- Fraud warnings
- New innovative ways of housing (e.g. combined living of students and elderly people in a mutually beneficial living arrangement)

The platform should be related to the European Union or the Erasmus+ programme or be strongly linked to them. This would increase the trustworthiness, safety and relevance of the platform.

As it would be endorsed by the EU, the platform would decrease the risks of students facing housing frauds or for example landlords with constant problematic behavior.

SAFETY

The platform could also offer private landlords/landladies an official guarantee that the student is really an exchange student (for example, an Erasmus+ student or has a study right in their home university). This could potentially increase the likelihood of private flats of being offered to mobility students.

Money-wise, there could be a transfer system like PayPal, that the student can pay their rent directly to the platform and the money isn't transferred to the owner (landlord, organisation, etc.) before the student has arrived at the accommodation. This would also increase the trustworthiness of the platform and increase the risks of students facing frauds.

ORGANISATION & STAFF

There would be an organisation behind the platform and it would have full-time workers working for the platform. The platform would offer advisory support for problematic situations. Later on, if the resources would allow it, the platform could expand having regional or country-specific translators or advisors and the opportunity to connect with students from the receiving institution.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Ideas for additional source of money for the platform: The platform could have options such as:

1. The platform could require a registration fee from the students. This would offer some income for the maintenance of the platform and its staff.
2. The platform could take commission from all the successful processes. This would be the same working logic that sites such as AirBnB or TripAdvisor use.

RESTRICTIONS OF THE IDEA

- The platform could be ideal and could evolve to become the main European student housing platform that is well-known and trusted among students and universities. It would lower the barriers to student mobility in Europe.
- However, the development, launching and further improvement of the platform would require quite a lot of financial resources. Ideally, it would be funded by the EU or Erasmus+.

Recommendation to the European Commission, UNICA, ESN and other European Networks

Since this idea would require a high amount of resources to be allocated, we suggest implementing to following minimum recommendation in order to ease the student accommodation issues in Europe:

The European Union and/or the Erasmus+ programme as well as European Networks should endorse a few already-existing platforms or websites that offer student accommodation in Europe. This way, students could have a shortlist of at least 3-4 platforms that they can trust and use to find accommodation with. An Erasmus+ or EU endorsement would guarantee



that international students have some sort of starting point for finding trustworthy and safe accommodation options.

Recommendations #4 on finances

Recommendation to UNICA .

STUDENT JOB OFFICE

Providing international students with student jobs opportunities during the mobility programme. Each host university would have a Student job office which would inform students about available job vacancies. This would help students to cover their mobility costs in addition of the Erasmus+ scholarship.

This would be highly relevant for those students who have a part-time job at home to finance their studies.

Recommendation to the European Commission.

GRANT SUPPORT FOR THE MOBILITY OF STUDENTS IN ERASMUS+

- Increase the amount of the scholarship allocated to exchange students.
- Divide countries in more than 3 categories in order to have more precise information regarding the amount of money received depending on the destination of mobility.
- Categories could be divided not only by countries but also by cities because costs widely differ between different areas.

Recommendation to UNICA, European commission and other European Networks

CREATE ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

External organisations (Networks of Universities such as UNICA, companies, etc) could offer additional scholarships. These scholarships would be allocated on the bases of:

- Social involvement on the campus or in the local community
- Internal competition within Universities / assessment center – Students would write motivation letter, CV, get interviewed and take part in a collective case studies. The best project(s) would win one or more scholarships.

Recommendations #5 on administrative procedures and visas

GENERAL

To universities

The universities should create a specific section on their websites which includes all the relevant information regarding mobility procedures and legal issues related to mobility period.

Universities should work towards making all application procedures for mobility online and digital.

VISAS

To universities

More cooperation with embassies in order to facilitate mobility of participants.

To the European Commission and National governments

- The visa procedures to be simplified and easily accessed by students.
- Visa procedures for mobile students from the-non EU member states should be standardised and should be made easier to promote mobility.
- The maximum period of the procedure should be fixed in order to inform the students about the duration.

ENGLISH COURSES

To universities

The number of English courses should be increased.

STAFF TRAINING

To the European Commission

Funding and duration of staff mobility should be increased to support to disseminate the impact of Erasmus+ Programme. Longer periods of staff exchange may endorse internationalisation at the host institution and provide organised courses in English.