

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

“Going back to normal after Covid-19”

UNICA IRO Group online meeting, 15 February 2022



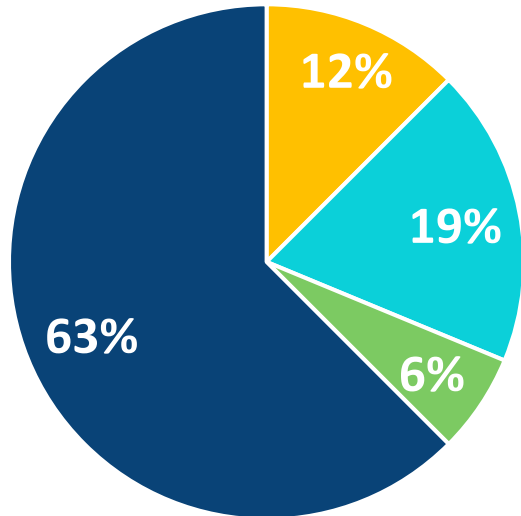
Network of Universities
from the Capitals of Europe

UNICA IRO Group



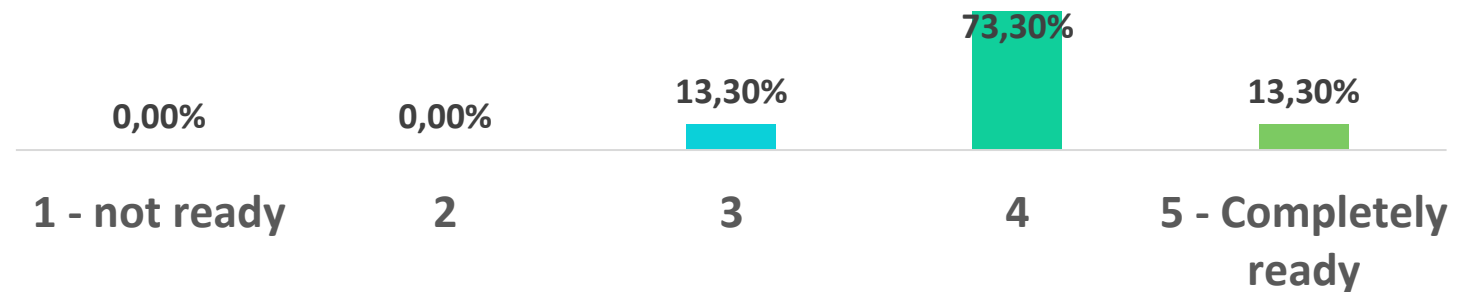
PERCEPTION OF THE FUTURE

How do you perceive the near future of the IRO at your university? Please select the sentence that you consider to best describe the situation at your institution.



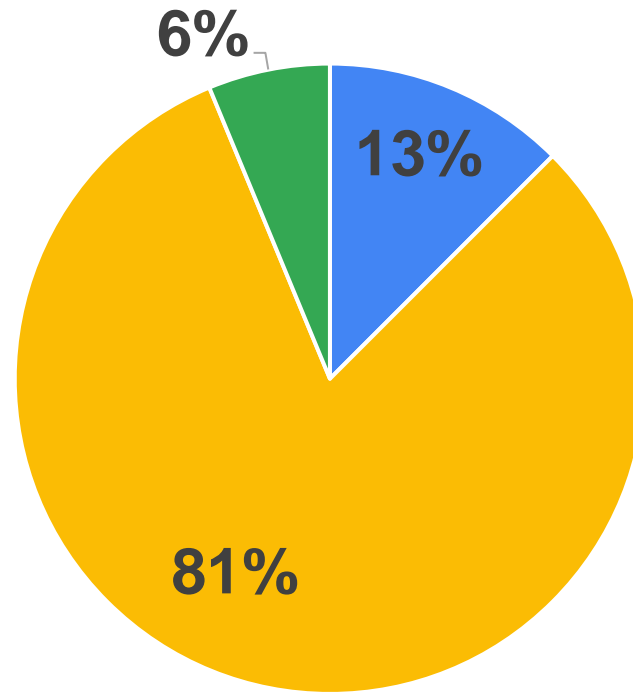
- In the near future we will have the conditions to go **back to normal** as in the period **before the pandemic (12%)**
- COVID-19 has **transformed the role and vision** of the office; we are not going back to normal, we are entering a **new chapter (19%)**
- While still working with mitigation measures in the near future, we are **slowly trying to go back to normal** as in the period before COVID-19 and **expect to achieve this on the long term (6%)**
- We intend to go **back to normal** as in the period before COVID-19, **while introducing new practices/ programs** that emerged as opportunities during the pandemic **(63%)**

What is the level of preparation of your university to go back to work as in the period before the Covid-19 outbreak?



NEW PARTNERSHIPS/PROGRAMS

Are you facing obstacles in creating new partnerships and programs?



Major obstacles

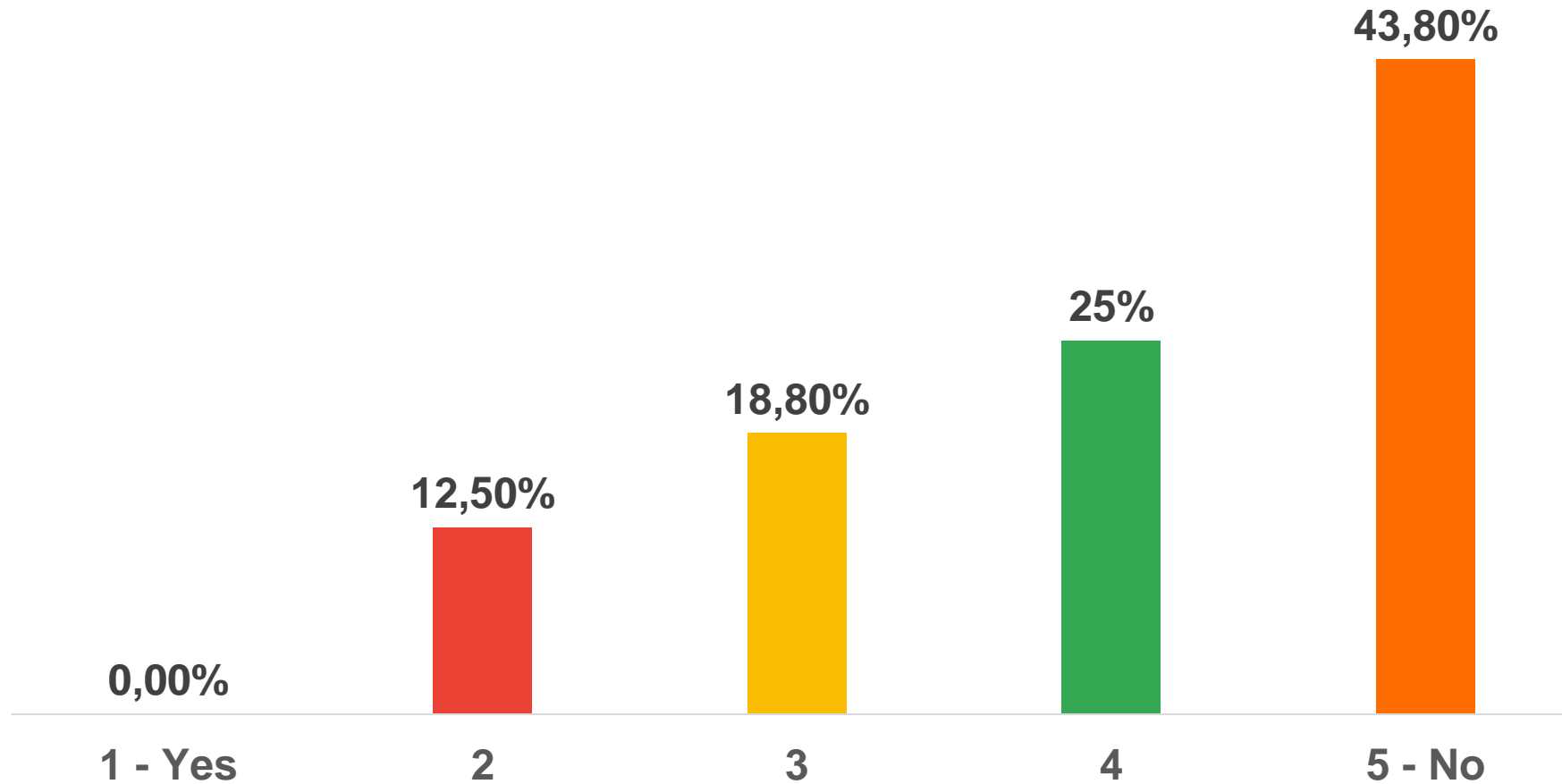
- Ethical issues (knowledge transfer; human rights...)
- Political landscape
- Financial issues of students
- New Erasmus+ student exchange agreements - the deadline was postponed until end of the year 2022
- Huge amount of work as we cannot sign the agreements in planned schedule
- There are still exchange destinations that are closed and the activities are cancelled
- Lack of staff; many left their positions and we have difficulties to recruit new persons

- Yes, there is a higher number of obstacles compared to the period before COVID-19
- No, COVID-19 has not affected negatively the creation of new partnerships and programs
- No, COVID-19 represented an opportunity and had a positive impact in the creation of partnerships and programs

- Cancellation of students' exchanges/stays abroad. Some lost the opportunity to go abroad during their studies. Lots of lost/unused scholarships
- Absence of international activities by professors, restrictions to the visits of foreign guests & delegations, cancellation of fairs and events
- Mobility within Europe is growing at the cost of mobility to countries far away
- Attaining the planned indicators for studies and teaching physical mobilities both incoming and outgoing
- Impossibility to offer a real student life on campus to the international incoming exchange students and lack of informal physical pre-departure get-togethers of future outgoing students
- No campus and class experience for students
- Difficulties to plan future activities due to uncertainty
- Budget restrictions
- Lack of face-to-face meetings has affected current and new initiatives. It is easy to have online meetings, but it is more difficult to build relationships and address any challenges arising
- Workload which has done it more important to prioritize tasks, and international initiatives has not always ended up on top of the list
- European Universities Initiative: cooperation partly successful as online meetings have prevented profound discussion and have made more difficult to coordinate and develop the new networks
- Integrating online and blended elements into initiatives is not straightforward and takes more planning than is perhaps realised to ensure a quality experience
- Still not very professional and planned online teaching
- Many difficulties in implementing the activities within the Erasmus Plus HEd cooperation projects
- Online fatigue

« PHYSICAL WORK »

Is your institution experiencing any difficulty/resistance of the International Relations staff to physically work together with other colleagues (both within the IR office and with colleagues from abroad, i.e. staff weeks, visits of delegations from other HEIs, etc)?



How has the pandemic impacted your working mindset? (Office's approach to work, priorities, mission & values, work practices, perception of the office's role within the institution, of working schedule, of physical work...)

No huge changes reported in priorities, mission & values, role of IROs

- The importance of the IRO has not suffered, increased emphasis on the importance of international relations in HE within the university.
- Added conception that digital exchange formats do have a value and shall be considered as well, so the value of internationalization at home has probably risen.
- Possibility to connect to partners all over the globe, broader participation of students when events/information sessions/ have been online
- Different mindset on international travels
- Larger focus on online projects

Home office - The switch to online was sudden and work from home asked a great sense of adaptation. A reduction of physical presence in the office is expected even after the end of the health crisis. This is often seen as an **opportunity** to work on tasks requiring more concentration and to have more flexibility, but also to revise the office's approach and work towards greater efficiency and better use of opportunities.

- Planning of where we work with what tasks: for ex. in the office to meet and be creative and from home for more focused tasks.
- Opportunity to reflect on alternative ways to do what we did before and explore how to use digital tools to support new work practices.
- Sharing of a lot more of technical know-how now

On the other hand:

- Perception of employees of their duties has changed and it could be difficult to return back to intensive work in the office.
- Possible difficulties related to "the new normal": offices not built for participating in virtual meetings
- Feeling tired and missing the nice parts of work: get-togethers, informal coffee talks, travelling. This has maybe made us more efficient, but certainly not happier with work!

The results of the section of the survey focusing on Covid testing, vaccination and medical care at HEIs are available in the presentation "Student's Health-care during the COVID pandemic", by Vratislav Kozák



Network of Universities
from the Capitals of Europe

UNICA IRO Group



**Thank you for your cooperation
and for your attention!**

Please note that the survey is still open and those who didn't have the time to complete it are still welcome to do so at:

<https://forms.gle/WjqPHGtHoZo11aJx7>