

# Impact of Erasmus+ on individuals

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Research report, October 2018

Implemented by MEDIAN s.r.o. exclusively for the Centre for International  
Cooperation in Education



# Research methodology

<b>Data collection method</b>	Focus Groups (FG)	
<b>Sample size</b>	8x 9 to 10 respondents	
<b>Selection of respondents</b>	quota-based selection (from gr. 1-6 and 8 database)	
<b>Date of Focus Group and target group</b>	8.10. Group 2	LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
	9.10. Group 3	STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
	10.10. Group 5	YOUTH (other than Youth Workers)
	11.10. Group 6	WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS (part of the Youth)
	15.10. Group 4	WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
	16.10. Group 1	WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)
	17.10. Group 8	FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS (part of Socrates)
	18.10. Group 7	NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
<b>Duration of one FG and location</b>	90 – 120 min, Prague	
<b>Implemented and commissioned by</b>	The independent research was conducted by MEDIAN s.r.o. (a member of SIMAR) exclusively for the Centre for International Cooperation in Education	

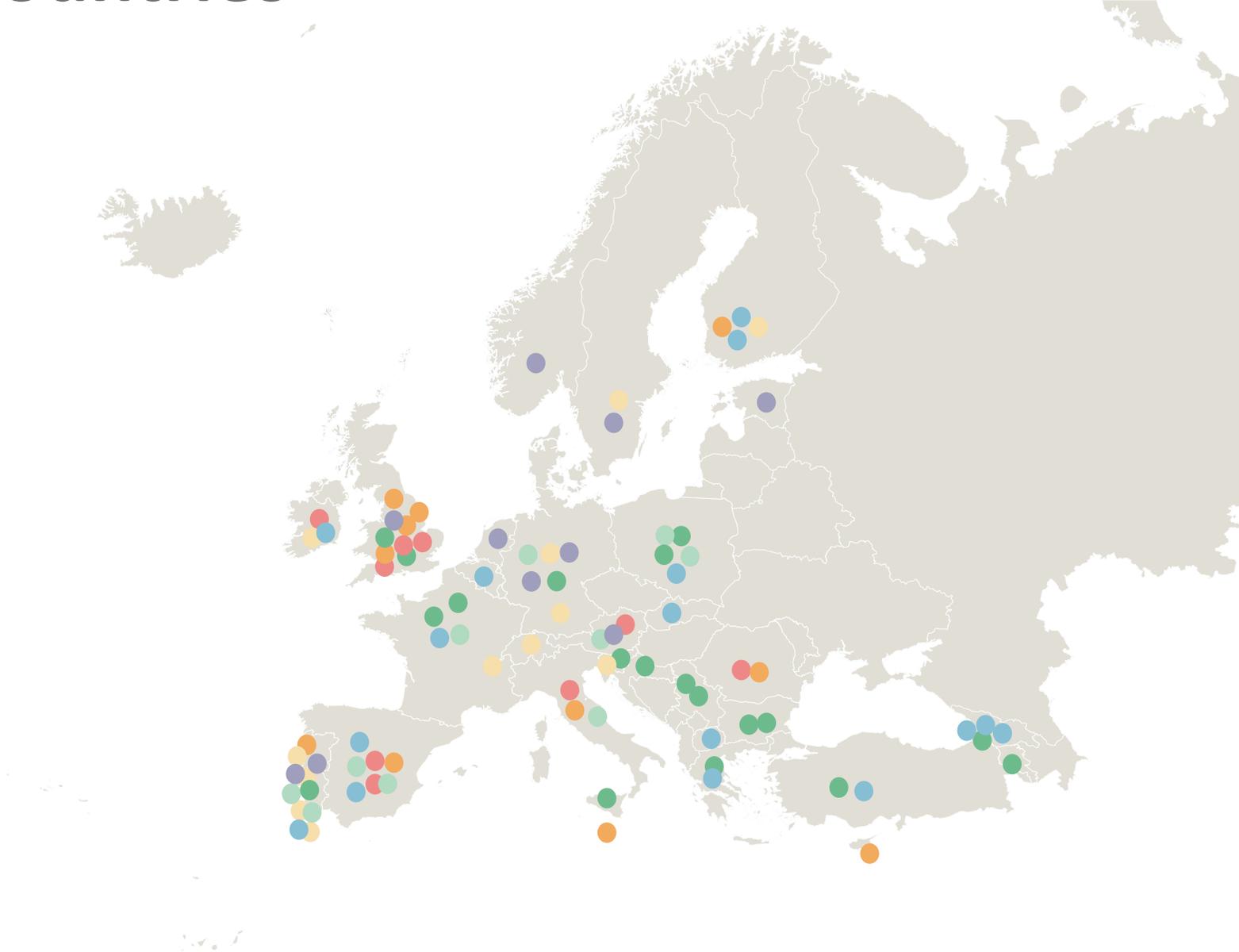
# Research objectives

- to obtain feedback from foreign mobility participants that would help to further support Erasmus+ applicants at the national level
  - to understand the motivation of participants foreign mobilities offered by the Erasmus+ programme, including how they see the benefits of mobility in different aspects of their lives
    - motivations, reasons for mobility
    - decision-making process
    - difficulties
    - surprises
    - immediate and long-term benefits and impact
- to understand the reasons provided by those who did not participate in any foreign mobility during their student life
  - study, work, personal and other reasons
  - obstacles to mobility
  - decision-making process

# Sample description

		Number, age and sex of respondents	Target groups	Selection criteria
Group 1	<b>WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)</b>	9 respondents 33 – 60 years 2 M/ 7 F	Workers at preschools, elementary and secondary schools and workers at vocational education and training (participants in teaching assignments and professional development), participation in the Erasmus + programme. Possibilities of participation in the programme: teaching assignments and professional development abroad.	Mobility participants under the current Erasmus + programme, in the range of in min. one year and max. three years after the end of mobility, i.e. participants in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
Group 2	<b>PUPILS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	9 respondents 18– 23 years 5 M/ 4 F	Pupils in vocational education and training at schools involved in the programme.	Participants in the current Erasmus + programme, in the range of min. one year and max. three years after the end of the mobility, i.e. participants between 2014, 2015 and 2016.
Group 3	<b>STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS</b>	10 respondents 22– 31 years 4 M/ 6 F	Students' foreign mobility (studies, training placements).	Participants in the current Erasmus + programme, in the range of min. one year and max. three years after the end of the mobility, i.e. participants between 2014, 2015 and 2016.
Group 4	<b>WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS</b>	9 respondents 31– 67 years 5 M/ 4 F	Teachers' foreign mobility (teaching or training assignments).	Participants in the current Erasmus + programme, in the range of min. one year and max. three years after the end of the mobility, i.e. participants between 2014, 2015 and 2016.
Group 5	<b>YOUTH (other than youth workers)</b>	10 respondents 17– 31 years 6 M/ 4 F	Mobility of people in the youth group – engagement options: youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service, strategic European Voluntary Service.	Participants in the current Erasmus + programme, in the range of min. one year and max. three years after the end of the mobility, i.e. participants between 2014, 2015 and 2016.
Group 6	<b>WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS (part of the Youth)</b>	9 respondents 25– 58 years 4 M/ 5 F	Workers at adult education organisations and youth workers – the possibility of teaching assignments/training stays and professional development.	Participants in the current Erasmus + programme, in the range of min. one year and max. three years after the end of the mobility, i.e. participants between 2014, 2015 and 2016.
Group 7	<b>NON-OUTGOING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS</b>	9 respondents 23– 27 years 4 M/ 5 F	Non-participating students from higher education institutions that are involved in the programme.	Current students at both public and private higher education institutions who have not yet travelled abroad and are not planning a stay abroad and attend the 4th or the 5th years of their university studies.
Group 8	<b>FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS (part Socrates)</b>	10 respondents 31– 35 years 6 M/ 4 F	Former students from higher education institutions involved in the Socrates programme – an Erasmus sub-programme.	Participants from higher education institutions involved in the Socrates programme – an Erasmus sub-programme, 10-15 years after the end of their stay.

# Visited countries



# Top lines

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# Positive evaluation of Erasmus+

All respondents who have travelled abroad with Erasmus assess its benefits in a highly positive way and their positive attitude, the joy of memories and, in many cases, enthusiasm were apparent during the discussions.

Erasmus is also **positively assessed by a group of non-participants** (university students in the 4th or 5th year of their studies) and some admit that, with minor changes or if they were now in a lower grade, they would consider participating in the programme.

On several occasions, participants mentioned that Erasmus+ does not affect just those who travelled abroad, **but also the people around them, their family and friends.**

Although the Erasmus programme aims at improving the quality and adequacy of qualifications and skills, it affects participants **in a very wide range of different areas** and in many cases (students, longer stays) it affects **the shaping or awareness of life attitudes and personal values.**

# The largest benefits of Erasmus+

## All participants appreciate

- positive impact on both study or professional and personal life
  - getting to know oneself, increased self-confidence
  - broadening horizons, a new life perspective
- new contacts, friendship, sharing
  - new methods, processes, views, experience
  - new impulses and ideas
- getting to know new countries and cultures
  - opportunity to compare life at home and abroad
- language skills improvement

## Younger participants emphasize

- language skills (more than others)
- and also mention
- becoming independent

# Other benefits for various target groups

**Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS** also mention

- getting to know teaching and different approaches, methodological experience, increased expertise
- outlook, seeing work from a different angle
- prevention against the burnout syndrome

**Gr. No. 2 LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING** also mention

- acquiring new professional skills, learning new techniques
  - practice in the branch of study, technical terms in another language
  - work experience abroad
- getting to know fellow schoolmates and school teachers

**Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS** also mention

- finding oneself, clarifying life goals
- awareness of their relationship to (and love for) the Czech Republic
- professional growth, ambition

# Other benefits for various target groups

Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS also mention

- social contacts with colleagues in abroad, partnership
- gaining new work experience, verifying correct teaching methods
  - new impulses and ideas
- implementation of international projects

Gr. No. 5 YOUTH also mention

- self-development, self-confidence in one's own skills, finding one's direction in life
- new skills
  - experience with leading a group
- pro-European thinking, acquiring tolerance and patience
- experiences, fun

# Other benefits for various target groups

**Gr. No. 6 WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS** also mention

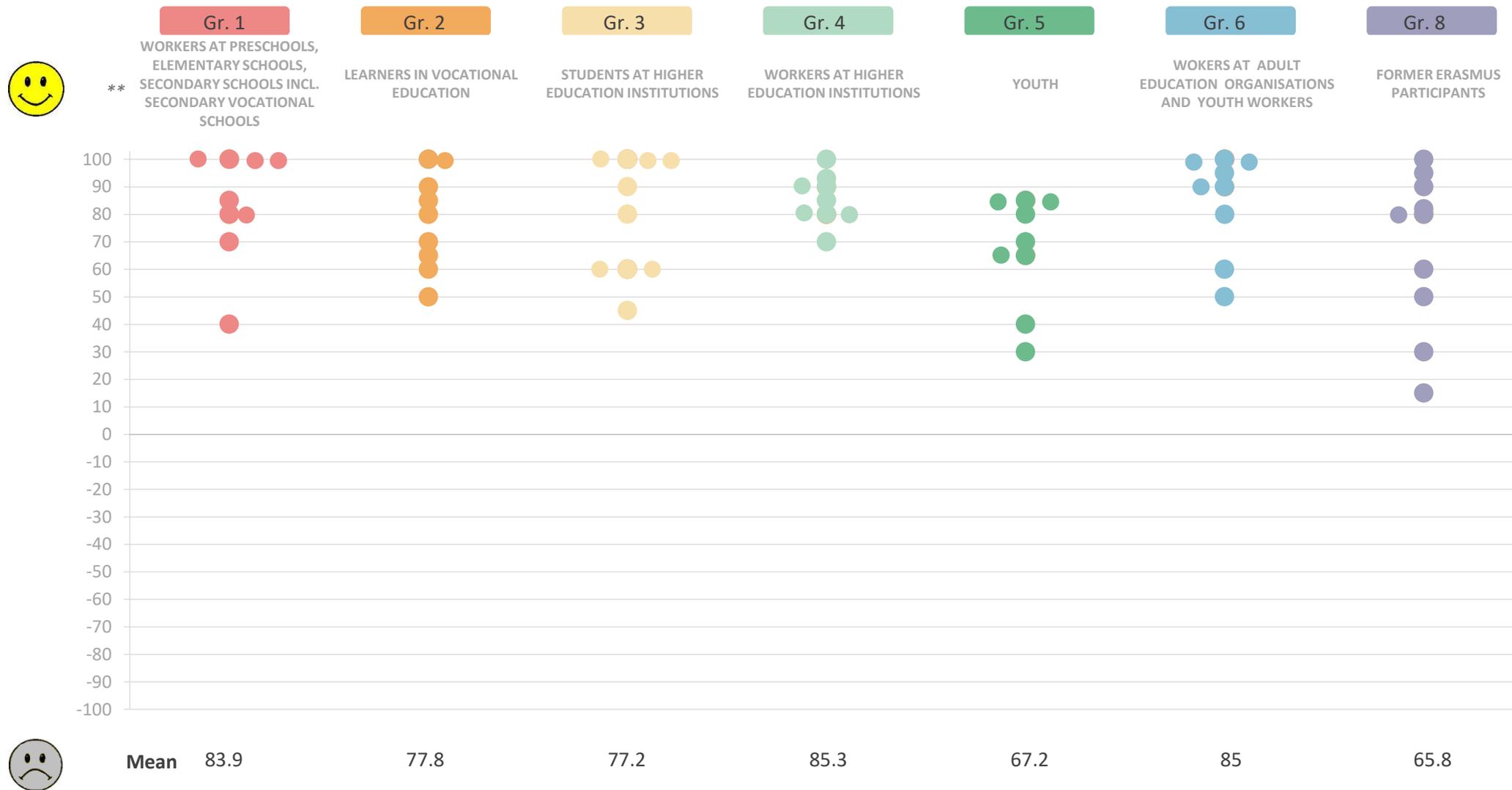
- exchange of experience
  - good practice examples
  - inspiration, ideas, work methods, new knowledge and methodology
- expanding the network of professional contacts
- mental rest and new energy for work

**Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS** also mention

- setting the life direction
- education, way of study
  - enhancement of technical/professional knowledge
- long-term friendships
- financial independence

# All respondents\* value the overall impact of Erasmus as highly positive no participant stated a zero or a negative value when assessing the impact of mobility to their lives.

\* Naturally, respondents in group No. 7 did not participate in the evaluation.



\*\* Respondents did not have any numerical scale, they recorded their feelings about the impact of mobility in the answer sheets.

# Promotion of Erasmus+

**Differs according to the target group**

**The best awareness was recorded in students at higher education institutions and secondary schools**

- however, even these students would welcome an easier access to information

**Young people from Gr. No. 5 YOUTH view it as insufficient (a wide selection, but no central database)**

- almost all participants in this group have learned about the possibility of mobility through acquaintances and friends

**In general, lower awareness (even a fewer mobility options) is mentioned outside Prague**

**In term of work trips (if the director supports or at least tolerates Erasmus), there is no problem with promotion**

- the sending organisation itself will identify potential candidates

**Consider more intensive use of information from programme participants – discussions, presentations, Internet**

**Consider focusing the promotion on pupils' parents, informing them about possibilities and benefits and arousing their interest in sending their child abroad.**

# Reasons for not using Erasmus+

The questions of reasons for not-travelling was primarily dealt with in group No. 7 non-participating university students, but participants also talked about their classmates, colleagues and/or friends

- impossibility or unwillingness to leave established social ties, fear of losing a relationship
- language barrier and/or little confidence in language skills (but this did not apply to group No. 7)
- concerns about financial burden (for long-term stays)
- concerns about the necessity of extending studies (in university students, long-term stays)
- fear of handling living alone (in younger participants)
- different value system
- laziness / unwillingness to go anywhere

# Weaknesses of Erasmus+

**No participant stated a zero or a negative value when assessing the impact of mobility to their lives, yet they identified sub-negatives:**

- a lack of communication, unprepared/poorly prepared program at the host school
  - occasionally study in a different language than was originally selected or a lack of language skills in the host country
- disruption or loss of social ties
  - alienation from family, friends
  - disagreements before mobility, upon return
  - disruption of family life
- administration, complexity of processes, organisational burden
- finances
  - unjustly/incorrectly set grants for mobilities to certain countries
  - uncertainty as to how the funds can be used (e.g. substitute teaching)
- necessity to catch up with missed work, study, earn credits/credit recognition
- time demands, occasionally also waste of time

# Problematic areas

## School's approach to the mobilities of its own students

- not uniform, some schools strongly support the mobility of their students, others don't
- demanding/unfair demands on learners
- unclear and changing rules
- the responsible teacher or coordinator (sometimes it is a person who performs this function in addition to his/her normal work and so he/she does is not 100% dedicated, or he/she is a person who has been granted this function and does not have the necessary relationship to the project)

## Administrative process

- a missing written procedure and instructions on how and what to arrange
- sometimes complicated by the sending school and sometimes by the hosting school
- necessity of using paper forms at the time of digitisation
- unnecessarily complicated
  - getting worse

# Suggestions for Erasmus+ improvement

**Target the programme and its promotion to the target group of students in the 2nd and 3rd grades of secondary schools**

- it is the best time to gain experience with foreign countries and further benefit from the stay

**A great potential is hidden in the 2nd and, in some cases, in the 3rd year of higher education**

- in higher grades, students are already too focused on completing school and their career progression
- in the first year, it is necessary to give them time for orientation in their studies and to form social ties, etc.

**Simplify the entire administration, simplify mobility forms, unify conditions**

**Clarify financial management rules (lump sums, accounts)**

**Increase the activity and interest by teachers/coordinators/directors**

- offer the possibility of a longer-term course for educators, practice abroad
- quality language courses for educators
- offer a "tasting" – short mobility

# Other suggestions for Erasmus+ improvement

**Consider allowing a mobility for two people from the same country/institution** (participating together can help those who are not sure during their first mobility)

**Greater cooperation with Czech schools, educational communication of benefits**

**Simplify the initial orientation what the programme has to offer**

**Offer larger number of choices or more locations in preferred countries and universities**

**Publish (easily accessible) reviews of foreign schools**

# Other findings

- participants agree that the strongest and most positive experience was their first mobility
  - among other things, they managed to break the barrier of personal uncertainty
  - and acquired a taste for travelling again
- friendships established abroad often become long-term ones
- for some participants (especially for longer stays), it is difficult to cope with differences between the Czech Republic and abroad
  - partial dissatisfaction by not feeling fully part of Czech relationships and system, but they also see that not everything abroad is fully functional (dark side that is not discussed too much)
- participation in the programme was not a first encounter with a foreign country to any participant
- programme participants almost exclusively use the term “zahraničí” (abroad) unlike a group of those who did not travel anywhere – those people almost exclusively used the term "cizina" (a foreign country) (therefore, it can be concluded with certain exaggeration that to Erasmus participants, other countries are not "foreign")

# Messages from former Erasmus participants (part of Socrates) to current students about travelling abroad

- ❑ Don't worry and go ahead, you won't regret it. What won't kill you will make you stronger
- ❑ Be sure to go, you can't make a mistake. When you are there, be open and don't spend too much time with Czech students; you can talk to those back at home.
- ❑ Dear student, don't be stupid and go abroad for Erasmus or another program, it's the best thing you can do. Experience for a lifetime, its benefits will outlast your negative expectations. Don't be afraid.
- ❑ One should try everything! Especially during university studies, the possibility to study abroad is a great opportunity for personal and professional development!
- ❑ If you don't want to go, don't worry. You will lose some experiences, but it is not the end of the world. If you' hesitate, try connecting to the local ESN to find out that not going is stupid.
- ❑ Why are you studying at university if you do not want to change or improve your science, society and economy, which you can do thanks to Erasmus; you will learn how to be open to new ideas and knowledge.
- ❑ Erasmus will allow you to familiarize yourself with another way of studying and establish long-term friendship. It is a unique (life) learning experience.
- ❑ Don't be a fool, go... You will find yourself, you will meet others, but be prepared that after that, you will keep searching. Be strong and go.
- ❑ Yesterday was already too late! :) I first went abroad for a long time at secondary school and it was an ideal age. The older you are, the less flexible you may be, the more you worry, the less open you are and the less you may profit from Erasmus.
- ❑ Don't be afraid and go. It's one of the best experiences you can get. Go and make the most out of it!

# Detailed analysis and answer sheets

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# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

Teachers do not distinguish between mobilities, when they went abroad alone, when they were accompanying students

When evaluating, they spontaneously switch between one area and the other, both of which are strongly interlinked with the school.

- Education only for teachers
  - most often language, usually weekend, holiday (this is a problem for younger teachers with children)
  - shadowing was also mentioned (popular not too often used)

 *"We all want to travel. Of course, during summer holidays. There are conditions, we support somebody who does something, German, English, or at least the method CLIL."*

- Courses/stays/mobilities/practical training for students/school partnerships

- primarily as children escorts
- the teacher himself/herself gains experience and develops his/her language skills

 *"I convince myself, the director, two people, I prepare it, they don't want to go ... Don't come up with new things, we've got enough work."*

**The director's attitude is crucial (whether he supports these activities, he/she also travels in about half of the cases)**

- Usually, projects are guaranteed by one of the teachers, an enthusiast who also dedicates his/her their leisure time (also represented in the discussion)
- A different number of teachers at schools who participate in mobilities (from a few individuals to almost everybody at a language school)
  - an originally not supportive teacher who is forced to travel by circumstances may change his/her mind and take part in the future

 *"I have projects underway for EUR 200,000 but nobody wants to help me... I keep the same people busy, they will collapse."*

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Projects – writing a project

- **The most demanding parts of the whole process – write a project for the first time** (several months), deter potential interested parties

 "It took me two years to understand how to write a project; it's all about same motivation, risks, objectives..."

- a lack of knowledge how to write projects
- a lack of time (at the expense of free time, evenings, weekends, Christmas holidays)
  - in terms of costs, it can be included under project organisation, but it is not adequate to the real burden, sometimes this amount is spent on unexpected expenses
  - uncertainty whether the project is approved and whether the time has not been spent unnecessarily
- in partner projects, cooperation with partners
  - it can be good for gaining first experience (e.g. approached by the Slovaks, did it as they did)
  - or the Czech side is more experienced (e.g. the French did not know how to create PIC codes, Czechs had to go see them in person)
- fear of possible errors in the prize (real experience, e.g. an omission to include a teacher into a mobility in addition to pupils, covered individually e.g. from money for project organisation, increased complementary activities of the school) - they would appreciate if not only the content (objectives, etc.) were evaluated when selecting projects, but if also the feasibility of expenses were considered and potential mistakes pointed out.
- an agenda in Czech or English (partners must understand), a report can be in Czech
- excessive red tape
- individual teacher mobilities (most often language one) usually arranged via an "agency"; perceived rather as significantly more expensive than when the teacher makes his/her own arrangements
  - unlike abroad, people are not used to co-financing a portion.

 "Once you learn it, you keep applying. It looks like there are a lot of schools, but the same ones keep going."

 "The money can be partly used to cover substitute teaching. Former teachers... or we take turns. There are 8 of us, we go in pairs and take turns. It's a problem, but we go during the school year. "

 "I want to go to the course, I want to learn, to teach mathematics. This is too much. It will discourage a lot of people."

 "I paid for a business project management course myself to understand how to write projects"

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Projects – course

- **Ambiguities in sub-processes** (what can be requested, what is correct)
- **Continuous agenda / final report**
  - Extensive paperwork, more work for teacher who accompany children during a mobility
- **Settlement**
  - Questionable whether a lump-sum or not
  - All unexpected expenses abroad must be paid (e.g. a missed flight, unplanned extended stay), extra worries

 "We have to write a project for a language course ourselves, the director just signs it."

 "How do they approve when you're doing K1 alone? When there's progress. Then they approve. I may have 3 to 4 targets... Finding a partner for something,.. I introduced critical thinking, CLIL was introduced, and approved."

## Experience from abroad (sporadically)

- In Slovakia it is easier, they do not have to talk to the region first, but can submit an application themselves
- From partner schools we hear that our system is easier (e.g. there are no problems with interim reports)

 "The Czech Centre for International Cooperation in Education – great, they will help. A great seminar, nice and helpful staff."

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Areas for improvement

- **Simplify overall administration**
  - Reduce bureaucracy
- **Simplify the mobility form**
  - Automatic loading of an adequate version of the form (one that will remember to include learners, teachers, assistants in special schools, etc.)
- **Availability of funds**
  - 100% pre-financing
- **Clarify financial management**
  - Unclear (e.g. project accounts, taxes, selection procedures, agreements)
- **The possibility of submitting a joint application by schools** (unclear, mentioned both that it can and cannot be done)
- **Greater activity, interest by teachers/directors** (lacking motivation to do things beyond their responsibilities)
- **Possibility of a longer-term course for educators, practice abroad**
- **Ensuring the quality of a language course for educators**

 "When I prepare 45 students, you cannot imagine the number of document for each of them."

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Motivation to first participate in a project

- **Director's motivation**
  - general interest and support from the director
  - evaluation of the school also based on project participation (some regions)
    - inspiration for other areas
  - The visibility of the school (student mobilities)
    - apprenticeships fields of study declining, to attract students (communication e.g. on open days)
    - protection against schools being integrated
    - competition among schools in smaller town (balancing other shortcomings of schools: equipment, building, premises, etc.)
    - e.g. for the socially weak, the first possibility to travel abroad
- **Personal engagement**
  - interest in organizing, possibility at a new school option (already mentioned during the admission interview)
- **The experience of others**
  - colleagues from school who have already travelled abroad
  - Colleagues/friends from other schools who speak about their stay
- **Forced by circumstances**
  - a necessity to participate on behalf of the school, a teacher was forced
  - A colleague who was supposed to go got pregnant

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Largest positives

- Languages (enhancement/getting fluent/overcoming shyness)
- Exploring different cultures, travelling
- See new things in general (e.g. gastronomy)
- Gaining work experience (how it works somewhere else, approaches, methods)
- Establishing friendships with teachers from other countries
- Pleasant +, continuation of cooperation
- Understanding the Czech mentality

 "Projects promote tolerance. That's what we're missing. When a slightly xenophobic student lives in a Kurdish family, he or she can see what the society is like, how families and students live... the greatest plus of all is learning to tolerate virtually anything. "

 "I think that when a teacher goes, even if he or she does nothing there, it has language benefits."

 "A person is shaped by experiences. This applies even more for teachers, to bring this into school. Some just want to sit at home."

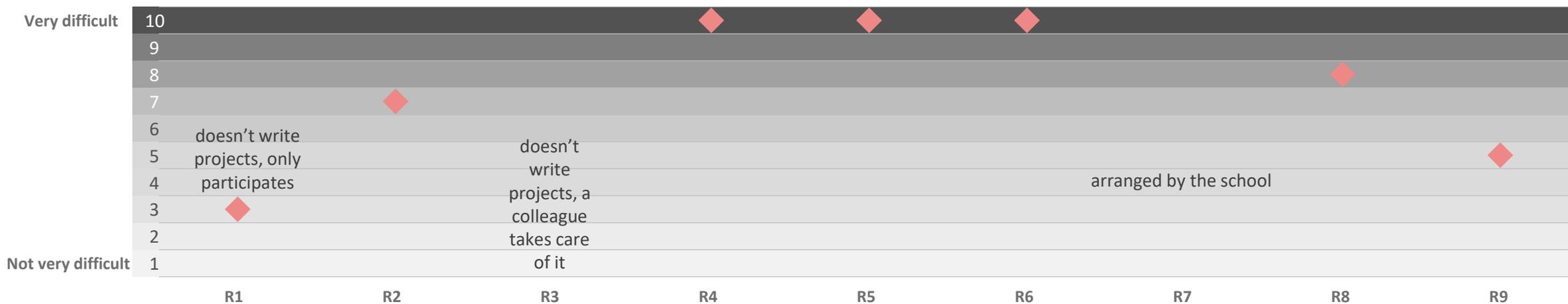
## Personal development

- Self-confidence
- Horizons/Enrichment
- Outlook
- Handling difficult situations
- Prevention of the burnout syndrome
- Enhancing organisational skills
- Development of tolerance (in students)

 "No language school can force me to speak in a foreign language, but when I go abroad, after 3 days I am willing to discuss any subject."

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Difficulty of writing a first project and process administration



# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Answer sheets

### Positives

R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9
❖ language skills enhancement	❖ strengthening tolerance	❖ placements (training) have personally enriched my knowledge in terms of Italian gastronomy	❖ contacts	❖ seeing work from a different angle	❖ broadening horizons, a life perspective	❖ language skill enhancement	❖ travel	❖ gain insight, experience, language skills
❖ experience	❖ multicultural awareness	❖ mentality of Italian colleagues	❖ language skills	❖ methodical and language skills	❖ higher expertise	❖ Ability to independently organise a mobility (ticket, course)	❖ language teaching	❖ get to know teaching and other approaches in England
❖ new experiences	❖ friendship	❖ I liked classes at the Italian school	❖ comparison with other colleagues	❖ contact with new people, novel cultures	❖ language enhancement	❖ solving problematic situations abroad	❖ self-confidence	❖ meeting new people,
	❖ linguistic enrichment	❖ new friendships	❖ against the burnout syndrome			❖ meeting foreign colleagues	❖ gastronomy	❖ new places
	❖ knowledge of the environment		❖ learning methods					
	❖ understanding the Czech mentality		❖ culture					

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## What participants did not expect and what surprised them during mobility

### Difficulty of a student mobility with a teacher

(which discourages some to start)

- mobility with students demanding, exhausting (stress)
  - usually a full programme, transfers, accommodation, practice, families, etc.
  - responsibility for minors (can get lost, medical complications)
  - unexpected situation to be solved immediately (e.g. transport)
    - easier when the school has a coordinator to help (stress is transferred to him/her)
    - more complicated when teachers have to deal with everything abroad alone

### Accommodation and food

(rarely mentioned as unsatisfactory, hygiene)

### In relation to teachers' foreign mobility

- A low level of the course (choosing a language school is like a "lottery bet")
- an inadequately prepared course (participants of distinctly different language levels)
- reduction in the length of studies (in teacher's schedule, they did not include breaks, classes made shorter)
- there were many students from the same country in the language course, they spoke their language, distracting
- a Czech teacher teaching at a foreign school
  - preparatory course, speaking, increased self-confidence
  - then teaching in a teenage class, misunderstanding/slang, decrease of self-confidence

# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Negative moments and negative impact

- choosing a language school is like a lottery
  - quality of some courses
- administration
- funding
  - accountancy
- time requirements
- loss of free time in CZ
  - a lack of time for actual teaching
  - mobility during holidays - family (children)
- uninterested colleagues
- stress
- envy

 "I do not consider any experience negative."

 "Even a bad experience can have a positive impact => I appreciate what I do."

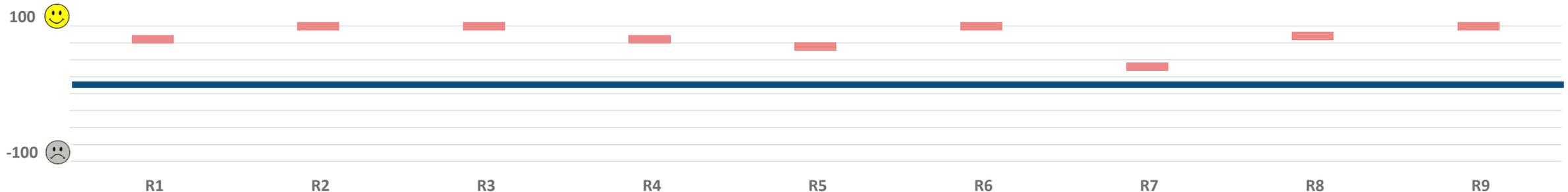
# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

Answer sheets

## Negatives, what participants did not expect and what surprised them

- | R1   | R2   | R3  | R4  | R5   | R6  | R7   | R8   | R9  |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>choosing a language school is like a lottery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a lack of time for actual teaching</li> <li>small financial motivation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I did not have any negative experiences</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>administration – application</li> <li>accountancy</li> <li>time issue</li> <li>uninterested colleagues</li> <li>a low quality of the course</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time demands (incl. project coordination)</li> <li>colleagues not interested in implementing outputs</li> <li>envy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality of some courses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mobility during holidays - family (children)</li> <li>change of the host family - a woman refused to take care because of a family visit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stress</li> <li>loss of free time in CZ</li> <li>funding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I do not consider any experience negative</li> </ul> |

In this FG, negatives were mentioned rather sporadically, impacts are valued in a very positive way:



# Gr. No. 1 WORKERS AT PRESCHOOLS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS INCL. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (part VET)

## Answer sheets

### What participants wish

- | R1  | R2   | R3  | R4  | R5   | R6  | R7   | R8  | R9   |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ simplify paperwork associated with project submission</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ improve the mobility form (add an accompanying teacher automatically)</li><li>○ more focus on the financial aspect of the project (whether the submitted project is realistic to be implemented for specified funds)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ transfer more funds</li><li>○ more younger colleagues</li><li>○ more willingness to work beyond one's obligations</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ simplify the application</li><li>○ longer-term courses</li><li>○ clarify project accounts</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ simplify the application and final report</li><li>○ 100% pre-financing</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ writing a project is difficult</li><li>○ the financial management of the grant is unclear (tax, selection procedures, agreements)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ guaranteeing a quality agency - quality of teaching</li><li>○ family accommodation - hygiene</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ simplify the application</li><li>○ a lot of bureaucracy</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ better cooperation between school management</li><li>○ the director worries about her project and does not care about others</li></ul> |

## Gr. No. 2 LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### How they found out about the study stay

- noticeboard at school
- school representative / designated teacher
- programme's website
- from friends

### Entry conditions differed for individual students, often included

- a motivation letter
- an interview in English via Skype

**After returning home**, it was necessary to fill in a form (about 30 minutes). Depending on their interests, students

- kept a blog about their study visit
- filmed a video that could be used on the school's website

Most schools told their students in advance that soon after returning, they will be **presenting their experience to others**.

Respondents state that it is best if others can see and talk to the participants **as soon as they arrive**.

## Gr. No. 2

# LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In most cases, the stay of this FG was connected with internship, in about half of the cases this practice was recognized by the school in the Czech Republic

Only **occasionally**, pupils from this FG have travelled abroad with Erasmus + **more than once** because some schools

- offer the program only to third grade students (however, the 3rd grade is considered ideal)
- they have a strong excess demand
- being selected is a reward
- Favour pupils who have not travelled yet

 "The third grade was the ideal time, I don't have to worry about school leaving examination yet."

 "I didn't apply for a second time out of solidarity towards classmates."

and some pupils do not apply for a second time because they are being considerate to others

**The main reasons for mobility** mostly corresponded with positives that were stated in the answer sheet.

- students like to travel and get to know new cultures
- improvement of English
- gaining practical experience
- familiarization with procedures and techniques that the Czech school does not have/teach
- better chances in the future
- establishing new contacts (friends)

 "I wanted to travel and be in another school for a while. And it looks good in the resume."

## Gr. No. 2

# LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Schools support learners' mobilities, but

- for "better" (more desirable) destinations, they select pupils who
  - have better results
  - have completed written tests and other school duties
  - do something for school outside classes (open days)

 "In our school, it was considered a reward."

and favour students who have not yet gone anywhere

 "Eventually, everyone who wanted to could go."

About one half of candidates was chosen by 3 schools, but in others schools, they do not even have enough candidates

 "Some pupils are really afraid of this, that they are asked to meet some expectations."

Some schools "threaten" that if a pupil fails to meet the agreed upon duties in time after his/her return, he/she will have to repay the money.

Pupils do not believe it much, but they acknowledge that it is "good motivation".

Some teachers show that they do not like doing it or are not convinced.

Pupils do not know whether or not they can choose their mobility themselves independently of the school and they do not know whether the destination and the field of study is chosen by their school or "assigned" to the school

# Gr. No. 2

## LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### According to students, the following can be demotivating

- extra time devoted to languages and specialised subjects (up to several hours per week for 3 months)
- coordination of regular school duties
- catching up with subject matter
- fear of a foreign language
- fear of a new environment
- giving up one's free time, but on the other hand, R5 took advantage of the spring break, so as not to miss anything
- finance (the school paid for air tickets, pocket money, but the respondent had to pay CZK 5,000)

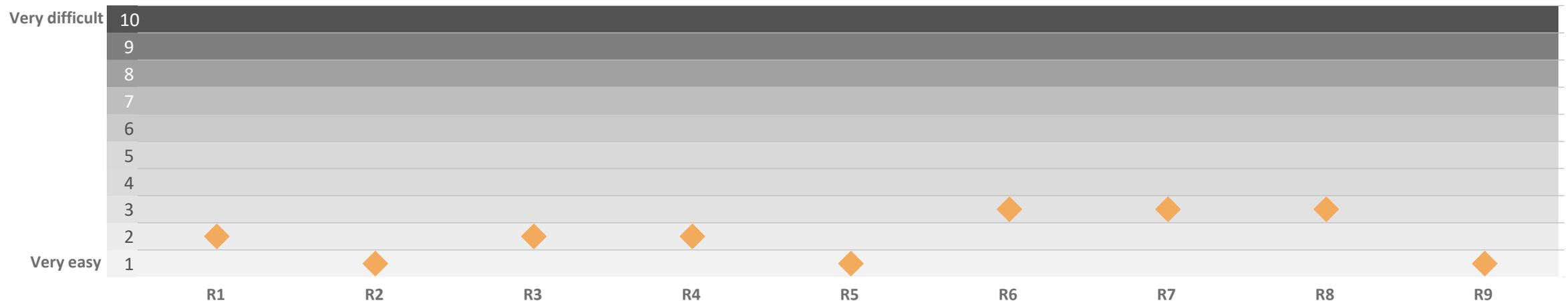
“London is a big city and pupils are not used to it.”

“Fear of catching up with subject matter and worse grades”

“One classmate said it wasn't worth it to write a motivation letter.”

“We would meet regularly before that because we had to do a lot of paperwork, but I don't know if it was for Erasmus or for the company that arranged it for us.”

### Concerns about administrative burdens are not too big in pupils



## Gr. No. 2 LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### What surprised them – sporadic answers

- little communication and cooperation
- the responsible person abroad said he/she does not know about anything
- when there was an accident and the staff in hospital did not speak English
- cultural shock – if they do not just visit tourist centres, but stay on a devastated street
- *“a small beer is 0.2 l”*

 *“I was expecting they would talk to us more.”*

# Gr. No. 2

## LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The final impression of the stay is impacted by

- the team where the pupil is (mostly groups of two or three)
- teachers
- programme readiness and content (unpreparedness reported by 4 out of 9 participants)
- strictness of rules

 "The responsible person abroad said he didn't know about anything, so they didn't know what to do with us."

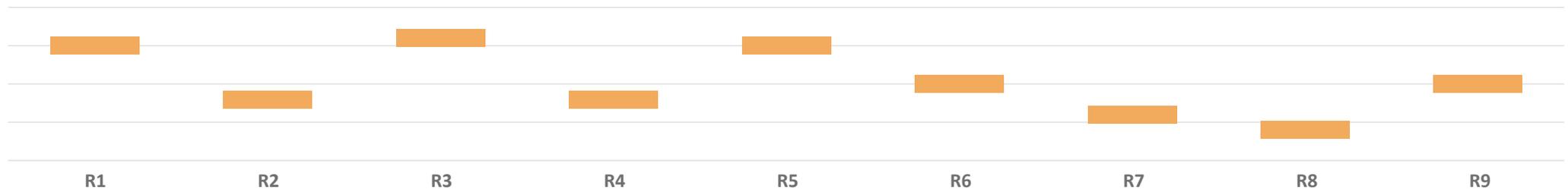
It also depends on each individual pupil (how he/she seeks the company, etc.) and their language skills

 "We all started to talk and it was cool."

### Study and fun ratio

Fun, holiday

Work, education



## Gr. No. 2

# LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Largest positives

- improving (English) language skills
- becoming independent
- getting to know a new culture, sites
- meeting new people
- meeting fellow schoolmates and school teachers
- foreign work experience, professional experience (learning new skills)
- travel
- self-confidence

 *"It was very beneficial for me, because I was studying and developing various techniques that I had not known until then."*

 *"Our school can't afford solar panels, I'm glad I could learn about them there."*

 *"(After returning) one is more positive, more relaxed."*

 *"I know now what to expect from myself when I'm somewhere abroad. What I can handle and what not."*

 *"I know I can rely on myself."*

# Gr. No. 2

# LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Answer sheets

### Positives

#### R1

- ❖ becoming independent
- in the context of practice,*
- tourism in the city\**
- ❖ language

#### R2

- ❖ getting to know a new culture
- ❖ English
- ❖ becoming independent

#### R3

- ❖ work in the branch of study
- I put practice in the first place*
- ❖ getting to know the culture, *siesta*
- ❖ practicing other languages
- ❖ meeting fellow schoolmates
- at such events, you get to know them best, even professors*

#### R4

- ❖ improvement of English
- ❖ verifying the knowledge of technical assumptions
- ❖ different culture

#### R5

##### Erasmus provided by school

- ❖ inspiration (museums, shops)
- ❖ I saw how the same school works somewhere else

##### Erasmus youth exchange

- ❖ great new people

#### R6

- ❖ professional work in another language
- ❖ communication + language
- ❖ sightseeing and culture
- ❖ meeting new people

*I agree you get to know your classmates, our director was there with us, it was more friendly*

#### R7

- ❖ cultural landmarks
- ❖ language experience
- ❖ work experience abroad
- ❖ becoming independent

#### R8

- ❖ learning new skills (textile technique)
- ❖ improving English language skills
- I found out that when you want to, you can make yourself understood*
- ❖ getting to know a new culture, new people
- people at work wee from different countries, all were friendly*
- ❖ becoming independent

#### R9

- ❖ experience
- ❖ travel
- ❖ learning about a culture + local people
- ❖ improvement of English
- ❖ marked improvement of colloquial English
- ❖ self-sufficiency
- ❖ preparation for a “real” life

\* Comments by participants are provided in Italics, the rest is transcription from answer sheets

# Gr. No. 2 LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Negative moments and negative impact

- bad communication, poorly prepared program at the host school
- catching up with subject matter and tests
- hastily submitted underlying documents
- envy by classmates
- problems with transportation
- disagreements with accompanying teachers

 *"I understand that during the day we have to go to school, but in the evening the professors wouldn't let us go anywhere, we had to be back by 10 PM."*

# Gr. No. 2

# LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Answer sheets

### Negatives

R1

- bad communication
- poorly prepared programme
- hastily submitted underlying documents (photos, searches, etc.)

R2\*

\* R2 did not put any negatives in the answer sheet, but in discussions, he mentioned that he can compare it to England and people in Portugal were not as nice, "I was glad I returned to the Czech Republic"

R3

- greater stress at school
- compliance with schedules

R4

- catching up with subject matter
- too much paperwork

R5

- Erasmus provided by school**
  - arguments with teachers
- Erasmus youth exchange**
  - I realized how bad my life is

R6

- catching up with subject matter and tests

R7

- catch up with subject matter at school
- face the envy of classmates who did not go

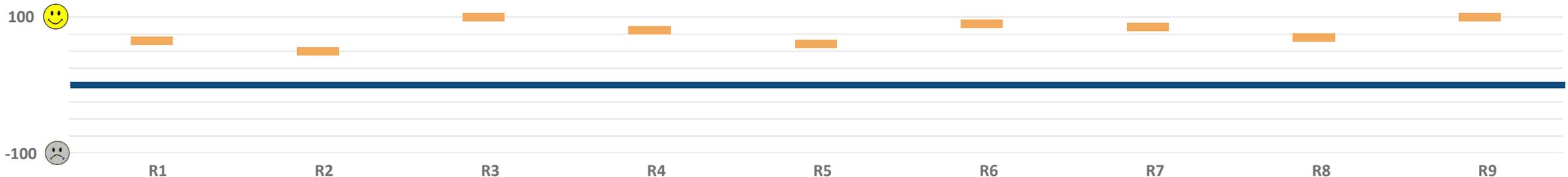
R8

- catch up with studies

R9

- envy among classmates
- transportation (*delays, bus*)

Negatives in this FG are minimal, all answers indicated largely positive impact of stays:



# Gr. No. 2

## LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Answer sheets

#### What to do differently next time ...

R1

- ✓ more time to pay the deposit and a smaller amount
- ✓ better organization: plan the submission of underlying documents

R2

- ✓ a more professional programme

R3

- ✓ a longer stay
- ✓ more benevolent programme
- ✓ possibility to travel multiple times and to more places

*next time, I would like to choose not only by country but also by content*

R4

- ✓ extend the period of stay

R5

- Erasmus provided by school**
- ✓ more freedom from teachers
- ✓ more interesting and fuller program

**Erasmus youth exchange**

- ✓ nothing, it was perfect

R6

- ✓ nothing

R7

- ✓ longer stay
- ✓ more expertise

R8

- ✓ better organisation before departure

R9

- ✓ more time to get to know the culture
- ✓ do not mix 5 + 9 + secondary schools
- ✓ age limit
- ✓ improve transportation to England = 30 hours by bus, it is you better to fly = 2-3 hours!!
- ✓ the political situation, it was a nightmare at 3 a.m., close to the port there were immigrants who wanted to get to England

#### ... but nobody has any regrets in relation to the mobility

The school should offer programmes for all its specialisations

- in R8, the school has three specialisations, but the programme involved only two of them

## Gr. No. 2 LEARNERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Other findings

- a positive thing was breaking through the barrier of personal uncertainties, a greater desire to travel again (in case of respondents who showed a smaller desire to travel before the mobility; however, most participants in the mobility wanted to travel even before)
- friendships established abroad by these young people last to date
- participation in the programme was not a first encounter with a foreign country to any participant

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Promotion of Erasmus+

- at higher education institutions is very good
  - larger schools have an Erasmus department, all schools have their coordinators
- all students know about this possibility
  - but they only rarely know that a student at a higher education institution is entitled to 12 months
- schools support and recommend mobilities, participation is only rarely a condition for master's degree studies

 *"At our faculty, Erasmus has an incredibly strong promotion and they pride themselves on being able to send all students abroad and not spending any money on it. But the reality is completely different."*

 *"In our master's programme, a mobility (either internship or Erasmus) is compulsory, but no one will help you with that."*

- only three schools where participants in the discussions study report a demand higher than supply
  - the possibility of using posts available at another department has been mentioned

 *"It's hard to get back to normal once you return."*

 *"I'd like to continue studying in Switzerland, not in Prague, it's too big for me."*

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Reasons for participation

- popularity of travel - *"I have always wanted to live abroad"*
  - comparison of studies – subjects there are more varied, teaching is much more entertaining and students learn much more information

• disruption of student stereotype

 *"It was worth standing up from the table and try thigs differently. I found out that I liked Prague, and I was glad to return."*

• get to know people, experts, culture

 *"I met a great group of schoolmates there."*

• a very competitive environment, one has to bring something extra

 *"Get out of the bubble - you meet the same people and only speak Czech." (Although the respondent studies a large number of subjects in English, she believes it is not enough).*

• language and the branch of study

 *"When you live together and see each other every day, the relationships are really strong. Actually, you create a home together."*

• become independent (*"to try what it's like not be backed up by anybody"*)

 *"I went because once in my life, I wanted to study only instead studying and working at the same time" (Since the age of 18, the respondent has worked while studying to be able to pay for her studies).*

- break free from parents

• enjoy student life

• good experience with past trips

 *"I went abroad already at secondary school (not with Erasmus, it was not possible yet) and so it was unthinkable for me that I would not also go at university."*

• possibility to choose a destination

 *"I chose Aveiro, a small town. I am from Prague and I never lived anywhere else, so I didn't want to go to a big town."*

 *"I chose Finland because it appears as the best country to study in based on all research."*

 *"Not many people want to go anywhere at the Czech Technical University, I could choose."*

 *"I knew that if I leave, I would have to come up with a lot of things myself."*

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

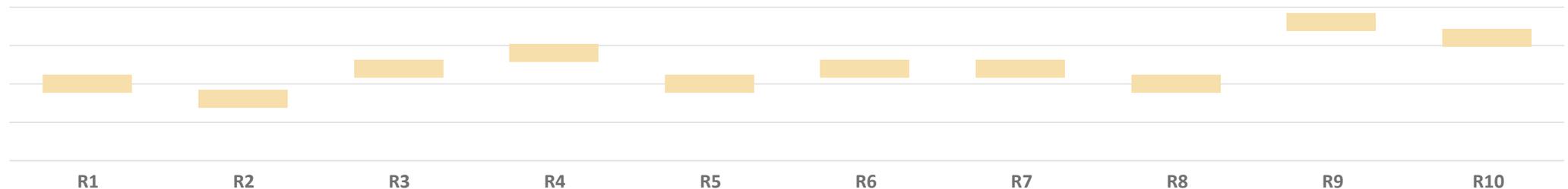
## What surprised them – sporadic answers

- the hosting school did not know that the students would arrive or was not sufficiently prepared
- insufficient or non-existent English
- R2 one lesson lasted 4 normal hours, professors flew from Paris for one day, he expected a little different focus
- not only Erasmus participants but also other foreign students were at school (assessed positively)
- the dorm must be paid until the end of a month, even if a student leaves in the middle

## Study and fun ratio

Fun, holiday

Work, education



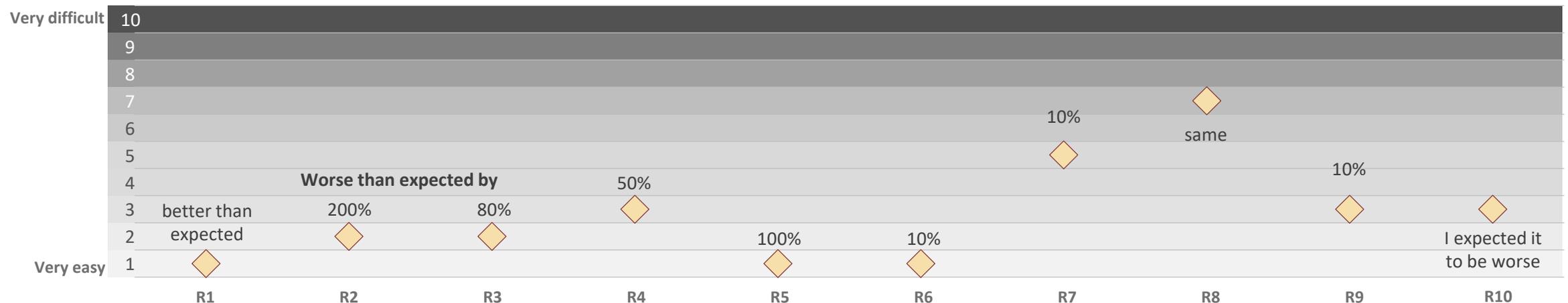
# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Administration

- at the beginning, they were not concerned, but later upon arrival, it was worse than they expected
  - significant deterioration was perceived by 3 participants
- students lack a written procedure and instructions
  - during a second and further mobilities, the situation is considerably easier for applicants
    - some university students did not have the opportunity to travel at secondary schools, this possibility did not exist in small towns

*"A list of things that you have to arrange is really missing (but I guess it would have to be a different one for every faculty). Nothing like that exists."*

The concerns about administrative workload were usually smaller than the reality



# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Conditions and administration

- there are reservations regarding the coordinator's work (but also understanding – it is not an activity that they have chosen)
  - they are difficult to reach  R6 "Pokemon Hunting."
  - praise rather sporadically  R2 "I'll take advantage of the fact that I can do this on the camera; I would like to thank our study department and the entire team."
- at larger schools, "the Erasmus department coordinates coordinators"
- sometimes it happens that a Czech school did not sufficiently communicate with a foreign partner  "The coordinator is really nice, but totally incapable. My faculty did not communicate with the faculty abroad."
- occasionally, after arriving abroad, students would find out that the selected subject is not taught in English
- overall communication in English is worse or does not exist (namely in Portugal)  „Administration in the Czech Republic is complicated because there is the element of many coordinators, who are academics that were assigned this role – an unpopular position.”
- more difficulties at the Faculty of Medicine
  - all subjects are compulsory and each professor must sign an approval
- necessity of paper forms (students call for digitisation)
  - however, they admit that even some foreign universities require paper forms, e.g. in Germany
- administration in the destination country
  - the red tape i French banks was mentioned, you have to open an account (according to R2, a Czech bank worked much better)
- unpleasant being a “substitute”, uncertainty of mobility

 "Maybe the faculties could promise it right away, if they do it after all anyway."

 "The new official is great, really amazing, but she still don't know what to do (even after 10 months we have not resolved the recognition of some subjects. The departments are not ready for this."

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Circumstances considered when thinking about a mobility

- studies
  - need for extension
  - recognition of tests and credits
  - subjects and specialisation of a selected school
- a common complaint was that a school promises to recognise credits, but changes the rules upon arrival
- relationship (often also perceived as a test or a solution after a breakdown)
- leaving the family (often perceived positively) + parents support mobilities
- leaving friends (sometimes positive - leaving a "bubble")
- financial demands
  - scholarships should take into account the costs in a particular foreign country (a dorm in the Czech Republic is CZK 3,000 but in Switzerland it is about CZK 16,000)
  - participants agree that scholarship is not meant to expenses that a student incurs in the Czech Republic
- language (in a situation where English is not available)
- length of stay

 "Everybody at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, knows about Erasmus, everyone is recommended to go... And when you get back, it starts – these subjects do not exist anymore and we cannot recognize this and that is not possible..."  
But R6 defends the Faculty of Arts, says administration is easier, perhaps because the hosting university works online.

 „To break free from my parents."

 "A positive thing is that you can start your life from the beginning, disrupts stereotypes."

 "Erasmus should not pay for a stay abroad, but compensate for the difference."

 "I decided to leave for a year and that if I can't go for a year, I won't be going at all (contract termination, apartment lease)."

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Reasons for non-participating classmates

- finance (but participants recall that life is not free in the Czech Republic either)
- relationship
- language barrier and unwillingness to go anywhere
- concerns about having to extend their studies
  - (R2 “I went twice and I did not have to extend my studies”, R5 at the Faculty of Medicine extending studies is a given thing)
- plain human laziness
  - R6 “a lot of my classmates did not go because they simply did not want to deal with it”
  - the number of these people is increasing - fewer people go and other extracurricular activities involve fewer people
- they do not want to leave the social network that they have built
- R3 there are many options, a hard choice

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Largest positives

- finding oneself, freedom, freedom, broadening of horizons, clarifying life goals  "I found out how I want to live, what I want in my life, who I am."
- awareness of one's relationship to the Czech Republic  "You don't realize a lot of things, and you take them for granted."
  - gaining an outlook thanks to a comparison between home and a foreign country
  - acquiring love for one's own country
- improving (English, professional) language skills
- study, knowledge, professional growth, professional experience  "It still looks good in the resume."
  - mapping of the labour market
- new contacts, friendships
- becoming independent and overcoming oneself, self-confidence  "I have learned that nothing is a problem."
- ambition to continue similar activities  "It inspired me to go again."
- getting to know a new culture  "There are very nice people in Switzerland."

# Gr. No. 3

## STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Answer sheets

#### Positives

- |  |   |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>R1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ I started to speak English</li><li>❖ I learned to love home</li><li>❖ I found it was good to maintain and establish friendly relationships</li><li>❖ I gained professional experience</li></ul>  | <b>R2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ I was cool/alone/abroad</li><li>❖ I grew up there in terms of my studies</li><li>❖ I have planned a little what I want to do</li><li>❖ I like the Czech Republic/Prague, but even more so after coming back</li></ul> | <b>R3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ life attitudes and goals</li><li>❖ friendship</li><li>❖ understanding of what it means to study</li><li>❖ discovering</li><li>❖ pushing my limits</li><li>❖ academic reading in English</li></ul> | <b>R4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ I realized that the Czech Republic is a great place to live, work and study</li><li>❖ how beautiful it is here and easy, in a certain way <i>many things work better in the Czech Republic, they are simpler and people here have a really good life, in a way</i></li><li>❖ self-reliance and overcoming oneself</li><li>❖ deepening the desire to discover the world</li></ul> | <b>R5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ meeting a partner and the best female friend</li><li>❖ meeting people from all over the country</li><li>❖ getting a new home in a beautiful country</li><li>❖ openness to the world</li><li>❖ acquiring love for one's own country</li></ul> |
| <b>R6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ awareness of my relationship to the 'base'</li><li>❖ professional growth <i>and contacts</i></li><li><i>"the opportunity to meet with world-class experts - that means a lot to me"</i></li><li>❖ English became an active language</li><li>❖ thinking many personal things through</li><li>❖ contacts</li></ul> | <b>R7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ gaining an outlook thanks to comparing domestic and foreign living conditions</li><li>❖ confidence through the successful management of the entire stay and all related with it</li></ul>                             | <b>R8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ freedom</li><li>❖ liberation from the past</li><li>❖ broader horizons</li><li>❖ a different view of my studies</li><li>❖ ambition to continue similar activities</li></ul>                        | <b>R9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ gain experience/not to be afraid of changes</li><li><i>you will stop fearing change</i></li><li><i>one day I will be able to handle it if something happens</i></li><li>❖ experiences/travel</li><li>❖ a greater outlook</li></ul>   | <b>R10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ finding oneself</li><li>❖ clarifying life goals</li><li>❖ finding new friends</li><li>❖ broadening horizons</li><li>❖ getting to know the culture</li><li>❖ mapping the labour market <i>"that was very useful for me"</i></li></ul>        |

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Negative moments and negative impact

- alienation from family, friends
  - losing certain relationships and connections
  - establishing relationship with colleagues and classmates in the Czech Republic
- disagreements with parents, friends
- high costs, debts
- loss of ideas (illusions) about some societies
  - dissatisfaction with life in the Czech Republic
- return to reality - not ready for everyday busting
  - living in a “bubble”
- worsening of health problems

 "I didn't finish school with the people I started with."

 "It's a short time to build relationships and establish oneself, it's artificial."

# Gr. No. 3

## STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Answer sheets

#### Negatives

R1

- I broke my relationships with my friends in my town
- I didn't establish relationships with colleagues and Czech classmates at my institute,
- I hardly know them, I don't know whom contact for help

R2

- I was gone when my presence would help somebody here
- loss of ideas (illusions) about some societies - confirmation of certain views
- money - Soci t  Generale are thieves

R3

- attitude of friends to new ideas (generally negative)
- "suddenly, I was crossed out of the list because I did not fit into any of their boxes"*
- misunderstanding with parents
  - alienation with family
- "at home, they tell me that I'm too cheeky, that I think a lot now that I have seen the world..."*

R4

- the first few weeks were difficult - complicated "return" to reality
- losing certain relationships and connections

R5

- shock after return - not prepared for daily hustle and bustle
- no really negative impact (only high costs)
- loss of classmates

R6

- worsening of health problems (ligaments in the knee)

R7

- debt

R8

- returning to real life, when it takes an hour to get to school, you have part-time jobs, they keep asking what time I will be home
  - awareness that it was just an Erasmus "bubble"
- "you were closed in it and you did not really live like a local"*
- It was not a real life abroad

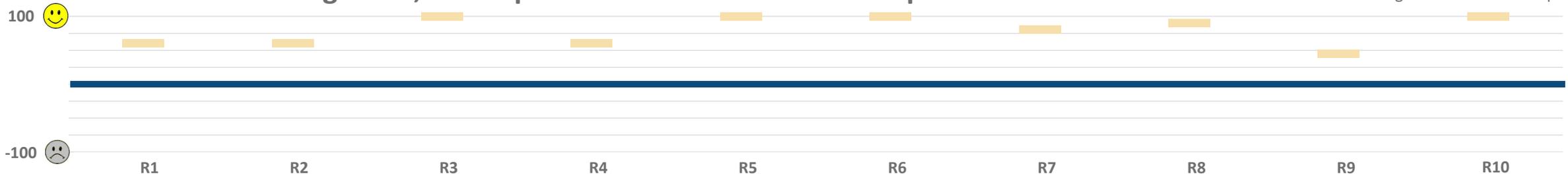
R9

- return to reality - you have to solve important issues again which you are not used to doing after a long time

R10

- distance of friends
- dissatisfaction with life in the Czech Republic
- "I plan to finish my bachelor's programme and move there"*
- language barrier in the place
- disagreement with some people

This FG mentioned negatives, but impacts are overall evaluated as positive:



MEDIAN

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# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Answer sheets

### What to do differently next time

- R1**
- ✓ get better living in Lisbon (I do not like uniplaces.com)
  - ✓ I regret that the term does not start and end on the same dates in Germany as in the Czech Republic, I would change that
  - ✓ Saarland University does not have a good website and information about subjects and study plans
  - ✓ exams at Saarland University are strictly on designated dates
- R2**
- ✓ contract in English (if any)
  - ✓ stay in a room alone
  - "I lived with two boys and it was problematic"*
  - ✓ beware of banks
  - "I had to sign contracts in Portuguese"*
  - ✓ a different countries, different manners and different laws
- R3**
- ✓ Switzerland is not in the EU and has different ERASMUS rules,
  - others should watch out for that
  - ✓ Maybe I'd rather go to Germany.
- R4**
- ✓ I would go to a language course organised by a university, but it started a month before the beginning of the term
- R5**
- ✓ unpreparedness for the initial rush and disorganisation of the faculty
- R6**
- R7**
- ✓ I don't regret anything
- R8**
- ✓ I would have learned less, I was too diligent there and I would have enjoyed the freedom more for 1 term. Maybe even for more money.
- R9**
- ✓ take as much advantage of it as possible, definitely go for an entire year
- R10**
- ✓ travel and explore as much as you can while there is a chance
  - ✓ be cautious with money
  - "plan and no to spend all the money immediately"*
  - ✓ interacting with classmates as much as possible

### How to recommend Erasmus to non-outgoing classmates

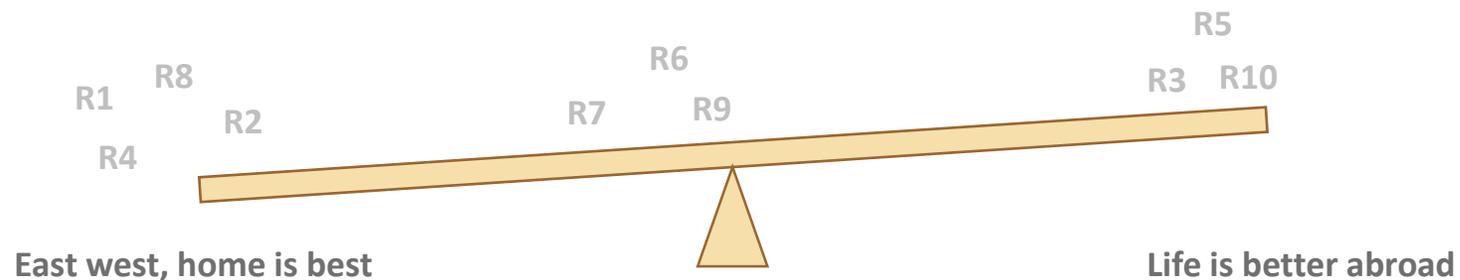
*"Don't be stupid and go." "Stop worrying."*

# Gr. No. 3 STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Other findings and suggestions

- it is better to go in the fall, start with the fall term with others is better,
- it is possible to submit your own project, but if it is approved, it is not certain that the applicant will go, somebody else might go (a selection procedure is called) – so nobody does it
- coordinators could ask the student who is going to write down everything that he/she had to do and arrange

A slight majority of participants is inclined to believe that the mobility helped them appreciate life in the Czech Republic



## Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Most of present teachers went to Erasmus as students and they go abroad to lecture rather than for training. An opinion prevails in the group that if you go once, you keep going forever.

 "The first three are the worst."

As reasons why some will only go **once (or not at all)** they mention in particular the following

- it is necessary to arrange for a substitute teacher for a given week (efforts to travel to countries where the term starts on different dates)
- they lose money if they go (they work on grants that generate more money)
- poor setting of grant amounts
- they do not want to go alone (they would go in couples)
- lack of knowledge of the language (actual and alleged)
- mobility is seen as extra work
- they do want to sacrifice leisure time (especially weekends)
- they are afraid to go

 "There has always been a huge disproportion of budgets. It was huge for teaching and who wanted could go, but for training it was tiny, for entire Charles University with 17 faculties, the budget was for 20 people.... It has increased, now we do not have this problem, but last year we still did. "

 "Some are afraid to go... I had to persuade teachers to go. NO, they were afraid, they were so worried... Finally, I convinced them and since, they have been going like crazy."

 "As long as there is a barrier that not too many people go and are afraid, it is necessary for the braver ones to go back and report that it is safe."

# Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Obstacles for students

- combined studies  *"At the Faculty of Economics of the University of South Bohemia, PhD students have to leave for six months, but then the question is if it does not mean the end of combined studies. Because a student in a combined study programme is hardly able to meet this condition if he or she has a job."*
- language barrier
- Eastern countries are not attractive enough for them, in Western countries they are afraid of the language barrier
- financial reasons (for students it tends to be loss-making (especially Nordic countries), while for employees, the allowance covers most of their expenses)
- problem with selection of suitable objects  *"When an Erasmus student arrives, he or she receives a study programme translated into a relatively good English, which our students don't ever get."  
"Students say they have a problem finding subjects that would overlap."*
- recognition of completed subjects
  - depends on the subject type (importance for the branch of study)
  - overlap with a subject that they wish to have recognised  *"Our Rector's order states that we have to recognise study results from abroad, but we cannot force them."*
  - somebody will acknowledge a subject and test students at the same time
  - somebody refuses to acknowledge subjects at all  *"Students sometimes take it as an opportunity to go somewhere without having to work too much."*

 *"They often ask me who will guarantee that the good grade which a student brings from Italy means that somebody actually examined them instead of just giving it to them for their smile. One day they diploma will say that they graduated from pediatrics with me but I have never heard them talking about the subject."*

# Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The administrative complexity associated with a mobility cannot be summarized in one point. Everything depends on the school where the teacher works but also on the school where he or she goes.

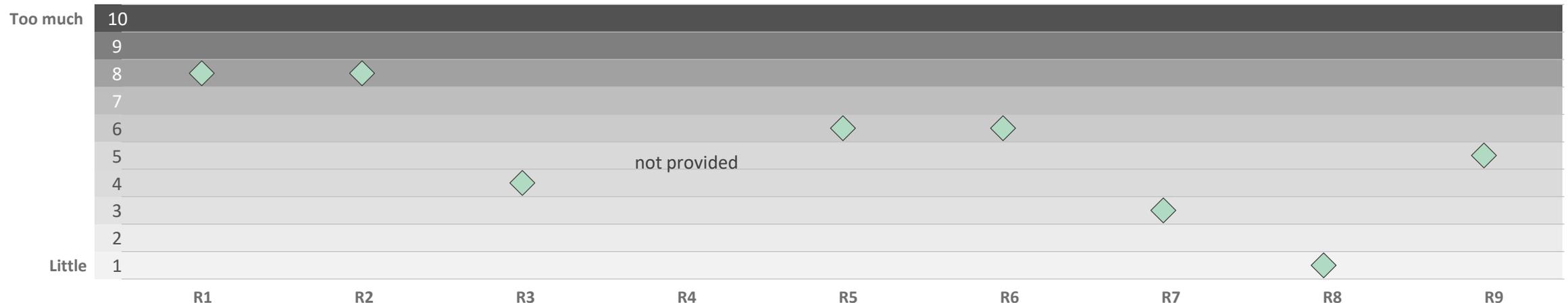
## Administration

 "When I started doing this, the contract was on one page and now there are 5 to 9 page contracts."

- is not complex, but keeps growing
- differences between requirements by the school from where the teacher comes and the school where he or she is going (duplicating forms)
- compliance with the Erasmus rules

 "When French students came to visit us, it was similar. All forms have been closed, and then, all of sudden, the French school started to send some of their own form that duplicated what had already been signed."

## How much administration is needed for mobility



## Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

A partial problem is a **very general Erasmus + handbook that allows for a large number of different interpretations.**

Among vaguely worded points, respondents mentioned

- reimbursement of travel expenses
- overcontrol of time spent teaching

 *"I feel that we in the Czech Republic are often afraid that something might happen ... And then we make up rules that are not even there."*

 *"The administration involved that we signed some insurance policy here that we're going there and there we signed one or two things. And that was it. Here, we almost have to wear a GPS in our pockets so somebody can see whether we are here or there." (experience from a previous stay before the revolution)*

**The attitude of the family** toward mobilities is very individual. Participants in the group discussion agree that their partners support them to go for mobilities regardless of whether it is a short one (max.14 days) or a longer stay. They also have experience with opposite situations.

 *"There are colleagues who will say: "We cannot leave for 14 days because the partner will not take care of our children."*

# Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Largest positives

- social contacts with colleagues abroad, new contacts, partnership
  - improved relationships / communication between schools
- gaining new work experience
  - better orientation in professional problems
  - new impulses and ideas
  - implementation of international projects
  - another form of teaching a subject that is identical in the world/verifying the correctness of teaching methods
- personal and professional development
- language skills use / improvement
- improvement of communication skills
- getting to know different countries / cultures

 *"Many things can't be done remotely, at least not over a long-term. If you simply want to file international projects, deal with conferences, etc., then you need to go somewhere, at least once a year."*

 *"They teach it a little differently at different places ... the same subject, but in other places, they are more technically advanced."*

# Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Answer sheets

### Positives

#### R1

- ❖ new experience
- ❖ improved relationship with the university abroad
- ❖ travelling - getting to know a new place

#### R2

- ❖ learning how a partner school works
- ❖ inspiration
- ❖ improved communication between schools
- ❖ improvement of one's communication skills
- ❖ sometimes new contacts - prospective

#### R3

- ❖ gaining new work experience
- ❖ implementation of international projects
- ❖ contact development
- ❖ internationalisation of the school
- ❖ career development

#### R4

- ❖ social contacts with colleagues in abroad
- ❖ exchange of experience, collaboration
- ❖ negotiating conditions for students, so that they can travel under Erasmus+

#### R5

- ❖ new contacts
- ❖ new impulses and ideas
- ❖ horizons
- ❖ language skills enhancement

#### R6

- ❖ New qualifications
- ❖ partnership
- ❖ contacts
- ❖ inspiration for projects

#### R7

- ❖ another form of teaching a subject that is identical in the world

#### R8

- ❖ personal and professional development
- ❖ new experience
- ❖ language skill enhancement
- ❖ establishing new contacts
- ❖ new ideas

#### R9

- ❖ new contacts
- ❖ verification of correct teaching methods
- ❖ language enhancement
- ❖ better orientation in professional problems

# Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## Negative moments and negative impact

- there are still not enough foreign educators who would be willing to teach in the Czech Republic
- poorly set grants for some countries
  - financial loss - an insufficient grant
  - sometimes limited by funds
- high time intensity
  - necessity to spend time over weekends
- larger workloads
- organisational burden
- administrative burden
  - unnecessary administration



*"It's not about the complexity as much as about the fact that bureaucracy has been constantly increasing."  
"When someone teaches a lot and then they are gone for a week, they have to make up for everything, so it means extra work for them."*

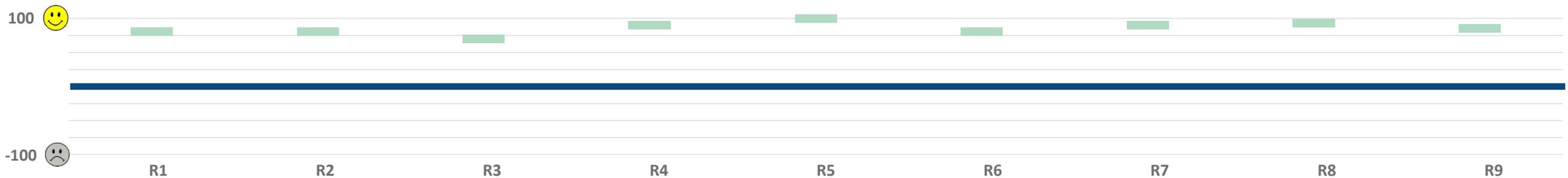
# Gr. No. 4 WORKERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Answer sheets

## Negatives

- R1**
  - financial loss - an insufficient grant
  - trips on Sunday evenings, in my free time, for free
  - unnecessary administration (rector's office requires IIA)
- R2**
  - poorly set grants to some countries
- R3**
  - high time intensity
  - difficulties in negotiating certain exceptions
- R4**
  - necessary evil with administration
  - sometimes difficult to find dates for next mobilities
- R5**
  - organisational burden
  - larger workloads
- R6**
  - not provided
- R7**
  - there are still not enough foreign educators who would be willing to teach in the Czech Republic
- R8**
  - not stated
- R9**
  - sometimes we are limited by funds

This FG mentioned only very few negatives, impacts are seen as very positive:



# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Promotion of Erasmus+

- while at schools it is clear where information about the program can be found, in this FG no such place exists
  - people interested in the programme have been asking our respondents for a central database
  - some people know SALTO-YOUTH, but consider it unsatisfactory (little clear)  "We choose what to publish. If we published 20 events a day, you would be lost."
  - at the same time, our respondents argue that this is not possible because there will always be organisations that will do it without providing a database
    - some people believe that it is deliberate so that a candidate has to perform some activity  "So people who are not downright lazy apply."
- almost all participants in this group first learned about mobilities from acquaintances and friends
  - only R3 started to go in the 3rd grade of her secondary school, her class teacher provided her with information about extracurricular programmes  "It's extremely difficult to find participants."
- they participate in different projects, later they often actively organise and conduct them
  - some of them also write their own projects  "... when my class teacher told me about it for the first time at the secondary grammar school, I may have gained a feeling of certainty thanks to the authority. While if you find it somewhere on the Internet..."
- a majority participated in many (up to 15) projects, sometimes longer (up to annual) projects
  - only R1 participated in just one mobility  "A lot of people who want to go will not find out about it."
- while Erasmus + for university students is widely known, the mobility of this group and the sending organisation are less known and in some cases, it may give seem like a scam  "I never thought it was part of Erasmus."

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Reasons for departure

- part of life, lifestyle
- Investment in the future, for future work
- part of work or volunteer activity
- experience something new
- start actively speaking a language
- self-development
- meet new interesting people, their views
- be part of a community of people across Europe, from all over the world
- get to know and understand other cultures



*"You can see places that you normally would not."*



*"It is not only the hardskills that one learns in school, but also softskills, connections and the things around."*



*"For me, Erasmus means broadening of horizons and diversification in my life."*



*"I can only speak English with a half of my friends on Facebook."*



*"I know so many people in Europe now that if I wanted to, I could find a job somewhere in Europe the next day."*

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Decision-making – circumstances for consideration and against mobility

- time (at work, only when on holidays)
- family situation, relationship
- situation and duties at school
- necessity to combine study and work
- obligation to present and run a workshop on return
- finance (not so dissuasive in this FG)

 "I was with my girlfriend on the first trip and we broke up."

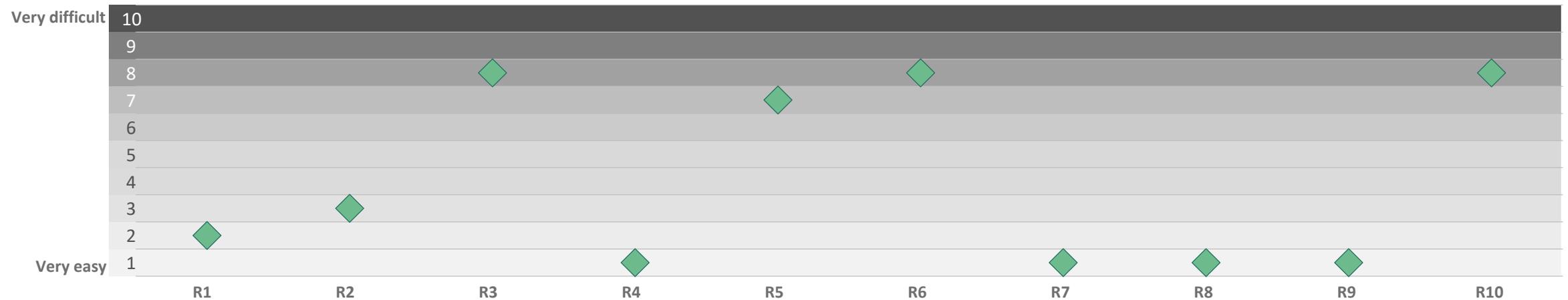
 "It's not an excuse at school, Erasmus."

 "You have to think if it still brings some benefits or not."

 "On the other hand, I have only seen it once that a friend of mine got two credits for a mobility."

 "My employer at that time even paid for it, like it was training. It was for free time educators and I was a free time educator."

### Concerns about the administrative burden



# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Finances

- respondents in this FG do not see mobilities as a large financial burden; regardless of that, they consider Tmelnik as another option which they pay for themselves, including the initial contribution that is reimbursed in Erasmus, and so they do not need any money at the beginning

 "That was a reason for me to choose Tmelnik instead of Erasmus."

 "That's what makes Tmelnik different, that they make travel arrangements for people and then they ask the hosting organization to reimburse them so that people don't have to invest any of their money except for the organisational fee, which is about five hundred and is refundable if you present your stay after returning."

 "It was a problem for me to find 7,000CZK."

- usually, however, they agree that if a mobility is completely free and easily accessible, then people who are not so passionate about the matter and reliable apply

 "It used to happen to us that if people didn't have to put any of their money in, then two days before the departure, they would come say: I have changed my mind. I am not going."

- take into account the destination, e.g. Albania cannot be reached by train, low-budget airlines do not fly to the Balkan countries

 "We started to consider collecting symbolic fees for registration only to put off the unreliable ones."

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Administration

- the complexity of application handling in this FG is influenced by the number of mobilities (with the next mobility, it is easier to handle the administration), but the decision-making does not get any easier with an increasing number of trips, for somebody it may be the other way round (a large selection, more careful considering as to what to devote one's time to)
- student mobilities are limited by studies or results, but the mobility in this FG is for all
- if the applicant works, he/she carefully considers the time demands, even in terms of administration

## How to recommend it to other young people?

- especially by informing them about this option (the awareness is not so high in this FG as among universities), especially outside of Prague
  - those who have gone abroad should be required to go to school and talk about their experience
- some young people perceive it as a loss of time or really do not have time (work, study)
  - they have a backwards way of thinking, they do not share this idea or they have other values (family, work, money), they are introverts
- communicate that they must overcome fear (of travelling, of language barrier)



*"In the Czech Republic, we are historically isolated from those around us. We sat on our butts and minded our own business."*

## Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

### What surprised them

- some respondents were surprised that the hosting organisation requested an “organisation fee” upon arrival

 “We didn't like it much and as far as I know, it is also not allowed under the Erasmus rules.”

- according to other respondents it is OK as long as it is indicated in the project and it is not a high amount

- 20 – 50 EUR is OK, EUR 400 is already a high amount

 “Some organizations have made a business out of it. They generate a project after a project and make living out of that. And I don't like that at all. I do partnership for free.”

- some hosting organisations do not ask for money, but an amount will be deducted from funds that they reimburse for travel

- organizers abroad look at us as an Eastern European county and give us less money

- it has become a business - projects submitted by people who work in the field are more often rejected and projects submitted by professionals are approved

 “They exactly know the Czech or the English to use so that those who evaluate it like it. It's a business. There are organisations that only write projects. And then they charge a percentage out of that.”

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Support from parents

- is different across this FG
- respondents have encountered everything from support to a neutral attitude to rejection
  - one respondent even had to deal with his father's expressly negative attitude

 "My mum keeps telling me to go somewhere."

 "My mum has a problem because she doesn't know who runs it and who is actually behind it. Unless it is under the Ministry of Education.... "

 "Better than if I took drugs."

 "This is a completely different world for my parents."

 "It's not what the programme is about, but what he thinks about it."

## Disadvantaged people

- respondents meet them
- they named both people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and people with physical disabilities
  - programme for unemployed young people
- it should be part of the national team
- some programmes directly focus on them, but only few apply for them

 "For me, Erasmus was always like a happy end. I come from a background where we couldn't go absolutely anywhere abroad with my family. The first time I went abroad was with school in the eighth grade and then nothing for a long time. And then out of the blue, I went to Armenia, Serbia, England... And my dad suddenly saw: The European Union gave my son an opportunity to travel. And he changed his mind of the EU. "

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Largest positives

- getting to know new people, contacts, networking
- self-development, finding the way of life, becoming independent, confidence in one's own skills, criticality
- getting to know different cultures and values, exchange of experience  "You overcome your fears."
- improved communication in a foreign language.  "Every single of those projects has given me a new direction, it has shifted my thinking."
- key8  "Stepping outside the comfort zone."
- new skills, soft skills - cooperation with people with whom they normally do not come into contact, learning tolerance and patience
  - experience with leading a group  "I have led people who are much older than me, and it will be useful in the work environment."
- pro-European thinking
- experiences, fun  "A positive impact on selection procedures at work. I would use it during entrance exams, they would give me a higher score."
- good for CV

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Answer sheets

### Positives

#### R1

- ❖ getting to know a foreign country/culture
- ❖ English practice
- ❖ meeting new people

#### R2

- ❖ connections
- ❖ getting to know different cultures
- ❖ language abilities
- ❖ experience with leading a group

*ambition to work in a European institution and those could take that into account*

*the comfort zone is not related to space, many people at our age have not yet flown by plane and it is already deep in my conf. zone, I fly several times a year*

#### R3

- ❖ finding the way of life
- ❖ self-development, education in new themes
- ❖ language skills
- ❖ new contacts in Europe
- ❖ confidence in one's own skills
- ❖ pro-European thinking

#### R4

- ❖ education Key8 (English)
  - ❖ getting to know a culture other than the Czech one
  - ❖ self-reliance
- critical thinking, one learns about other opinions than those presented in our media*

#### R5

- ❖ coping with fear

#### R6

- ❖ contacts
- ❖ meeting with another culture
- ❖ interesting environment
- ❖ knowledge from good trainers

#### R7

- ❖ new interesting people
- ❖ lots of fun
- ❖ getting to know different cultures / values
- ❖ soft skills - cooperation with people with whom I would not normally be in contact,
- ❖ learns tolerance and patience

*a comfort zone is where he/she feels good and knows things*

#### R8

- ❖ exchange of experience
- ❖ getting to know a different culture
- ❖ new friends
- ❖ greater autonomy
- ❖ overcoming fear of flying

#### R9

- ❖ a better communication in a foreign language.
- ❖ new skills
- ❖ new contacts abroad

#### R10

- ❖ networking (contacts)
- ❖ education
- ❖ experiences

*improves communication skills  
learns to be independent, deal with issues*

# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Negative moments and negative impact

- alienation and loss of some relationships and social ties
- worse results, disagreements with the school
- lost time in case of a poor project
  - limited possibilities when they don't like a project
  - sometimes perhaps too vague, disorganised programme, unprofessional leadership
- the knowledge of wasted opportunities (regrets that he did not know about it earlier)
- an urge to keep doing something-> keep going somewhere



*"disappointment from first project, I expected more lectures."*

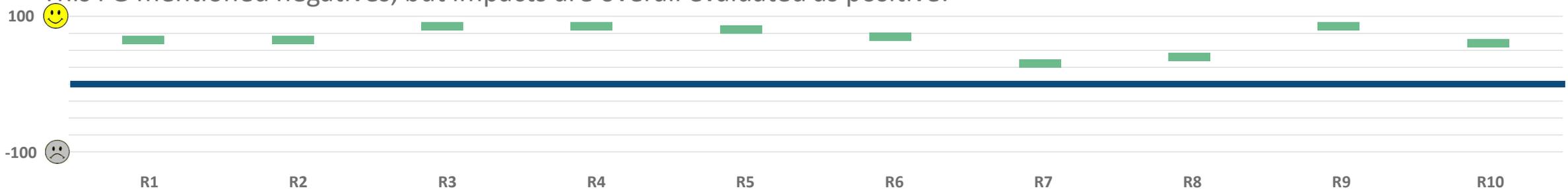
# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Negatives

## Answer sheets

- |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>R1</b><br/>not specified negatives</p>                                      | <p><b>R2</b><br/>not specified negatives<br/><br/>absence from school was not welcome, better at universities, in the secondary school leaving year, he travelled a lot and when he had better grades at the school leaving exam, his classmates were jealous</p>      | <p><b>R3</b><br/>▪ an urge to keep doing something-&gt; keep going somewhere<br/><br/>she was assigned a question about the Balkans at her school leaving exam and she had been there (but she did not say that she had been there, it helped her recall the experience and it was easier to talk about the topic)</p>  | <p><b>R4</b><br/>▪ awareness of lost opportunities (too bad I didn't know earlier)<br/><br/>▪ view of the issue</p> | <p><b>R5</b><br/>▪ collapse of values<br/><br/>▪ a goal can also be that you learn how something works (how the European Union works)</p> |
| <p><b>R6</b><br/>▪ limited possibilities of to do if I don't like the project</p> | <p><b>R7</b><br/>▪ lost time in case of a poor project<br/>▪ sometimes perhaps too vague, disorganised programme, unprofessional leadership (disorganised)<br/><br/>missing content<br/>unprofessional - but he understands, people who do it work are enthusiasts</p> | <p><b>R8</b><br/>▪ "war in school"<br/>it caused me a war at our secondary school, I had a lot of other activities and I missed school, they made me aware of that at the school-leaving exam<br/>classmates said that I was increasing the overall absence in the class<br/>during the school-leaving exam her question was about Turkey and she wanted to use her experience, but the professor did not let her</p> | <p><b>R9</b><br/>▪ worse grades at secondary grammar school</p>   | <p><b>R10</b><br/>▪ losing relationships social. links<br/><br/>▪ time investment</p>   |

This FG mentioned negatives, but impacts are overall evaluated as positive:



# Gr. No. 5 YOUTH (other than youth workers)

## Answer sheets

### What to do differently next time

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>R1</b><br>✓ a more enjoyable journey<br><i>we took a bus from Prague and the journey took 17 hours</i> | <b>R2</b><br>✓ I would like more projects aimed at movement, sports, e.g. cycling<br><i>there is a minimum of sport-oriented projects</i> | <b>R3</b><br>✓ I am not dependent on whether I can currently pay the fare<br>✓ participation 100% tolerated by the university +the employer<br>✓ place more weigh on Youthpass during interviews/entrance exams | <b>R4</b><br>✓ I would like to move the age limit and show it to the uninitiated<br>- family or a professional programme for the general public<br>(singles mothers, young families, but also retired people) | <b>R5</b><br>✓ clearer rules for organisations  |
| <b>R6</b><br>✓ better structure of information provided   | <b>R7</b><br>✓ I would participate in a hard-skill project =)<br>✓ I would only go to carefully chosen projects                           | <b>R8</b><br>✓ end of prejudice   | <b>R9</b><br>✓ raising public awareness of Erasmus + projects   | <b>R10</b><br>✓ increase foreign students' involvement in local life (less focus on other foreigners)<br>✓ limit business associated with foreign students (leases, etc.) |

### The objective must be clear

In their discussion about negatives and suggestions for improvement, participants mentioned the topic of a clear goal

There must be a clear vision, for example:

- building a children's parliament in Poland (R8)
- restoration of a cross-border carnival parade in Náchod (R9)
- a joint concert on which they worked together (R7)
- a project where they learned to work with camera and the goal was to make a spot that they present at a mini festival



*"This is a kind of thing that sometimes occurs with these.  
Now I choose more carefully and I check if they really know what they want to convey to people."*

## Gr. No. 6

# WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Awareness and promotion of Erasmus+

- there is no problem with work trips, the sending organisation itself will identify potential applicants
- in the field of volunteering, there is an opinion that all those who want to already know
  - However, FG participants acknowledge that not all people who would be interested know of a sending organisation (and perhaps they do not know that a place where they can learn about travel options is called the “sending organisation”)
- start promoting Erasmus at secondary schools
  - but not only among students, but especially among teachers!
  - and it is good to also inform (lectures, presentations) parents and raise their interest so that their child travels
- good practice is to create a special Facebook group for each project where people can meet before the mobility and after the end of the stay, share opinions, photos...

 *“As soon as students start at the age of 15 or 16 years, it can raise their interest for the future.”*

 *“If I’m not on fire myself, I can hardly make others burn.”*

# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Participants' experience and behaviour

- a majority of respondents in this target group has travelled several times, often already at school or under youth exchange
- one respondent went with an organisation with which she only started to work later
- they use their experience from the stay in their job for a long time and recommend it to others
- they maintain contacts, meet at conferences and other events beyond Erasmus
  - sometimes, a lost contact can be reestablished even after two years, but some people are less reliable and less enthusiastic
- it is necessary to select trusted partners
  - one respondent had already experienced disappointment when they the organized ignored the rules and she perceived that as an abuse of the idea of Erasmus
  - more often, however, respondents talked about a good course and planning of events
  - it is good to choose based on the programme, but the exact program is often not available and some participants only need to know the main topic
- a big plus is comparing activities at home and abroad
- consider going to countries where English is not a common language

 "It's a unique experience."

 "That was a crucial moment. The first mobility and the others that followed. I totally changed my career plan. I stopped doing what I was studying (translation studies), and I started to engage in education and volunteering activities."

 "There is an incredible difference in quality."

 "Before each project there is an initial training and all participants know where they are going, why they are going there and what they are going for. And what the goal is. They knew why they were doing it."

# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Reasons for mobility

 "Our people who have gone have become more self-confident. Suddenly they found that they were not from just ... a small country in the middle of Europe and that they know very well what they do and later, they can teach it. And they told other teachers that we had nothing to be ashamed of."

- to go abroad and see how colleagues work there, see that things can be done differently than here, learn about new possibilities
  - an effort to do things differently (e.g. museum exhibitions, care of psychiatric patients)
  - learn from mistakes made by foreign colleagues and avoid them
  - sharing examples of good practice, foreign colleagues also provided manuals
    - however, cooperation does not follow the pattern "we do it well and you do it wrong", but participants look for common ways and mutual enrichment

 "I opened a door to the world for me and then I would purposefully go to learn something and gaining experience in the field I wanted to do. And now I'm doing it, so I succeeded. "

- contacts
- for somebody, it was the first opportunity to attend an international event
- with the second and the next trip, the desire to recreate the positive experiences and have new ones and the inner motivation to learn something new are clear motivators

 "I first went for an exchange and I had no idea that it was an Exchange and what actually an exchange is. I would definitely recommend it." (She had no expectations that could be unmet and she was open to everything).

- during other trips, participants carefully select the content of the project
- it is not clear whether it is better to go for a general project of youth Exchange type or a project with a clear focus (photography, music, employment) for the first time However, if you already work, discussion participants recommend a project with a special focus.
- popularity of travel, breaking out stereotype, prevention of burnout

# Gr. No. 6 WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

## How to influence people to go

- **directively** (for work mobilities - it is not optimal, but it would solve a situation where no one wants to go and may unnecessarily worry)
  - more likely in people who are already thinking about going or are afraid to make the last step  *"The question is whether they take anything out of it if it's about power."*
  - in this target group, it is more likely that the project will be attended by people from a broader group than was originally planned because there are not enough candidates from the original group
  - E.g. R6 was ultimately the only one from the workplace that was willing to attend
- interviews with people who went, personal presentations

## Reasons:

- first is the uncertainty of speaking a foreign language
- family reasons
- inability of sending two representatives from one organisation
- laziness (+ concerns about subsequent duties and tasks)
- unwillingness to start something unknown

Note: There is a greater distrust in Erasmus as a platform in the Nordic and Western European countries

# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Duties and administration upon arrival

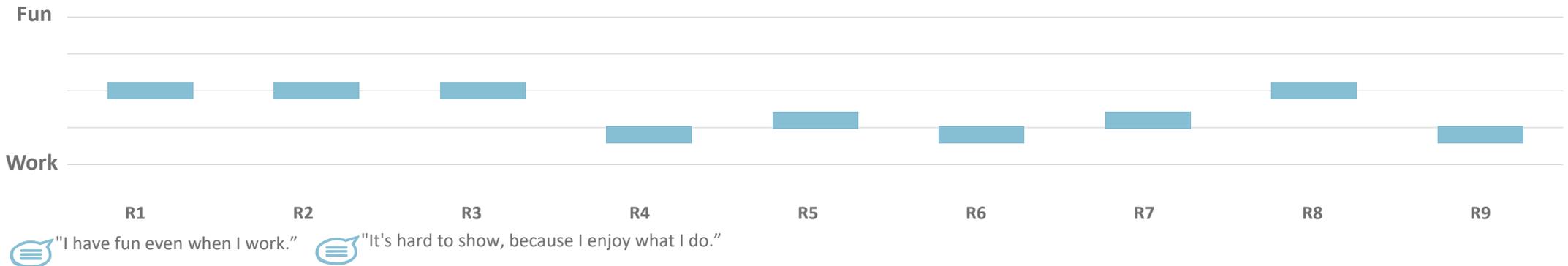
- depends on the sending organisation what is required
- depends on the position of the participant (a regular participant, a group leader, trainer, member of an organisation)
- the administration of Erasmus alone is not as demanding
  - some participants describe the responsibility for ECET, funding for Erasmus + is done by project managers
- there are many duties, but they are predefined so that you are not taken by surprise
- difficulty (generally - form filling)
- it is more difficult during a first mobility, you must get acquainted with it
- retrospectively, they appreciate summaries or presentations for their other needs

"The necessary evil."

"Filling out forms is always a struggle."

"When you do it for a third time, it gets better."

### Work/entertainment ratio



"I have fun even when I work."

"It's hard to show, because I enjoy what I do."

Others usually do not share this opinion

# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### The decision-making process with the first mobility

- usually simple regardless of whether the respondent first left for a student or work stay
  - R8 had concerns about language readiness during her first mobility
  - R6 had to consult it with his wife (small children)
  - work duties
  - benefits for the sending organisation
    - trainers' skill, quality of the organisation
  - In a vast majority (except for two cases), respondents in this TG went as part of their job so that they did not have to consider taking holiday time
- they did not mention any concerns (only occasionally, a volunteer who was to meet with professionals, but it turned out that they could not help each other in that particular case)

 "If I bring something we can use."

Difficult decision-making



# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### How many attendees from one organization?

- some organisations allow only one participant to leave the Czech Republic so that he/she is more forced to be in contact with foreign colleagues
  - the majority of discussion participants had that experience (and they were a rarity, typically, there were more people from other countries; however, participants see it as a positive thing if they go alone)
  - only R4 travelled with three colleagues and so did R6 who appreciates that on the way back they could share their experiences
    - children should go as a group
  - R3 participated in a project with other Czech people that she did not know before, and she appreciated that she could meet other Czechs, not just foreigners
  - ideal when all countries are represented by the same number of participants

It cannot be clearly said whether only one representative per organisation should take part in a project

it also depends on the content of the project

intensified contact with colleagues

mutual support and elimination of uncertainty  
(suitable for students and certain work trips)  
sharing knowledge and different views

**One participant**

**Several participants**



*"Everyone sees it with their own eyes, which is also a good thing."*

## Gr. No. 6

# WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Expected benefits for the future

- you are open to other projects and meetings
- according to R2, co-operation will be also better in the future (e.g. during the preparation of a new international project) with someone whom she has personally met rather than just exchanged an e-mail
- R7 was motivated by the mobility to try other forms, e.g. the European Voluntary Service
- R5 also considered EVS, but it is difficult to make a final decision, conditions for that change too much, she thinks

# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Largest positives

- sharing, exchange of experience, an open positive atmosphere  *"Not only taking, but mutual enrichment."*
- good practice examples  *"Sometimes, our colleagues become more confident that we do things better."*
- to see that it can be done in a completely different way than in the Czech Republic
- inspiration, ideas, work methods, new knowledge and methodology  *"Here's the best way to expand your circle of friends (especially when more than one country get together)."*
- get to know new people, expand the network of contacts, professional network, new friends
- get to know other cultures, cultural convergence and enrichment  *"Informal experiences are the most valuable for learning about a culture."*
- improve language and presentation skills
- contribution for both personal and professional life  *"Stop being afraid of presentations, of engaging in discussions."*
  - self-development, self-knowledge, self-reflection
  - mental rest and new energy for work  *"Meeting with colleagues from other countries will encourage you."*

# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Answer sheets

#### Positives

##### R1

- ❖ exchange of experience (what works)
- ❖ I will meet new people
- ❖ I will get to know a new country
- ❖ rest mentally and recharge to work

*it may almost be like holiday when a person is alone and must take care of everything*

##### R2

- ❖ Sharing  
*not just taking, but mutual enrichment*
- ❖ open and positive atmosphere
- ❖ colleagues
- ❖ good practice examples
- ❖ getting to know other cultures
- ❖ new friends

##### R3

- ❖ sharing knowledge with others
- ❖ contribution for both personal and professional life
- ❖ getting to know new people-> network enlargement
- ❖ improve language and presentation skills  
*overcoming shyness*
- ❖ leaving the Czech Republic - to know other cultures, traditions  
*meeting with people not only from the host country, but also from other countries diametrically different from travel during holidays*

##### R4

- ❖ to see that it can be done in a completely different way than in the Czech Republic
- ❖ English practice
- ❖ getting acquainted with a foreign country  
*While on holiday, I cannot see other workplaces and I do not have the opportunity to see how other people think, how they work as a team*

##### R5

- ❖ existence of E+
- ❖ inspiration, ideas, work methods
- ❖ contacts, professional network
- ❖ discovering cultures of countries that I did not know

*a big plus is that throughout the whole stay you are accompanied by a local*

*- informal experiences are the most valuable for learning about a culture*

##### R6

- ❖ experience/information
- ❖ language skills
- ❖ new contacts

##### R7

- ❖ sharing of experience
- ❖ new knowledge and methods
- ❖ contacts
- ❖ cultural convergence and enrichment
- ❖ self-development, self-knowledge, self-reflection

##### R8

- ❖ new experience
- ❖ intercultural learning
- ❖ self-knowledge  
*boost one's confidence*

##### R9

- ❖ otherness = doing the same things differently

*information can be obtained in other ways (TV, Internet, Facebook), but a personal contact is important, to see how real people live*

*(an older saying) "Don't tell others what to do, you haven't been to Russia" – now you can go out and then you can be smart*

## Gr. No. 6

# WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Negative moments and negative impact

- a poorer organisation by the hosting organisation, unreliability
  - bad (unskilled, incompetent) trainers
- lack of language readiness, lack of self-esteem
- Taking advantage of Erasmus+
  - abuse of budgets
- necessity to catch up with missed work
- disruption of family life
- fear from unknown
- transport
- a limited use of knowledge in practice is given by the fact that the respondent does not work in the field as a professional, but as a volunteer

# Gr. No. 6

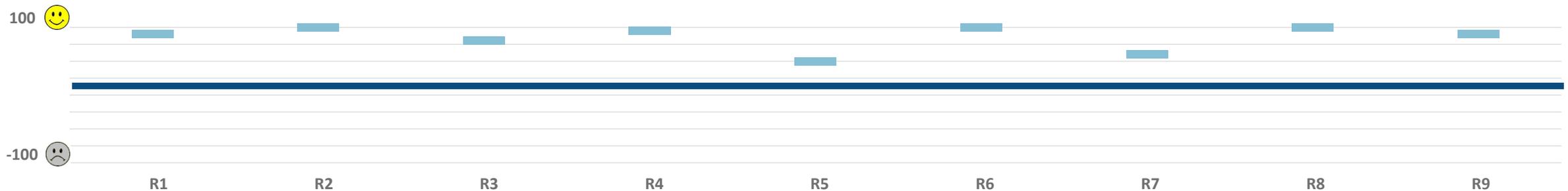
## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Answer sheets

#### Negatives

- | R1  | R2                              | R3   | R4  | R5   | R6   | R7   | R8   | R9  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>catch up with missed work</li> </ul> | <p><i>did not state any</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>worse organization by the hosting org.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the power of light - not enough sleep:) (Lapland)</li> <li>otherwise nothing at all</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>abuse of E +</li> <li>unreliability of organisations</li> <li>bad trainers/ non-qualified, incompetent</li> <li>abuse of budgets</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disturbance of family lief</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>own reasons-&gt; a limited use of knowledge in practice because I am not a professional in the field, but only as a hobby in free time</li> <li>enthusiasm over the place slowly disappears after returning to everyday life</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fear from unknown</li> <li>lack of confidence</li> <li>language unpreparedness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>transport</li> </ul> |

In this FG, negatives were mentioned rather sporadically, impacts are valued in a very positive way:



# Gr. No. 6

## WORKERS AT ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORKERS

### Answer sheets

#### What they would have done differently

- |           |                            |                       |                    |  |           |   |  |                                     |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|-----------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>R1</b> | <b>R2</b>                  | <b>R3</b>             | <b>R4</b>          | <b>R5</b>  | <b>R6</b> | <b>R7</b>   | <b>R8</b>                              | <b>R9</b>                           |
| ✓ nothing | ✓ not to miss the plane    | ✓ go to more projects | ✓ probably nothing | ✓ I would not go to Društvo (org. in Serbia) again |           | ✓ I would have gone more times:)  | ✓ always identify oneself with project | ✓ a higher awareness about the host |
|           | ✓ I do not regret anything |                       |                    |  |           | ✓ I would do more awareness of objectives Erasmus +                         |  |                                     |
|           |                            |                       |                    |  |           | ✓ I would have dedicated more time to on my own project that I have started |  |                                     |

## Gr. No. 7

# NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Promotion of Erasmus+

- Erasmus + promotion cannot be assessed based on this group since according to recruitment conditions, only university students who knew about the programme participated

### They learned about Erasmus +

- at school (school website, notice board, or e-mail)
- from friends who participated in the programme
  - (individuals) said that it is:
    - a lot of bureaucracy
    - a lot of arrangements at your own and at the hosting school
    - watching credits and other school duties, having a sufficient number of exams (if a student fails to meet a given number of credits per year, they can even be expelled from school)
    - financially demanding + a threat that funds will be returned if they fail to meet the conditions
- from Erasmus events in the Czech Republic (trips, parties)
- from participants who arrived in the Czech Republic and whom they met
  - at schools (joint lectures, seminars)
  - in dorms (one respondent was living with a person like that)
  - at events (you go somewhere, a party)

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Participants' language skills

- all participants declare to be able to speak English and often other languages
- everybody watches movies in English
- games in English are only played by some participants
- books in English are also read only by some participants
  - the reason is the language and that people do not read much in general
- 1 respondent has lectures in English (optional)

 (Playing games) "Only in English, no one wants to wait for dubbing."

**R1** English

**R2** English and some German

**R3** English and little French

**R4** English and German

**R5** English, German and about 5 sentences in French

**R6** English, Bulgarian and a little Russian

**R7** English and 4 years of Spanish

**R8** English, French, Russian and a little German

**R9** English and a little Serbo-Croatian

**During the discussion, respondents were asked to give reasons for they did not want to go anywhere and a half of them did not have a problem expressing themselves in English.**

### Travel

- All FG participants have travelled abroad (other than to a hotel when with parents)
  - on the contrary, one respondent takes care of his mother abroad because she does not speak English

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Reasons for not going anywhere with Erasmus

- the bachelor's programme of architecture does not allow students to go anywhere much (only in the master's programme)
- one participant was thinking about going, but because of exams and since she did not want to prolong her studies, it was not possible
- another stated financial and family reasons
- the school does not offer countries that would be interesting
- fears of non-English speaking countries
- reluctance to meet the school's requirements (both the local and the host schools)
  - bad experience with studying at a high school in the USA
- they half-knew about study visits but they did not see one that would be interesting in terms of content; plus they take place during summer holidays and respondents have a different programme planned (e.g, a camp counselor)
- it is better to finish studies first and then have a taste of money (fear of not wanting to return to school anymore)
- three FG participants went to Erasmus with their secondary schools and they have good experience (one- to two-week stays), but they think it is complicated at universities
- because the programme is short, it cannot be referred to as a study stay
- If they studied a secondary school again, would they go? Some of them would.

 "I studied in the USA for a year and when I returned, I realized I would like to travel a lot. And since then, I have been travelling around the world, east, west, anywhere. But not with school. I would never want to go anywhere abroad to study."

 "If I had no problems and nothing would keep me here, I would not go to Erasmus anyway, but I would have gone somewhere by myself."

 "I work at school, so it wouldn't be interesting to me. What could I do there? I would be doing the same somewhere else."

 "For a few days I would go."

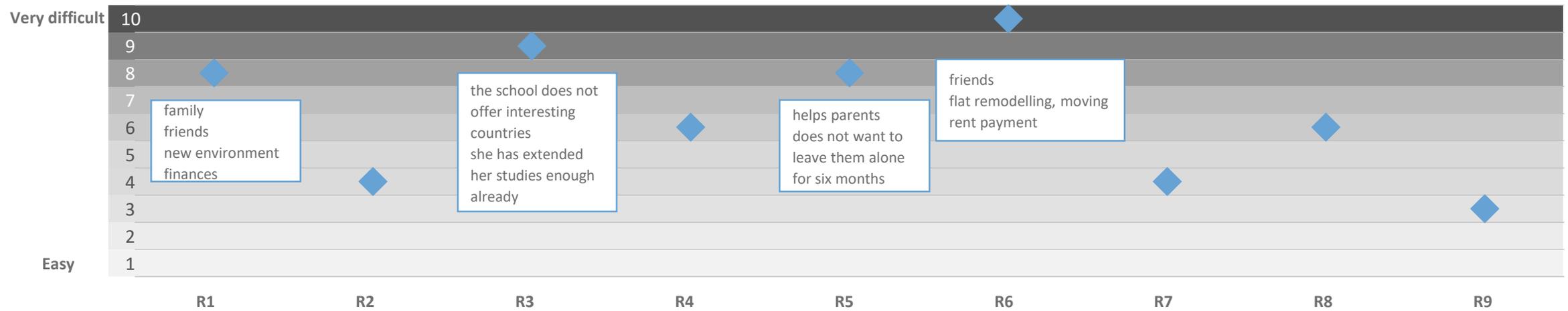
### Finances

- from others, respondents know that grants cover only a part of expenses, often only accommodation, sometimes only the travel
  - in countries where salaries are three times higher than in the Czech Republic, the cost of food and other needs is considerably higher than in the Czech Republic
- they are not able to clearly answer whether this issue could be solved by increasing the grants; they are rather inclined to believe that it would be good to allocate cheaper rooms for Erasmus students at dorms (reciprocally between universities) or provide alternative housing
  - with a “room for room” principle though, some universities may complain about the different quality of accommodation at dorms
- you can save money for a two-week stay, but not for six months

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

How difficult it would be if they had to travel now before the end of their university studies



# Gr. No. 7

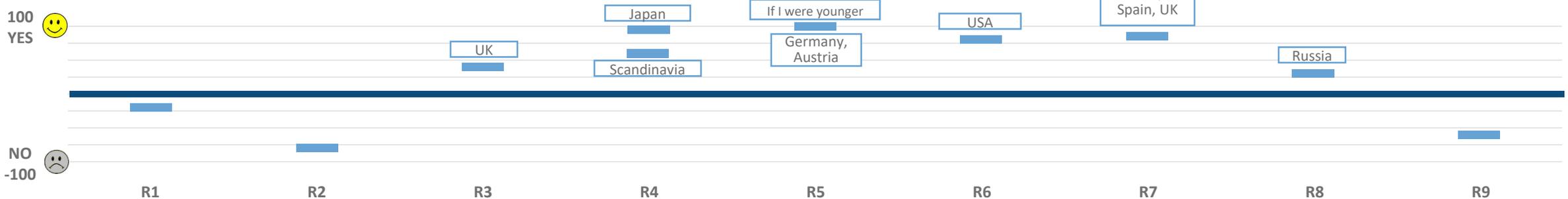
## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Answer sheets

#### Reasons for not going and obstacles

- |  |  |   |   |  |  |   |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>R1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finances</li> <li>family</li> <li>stress from the unknown environment</li> </ul> | <p><b>R2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I do not want to STUDY abroad</li> <li>money</li> <li>extension of university studies</li> </ul> | <p><b>R3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uninteresting countries</li> <li>a lot of bureaucracy</li> <li>a very short time - by the time you get used to being there you have to leave</li> <li>friends and family</li> </ul> | <p><b>R4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal reasons - practical somebody has to look after the flat and the cabin</li> <li>not very interesting positive effects on career</li> <li>social anxiety disorder</li> </ul> | <p><b>R5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finances</li> <li>family reasons</li> <li>age</li> </ul> | <p><b>R6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>family, boyfriend</li> <li>finances</li> <li>flat remodelling</li> <li>start somewhere from the beginning</li> </ul> | <p><b>R7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school does not allow a mobility in BP</li> <li>I did not like the selection much</li> <li>a little fear of a foreign language</li> </ul> | <p><b>R8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>during bachelor's studies because of results - prolonging</li> <li>currently due to locations that are being offered</li> <li>I've seen enough abroad, so I'm particularly attracted to Russia only (or the Baltics)</li> </ul> | <p><b>R9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>law is linked to a specific country and I need to study Czech or European law</li> <li>laws of other EU Member States are not relevant to me</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|

They would have gone if there were no current obstacles and if the school offered it



Respondents admit that if they were in the second or third year now, they would be more inclined to travel.

## Answer sheets

### What they think they have missed

R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, I was able to go but since I have experience with that from the secondary grammar school, I'm not going.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it makes you a little more "mature"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expanding the knowledge of culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language enhancements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiences, a longer stay and living abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contacts with other foreign students</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contacts</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knowledge of the country, experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience(s)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a good item for resume</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiences and adventures associated with the mobility</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>practical experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>friendships from studies</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how things work in architectural studios in foreign countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vocabulary of my field in another language other than Czech and English</li> </ul>	

### What should be on the Erasmus + posters that would appeal to you, what the school should do for Erasmus

R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ability to travel with somebody else</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>travel is the only thing that will make you richer, if you buy it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>selection of countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some guarantee of return on investment (financial, time, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet more people who have been abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bonus money while studying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a specific city / interesting architect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearer orientation in red tape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school should use students who have successfully participated in Erasmus and show them to other students as an example – what have they experienced and what it gave them, etc. to motivate others to also participate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>friend/girlfriend</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fewer troubles on return-&gt;</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personally, to start a university earlier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>something that would motivate me more to go</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specific traineeship in a very interesting place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a greater selection of foreign universities</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prolonging studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would be motivated by presentations directly from past participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>instead of providing information just on a notice board and in an editorial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access at school, better possibilities reaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some support from the school so that a student goes for Erasmus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>better harmonization of objects to avoid the necessity of prolonging the study</li> </ul>	

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### The Court of Justice \*

PROSECUTION	DEFENSE
it prolong studies	
The language benefit may not be as good if the teacher does not speak perfectly	It depends on everybody what they take from it, you will certainly learn more than at home
The content of classes may not be the same as in the Czech Republic	The concept of higher education institutions in Europe is different than in the Czech Republic and it is a great life experience
	Meeting other people, contacts
	Erasmus participants divide their life between "life before Erasmus" and "life after Erasmus", a significant impact
Finance – in the countries with the largest grants they paid only for housing, e.g. Scandinavia	It depends on how you do it. If you really want to, you can pay up the difference.
You can save up money for a holiday, but not for six months abroad	If it is worth it for you, you can save money in advance.
I'm not going anywhere in summer and I will try to make as much as possible	
For my friends, the grant only paid for the dorm. Staying in private accommodation is pointless.	
They should take care of this at the hosting university	
Students are not allowed to travel in the bachelor's programme (ideal is second and third year)	The university must know the student whom it will invest money into
	In the first year, you have to get to know the school, find out how it works
Abuse – some students choose a school based on whether it offers Erasmus or not	
Some conditions are not known until you arrive	Usually everything is known before the departure
Sometimes a student must take some examinations in the Czech Republic and so on in the middle of his/her stay	Some form of control is needed even during the stay
	It also depends on how strictly conditions at every school are set



*"Sometimes it's scary to go abroad alone, but if you have to deal with everything yourself, it will boost your confidence that you did it..."*

\* Respondents do not necessarily have to say their own opinion, but most of the time it is reflected in their answers. Grey-coloured text was mentioned by the moderator, white are reactions by participants.

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### The Court of Justice \*

PROSECUTION	DEFENSE
Mobility causes family problems, breakdowns, etc.	So does a bachelor's thesis
My friend broke up with her boyfriend	I cannot imagine how Erasmus could support a long-distance relationship
It seems petty, but it's important (without children it's still easier)	It is possible for a couple to travel together
	It can make the relationship stronger; the question is if the one that did not last was the right one
	This claim seems meaningless to me, there are other long-distance relationships... there was a compulsory military service before
	We have social media, phones, so it's not as terrible as 15 or 20 years ago
Students become arrogant, they think they are something more	There can be other reasons
This happened to a friend, he studied at a high school in th USA and he terribly changed for the worse	One respondent also encounter this, but she does not think it is because of th stay abroad, but because of the person's character
Another respondent also has a bad experience with a classmate who studied in the USA	In the USA, you must protect yourself from this
	One respondent knows the opposite – everybody who has returned from Erasmus has been more modest and friendlier
	They talked about it so nicely <i>"now I know what it looks like in Switzerland, even though I've never been there"</i>
Students lose their "drive"	The drive will be the same, just different. It will be different in a certain way.
	It has been become common also at work – people can leave for six months, if they find a substitute
	It can amazingly kick-start and energize you and give you a new energy for work.
	It can happen if a student hangs out with bad company
	Every return back to a normal "life" is challenging, not only from Erasmus



*"Every country has its own style. But that's exactly the beauty of Erasmus, to get to know them instead of reprobating."*

\* Respondents do not necessarily have to say their own opinion, but most of the time it is reflected in their answers. Grey-coloured text was mentioned by the moderator, white are reactions by participants.

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### The Court of Justice \*

PROSECUTION	DEFENSE
Students got to enjoy a holiday	There are insurance policies, control mechanisms, a student must meet various obligations there
	Candidates must have a certain average (good, e.g. better than 1.5)
Student receives a lower level of education than he/she would get here	It probably depends on a specific school
	"I think that Czech schools are not quite on the top"
	Schools should be verified

\* Respondents do not necessarily have to say their own opinion, but most of the time it is reflected in their answers. Grey-coloured text was mentioned by the moderator, white are reactions by participants.

# Gr. No. 7

## NON-PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### The Court of Justice \*

DEFENCE, praise	PROSECUTION
The best way to learn the language	<i>"I do not really think so"</i> – in non-English speaking schools and with Erasmus students with a different mother tongue than English. But it is true for professional terminology.
It is a good element for improving the language.	
You are more pushed to do this than when you take German three times a week in the Czech Republic. An hour later, I don't think about the language anymore.	
When you are abroad, you start thinking in that particular language.	
Stays increase confidence, self-confidence.	
Most participants agree.	<i>"Not at the beginning, but later yes."</i>
Getting contacts, both personal and professional.	
Most participants agree.	
Openness to other cultures, other nations.	Either you are open or not. Both here and there.
	You can also meet representatives of the nation who are not behaving the way you would imagine, and this can create some prejudice.
Erasmus participants can find a job more easily.	It depends on the field of education
Probably so if you study languages	<i>"I don't think it's going to get worse, but..."</i> it is not such a striking difference
These can be positive points for being independent	
It can be assumed that he/she knows the language better and solves problems more easily	
For international firms, this can play a role, showing the willingness to travel	
Someone can directly find contacts for a new job	

 *"It's one of the best ways to learn a language."*

\* Respondents do not necessarily have to say their own opinion, but most of the time it is reflected in their answers. Grey-coloured text was mentioned by the moderator, white are reactions by participants.

### Final messages for Erasmus

- work more closely with Czech schools so they know how to better communicate about it
- simplify and harmonise conditions, simplify administration
- make mobilities less financially demanding
- offer a wide selection of countries and universities
- simplify the initial orientation so that one has a desire to look at it at all
  - options are not visible at schools' websites
  - in some schools, the access to the Erasmus website is complicated
- provide a software for filling forms
- publish (easily accessible) reviews of foreign schools

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Main selection criteria of where to travel

- finances (how much it will cost)
- language (country), a highest interest in English, more difficult to get there
  - it is common to choose another destination or another language, if the preferred one is not available
- field of education

## Main reasons for participation

- to learn a language
- to get to know a different culture
- life challenge
- a different teaching style
- expectation of better teaching quality
- coincidence, free openings

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

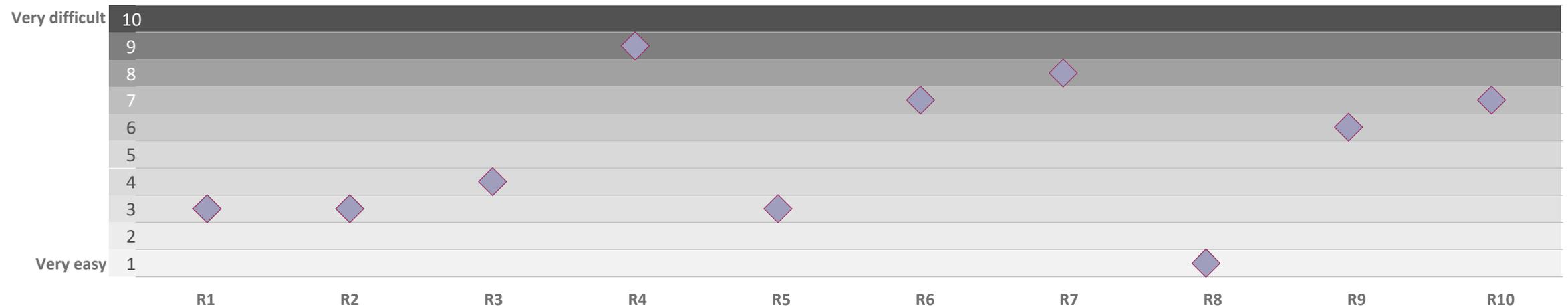
## The complexity of mobility (how difficult was it before the mobility)

- about one half of participants in the group talks about an easy way towards participation
- the other half considers it rather complicated

according to them, it depends on the sending school and personal circumstances

R8 changed school so he could go abroad more easily

 "The process of paperwork at Bata University was resolved with an online platform; it is great, inspiration for other schools."



# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Main reasons against participation

- concerns about finishing studies at a regular time limit (somewhere also preparation in advance, studying more subjects)
- fear of mastering independence
- financial concerns
  - depends on the country/city
  - somewhere a part-time job or a loan is needed
- personal reasons
- health condition
- difficulties with getting accepted into Erasmus (at some schools/faculties without problems, everyone can go, at others, there is a wait, then you go somewhere else than you wanted)

 "Not just to be there, but also to enjoy it. When you want to enjoy it, you need to work or get a loan."

 "There was no problem with finance in Portugal; if you cooked for yourself, you had money left to travel."

 "There were bilateral relationships with several universities where everybody went. But I wanted to go to Estonia, so because of me, they started collaboration there, too."

 "The better the partner universities, the harder it is to get there."

 "I even chose university because of a better chance to go somewhere."

 "In Ostrava, it is easy to get accepted, language skills were poor at some faculties."

 "I had to move to Zlín to get to where I wanted."

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## What participants did not expect /what surprised them

### Social impacts

- isolated from the country and the locals
  - only foreign students at the dorm, the dorm was far from the school
  - Cooler, reserved relationships (Portugal)
- isolation (living alone in an apartment)
  -  „For me, Erasmus began only when I started to socialise with others.”
- different mentality (Norway), the necessity of understanding
- breakup with a partner due to separation
- breakup of friendships/ties in the Czech Republic

### Related to studying abroad

- disregarding that a student is a foreigner, the same grading (England)
- study schedule, examinations twice per term, more demanding preparation (Estonia)
  -  "I used to go home from school with migraines."
- a different way of studying (a lot of self-study, discussions, smaller groups)
- even in a non-English speaking country, most subjects are in English
- a great emphasis by the hosting country to show their culture, country (Estonia)
  -  "As a small country (Estonia), they appreciated that there were foreign students. They cared that the students remember them in the best light."
- difficult to concentrate on studies in a new language (Portuguese)
- professors spoke English poorly (art subjects/Turkey)
- no experience with foreign students (the first student)
  -  "They did not know what it means to have a foreign student, they learned it all with me."

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## The Court of Justice \*

PROSECUTION	DEFENCE
it prolongs studies (they did not recognized lectures, attendance)	There is an international credit system that should standardize requirements.
The rules are not clear.	If the extended study is covered by the university, it is OK
They were not helpful.	
It's almost impossible for lawyers to travel abroad.	
People party hard and drink alcohol.	The host university would not tolerate it.
	If they meet their obligations, it is OK.
	In the Czech Republic, it is often easier to do nothing than somewhere else.
	It's a school of life. Social life is often more important than education.
Funding does not reflect reality. It is distinguished according to the country but not according to whether you go to the capital or to a cheaper area.	
I have not been able to choose where I want to live since then. (more likely during a second and subsequent mobility)	It also depends on other circumstances.
Few people think of this "dark side" when thinking about studying abroad.	Each of us has learned a bit about himself/herself.
	It's not that bad here when we look at what's happening in the world
Erasmus destroys human lifes; everything is planned, you leave and it is all different	This would happen even without Erasmus, only later
	It's just a catalyst for all the changes

\* Respondents do not necessarily have to say their own opinion, but most of the time it is reflected in their answers  
 Grey-coloured text was mentioned by the moderator, white are reactions by participants

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## The Court of Justice \*

PROSECUTION	DEFENCE
Mobilities cause financial problems for students	It is not so terrible
	The lump sum was given and you could do the maths
	The cost of 1 term is not devastating
	You learn to manage money without living at the expense of your parents, to make money in advance
	I first flew with a low cost company and I stayed in a hostel.
Employers may be concerned about employing an Erasmus graduate	In an international company this is a big plus
Fears that he/she will quit	A professional smile is the thing in corporations
Concerns about overqualification	Today, it is a necessity to have the same or similar experience,
	it is viewed negatively when you don't have it
	Small and medium-sized companies do not take that into account

\* Respondents do not necessarily have to say their own opinion, but most of the time it is reflected in their answers  
 Grey-coloured text was mentioned by the moderator, white are reactions by participants

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

**Other topics** that have appeared at the "Court of Justice" and undoubtedly reflect respondents' life experience

## Life changes

 *"It's a strong thing when you go abroad. It's like a detonator."*

- a fundamental change of their view of life/study/future work thanks to new information, experience, relationships
- gaining overlook and insight
- speeding up the process of changes that would come over a longer term
- getting to know oneself

 *"The rector of the university had a speech and said: You will get to know yourself. I didn't know what he was talking about, but now I think it's the main idea of the entire Erasmus."*

## Relationships

- loss (but also a test) of some friendships and relationships at home
- loss or weakening of some foreign relationships ("*friends go their own ways*")
- but also establishing strong international personal relationships
- efforts to maintain all contacts, at home and abroad, are very challenging

 *"But on the other hand, you've got international contacts."*

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Travel syndrome/Where to live

- getting to know many interesting places
- after more trips a larger desire to go again
- a strong link to another country (it is my home)
- “they don't know where they belong”
- “carefree” life in another country
- a difficult return to the original life
- but it also makes you appreciate how people live in the Czech Republic

 “There should be some sort of reflection on all the things it can help you start; this is not discussed enough.”

 “It was so good that I could not imagine I was going to study for master’s here.”

 “The smile you put on there is fake... You study, you work, no worries. You don’t have to worry about the everyday life stuff. And the return is cruel and you can feel it, like a mental shock...”

 “It’s not so bad here when we look at what’s happening in the world, in Turkey...”

 “They did not tell us at in the Czech Republic how to prepare an international portfolio. Abroad they will tell you: Go there and there, I’ll introduce you to..., try... For our work, networking is very important. When I returned, I followed on my own.”

## Seeing limited home university options

- a different style of teaching (less debating at home, a lot of “memorizing”)
- perception of disinterest of the home university
- gained experience can be transferred back to the Czech Republic

 “The professor didn't consider me to be a competitor, but a partner. Before that, it would slow down my entire development.”

 “Good for the future of education. In our organisation, who went abroad will start to teach. And these people bring here what they have learned elsewhere.”

 “I got the head of the studio fired, we wrote a petition. There are solutions to what students can do.”

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Largest positives

- essential life experience, personal development
  - getting to know oneself, self-confidence
  - positive outlook over problems, indulgence, respect, tolerance
  - critical thinking/reflection, outlook
  - becoming independent in a foreign environment
    - long-term stay abroad
    - opportunity to go through personal challenges (without friends or family)
- use/improvement of (professional) language skills, presentation skills
- new contacts, social interaction, friendship (lasts until now)
- education, knowledge, way of study, broadening of technical/professional knowledge
- learning about the host country, culture, personalities
- financial independence

## Long-term influences on the current life:

- continuous use of experience in all directions
- use of learned tools and processes
- setting the life direction

very rarely was there no significant impact

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Answer sheets

### Positives

#### R1

- ❖ life experience
- ❖ language refreshment
- ❖ work

#### R2

- ❖ a way of studying sociology abroad
- ❖ long-term stay abroad
- ❖ discussions with peers abroad
- ❖ Italian friends

#### R3

- ❖ improvement of English
- ❖ getting to know different cultures
- ❖ becoming independent
- ❖ travel
- ❖ openness, new horizons

#### R4

- ❖ gaining an outlook, becoming independent in a foreign environment = great life experience
- ❖ getting rid of the shame to talk to strangers of different nationalities
- ❖ getting friends (some until now)
- ❖ foreign language enhancement (English, German)

#### R5

- ❖ new contacts, friendships
- ❖ travel
- ❖ getting to know the culture
- ❖ study aspects => form
- ❖ financial independence
- ❖ outlook

#### R6

- ❖ critical thinking/reflection
- ❖ language skills
- ❖ respect/tolerance
- ❖ new knowledge/ skills
- ❖ problem/crisis solving

#### R7

- ❖ improvement of German
- ❖ learning with better cooperation with fellow students
- ❖ learning to think thinking outside the box
- ❖ first work experience abroad

#### R8

- ❖ great social interaction
- ❖ getting to know cultures, personalities
- ❖ broadening technical knowledge
- ❖ desire to improve, self-study
- ❖ feeling of appreciation
- ❖ positive outlook over problems and indulgence

#### R9

- ❖ learning a new language
- ❖ immersion into another culture
- ❖ opportunity to go through personal challenges (without friends or family)
- ❖ at the end of the stay, an opportunity to learn more of the host country

#### R10

- ❖ English!
- ❖ education/inspiration for a future mobility
- ❖ friendships that last to date
- ❖ broadening horizons
- ❖ improvement in my field

# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Negative moments and negative impact

- expectations of a better organisation
  - information in advance (so that tests do not have to be taken again)
  - use of experience by the home university/expectations of greater openness of teachers (“they think they are on the top”)
  - a substitute has to make last-minute arrangements (limited accommodation, subjects)
  - at a foreign university, it is harder to orient, what lectures to choose
- relationship breakup
- studying in a language other than was originally chosen
- mentally demanding
- difficult to deal with differences in the Czech Republic and abroad
- rarely an insufficient stimulation, few contacts



*“Inability to reconcile with the fact that I live here in the Czech Republic in society of grumpy people who complain all the time.” Maybe it’s only that we are normal and we do not want to live with the abnormal ones and the mobility will just make us realise it.”*

# Gr. No. 8

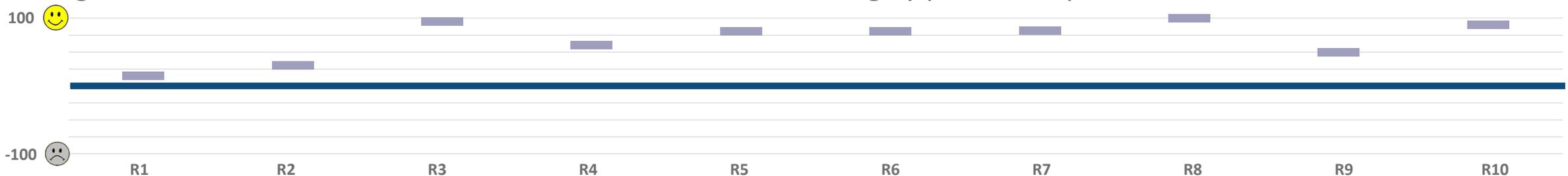
## FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

### Answer sheets

#### Negatives

- |   |  |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>R1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stress from lacking organisation</li> <li>exams again at home</li> </ul>  | <p><b>R2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a world of itself - nothing like that before or after</li> </ul>   | <p><b>R3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have failed to make more contacts with local, as I would have liked</li> </ul>   | <p><b>R4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the problem of going for Erasmus at the home university</li> <li>I was a substitute, i.e. I made arrangements in December, my stay was supposed to begin in February, duly registered students started arrangements in June =&gt; everything was done hastily, smaller selection</li> </ul>         | <p><b>R5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relationship breakup</li> <li>more efforts to obtain the degree (not all tests were recognised)</li> <li>lot of alcohol =)</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>R6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>difficult to understand the environment/programme/plan</li> <li>it was really cold in winter</li> <li>contact with Czech students at the home university</li> </ul> | <p><b>R7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>price differences</li> <li>everyday life</li> <li>impossibility to use BAVOG in the Czech Republic</li> <li>examinations taken in the Czech Republic not recognised</li> <li>insufficient scholarship</li> </ul> | <p><b>R8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inability to stay in one place</li> <li>-&gt; inability to accept society in the Czech Republic as one's own</li> <li>-&gt; i.e. a permanent search for a place to live</li> </ul> | <p><b>R9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only a limited benefit professionally</li> <li>no strong contacts that would survive to this day</li> <li>impossibility to study in English, only in Portuguese</li> <li>a lack of interest in feedback to my university on how to improve the organisation at the receiving institution</li> </ul> | <p><b>R10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>loneliness</li> <li>maintaining relationships in the Czech Republic was demanding</li> <li>demanding on "brain", especially the beginning</li> <li>finance -&gt; difficult</li> </ul> |

Negatives are more common in this FG, but all scores indicate largely positive impact:



# Gr. No. 8 FORMER ERASMUS PARTICIPANTS

## Answer sheets

### Recommendations for students to travel

- Definitely **YES**
  - Recommendations to overcome fear
  - Recommendations to try it
  - Expect great life benefits

**R1**

Don't worry and go ahead  
you won't regret it  
What won't kill you will make  
you stronger

**R2**

Be sure to go, you can't make a mistake.  
When you are there, be open and don't  
spend too much time with Czech students;  
you can talk to those back at home.

**R3**

Dear student, don't be stupid and go abroad for  
Erasmus or another program, it's the best thing you  
can do. Experience for a lifetime, its benefits will  
outlast your negative expectations. Don't be afraid.

**R4**

One should try everything! Especially  
during university studies, the opportunity  
to study abroad is a great opportunity for  
personal and professional development!

**R5**

If you don't want to go, don't worry. You  
may miss some experiences, but it is not  
the end of the world. If you hesitate, try  
connecting to the local ESN to find out  
that not going is stupid.

**R6**

Why are you studying at university if you  
do not want to change or improve your  
science, society and economy, which you  
can do thanks to Erasmus; you will learn  
how to be open to new ideas and  
knowledge.

**R7**

Erasmus will allow you to familiarize  
yourself with another way of studying  
and establish long-term friendship. It is  
a unique (life) learning experience.

**R8**

Don't be a fool, go... You will find  
yourself, you will find others, but  
be prepared to keep looking after  
that.  
Be strong and go.

**R9**

Yesterday was late! :) I first went abroad for a long time  
at secondary school and it was an ideal age. The older  
you are, the less flexible you may be, the more you  
worry, the less open you are and the less you may profit  
from Erasmus.

**R10**

Don't be afraid and go. It's one of the  
best experiences you can get.  
Go and make the most out of it!

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