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INTERNACIONALIZĀCIJAS ATTĪSTĪBA  
AUGSTĀKĀS IZGLĪTĪBAS JOMĀ,  
IZMANTOJOT NACIONĀLOS UN ES FONDUS:  
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MAĢISTRA DARBS

Autors: Dita Usāre

Studenta apliecības Nr.: du15012

Darba vadītāja: profesore Dr. oec. Biruta Sloka

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DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE FIELD OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FRAMEWORK  
OF NATIONAL AND EU FUNDING:  
LATVIA AND SWEDEN IN 2014-2017

MASTER THESIS

Author: Dita Usāre

Student ID card No.: du15012

Scientific advisor: professor dr.oec. Biruta Sloka

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## ABSTRACT

In 1999 Latvia started its way towards internationalization in higher education field, when the Bologna Process in higher education was introduced. Joining to European Union (EU) promoted opening of the borders in Europe. This caused new forms of collaboration and establishment of programmes among countries in various fields. However, internationalization in higher education field for Sweden has developed in different pace than for Latvia.

The **aim** of the master thesis is to research and evaluate development of internationalization in higher education field in the framework of national and EU funds both in Latvia and Sweden and to uncover aspects that Latvia should improve in its development of internationalization in higher education field.

In order to achieve the aim of the master's thesis several tasks were set, including research of reality of development of internationalization in higher education both in Latvia and Sweden, investigating the evaluation of student opinions provided about development of internationalization in higher education in Latvia, exploring both advantages and disadvantages of the topic, as well as development of proposals to improve the development of internationalization in higher education in Latvia.

In the framework of research of different theoretical and methodological sources, comparative analysis and questionnaire of students both in Latvia and Sweden, it is concluded that both in Latvia and Sweden the development of internationalization is in average level, therefore, several aspects still have to be improved in higher education field.

**Keywords:** Latvia, Sweden, internationalization, higher education, European Union, questionnaire, comparative analysis.

## ANOTĀCIJA

Latvija 1999. gadā uzsāka virzību internacionalizācijas attīstībā augstākajā izglītībā, kad augstākajā izglītībā tika ieviests Boloņas process. Pievienošanās Eiropas Savienībai veicināja robežu atvēršanu ar valstīm Eiropā. Tas veicināja jaunas sadarbības formas un dažādu programmu izveidi starp valstīm dažādās jomās. Tomēr Zviedrijā internacionalizācija augstākās izglītības jomā ir attīstījusies citādākā tempā, nekā Latvijā.

Maģistra darba **mērķis** ir izpētīt un izvērtēt internacionalizācijas attīstību Latvijā un Zviedrijā augstākās izglītības jomā, izmantojot nacionālos un ES fondus, kā arī identificēt faktorus, kas Latvijai būtu jāattīsta augstākās izglītības internacionalizācijas attīstībā.

Lai sasniegtu maģistra darba mērķi, tika izvirzīti vairāki uzdevumi, tai skaitā, internacionalizācijas augstākajā izglītībā izpēte gan Latvijā, gan Zviedrijā, studentu vērtējuma analīze par internacionalizācijas attīstību augstākajā izglītībā Latvijā un Zviedrijā, apskatot tēmas gan stiprās, gan vājās puses, kā arī tiek izvirzīti priekšlikumi internacionalizācijas attīstībai Latvijā augstākās izglītības jomā.

Pētījuma ietvaros izpētot dažādus teorētiskos un metodoloģiskos avotus, veicot salīdzinošo analīzi un veicot studentu Latvijā un Zviedrijā aptauju, tika secināts, ka internacionalizācijas attīstība abās valstīs ir vidējā līmenī, līdz ar to vairāki aspekti internacionalizācijas jomā vēl būtu jāattīsta.

**Atslēgas vārdi:** Latvija, Zviedrija, internacionalizācija, augstākā izglītība, Eiropas Savienība, aptauja, salīdzinošā analīze.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the development of globalization promotes a frequent usage of intercultural communication in everyday life. If people regularly communicate with their friends, colleagues or acquaintances who have different cultural background, usually a few features from this culture can be adopted. Therefore, lately a growing interest in the area of internationalization has been observed.

In 1999 Latvia started its way towards internationalization in higher education field, when the Bologna Process in higher education was introduced. In the framework of Bologna Process joint degree system was introduced in all member countries, as well as ECTS credit system, which is now well-known in whole Europe. Moreover, Bologna Process also improves opportunities for mobility of students and staff, as well as for internationalization of higher education systems and institutions.

In May, 2004 Latvia together with ten other countries, including Estonia and Lithuania, joined European Union (EU). Joining to EU promoted opening of the borders among Europe. This caused new forms of collaboration and establishment of programmes among countries in various fields.

However, Sweden has joined EU already 10 years earlier than Latvia – in 1994 and then, 5 years later – Bologna Process was introduced, where Sweden took part as well. Therefore, internationalization in higher education field for Sweden has developed in different pace than for Latvia. There are various good practices that can also be adopted for case of Latvia higher education system.

Since Latvia is now full EU member, borders for students are opened, that promotes usage of opportunities for study abroad wider and easier accessible. For students it is a significant opportunity to gain new knowledge and experience that they would not gain studying only at their home university. However, there are different possibilities that can be used by universities in the framework of national and EU funds – for teachers, students, researchers, scientists, as well as for university at institutional level.

One of the most common tools how internationalization is improved in higher education institutions, is the usage of EU funds. Most commonly known programmes, such as Erasmus+, European Structural and Investment Funds, now implement the cycle from 2014 until 2020. This master thesis includes the analysis of the period from 2014 until 2017, since the implementation of the six years period 2014 – 2020 has reached its middle point. Therefore, the results reached among EU funds in the period from 2014 until 2017 can be the basis for the further implementation periods in the framework of both national and EU funds.

Different researchers (e.g. Knight, Margardt) have studied the topic of internationalization in higher education in theoretical, global, national, local, as well as institutional level.

The **aim** of the master's thesis is to research and evaluate development of internationalization in higher education field in the framework of national and EU funds both in Latvia and Sweden and to uncover aspects that Latvia should improve in its development of internationalization in higher education field.

Therefore, before the study design, two **research questions** were defined:

1. What is the reality of internationalization in higher education both in Latvia and Sweden?
2. How can development of internationalization in higher education in Latvia be improved?

To achieve the aim of the master's thesis several **tasks** were set:

1. To analyse findings in academic literature and studies on the meaning of internationalization and its significance in higher education;
2. To analyse the reality of internationalization in higher education both in Latvia and Sweden described by EU superior institutions;
3. To analyse the improvement of results of internationalization in higher education in the period from 2014 – 2017;
4. To compare the realities of both Latvia and Sweden according to European Mobility Scoreboard and Eurostudent data;
5. To investigate the evaluation of student opinions provided about development of internationalization in higher education in Latvia, explore both advantages and disadvantages of the topic;
6. To develop proposals to improve the development of internationalization in higher education in Latvia.

The Master thesis includes a wide range of theoretical and methodological sources used: academic literature, scientific publications, statistics provided by Latvian and Swedish sources, information provided by European Commission and European Council, articles published by different foreign media, questionnaire of students about development of internationalization in higher education in Latvia.

To achieve the aim of the Master thesis several research methods were used: literature review on studies in scientific publications, situation analysis, comparative analysis, questionnaire of students both in Latvia and Sweden. Comparative analysis is used as a

qualitative method, while questionnaire is used both as quantitative and qualitative method in this research.

The master thesis is structured into three chapters. The first chapter includes review of theoretical resources regarding internationalization in the field of higher education. The second chapter provides the situation analysis of development of internationalization in higher education both in Sweden and Latvia in the period from 2014 to 2017. The third chapter includes empirical research (comparative analysis of the situation both in Latvia and Sweden, analysis of results of questionnaire of students both in Latvia and Sweden). Afterwards, conclusions and proposals are provided.

# 1. CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

Today almost all products and services are internationalised and available on the world market, confirms Margardt.<sup>1</sup> This is the reason why it is significant to consider the situation of internationalization in different field institutions in order to provide the product that is appropriate and topical for a potential client.

When researching the term “internationalization” in the scientific literature, both definitions and explanations are available for different fields. There are several definitions of term “internationalization” which meaning is entirely general and also adaptable to different fields of internationalization. For instance, scholars Thompson and Martin discuss the definition provided by Yanacek in 1988<sup>2</sup> that internationalization may be viewed as an approach to management which allows an organization to integrate domestic and international opportunities with internal resources.

Furthermore, internationalism can also be defined as orientation towards collaboration among nations, non-governmental organisations of different countries; observance of international agreements and certificates, especially in politics, economics, and culture.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, Haijing de Haan expresses her opinion that “the meaning of internationalization includes everything that relates to international, meanwhile internationalization is losing its meaning.”<sup>4</sup> That is the reason why the author of the article proposed a practical approach in 2014 to clarify this concept providing different interpretations of the definition among Dutch practitioners.

During the research of the term “internationalization”, two definitions provided by Business Dictionary can be observed. The first definition is provided in the field of commerce: “the growing tendency of corporations to operate across national boundaries”. The second definition is provided in the field of marketing and computing: “an approach to designing products and services that are easily adaptable to different cultures and languages.”<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, one of the most common fields where term “internationalization” can be commonly discussed, is entrepreneurship. According to Piercy (1981), Turnbull (1985) internationalization in this field is described as an outward movement of a firm's operations.

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<sup>1</sup> Margardt, D. *A critical comparison of Internationalisation theories: Electic Paradigm of Dunning vs. Uppsala school*. University of Applied Sciences: 2007. Page: 1

<sup>2</sup> Yanacek, F., The road to exports, *Transportation and Distribution*. Vol. 29 (2), 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Beļickis I., Blūma D., Koķe T., Markus D., Skujiņa V., Šalme A. Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca. Zvaigzne ABC (Rīga): 2000. Page: 71.

<sup>4</sup> De Haan, H., Internationalization: Interpretations Among Dutch Practitioners. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. 2014. Vol. 18 Page: 241,

<sup>5</sup> Business Dictionary. Retrieved on 25 March, 2018 from: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/internationalization.html>

However, the author argues that this expression can be developed to describe internationalization as “the process of increasing involvement in international operations”.<sup>6</sup>

According to Margardt, internationalization can be defined more exactly as the name “international” predicts as an international network between companies of different nations which means in most cases industrialised nations.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, Mario Krist in his book reviews definitions of internationalization in the field of entrepreneurship and provides his own definition narrowing it to the definition of multinational firms: “firms which undertake value creating activities in more than one country”.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, researchers from Sweden’s Uppsala University in 1970-ies proposed the definition for internationalization of the firm which is now well-known in entrepreneurial field as “Uppsala Model”: “The Uppsala model of gradual incremental steps to international business expansion is based on a series of incremental decisions, whose successive steps are based on learning and knowledge acquisition about the foreign market and operation.”<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, even if there are several definitions of the term “internationalization” provided in different fields (with higher frequency in entrepreneurship), the largest amount of resources in this context is found in the field of education, especially in higher education. The theoretical overview of internationalization in the field of higher education is provided in further section of the paper.

According to Lars Engwall from Uppsala University in Sweden, internationalization is often mentioned in university strategies nowadays. “Strong efforts are made by university leaders to strengthen their position in a global market. A central factor behind this tendency is the global rankings of academic institutions.”<sup>10</sup>

The following section includes the analysis of development of internationalization concept in the field of higher education. Furthermore, in this section different types and selections of internationalization that are provided by several scholars are reviewed. Additionally, comparison of globalization and internationalization subjects is provided, since both of these definitions are closely linked in the in the field of higher education.

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<sup>6</sup> Gronwald K.D., *Global Communication and Collaboration*. Springer: 2017. Page: 52

<sup>7</sup> Margardt, D. *A critical comparison of Internationalisation theories: Electic Paradigm of Dunning vs. Uppsala school*. University of Applied Sciences: 2007. Page: 1

<sup>8</sup> Krist M. *Internationalization and Firm Performance: The Role of Intangible Resources*. Gabler: 2009. Page: 4

<sup>9</sup> Rajendren Pandian J., Sim A.B. *Internationalisation Process: Revisiting the Uppsala Model in the Asian Context*. University of Wollongong, Australia: 2002. Page: 3-4. Retrieved on 25 March, 2018 from: <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1844&context=commpapers>

<sup>10</sup> Engwall L. *The Internationalisation of Higher Education*. *European Review*, Vol. 24. Academia Europa: 2016. Page: 1. Retrieved on 20 March, 2018 from: [https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3366/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/2EA32746C19C7AB59C7BDB44514DDA23/S1062798715000575a.pdf/internationalisation\\_of\\_higher\\_education.pdf](https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3366/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/2EA32746C19C7AB59C7BDB44514DDA23/S1062798715000575a.pdf/internationalisation_of_higher_education.pdf)

## 1.1. Development of Internationalization

According to scholars, terms connected with international collaboration were used in higher education field already around 50 years ago: such terms as “international cooperation”, “international relations”, “international education” were commonly used terms in higher education. “These concepts were usually defined in terms of activities such as development project, foreign students, and international academic and cultural agreements.”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, according to OECD publication, another term appeared as a result of the birth of a middle class in certain emerging economies: “cross – border education”. “The demand for cross-border education has increased of students’ desire for international experience and of increased ease of international mobility.”<sup>12</sup>

According to OECD, cross-border education is supposed as a second dimension of internationalisation – “it refers to situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders.”<sup>13</sup>

According to J.R. Verlag, at the end of 1980s, internationalisation was commonly defined at the institutional level and in terms of a set of activities.<sup>14</sup> The definition provided by Arum and Van de Water is a good example of this approach. According to the author, internationalisation refers to “the multiple activities, programmes and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation.”<sup>15</sup>

After providing the definition for the term “internationalisation”, it gradually emerged. Various study activities such as studying abroad, foreign language courses, institutional agreements, as well as area studies were added to the definition of the term. “As internationalisation moves into the first part of the 21st century, the emerging elements show an increasing orientation of academic mobility which includes students, research, programmes and providers moving across borders, and a greater orientation to commercial and market driven activities than development projects. At the same time, there is substantial growth of international academic networks and partnerships which are based on mutual benefits and

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<sup>11</sup> Teferra D., Knight J. *Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension*. Center for International Higher Education, Boston College and Association of African Universities: 2008. Page: 13

<sup>12</sup> Education Policy Analysis: Focus on Higher Education. 2005-2006. OECD: 2006. Page: 72

<sup>13</sup> Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges. OECD: 2004. Retrieved on 25 March, 2018 from [https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3877/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education\\_9789264015067-en](https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3877/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education_9789264015067-en). Page: 19

<sup>14</sup> ICEF Monitor. EAIE measures the state of internationalisation in Europe. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/05/eaie-measures-the-state-of-internationalisation-in-europe/>

<sup>15</sup> European Association for International Education. *The EAIE Barometer. Internationalisation in Europe*. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: [http://obiret-iesalc.udg.mx/sites/default/files/publicaciones/3.\\_eaie\\_barometer\\_extended\\_executive\\_summary\\_0.pdf](http://obiret-iesalc.udg.mx/sites/default/files/publicaciones/3._eaie_barometer_extended_executive_summary_0.pdf)

collaboration. Therefore, both for-profit and non-profit internationalisation activities are growing.”<sup>16</sup>

By the mid-nineties a process or organisational approach was introduced by Jane Knight who is one of the most commonly mentioned authors in the resources where internationalization in higher education is discussed researched. According to the researcher, internationalization was defined as the “process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution”.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, Knight in 2003 updated the definition of internationalization: the term at different levels (national, sector, and institutional) is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.”<sup>18</sup>

According to Knight, now internationalization is increasingly characterized by competition, commercialization, self-interest, and status building. “More attention is called for discovering truths and values underpinning the internationalization of higher education.”<sup>19</sup>

According to Surock, nowadays a good internationalisation strategy positions a university in the global knowledge production networks, where different cooperation and competition strategies are involved (both at the international and national levels). Moreover, a clever usage of digital technologies has to be taken into account. “While in the past, institutions could be defined by their primary orientation (local, regional, national, European, international), today they tend to operate seamlessly on all levels.”<sup>20</sup>

However, Robson in his research emphasizes that internationalization has become an increasingly important phenomenon for the higher education sector in many countries<sup>21,22</sup>. “Internationalization has been positively presented as a means to increase the range of international activities within universities and between universities<sup>23</sup> including international

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<sup>16</sup> Teferra D., Knight J. *Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension*. Center for International Higher Education, Boston College and Association of African Universities: 2008. Page: 13

<sup>17</sup> Knight, J. *Updating the Definition of Internationalization*. A Quaterly Publication No. 33. The Boston College Center for International Higher Education. 2003. Retrieved on 25 March, 2018 from: <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/7391/6588>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Mihut G., Altbach P.G., Wit H. *Understanding Higher Education Internationalization: Insights from Key Global Publications*. Sense Publishers: 2017 Page: 15

<sup>20</sup> Surock A., *Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities*. European University Association Publications: 2015. Page: 26 Retrieved from: <http://www.eua.be/Libraries/higher-education/trends-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

<sup>21</sup> International Association of Universities (IAU). (2005). Statement on internationalization: Towards a century of cooperation: Internationalization of higher education. Retrieved from [http://www.iau-aiu.net/internationalization/i\\_statement.html](http://www.iau-aiu.net/internationalization/i_statement.html)

<sup>22</sup> Middlehurst, R., & Woodfield, S. Research project report 05/06: Responding to the internationalisation agenda: Implications for institutional strategy. Higher Education Academy, 22 January 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Knight, J. *Internationalization: A decade of changes and challenges*. International Higher Education, Page: 6–7, 2008

research collaboration and application for societal impact <sup>24</sup>; <sup>25</sup>; <sup>26</sup>and the numbers of international students and academic staff.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, the authors of the book “Teaching International Students: Improving Learning for All” have developed strategies for normalising internationalization of curriculum. The strategy in total includes 14 stages: starting from clear written conceptualisation and rationale for internationalisation generally, adoption of a clear definition of internationalisation for universities, followed by identifying internationalization in all relevant university plans, and eventually finishing provision of organisational and staff development that promotes the identification of internationalization as a priority area in curriculum of the university, followed by internal and external communications with an aim to promote the importance of internationalization among internal and external target groups of universities. Therefore, the authors of the strategy conclude that internationalization of curriculum should be seen as “dynamic process which, much like the process of internationalization itself, affords staff and students the opportunity to own the process of their own learning and knowledge production.”<sup>28</sup>

However, Knight J. also emphasizes that internationalization as such is a process of change – “tailored to meet individual needs and interests of each higher education entity. Consequently, there is no “one size fits all” model of internationalization.”<sup>29</sup>

## **1.2. Significance of Internationalization**

Descriptions of internationalization in higher education provided by scholars include different perspectives why internationalization is necessary and significant for universities.

For instance, OECD research reports that one of the main goals of providing internationalisation in higher education is to provide the most appropriate education to students, who will be the citizens, entrepreneurs and scientists of tomorrow. “Internationalisation is not an end in itself, but a driver for change and improvement – it

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<sup>24</sup> Bennell, B., & Pearce, T. *The internationalization of higher education: Exporting education to developing and transitional economies*. International Journal of Educational Development, 23(2), Page: 215–232. 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Deem, R., Mok, K.H., & Lucas, L. *Transforming higher education in whose image? Exploring the concept of the ‘world-class’ university in Europe and Asia*. Higher Education Policy, Page: 21, 83–97. 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Teichler, U. *The changing debate on internationalisation in higher education*. Higher education, 2004, 48(1), Page: 12

<sup>27</sup> Robson, S. *Internationalization: a transformative agenda for higher education?* Teachers and teaching: theory and practice. 2011. Page: 621

<sup>28</sup> Caroll J., Ryan, J. *Teaching International Students: Improving Learning for All*. Routledge: 2005. Page: 115

<sup>29</sup> Mihut G., Altbach F.P., de Wit H. *Understanding Higher Education Internationalization: Insights from Key Global Publications*. Sense Publishers: 2017. Page: 14-5.

should help generate the skills required in the 21st century, spur on innovation and create alternatives while, ultimately, fostering job creation.”<sup>30</sup>

It is possible to look at significance of internationalization not only at global level, but also at national or governmental level. OECD research points out that internationalization for governments promotes the development of national university systems in broader and global framework. Furthermore, the report includes also the significance of production of skilled labour force, more concretely identifying the necessary skills for potential workforce, where global awareness and multi-cultural competencies are important for an employee. Furthermore, internationalization at governmental level promotes the usage of public higher education funds to promote national participation in the global knowledge economy, as well as to benefit from trade in education services.<sup>31</sup>

However, Rebecca Hughes, research associate, manifests little doubt, and that internationalisation of higher education is a phenomenon which brings benefits and enormous new challenges to governments and institutional policy makers worldwide. However, the author, similarly as OECD report, has tackled the benefits of labour and innovation that are developed within the impact of internationalization: “incentives for countries to internationalise are generally categorised under four broad areas (OECD, 2004): growth in mutual understanding, the migration of skilled labour, revenue generation, as well as capacity building.”<sup>32</sup>

While Hughes explains the significance of internationalization from quite global point of view, Henard, Diamond, and Roseveare characterizes internationalisation as a “two-way street”. Authors have reviewed the importance of internationalization from student perspective – it can help students achieve their goals to obtain a quality education and pursue research. “It gives students an opportunity for “real world, real time” experiential learning in areas that cannot simply be taught.” Furthermore, the authors of the book “Approaches to Internationalisation and Their Implications for Strategic Management and Institutional Practice” also provide advantages from the higher education institution point of view: institutions “may gain a worldwide reputation, as well as a foothold in the international higher education community, and rise to meet the challenges associated with globalisation”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Henard F., Diamond L., Roseveare D. *Approaches to Internationalisation and Their Implications for Strategic Management and Institutional Practice*. OECD Higher Education Programme IMHE: 2012. Page: 8

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Page: 9

<sup>32</sup> Hughes R. *Internationalisation of Higher Education and Language Policy: Questions of Quality and Equity*. Centre for English Language Education, University of Nottingham, UK Page: 2

<sup>33</sup> Henard F., Diamond L., Roseveare D. *Approaches to Internationalisation and Their Implications for Strategic Management and Institutional Practice*. OECD Higher Education Programme IMHE: 2012. Page: 8

Additionally, research has also set the top five reasons for internationalising an institution<sup>34</sup> in order of importance. According to Marmolejo, “it is important to improve student preparedness, internationalise the curriculum, enhance the international profile of the institution, strengthen research and knowledge production, and diversify its faculty and staff.” Furthermore, internationalisation also encourages higher education institutions to increase both national and international visibility of the institution, gain benefits with the help of strategic partnerships, enlarge the academic community, mobilise internal intellectual resources, add important, contemporary learning outcomes to student experience, as well as to develop stronger research groups.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, Middlehurst and Woodfield in their research project in 2007<sup>36</sup> note that the changing international context and the impact of globalization have led to two major trends in the higher education sector: the first is increasing international competition (in research and education), and the second involves efforts to internationalize strategies and practices.<sup>37</sup>

The researcher Knight in 2006 has identified four broad rationales for internationalization in higher education, driven primarily by globalization forces in the political, economic and the socio-cultural dimensions. “Maringe and Gibbs (2009) found that university institutions that exhibit high levels of internationalization tend to have the following characteristics:

- They have highly diversified income generating sources.
- They have high annual income turnovers.
- They contribute more strongly to local and regional economic development.
- They have diversified employment profiles.
- They attract more foreign staff and students.”<sup>38</sup>

Consequently, an appropriate level of internationalization in higher education institution provides valuable benefits for governments, institutions both in national and international level, as well as for students. Moreover, within the development of globalization in all fields, internationalization is an adequate further step towards provision of qualitative education at higher level.

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<sup>34</sup> Marmolejo F., *Internationalization of higher education: the good, the bad, and the unexpected*. Chronicle of Higher Education, October 22, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Henard F., Diamond L., Roseveare D. *Approaches to Internationalisation and Their Implications for Strategic Management and Institutional Practice*. OECD Higher Education Programme IMHE: 2012. Page: 9

<sup>36</sup> Middlehurst, R., & Woodfield, S. Research project report 05/06: Responding to the internationalisation agenda: Implications for institutional strategy. Higher Education Academy, 22 January 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Robson, S. *Internationalization: a transformative agenda for higher education?* Teachers and teaching: theory and practice. Taylor and Francis Group: 2011. Page: 620

<sup>38</sup> Wit H., *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: a historical, comparative, and conceptual analysis*. Greenwood Press: 2002. Page:25

### 1.3. Impact of Globalization to Internationalization in Higher Education

According to scholars, there are various terms that can be are often confused with term of internationalisation. One of the terms that is often used when referring to internationalization, is globalisation.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it is significant to identify the difference between globalisation and internationalisation.

Provided internet resources and available scientific literature confirm that globalisation can be described or defined in various ways and fields. The provided definitions also confirm that globalization and internationalization terms can be easily confused. Therefore, it is significant to define the difference between both of these terms, especially in higher education field.

According to the well-known researcher Knight in the field, internationalisation in higher education is one of the ways how country responds to the impact of globalisation, at the same time respecting the individuality of the nation. “Therefore, concepts of internationalisation and globalisation are observed as different but dynamically linked concepts.”<sup>40</sup>

One of definitions of the term “globalisation” provided by scholars is that globalisation is the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders. “Globalisation affects each country in a different way due to a nation’s individual history, traditions, culture and priorities.”<sup>41</sup>

According to Knight, key elements of globalization include the knowledge of society, information and communication technologies, the market economy, trade liberalization, and changes in governance structures. “It remains a matter of debate whether these factors are causes or effects of globalization; but this discussion treats them as critical elements of globalization that have a major impact on the education sector.”<sup>42</sup>

Robson in her publication reviews the matter how internationalization can sometimes be confused with broader debates about globalization, both ideological and

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<sup>39</sup> Buczynski S., Lattimer H., Inoue N., Alexandrowicz V. *Developing a policy for an international experience requirement in a graduate teacher education program: a cautionary tale*. Internationalization of Teacher Education. Taylor & Francis: 2012. Page: 35

<sup>40</sup> Ninnes P., Hellsten M. *Internationalizing Higher Education: Critical Explorations of Pedagogy and Policy*. Springer: 2005. Page: 124

<sup>41</sup> Buczynski S., Lattimer H., Inoue N., Alexandrowicz V. *Developing a policy for an international experience requirement in a graduate teacher education program: a cautionary tale*. Internationalization of Teacher Education. Taylor & Francis: 2012. Page: 35

<sup>42</sup> Knight J. *Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization*. Global Perspectives on Higher Education. Volume 13. Sense Publishers: 2008. Page: 5 Retrieved on 15 April, 2018 from: <https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/475-higher-education-in-turmoil.pdf>

practical.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the publication in the book “Internationalization of Teacher Education” points out that “each approach, internationalization, globalization, multi-culturalism, or cross-culturalism, has a distinct emphasis and a history that has developed independently of the others”. Therefore, the authors of the publication also identify the issue that now the distinction of these meanings is often mixed in higher education institution curriculum and classroom practice.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, Knight notes that internationalization of higher education has been positively and negatively influenced by globalization, and that these two processes, globalization and internationalization, even fundamentally different, are closely connected. “For instance, the competitiveness and commercialism agenda, often linked to globalization, has had a major impact on cross-border education development. In turn, the growth of cross-border education and its inclusion in bilateral and regional trade agreements have strengthened globalization”.<sup>45</sup>

Researchers Knight and Wilkinson in their studies have identified main key factors when characterizing the interaction between globalization and internationalization. Knight in her publication “Global: Five Truths about Internationalization” states that globalization focuses on the worldwide flow of ideas, resources, people, economy, values, culture, knowledge, goods, services, and technology. On the contrary, Wilkinson in his study also accepts the opinion that globalization is concerned with factors such as mobility, trade, migration, harmonization of rules, and rankings.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Knight considers that internationalization “emphasizes the relationship between and among nations, people, cultures, institutions, and systems.”<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, it can be concluded, that globalization influences the state of internationalization, however, globalization can be more like initial or general phase of internationalization. On the contrary, internationalization researches more particular processes in higher education field.

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<sup>43</sup> Robson, S. *Internationalization: a transformative agenda for higher education?* Teachers and teaching: theory and practice.

<sup>44</sup> Buczynski S., Lattimer H., Inoue N., Alexandrowicz V. *Developing a policy for an international experience requirement in a graduate teacher education program: a cautionary tale*. Internationalization of Teacher Education. Taylor & Francis: 2012. Page: 35

<sup>45</sup> Mihut G., Altbach F.P., de Wit H. *Understanding Higher Education Internationalization: Insights from Key Global Publications*. Sense Publishers: 2017. Page: 14-5.

<sup>46</sup> Wilkinson R., (2016) *Does Internationalization Promote Multilingualism? A Dutch University Study*. Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture. Volume 6. Riga: University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities. Page: 109.

<sup>47</sup> Mihut G., Altbach F.P., de Wit H. *Understanding Higher Education Internationalization: Insights from Key Global Publications*. Sense Publishers: 2017. Page: 14-5.

## 1.4. Internationalization of Higher Education in EU

European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of countries in Europe. Since July 2013, there are 28 member states in the European Union. “The EU has grown out of 3 communities founded after World War II to establish peace and prosperity in Europe.”<sup>48</sup>

The main aims of the EU are to establish European citizenship, that includes protection of fundamental human rights and freedom, provision of security and justice, including co-operation in the field of justice and home affairs, promotion of economic and social progress, as well as assertion of Europe's role in the world.<sup>49</sup>

The EU is run by 5 main institutions: the European Parliament, the Council of European Union, the European Commission, the Court of Justice, as well as the Court of Auditors.<sup>50</sup>

According to EU website, every country in EU is responsible for its own education and training systems. Therefore, the EU policy was designed with an aim “to support national action and help address common challenges, such as ageing societies, skills deficits in the workforce, technological developments and global competition.”<sup>51</sup>

Education and Training 2020 is the framework for cooperation in education and training. In 2009, four common EU objectives in the framework of Education and Training 2020 were set. One of the objectives is to introduce lifelong learning and mobility in reality. Additionally, one of the benchmarks under the policy indicate that at least 20% of higher education graduates should have some time studying or training abroad. Furthermore, other objectives of the policy are to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training, to promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship, that can be also achieved with the help of introducing lifelong learning and mobility in reality. Furthermore, one of the objectives is also to enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.<sup>52</sup>

The further sections below provide information regarding Bologna Process and Internationalization in EU, as well as information about main EU programmes.

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<sup>48</sup> Citizens information. European Union. Retrieved on 27 April, 2018 from: [http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government\\_in\\_ireland/european\\_government/european\\_union.html#lca0f](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/european_government/european_union.html#lca0f)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> European Union. Strategic framework – Education and Training 2020. Retrieved on 27 April, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

## 1.5. The Bologna Process and Internationalization in EU

The Bologna Process, that was introduced in 1998 – 1999, is a voluntary higher education reform process, with an aim to create compliant higher education systems, as well as to enhance the international visibility of higher education systems. “The Bologna Process is a rather unique approach to reform and internationalise higher education systems and institutions and establish regional convergence.” 48 countries are involved in Bologna process, including all EU countries.<sup>53</sup>

The main issues of the Bologna Process are common converged degree structure (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate degree), as well as joint credit system (usually European credit transfer system or well-known as ECTS). Besides, the Bologna Process priorities are also mobility of students and staff, as well as internationalization of higher education systems and institutions.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, 2010 was a milestone for the Bologna Process: in Vienna – Budapest Ministerial Conference took place, where the European Higher Education Area was founded.<sup>55</sup> The European Higher Education Area is the result of the political will of 48 countries that gradually built an area using common tools. “These 48 countries implement reforms on higher education on the basis of common key values – such as freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent students unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. Through this process, countries, institutions and stakeholders of the European area continuously adapt their higher education systems making them more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanisms.” For all countries that are involved in Bologna Process, the main aim is to increase staff and student mobility, as well as to facilitate employability.<sup>56</sup>

According to Vogtle and Martens, Bologna Process aims at establishing a European Higher Education Area. “As a key element in social and labour market policy, education is perceived to play a central role in the transformation into a knowledge-based economy. Capable higher education institutions are envisioned as having the potential to increase the competitiveness of the overall economy and further economic growth through research and

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<sup>53</sup> European University Association. *The European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Process*. Retrieved on 15 April, 2018 from: <http://www.eua.be/policy-representation/higher-education-policies/the-european-higher-education-area-and-the-bologna-process>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> European Higher Education Area. *European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Process*. Retrieved on 15 April, 2018 from: <http://www.ehea.info/>

innovation.” Therefore, according to the authors, Bologna Process can be perceived as one of the greatest socio-economic reform initiatives of the last decades.<sup>57</sup>

Surock in his research also confirms that development and implementation of effective internationalisation strategies are of strong interest to universities. “It requires them to consider the benefits, consequences and risks of different approaches, including the costs involved and sustainability prospects and to reflect on the proper balance between cooperation and competition with other universities.” Furthermore, the researcher points out that both positive and negative impacts of specific national strategies for internationalisation of higher education have to be taken into consideration.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, the main issues of the Bologna Process, aims of European Higher Education Area, as well as priorities set by European Commission confirm that topicality of internationalization for higher education institutions is the priority at high level.

### **1.6. EU Programmes in Higher Education**

As it is widely known, one of the obstacles that higher education institutions face, is limited funding provided by the state. Therefore, institutions often search for additional funding sources. “They have to be accountable not just to the government and its ministries but also to the local and national community. Universities have become more competitive as they seek to attract new groups of students, typically from abroad, and talented academic staff worldwide. These factors and trends suggest that a university education is now a commodity, no different from any other economic activity (Teixeira, 2009).”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, one of successful solutions is attraction of external funding for implementation of topical matters in the field of higher education. There are various types of funding that are provided by EU.

According to Altbach and Knight, European internationalization mainly focuses on the countries of the EU, students are still encouraged to study abroad within the EU. Moreover, several non-EU member states have joined the Bologna process. “The EU is also expanding

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<sup>57</sup> Vögtle E.M., Martens K. The Bologna Process as a template for transnational policy coordination. Policy Studies. 2014. Vol. 35, No. 3. Retrieved on 18 April, 2018 from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2013.875147>

<sup>58</sup> Surock A., *Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities*. European University Association Publications: 2015. Page: 15 Retrieved on 18 April, 2018 from: <http://www.eua.be/Libraries/higher-education/trends-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

<sup>59</sup> Wilkinson R., (2016) *Does Internationalization Promote Multilingualism? A Dutch University Study*. Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture. Volume 6. Riga: University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities. Page: 109-110.

Europe's international programs, especially in Latin America and the Asia - Pacific regions. Current initiatives include regional and institutional linkages and scholarship programs.”<sup>60</sup>

Additionally, Altbach and Knight states that EU authorities actively pursued academic internationalization for more than two decades, as part of the move to economic and political integration. “The scope of European regional integration expanded, and now the Bologna process harmonizes entire academic systems to ensure compatible degree structures, transferable credits, and equal academic qualifications throughout the EU.”<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, researcher Wilkinson in her study points out impact of internationalization towards multilingualism: “Partly as a consequence of the changed socio-economic environment in higher education, universities have, in the past quarter of a century, embarked on an overt policy of internationalization, and begun offering programmes in languages other than the local languages, most commonly in English.”<sup>62</sup>

It is stated in the book “Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges”, that in many cases the new EC programmes were also a boost for developing national policies for internationalisation in the various member states. “In the first instance, these policies were also mainly focused on mobility and exchange of individuals.”<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, more than 30 years ago, new generation of mobility programmes was created: in 1986 a programme for co-operation between higher education and industry in the field of technology COMETT was created. One year later Erasmus was introduced as well. Afterwards, a range of other mobility programmes followed.<sup>64</sup>

According to the provided information on European Commission website, it supports the implementation of the EU agenda for higher education through studies to provide policy evidence, exchanges of good practice and spending instruments, such as the Erasmus+ Programme, Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds.<sup>65</sup>

Detailed information regarding aims and impact of these programmes is discussed in further sections of the paper.

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<sup>60</sup> Altbach P.G., Knight J. *The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities*. Journal of Studies in International Education. 2007. Vol. 11:290. Page: 293-294.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Wilkinson R., (2016) *Does Internationalization Promote Multilingualism? A Dutch University Study*. Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture. Volume 6. Riga: University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities. Page: 110.

<sup>63</sup> Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges. OECD: 2004. Page: 91

<sup>64</sup> Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges*. OECD: 2004. Page: 91

<sup>65</sup> European Commission. *EU activities in the field of higher education*. Retrieved on 18 April, 2018 from: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education_en)

### 1.6.1. EU funds: Erasmus+ Programme

According to Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, internationalisation in Europe has been strongly influenced by the Erasmus programme, that was initiated by the European Commission almost 30 years ago. Erasmus has provided a remarkable impact towards internationalisation and reform of higher education. Furthermore, the programme piloted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as well as initiated access to EU membership for countries in Central and Eastern Europe and others. “It paved the way for the Bologna Process and the realisation of the European Higher Education area, which in turn has generated the European Commission's first comprehensive internationalisation strategy: European Higher Education in the World (2013).” Furthermore, Erasmus programme has inspired cooperation not only among countries in Europe, but also between Europe and the rest of the world. According to OECD, Erasmus is also as a model and inspiration for others, even though there are no comparable initiatives that are developed. There are more than 3 million mobile students that have participated in Erasmus programme.<sup>66</sup>

Erasmus provides funding not only to the mobility of students and staff, but also to the creation of university networks in all fields of study, as well as measures to promote and support recognition of study abroad periods with the support of ECTS. Within the development of the programme, it became the “flagship programme” of European Commission.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, Ivanova and Neimane state that the concept of quality becomes crucial in order to claim the ultimate goal, which Erasmus Program is actually devoted to. With the help of European Higher Education Area the programme can encompass greater geography than EU.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, the collaborative programmes with the rest of the world, such as TEMPUS, ALFA and ALBAN, ATLANTIS and others, are now united together with the European mobility schemes and created the new Erasmus+ programme.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> European Parliament. Directorate – General for Internal Policies. Policy Department – Structural and Cohesion Policies. *Internationalisation of Higher Education*. Policy Department: 2015. Page: 56. Retrieved on 18 April, 2018 from: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL\\_STU\(2015\)540370\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges*. OECD: 2004. Page: 91 Retrieved 18 April, 2018 from: [https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3877/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education\\_9789264015067-en](https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3877/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education_9789264015067-en)

<sup>68</sup> Ivanova I., Neimane S., (2017) *Leading for Equity and Quality in Education*, Riga: European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Language and Management – the friendly European network. Page: 111

<sup>69</sup> Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges*. OECD: 2004. Page: 56 Retrieved on 18 April, 2018 from: [https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3877/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education\\_9789264015067-en](https://datubazes.lanet.lv:3877/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education_9789264015067-en)

Erasmus programme in 2014 turned into programme “Erasmus+” thereby uniting other seven other programmes into one common programme. Erasmus+ supports education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Erasmus+ provides opportunities not only for students – it provides wide range of opportunities both for individuals and organization. The budget of Erasmus+ until 2020 is 14.7 billion *euro*. It is planned that until 2020 the programme will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad.<sup>70</sup>

Consequently, that caused the increase of the programme volume, as well as developed popularity and recognition of the programme.

### **1.6.2. EU Funds: Horizon 2020 Programme**

Horizon 2020 is a financial instrument that implements the Innovation Union, which is a Europe 2020 flagship initiative. The programme aims at securing Europe's global competitiveness.<sup>71</sup>

According to leaders of Europe and Members of the European Parliament, “research is an investment in our future that is a basis for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs.” Therefore, Horizon 2020 is seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs.<sup>72</sup>

Within research and innovation, Horizon 2020 helps to achieve the growth with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The main aim of the programme is to ensure that “Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.”<sup>73</sup>

Horizon 2020 is implemented from 2014 until 2020, it is the largest EU Research and Innovation funding programme. The Horizon 2020 Specific Programme is implemented through two-year work programmes where funding opportunities are set out:

- In the period from 2014 – 2015 the programme focused on several areas, such as sustainable competitiveness, innovation and growth, dedicated measures to leverage and boost engagement of industry, access to finance, new knowledge and contributing

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<sup>70</sup> European Commission. What is Erasmus+? Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)

<sup>71</sup> European Commission. Horizon 2020. Retrieved on 20 April, 2018 from: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/what-horizon-2020>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

to skills, enabling technologies, research and innovation divide, partnership with Member States, as well as international cooperation.<sup>74</sup>

- In the period from 2016 – 2017 the programme focused on Jobs, Growth and Investment Package with an aim to strengthen global competitiveness of Europe, create new and sustainable jobs, as well as to promote growth.<sup>75</sup>
- In the period from 2018 – 2020 the programme focuses on increasing investment in sustainable development and climate related research and innovation, integrating digitisation in all industrial technologies and societal challenges, strengthening international research and innovation cooperation, societal resilience, as well as market creating innovation.<sup>76</sup>

Horizon 2020 can be not so commonly known for society, including students, since it covers very specific target group, mostly researchers and scientists.

### **1.6.3. EU Funds: European Structural and Investment Funds**

The European Structural and Investment Funds include five separate EU funds: the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.<sup>77</sup>

One of the most common EU funds that can be used in higher education field, is the European Social Fund.<sup>78</sup> Its main aim is to focus on improving employment and education opportunities across the EU. Furthermore, it aims to improve the situation of the most vulnerable people at risk of poverty.

Furthermore, The European Regional Development Fund<sup>79</sup> invests in several priority areas such as innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the low-carbon economy. This fund can be widely used for research and scientific activities in higher education institutions.

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<sup>74</sup> European Commission. *Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014 – 2015*. Page: 7. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014\\_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-intro\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/main/h2020-wp1415-intro_en.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> European Commission. *Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016 – 2017*. Page: 6-7. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016\\_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-intro\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-intro_en.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> European Commission. *Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018 – 2020*. Page: Page: 10-14 Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-intro\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-intro_en.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> European Commission. *European Structural and Investment Funds*. Retrieved on 20 April, 2018 from: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index.cfm?pg=esi>

<sup>78</sup> European Commission. *European Social Fund*. Retrieved on 20 April, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/social-fund/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/social-fund/)

<sup>79</sup> European Commission. *European Regional Development Fund*. Retrieved on 20 April, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/erdf/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/)

More specific fund and maybe not so commonly known is the Cohesion Fund. The main aim of Cohesion Fund<sup>80</sup> is to reduce economic and social disparities, as well as to promote sustainable development. The Cohesion Fund includes a specific requirement, that funding is allocated only to that Gross National Income per inhabitant is less than 90 % of the EU average.

The EU's rural development policy is funded with the help of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.<sup>81</sup> In the framework of this fund each EU country receives a financial allocation for the 7-year period. This funding can be used by higher education institutions that specialize also in the field of agriculture and rural development.

Furthermore, The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund<sup>82</sup> is the fund for the EU's maritime and fisheries policies for 2014-2020. "It is one of the five European Structural and Investment Funds which complement each other and seek to promote a growth and job-based recovery in Europe." Similarly, as Agricultural and Rural Development Fund, this fund can also be used by specific higher education institutions and scientists that specialize in this field.

According to provided information by European Union, around 450 billion euro of EU funding during the 2014-2020 programme period is allocated to Member States of EU and implemented through nationally co-financed programmes. "The programme focuses on 11 objectives, one of which is research and innovation. The support is mainly delivered in the form of grants or through financial instruments (loans, guarantees and equity investments)."<sup>83</sup>

Since this programme implements several sub-programmes covering different fields, the title of the programme "European Structural and Investment Funds" can be less commonly known for public, since society may use funding in the framework of only one of the sub-programmes.

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<sup>80</sup> European Commission. *Cohesion Fund*. Retrieved on 20 April, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/)

<sup>81</sup> European Commission. Rural development 2014 – 2020. Retrieved on 20 April, 2018 from: [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020_en)

<sup>82</sup> European Commission. European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Retrieved on 23 April, 2018 from: <https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/>

<sup>83</sup> European Commission. *European Structural and Investment Funds*. Retrieved on 23 April, 2018 from: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index.cfm?pg=esi>

## 2. SITUATION ANALYSIS: INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATVIA AND SWEDEN: 2014 - 2017

Although Latvia and Sweden are geographically located at the Baltic Sea, there are various differences noticed in development of several areas, including higher education field.

In Latvia there are numerous universities, both legal and public entities, offering study programmes for different degrees. However, Dombrovsky V. points out different issues connected with higher education field in Latvia: decrease of students, large amount of students who combine work with studies, lack of research in foreign languages, and others.<sup>84</sup>

Conversely, with its emphasis on independent studies, Sweden is ranked among the world leaders in higher education. “The teaching model applied at Swedish universities and university colleges is based on the motto ‘freedom with responsibility’. This means that students have less teacher-led time than it is usual in the other countries, which means that studies are mainly pursued on students’ own or in groups.”<sup>85</sup>

Kalenuk and Dyakon<sup>86</sup> emphasize that the competitiveness of the national education system can only be ensured with the powerful governmental support, which has to be based on the understanding of highly important role of higher education system as a factor of social development. “Such support must also be provided taking into account the complexity of modern social and economic conditions of functioning of higher education, particularly, the sharpening of competition on the education market in the global context; the increase of the mass-type character of higher education; the necessity of implementing the innovative ways of development of national economy and facilitating innovative activity of higher education institutions. Ensuring competitiveness of the national higher education system must be based on the state policy of searching, forming and holding competitive advantages of both individual universities and the system as a whole.”

The section below provides the situation analysis of higher education both in Latvia and Sweden, as well as the development of internationalization in higher education field. Additionally, the analysis of recommendations provided by European Commission in higher education field from 2014 – 2017 both for Latvia and Sweden are provided.

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<sup>84</sup> Dombrovsky V. Is anything wrong with higher education in Latvia? *Baltic Journal of Economics*. 2009, Vol. 9, No.2, pp. 5-24

<sup>85</sup> Sweden. Higher Education and Research. Retrieved on 23 April, 2018 from: <https://sweden.se/society/higher-education-and-research/>

<sup>86</sup> Kalenuk I., Dyakon A. Competitive advantages of the national higher education system in the context of globalization. *Economics&Education*, 2016, Vol. 1, Page: 7

## 2.1.Higher Education in Latvia

After Latvia regained its independence in 1991, the Education Law was adopted. Since then, radical reforms in all levels of education have been introduced. According to provided information by European Commission, this law served as a basis for the Law on Institutions of Higher Education and linked Latvian education system with European higher education systems.<sup>87</sup>

In 1990 there were 10 public higher education institutions registered and only 2 private higher education institutions. By 2012 this number has reached 17 public and 19 private higher education institutions.<sup>88</sup>

In 1995 a new edition of The Law on Institutions of Higher Education was introduced. It states that higher education institutions together with government of the Republic of Latvia facilitate international co-operation of higher education institutions, exchange programmes of academic staff and of higher education institutions, as well as co-operation programmes among higher education institutions in the field of research. Furthermore, regional co-operation is also strengthened through financial arrangements.<sup>89</sup>

Bologna Declaration in Latvia was signed in 1999. Bologna process did not initiate reforms in Latvia's higher education, however, it is considered, that Bologna process shaped and directed them into the overall stream of higher education reforms in Europe on the way towards European Higher Education Area. "Academic staff and student mobility was stimulated, first of all, by the EU Tempus programme, later Socrates programme and Lifelong Learning Programme, and now Erasmus+ programme, as well as support through bilateral and multilateral projects with several Western European and Nordic countries."<sup>90</sup>

According to European Commission, Latvia, as member state of the European Union, invests effort in steering education development according to the commonly set objectives in education and training. "Through political support from the government and using possibilities provided by funding from structural funds, a number of national programmes in professional education, higher education, teaching of sciences in general education, science

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<sup>87</sup> European Commission. Eurydice. *Mobility and Internationalisation*. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34_en)

<sup>88</sup> Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. *Augstākās izglītības, zinātnes un inovāciju departaments*. Pārskats par Latvijas augstāko izglītību 2017. gadā. Galvenie statistikas dati. Retrieved on 15 May, 2018 from [http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba\\_augst/Parskats-par-Latvijas-augstako-izglitibu-2017gada.pdf](http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_augst/Parskats-par-Latvijas-augstako-izglitibu-2017gada.pdf). Page: 4

<sup>89</sup> European Commission. Eurydice. *Mobility and Internationalisation*. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34_en)

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

support as well as teacher training have been launched to achieve the benchmarks set in education.”<sup>91</sup>

While higher education institutions in Latvia are financed mainly from the national budget, large part of students pay tuition fees that fulfils a considerable part of total budget of higher education institutions. “The study fees depend on the individual institutions, their popularity and the degree courses offered. Universities and other post-secondary colleges are relatively autonomous.”<sup>92</sup>

This, in comparison with Sweden, where there are no fees requested for Swedish/EU/EFTA/EEA full-time and part-time students, identifies lower level of internationalisation in higher education in Latvia in terms of study fees for international students in both countries.

The description of the situation on study fees and support to international students in Latvia is also mentioned in recent research “National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education”.<sup>93</sup> The report informs that there are two types of financial status for students: state-funded and self-financed. “Students studying on state subsidised places do not pay fees. These places are allocated on the basis of academic merit – currently available in priority areas; natural sciences, computer sciences and engineering.” However, the tendency shows that study fees for programmes held in the English language are usually higher than for programmes provided in the Latvian language. Moreover, fees for international students (non-EU/EEA) are higher than for local students.

In 2012 State Education Development Agency as the administrating authority and the Ministry of Education and Science as the responsible institution was founded. One of its aims is to facilitate the internationalization of higher education. The target set in Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 is to reach the proportion of 10% foreign students by 2030.”<sup>94</sup>

European Council every year delivers opinion on the stability programmes of each EU country, as well as provides recommendations on national reform programmes. The opinions about priorities in higher education field in Latvia in the period from 2014 till 2017 provided by European Council are reviewed in the further section of the thesis.

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<sup>91</sup> European Commission. Eurydice. *Mobility and Internationalisation*. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34_en)

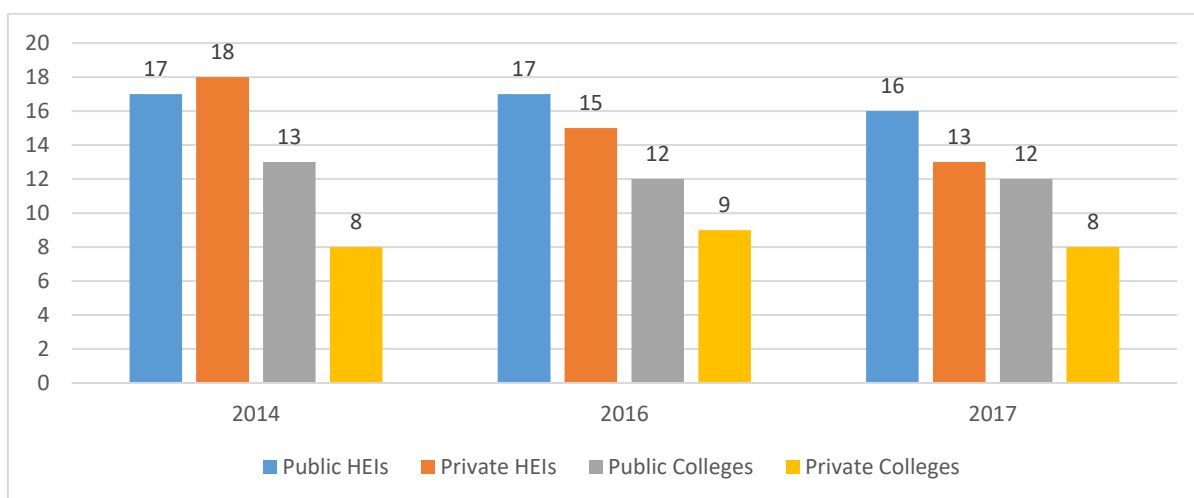
<sup>92</sup> Žogla I, Andersone R, Černova E. The Education Systems of Europe. Education in Latvia. Page: 433-4.

<sup>93</sup> European Commission. *National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2016/17* Eurydice – Facts and Figures: 2016. Page: 38 Retrieved from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-student-fee-and-support-systems-european-higher-education-%E2%80%93-201617\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-student-fee-and-support-systems-european-higher-education-%E2%80%93-201617_en)

<sup>94</sup> European Commission. Eurydice. *Mobility and Internationalisation*. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-34_en)

### 2.1.1. Development of Higher Education in 2014 – 2017

European Council in their recommendation for Latvia in 2014 set, that, despite an originally ambitious plan to reform higher education, Latvia has made no progress in setting up an internationally approved accreditation system. “Consolidation of higher education institutes has been weakened and restrictions on the use of foreign languages remain unchanged.” The Council in their review underlines the issue about significance of reforming the higher education system, which is too large in view of the declining population. According to the Council, there are too many distinct study programmes offered as well as attraction of foreign students and teaching staff is limited.<sup>95</sup>



Graph No. 2.1.

#### Division of higher education institutions and colleges in Latvia from 2014 – 2017

Source: Data collected by author based on the available information on the report “Pārskats par Latvijas augstāko izglītību 2017. gadā”<sup>96</sup>

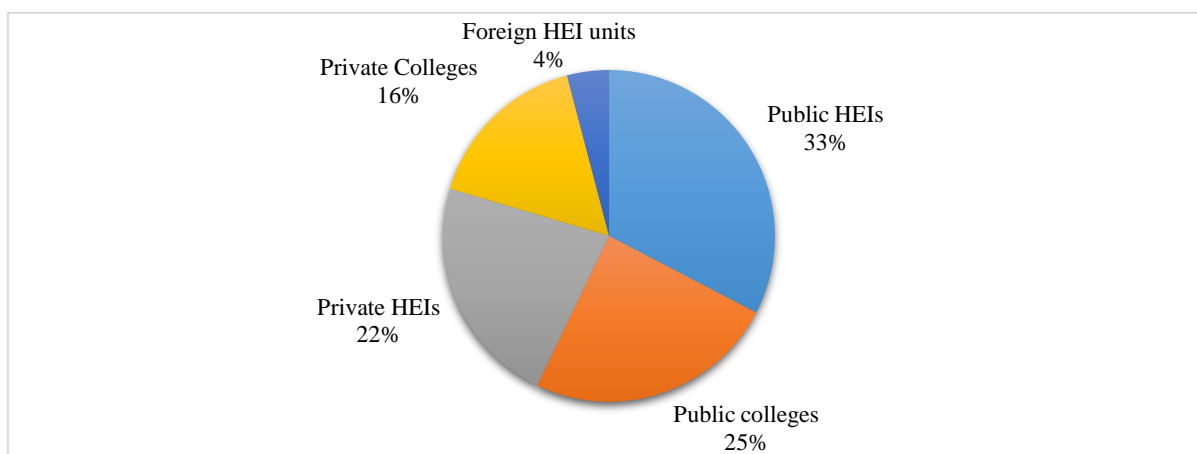
According to the graph above, there are no remarkable changes in the number of higher education institutions observed during the period of 2014 – 2017. In 2017 one state higher education institution was reorganized and added to the University of Latvia. The decrease of private higher education institutions can be observed – if in 2014 there were 18 private higher education institutions registered, then in 2017 the number has decreased to 13 higher education institutions. The changes in the number of institutions can be the result of

<sup>95</sup> Official journal of the European Union. *Council Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Latvia and delivering a Council opinion on the Stability Programme of Latvia*. Page: 247 Retrieved from: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014H0729\(12\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014H0729(12)&from=EN)

<sup>96</sup> Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. Augstākās izglītības, zinātnes un inovāciju departaments. *Pārskats par Latvijas augstāko izglītību 2017. gadā. Galvenie statistikas dati*. Retrieved on 15 May, 2018 from [http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba\\_augst/Parskats-par-Latvijas-augstako-izglitiba-2017gada.pdf](http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_augst/Parskats-par-Latvijas-augstako-izglitiba-2017gada.pdf). Page: 4

reforms implemented in higher education field, when reducing the number of higher education institutions is one of the tasks of the reform.

According to the provided information by Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, at the moment there are 16 public higher education institutions, as well as 12 public colleges established in Latvia.<sup>97</sup> In total that constitutes 58% of all higher education institutions in Latvia; the others are private higher education institutions, private colleges, and foreign higher education institution units.



Graph No. 2.2.

### Higher Education institutions in Latvia in 2017

Source: The information provided by Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia<sup>98</sup>

In total, there are 49 higher education institutions indicated by Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia – both public and private institutions. This number is higher than the amount of higher education institutions in Sweden (44 institutions), even if the population number of Sweden is more than 4 times higher than in Latvia.

Furthermore, in Latvia there are 28 public higher education institutions (including colleges) with population of 1.93 million.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, in Latvia there are more than 14 public higher education institutions provided for each 1 million of inhabitants. However, in Sweden there are 32 public higher education institutions (including only 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle institutions) with population of 9.98 million<sup>100</sup>. Therefore, in Sweden there are only 3 public higher education institutions provided for each 1 million of inhabitants. Consequently, the statement provided by Council that the higher education system in Latvia is too large in the view of declining population is adequate in comparison with reality in Sweden.

<sup>97</sup> Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. *Augstākās izglītības iestādes*. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/izglitiba/augstaka-izglitiba/augstakas-izglitibas-iestades>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Worldometers. *Latvia Population*. Retrieved from: <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/latvia-population/>

<sup>100</sup> Worldometers. *Sweden Population*. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/sweden-population/>

As a result, Council in 2014 set the recommendation for Latvia: “Step up implementation of the higher education reform, in particular through the establishment of an independent accreditation agency and a financing model that rewards quality.”<sup>101</sup>

In 2015 Council in their report highlighted that a national independent accreditation agency is being set up and a new quality targeting financing model is being developed for Latvia's higher education.<sup>102</sup>

The Latvian National accreditation body – Latvian National Accreditation Bureau was founded on August 30, 1994. Since March, 2018 it is called State Agency "Latvian National Accreditation Bureau". According to European Parliament and Council Regulation, setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products, the agency operates as a national accreditation body. Among many functions of the agency, one of them is also “to evaluate and accredit conformity assessment bodies, and to supervise work of such bodies, in conformity with the prescribed requirements of Latvian national standards, regulatory enactments, and European or international standards, as well as multilateral recognition agreements with international accreditation organizations.”<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, Council in their 2015 report underlines that, despite some progress in reforming the research and innovation system, inadequate public funding in a fragmented research and innovation system is leading to poor scientific outcomes.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, the Council recommends better target research financing and incentivise private investment in innovation on the basis on of the Smart Specialisation Framework.<sup>105</sup>

In 2016 Commission mentioned in their report that Latvia has made progress in reforming higher education system by providing incentives that reward quality and establishing an independent accreditation system.<sup>106</sup> However, in 2016 there is no specific recommendation for Latvia in higher education field, since the emphasis is set for vocational education.

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<sup>101</sup> European Commission. *Council Recommendation on the 2014 National Reform Programme of Latvia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2014 Stability Programme of Latvia*. Page: 6 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0415&from=EN>

<sup>102</sup> European Commission. *Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Latvia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Latvia*. Page: 4 Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/csr2015\\_latvia\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/csr2015_latvia_en_0.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> Latvian National Accreditation Bureau. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: [https://www.latak.gov.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=83&Itemid=160&lang=en](https://www.latak.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=83&Itemid=160&lang=en)

<sup>104</sup> Latvian National Accreditation Bureau. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: [https://www.latak.gov.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=83&Itemid=160&lang=en](https://www.latak.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=83&Itemid=160&lang=en)

<sup>105</sup> European Commission. *Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Latvia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Latvia*. Page: 5 Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/csr2015\\_latvia\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/csr2015_latvia_en_0.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> European Commission. *Council Recommendation on the 2016 National Reform Programme of Latvia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2016 Stability Programme of Latvia*. Page: 5 Retrieved on 25 April, 2018 from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0334&from=EN>

In 2017 Council reports that large-scale reforms of higher education and public research were introduced in the past three years to consolidate research institutions and to increase the quality and relevance of their output. “However, the governance and the organisational structure of Latvian public research funding remain inefficient, with funding functions scattered between many institutions. Inefficient funding for public research contributes to a very low scientific performance, a lack of skilled human resources in both public and private sectors and low levels of public-private cooperation.”<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, higher education field for 2017 recommendations is not mentioned, however, in the description of realities the low level in research field is pointed out.

### 2.1.2. Impact of Internationalization

According to Ose, since Latvia joined the EU, education has become more mobile. Studies abroad have become an usual matter for students. “Equally, the presence of international students in Latvia represents nothing unusual anymore.” Due to the “demographic depression” – a lower birth rate, the total number of students in Latvia has been decreasing – in 2004 there were more than 127,6 thousand students in Latvia. Until 2013 this number decreased to 89,6 thousand students.<sup>108</sup>

If in 2004, when Latvia joined EU, there were only 308 students studying abroad, then in 2013 the number increased more than five times reaching more than 1 700 students studying abroad. Furthermore, proportion for foreign students in Latvia has increased in equal speed – from 1.8% in 2004 to 5.25% in 2013.<sup>109</sup>

When characterizing internationalization in higher education in Latvia, Dainis Auers, associate professor at University of Latvia and Certus Director of Research, in his Latvia Competitiveness report 2016 “The Higher Education Export Sector in Latvia: High Growth, High Potential” uses term “higher education export” instead of internationalization: “higher education export is one of the fastest growing export sectors”. The author in his report emphasizes that in the three years period from 2012/2013 academic year until 2015/2016 academic year higher education export has doubled in size: if in 2012/2013 academic year

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<sup>107</sup> European Commission. *Council Recommendation on the 2017 National Reform Programme of Latvia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2017 Stability Programme of Latvia*. Page: 5 Retrieved on 25 April, 2018 from: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations-latvia.pdf>

<sup>108</sup> Ose L., *Latvia in the EU – ten years later. A different Latvia?* Providus: 2014. Page: 7. Retrieved on 25 April, 2018 from: [http://providus.lv/article\\_files/2721/original/Latvia\\_in\\_the\\_EU\\_10\\_years\\_brief.pdf?1415022500](http://providus.lv/article_files/2721/original/Latvia_in_the_EU_10_years_brief.pdf?1415022500)

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

more than 2 700 international students were studying in Latvia, then in 2015/2016 the amount reached almost 5 460 international students.<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, associate professor Dainis Auers points out that “international students clearly make a significant contribution to the Latvian economy and government revenue in particular.” Author of the report is also optimistic about the future of higher education export in Latvia: “if the current rate of student growth is maintained there will be 17,000 international students in the 2020/2021 academic year. This would mean 250 million *euro* of value added to Latvian GDP and 65 million *euro* in additional tax income. Competitiveness could be raised by expanding the Ministry of Economics’ role in promoting and developing a national strategy for the higher education export sector.”<sup>111</sup>

“In modern world scientific recognition of potential of each country is determined by the number of publications in scientometric issues”, the magazine “Economics&Education” presents the data, which shows trends and dynamics of publications in the leading countries. For instance, Latvia demonstrates high increase of cited publications, which definitely confirms the implementation of the targeted policy of these countries: from 355 publications in 1996 Latvia reached 1393 publications in 2013. However, in comparison with Sweden, where the number of 16 182 publications in 1996 was more than doubled in 2013 (reaching more than 33 thousand publications), improvement for Latvia in this field is still a necessity.<sup>112</sup>

Michael Kung, professor at University of Florida (USA) in his study about international student presence in USA points out that increase in the amount of international students in the university “demonstrate the need to study and understand current cultural issues with international students in order to ensure they receive a quality educational experience, as academic relationships established during student’s time in higher education often continue even after a student returns to his or her home country. Increased communication between people from different cultures has led to a dramatic increase in international collaboration in terms of volume, scope and complexity (Yang et. al 2014).”<sup>113</sup>

The provided state in the previous paragraph can be also referred to the current internationalization situation also in higher education field in Latvia: Michael Kung in his

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<sup>110</sup> Auers D., Latvia Competitiveness Report. *The Higher Education Export Sector in Latvia: High Growth, High Potential*. Domnīca Certus: 2016 Page: 11 Retrieved on 25 April, 2018 from: [http://certusdomnica.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/web\\_Certus\\_AugstakasIzglitibaExportaNozare\\_2016\\_EN-1.pdf](http://certusdomnica.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/web_Certus_AugstakasIzglitibaExportaNozare_2016_EN-1.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. Page: 2

<sup>112</sup> Kalenuk I., Dyakon A. Competitive advantages of the national higher education system in the context of globalization. *Economics&Education*, 2016. Vol.1, Page: 9

<sup>113</sup> Kung, M. (2017). Methods and Strategies for Working with International Students Learning Online in the U.S. TechTrends: Linking Research and Practice to Improve Learning. An Official Publication of the Association for Educational Communications & Technology. Volume 61, Number 5. September 2017. Page:479

survey has included recommendations for higher education staff for more successful integration of international students into their provided courses which is also a significant issue for higher education staff in Latvia in order to provide more qualitative internationalization process in their university.

## 2.2. Higher Education in Sweden

According to the available information on the official website of Sweden, higher education in Sweden is financed largely by tax revenue. Earlier, the studies without tuitions fee were applied to all students regardless their nationality, however, in 2011 Swedish Government introduced tuition fees for students from outside the EU/EEA area, except Switzerland. The Government of Sweden believes that Swedish higher education should compete in terms of quality and good conditions, not just by providing free education. “To enable students who cannot pay tuition fees to study in Sweden, the Government has allocated resources for two scholarship programmes:

- The first programme awards grants through the Swedish Institute and is aimed at highly qualified students from development countries and is designed to cover living costs and tuition fees.
- The second programme is aimed at highly qualified students from outside the EU/EEA area, barring Switzerland. Grants in this programme are intended to cover tuition fees and are awarded through the Swedish Council for Higher Education to universities and university colleges that already extend grants to students.”<sup>114</sup>

The description of the situation on study fees and support to international students in Sweden is also mentioned in recent research “National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education” provided by European Commission. In difference from Latvia case, there are no fees for Swedish/EU/EFTA/EEA full-time and part-time students in Swedish higher education institutions. However, the report informs, that other international students pay fees since autumn 2011. “Higher education institutions determine the size of the fees, based on the principle of full cost coverage.”<sup>115</sup>

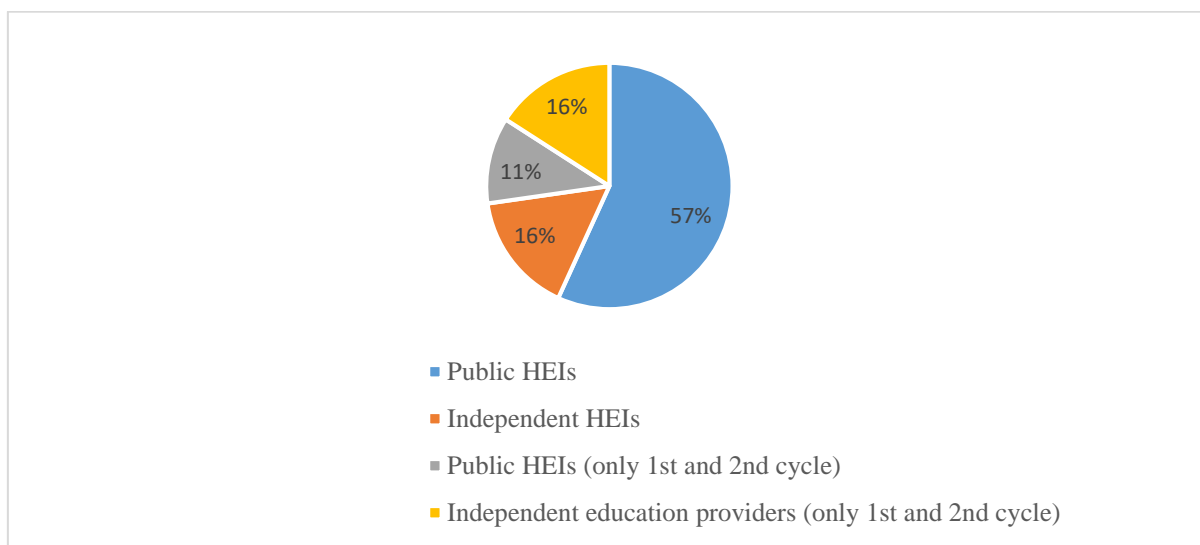
In Sweden there are 25 higher education institutions that provide opportunities for students to obtain Bachelor, Master or Doctorate degree, that constitutes 57% of all higher

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<sup>114</sup> Sweden. Higher Education Research. Retrieved on 12 May, 2018 from: <https://sweden.se/society/higher-education-and-research/>

<sup>115</sup> European Comission. *National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2016/17* Eurydice – Facts and Figures: 2016. Page: 51 Retrieved on 12 May, 2018 from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-student-fee-and-support-systems-european-higher-education-%E2%80%93-201617\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-student-fee-and-support-systems-european-higher-education-%E2%80%93-201617_en)

education institutions in Sweden. Furthermore, 11% of all institutions provide education in Bachelor and Master level. The rest are independent higher education institutions.



Graph No. 2.3.

### Higher Education Institutions in Sweden in 2017

Source: Author's construction based on the list of higher education institutions in Sweden <sup>116</sup>

When a person applies to studies in Sweden, it is possible to apply either for self-contained (individual) courses or full study programmes. If a student chooses to study a self-contained course or a range of courses, it is possible to award credits on completion of these courses. Alternatively, it is also possible to apply for a full study programme. Study programmes consist of courses, some of them are compulsory and some of them are optional. The length of study programmes is different: from two to eleven semesters.<sup>117</sup>

According to the provided information by European Commission, when characterizing Swedish mobility and internationalization in higher education, it is noted that for Sweden the educational rationale for internationalization has always been strong, emphasizing that the competitiveness of Swedish industry abroad is still an important factor. According to Swedish Government policy to secure Sweden's position as "a knowledge-oriented nation", it is important to provide a continuation of internationalization, since it is supposed as a important factor for improvement of Swedish education system. "The initiatives to broaden recruitment to higher education are parts of the internationalization of education. To recruit more students

<sup>116</sup> Swedish Higher Education Authority. *List of Higher Education Institutions in Sweden*. Retrieved on 08 May, 2018 from: <http://english.uka.se/facts-about-higher-education/higher-education-institutions-heis/list-of-higher-education-institutions-in-sweden.html>

<sup>117</sup> University Admission. *The Swedish Higher Education system*. Retrieved on 12 May, 2018 from: <https://www.universityadmissions.se/en/All-you-need-to-know1/Studying-in-Sweden/The-Swedish-higher-education-system/>

with foreign background is a question of equality but also of quality, since a multitude of social backgrounds allow different perspectives and create valuable dynamic effects.”<sup>118</sup>

Moreover, in January 2013 Swedish Council for Higher Education was established. The Swedish Council administers both European and national programmes for mobility in education. “This Council provide students formation regarding international cooperation and academic exchange across the entire educational spectrum, Nordic and European exchange services for state officials and training in preparation for the EU's civil service exams, admissions regulations and admission processes for institutions of higher education.” Furthermore, the Swedish Council also provides information regarding studies at the higher education level, as well as information about evaluation of foreign academic qualifications.<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, European Council every year delivers opinion on the Stability programmes of each EU country, as well as provides recommendations on national reform programmes. The opinions about priorities in higher education field in Sweden in the period from 2014 till 2017 provided by European Council are reviewed in the further section of the thesis.

### **2.2.1. Development of Higher Education: 2014 – 2017**

In 2014 European Council reported that the labour market situation in Sweden of the young, the low-skilled and people with a migrant background remains weak. In the report youth unemployment is emphasized since it remains above the EU average: “While the Swedish government has taken steps to address these points, it appears that difficulties may be linked to problems in the education field, with the Swedish education system failing to supply a proportion of young people with the necessary skills for successful integration into the labour market.” Furthermore, European Council also notes one more significant problem, immigration: “Sweden is also working to speed up the integration of people with a migrant background, while challenges persist notably with people with a migrant background from outside the EU.”<sup>120</sup>

Consequently, the Council recommends to take appropriate measures to improve basic skills and facilitate the transition from education to the labour market, including through a wider use of work-based training and apprenticeships. It is also necessary to “reinforce efforts

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<sup>118</sup> European Commission. *Mobility and Internationalisation*. Retrieved on on 12 May, 2018 from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-71\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-71_en)

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> European Commission. Council recommendation on Sweden's 2014 national reform programme and delivering a Council opinion on Sweden's 2014 convergence programme. Page: 5 Retrieved on 12 May, 2018 from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0428&from=EN>

to target labour market and education measures more effectively towards low-educated young people and people with a migrant background.”<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, in 2015 the Council noted that the Swedish Government is gradually improving school outcomes, after a decrease of quality in the last ten years that can be explained with relatively high youth unemployment. “The Government is also taking measures to facilitate the transition from education to the labour market and to improve the labour market integration of low-educated young people and people with a migrant background.” The Council reports that it is necessary to monitor the progress in this area.<sup>122</sup>

It is also communicated among media that Sweden is one of the countries where the immigration is higher than usual amount in the other countries. For instance, the journal “Business Insider Nordic” has reported, that, according to 2015 data, one of every six people living in Sweden were born outside the country. “The effect of the immigration wave in 2015, when more than 160,000 refugees and migrants entered Sweden, has also shown an effect. In Western and Southern Sweden, Syrians are now the biggest foreign-born nationality group.”<sup>123</sup>

In the report of 2016 the Council still underlined the issue of integration of migrants in higher education: “An important performance gap between students with and without a migrant background adds to the education challenge. This gap deserves particular attention in light of the large number of newly arrived young migrants to be integrated into the education system.” However, it is also noted that the Swedish Government has made additional funding available to improve school outcomes and equity, as well as the Government gradually integrates the newly arrived migrants in education.<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, it is noted that the high increase of refugees experienced in the past year has caused a number of social and economic consequences for Sweden. “This issue is high on

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<sup>121</sup> European Commission. *Council recommendation on Sweden's 2014 national reform programme and delivering a Council opinion on Sweden's 2014 convergence programme*. Page: 6. Retrieved on 29 April, 2018 from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0428&from=EN>

<sup>122</sup> European Commission. *Council recommendation on Sweden's 2015 National Reform Programme and delivering a Council opinion on 2015 Convergence Programme of Sweden*. Page: 4 Retrieved on 29 April, 2018 from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/csr2015\\_sweden\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/csr2015_sweden_en_0.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> Business Insider Nordic. *Sweden's foreign-born population is nearing 1,7 million — Finland and Iraq have the biggest communities*. March, 2017. Retrieved on 02 May, 2018 from: <https://nordic.businessinsider.com/swedens-foreign-born-population-is-nearly-17-million-people---finns-are-the-biggest-group-2017-3>

<sup>124</sup> European Commission. *Council recommendation on Sweden's 2016 National Reform Programme and delivering a Council opinion on 2016 Convergence Programme of Sweden*. Page: 4. Retrieved on 29 April, 2018 from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0347&from=EN>

the political agenda both at the EU and Member State level and will be monitored and analysed closely, including in the 2017 country report.”<sup>125</sup>

According to the Council, in 2016 Sweden had one of the highest employment rates in the EU (81.2 %), thus reaching one of the lowest long-term unemployment rates. “However, challenges remain, such as integrating low-skilled people and non-EU migrants into the labour market and reducing the substantial employment gap for non-EU-born women. Sweden has made considerable efforts in the reception of asylum seekers and in the integration of refugees and other immigrants.”<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the Council does not provide specific recommendation for 2017 in this field, since conclusions regarding achievements of 2016 are done.

Therefore, even if Sweden has solved the issue of unemployment, the country still has to tackle the issue as integration of migrants into the society that can also leave the impact to the level of education in Sweden.

### **2.2.2. Impact of Internationalization**

While in Latvia internationalization of higher education is mostly developed in the framework of EU and other funds, Sweden Government in 1994 set up The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education, which mission is to internationalise Swedish higher education and research.

According to the website, the Swedish Foundation, also known as STINT, promotes knowledge and competence development within internationalisation. Furthermore, the foundation invests in internationalisation projects proposed by researchers, educators, as well as leaderships at Swedish universities. “Foundation promotes internationalisation as an instrument to enhance the quality of research and higher education, increase the competitiveness of universities as well as strengthen the attractiveness of Swedish universities. The mission of Swedish Foundation is to encourage renewal within internationalisation through new collaboration forms and new partners.”<sup>127</sup>

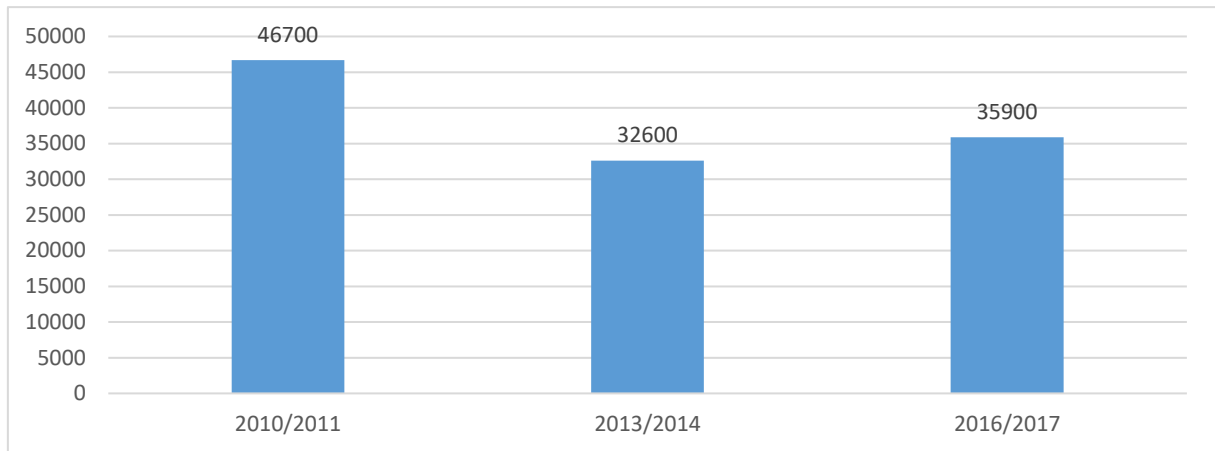
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<sup>125</sup> European Commission. *Council recommendation on Sweden's 2016 National Reform Programme and delivering a Council opinion on 2016 Convergence Programme of Sweden*. Page: 4-5. Retrieved on 29 April, 2018 from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0347&from=EN>

<sup>126</sup> European Commission. *Council recommendation on Sweden's 2017 National Reform Programme and delivering a Council opinion on 2017 Convergence Programme of Sweden*. Page: 4-5. Retrieved on 29 April, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations\\_-\\_sweden.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_-_sweden.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education. STINT. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: [http://www.stint.se/en/stint/about\\_stint](http://www.stint.se/en/stint/about_stint)

According to statistics, the number of Swedish students who study abroad for more than three months has remained constant for the last ten years. “For the 2016/2017 academic year, the figure was 24 100 students, corresponding to 14 percent of the graduating students.”<sup>128</sup>



Graph No. 2.4.

#### **Dynamics of Foreign Students in Sweden**

*Source: Author's construction based on the information provided by Swedish Government Inquiries<sup>129</sup>*

According to the statistics, the number of incoming students from abroad has changed lately. In 2010/2011 academic year there were 46 700 foreign students in Sweden. In 2013/2014 academic year the number reached it's lowest point – 32 500 students. That can be explained with the introduction of tuition fees for international students. However, in 2016/2017 the number of incoming students started to increase again reaching 35 900 incoming students from abroad at Swedish higher education institutions.

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<sup>128</sup> Swedish Government Inquiries. Internationalisation of Swedish Higher Education and Research. A Strategic Agenda. Stockholm 2018. Page:10. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: <https://www.government.se/48fc30/contentassets/4df6aeabd2bd4f5dbbf69210f786e133/internationalisationagenda.pdf>

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Development of Internationalization in Latvia and Sweden: 2014 – 2017

#### 3.1. Methodology and Materials of Empirical Study

**Questionnaire.** According to Business Dictionary, questionnaire is a list of a research or survey questions asked to respondents and designed to extract specific information. The questionnaire has several basic purposes: to collect appropriate data, provide data that are comparable, minimize partiality in formulating and asking a question, as well as to provide questions engaging and varied.<sup>130</sup>

According to Brace, in every case the main role of the questionnaire is to provide a standardized interview across all subjects. The key of the questionnaire is asking the same questions to different respondents, in order to make the interpretation of data possible for the researcher.<sup>131</sup>

**Comparative analysis** or comparative research is a term that includes both quantitative and qualitative comparison of social entities. “Social entities may be based on many lines, such as geographical or political ones in the form of cross-national or regional comparisons.”<sup>132</sup> In the process of comparative analysis, there are four key aspects that have to be taken into account: case selection, unit, level and scale of analysis, construct equivalence, variable or case orientation and issues of causality.<sup>133</sup>

The further chapter includes the comparative analysis of the realities in Latvia and Sweden according to European Mobility Scoreboard and EUROSTUDENT data.

#### 3.2. Comparative Analysis: European Mobility Scoreboard

The European Commission's Mobility Scoreboard in Higher Education (2016-2017) is a follow up to the 2011 'Youth on the Move' Recommendation of the Council of the European Union with an aim to promote the learning mobility of young people. The main purpose of the Mobility Scoreboard is to provide a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in promoting learning mobility, as well as removing obstacles to it.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Business Dictionary. *Definition: questionnaire.* Retrieved on 13 May, 2018 from: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/questionnaire.html>

<sup>131</sup> Brace I. *Questionnaire Design: how to plan, structure and write survey material for effective market research.* 2nd edition. Kogan Page: London&Philadelphia: 2008. Page: 4

<sup>132</sup> Mills M., Bunt G.G., Bruijn J. *Comparative Research: Persistent Problems and Promising Solutions.* International Sociological Association. SAGE Journals: 2006. Page: 621. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: [http://euroac.ffri.hr/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Comparative-Research\\_Problems-and-Solution.pdf](http://euroac.ffri.hr/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Comparative-Research_Problems-and-Solution.pdf)

<sup>133</sup> Blossfeld, H.-P., Mills, M. and Bernardi, F. *Globalization, Uncertainty and Men's Careers: An International Comparison.* Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar. 2006.

<sup>134</sup> European Commission. *Higher Education Mobility Scoreboard.* Retrieved on 13 May, 2018 from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators_en)

The Higher Education Mobility Scoreboard includes six indicators: Information and guidance, foreign language preparation, portability of grants and loans, support provided to students with low socio-economic background, recognition of learning outcomes, recognition of qualifications.<sup>135</sup>

Additionally, the surveyed information from EUROSTUDENT database is provided. The main aim of the EUROSTUDENT project is to collect comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education. According to the available information on the project webpage, the project focuses on the socio-economic background and on the living conditions of students, as well as investigates temporary international mobility. “It does this through coupling a central coordination approach with a strong network of national partners in each participating country. In this way, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the respective national frameworks in international comparison can be made.”<sup>136</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> round of the EUROSTUDENT survey took place from 2016 – 2018. In total, 28 countries conducted their field phases in 2016.

*Table 1*

**Indicator No. 1: Information and guidance on learning mobility<sup>137</sup>**

<b>Expected result by European Commission</b>	<b>Result in Latvia and Sweden: Comparative Analysis</b>
Central-level authority approaches to information and guidance in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an <b>overarching</b> strategy on mobility issued by the central-level authority that sets the direction for providing information and guidance, OR</li> <li>- publicly-supported <b>large-scale</b> initiatives aimed at informing and guiding learners, OR</li> <li>- a <b>delegated-body</b> with a mandate to provide information and guidance to</li> </ul>	While in Latvia there is strategy issued for providing information and guidance, in Sweden there is a delegated body who provides information and guidance to learners.

<sup>135</sup> European Commission. *Higher Education Mobility Scoreboard*. Retrieved on 13 May, 2018 from: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators_en)

<sup>136</sup> Eurostudent.eu. About eurostudent. Retrieved from: <http://www.eurostudent.eu/about/intentions>

<sup>137</sup> European Commission. *Higher Education Indicators. Scoreboard Indicator No.1: Information and guidance on learner mobility*. Retrieved from: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators/scoreboard-indicator-1-information-and-guidance>

learners.	
Centralised, publicly-supported web portal for learning mobility (outgoing mobility specifically or outgoing and incoming mobility together)	Public website for learning mobility in Sweden provides information for outward mobility, while for Latvia's case this information is not available. It does not provide information and guidance for outward mobility. In Latvia there is information and guidance provided regarding outward mobility.
Publicly-supported personalised services providing counselling, guidance and information, with established mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.	The situation is completely the opposite regarding publicly – supported personalised services on guidance and information: while in Latvia these services are provided by higher education institutions and other public bodies, that are monitored and evaluated centrally, in Sweden these services are provided by higher education institutions as well, however, they are not centrally monitored and evaluated. Provided by higher education institutions, and publicly-funded centres, agencies and bodies. Services are monitored and evaluated centrally.  Provided by higher education institutions but are not centrally monitored and evaluated.
Involvement of multipliers under publicly-supported large-scale initiatives of information and guidance on learning mobility.	Both Latvia and Sweden are not involved in publicly supported large-scale initiatives.

As it is indicated in the table No. 1 above, there are slight differences in providing information and guidance on learning mobility between Latvia and Sweden.

Moreover, according to Eurostudent VI information, 14.6% of students in Sweden who plan an enrolment abroad, have indicated lack of information from higher education

institution as quite or large obstacle for temporary enrolment abroad. The same indicator for students in Latvia is slightly higher - 15.3 %.<sup>138</sup>

Table 2

**Indicator No. 2: Preparation of opportunities for learning mobility – foreign language skills<sup>139</sup>**

<b>Expected result by European Commission</b>	<b>Result in Latvia and Sweden: Comparative analysis</b>	
Total compulsory foreign language teaching lasts for <b>10 years or more</b> for all pupils.	In Sweden all pupils have to learn foreign languages for at least 9 years, while in Latvia foreign languages are compulsory for all pupils in general education for 12 years.	
Pupils in both general and vocational education have to learn two foreign languages simultaneously for <b>at least 5 years</b> .	Two languages are compulsory in general education for 7 years.	Only one language is compulsory for all students.

Therefore, Latvia reaches the expected result by European Commission that foreign language teaching lasts for 10 or more years for all pupils, as well as pupils learn two foreign languages simultaneously for at least 5 years. On the contrary, Sweden only partly fulfils these criteria.

Nevertheless, EUROSTUDENT data show different view regarding language proficiency: in Sweden 95.3% of students respond that they have good or very good language proficiency in more than 2 languages (including native language), while in Latvia 89.9% of students have provided this answer. The difference between countries is noticeable where students have good or very good language proficiency in 2 and 3 languages (including native language): in Latvia 48.8% of students indicated proficiency in 2 languages, while in Sweden – 63.6%. However, the data regarding proficiency in 3 languages is different: in Sweden 24.1% of students have indicated their proficiency, while in Latvia the percentage is higher – 35.8%.

<sup>138</sup> Eurostudent.eu. *Obstacles to temporary enrolment abroad*. Retrieved on 09 May, 2018 from: [http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=mobility\\_enrol\\_concr\\_plan\\_obstacle&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D](http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=mobility_enrol_concr_plan_obstacle&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D)

<sup>139</sup> European Commission. Scoreboard Indicator 2: Preparation of opportunities for learning mobility – foreign language skills. Retrieved on 09 May, 2018 from: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators/scoreboard-indicator-2-preparation-opportunities>

*Table 3*  
**Indicator No. 3: Portability of domestic public grants  
and publicly-subsidised loans<sup>140</sup>**

<b>Expected result by European Commission</b>	<b>Result in Latvia and Sweden: Comparative analysis</b>
Full portability across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) of all available domestic student support measures – grants and/or loans – for credit and degree mobility. Equivalent requirements for public grants and/or loans if students study in the home country or abroad.	In Sweden domestic grants and loans are portable for credit as well as degree mobility. On the contrary, in Latvia grants are portably only for credit mobility and with some restrictions. However, for loans Latvia implements the same strategy as Sweden.

Furthermore, the current situation is also indicated in EUROSTUDENT data: 74.1% of students in Sweden as sources of funding used for enrolment abroad indicate regular study grants/loans from their home country, as well as 39.6% of students in Sweden indicate they receive special study grant/loan from home country for going abroad. On the contrary, in Latvia only 19.7% of students receive regular study grants/loans from home country, as well as 14.9% of students receive special study grant/loan from home country for going abroad. This issue can also be explained with the usage of STINT funding in Sweden that is mentioned in section No. 3.2.2. of the Master thesis.

It is significant to note that 67.3% of students in Latvia have indicated EU study grants as sources of funding used for enrolment abroad, while in Sweden the percentage is remarkably lower - only 34.4%.<sup>141</sup>

The further table below provides comparative analysis regarding mobility support provided to students with low socio-economic background both in Latvia and Sweden.

<sup>140</sup> European Commission. Indicator No. 3: Portability of domestic public grants and publicly-subsidised loans. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators/scoreboard-indicator-3-portability-domestic-public>

<sup>141</sup> Eurostudent.eu. Sources of funding used for enrolment abroad. Retrieved on 10 May, 2018 from: [http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=mobility\\_enrol\\_fund\\_all&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D](http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=mobility_enrol_fund_all&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D)

Table 4

**Indicator 4: Mobility support provided to students  
with low socio-economic background<sup>142</sup>**

<b>Expected result by European Commission</b>	<b>Result in Latvia and Sweden: Comparative analysis</b>
Comprehensive monitoring of the participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes.	Both in Latvia and Sweden there is no monitoring provided for participation of students with low socio-economic background in mobility programmes.
Financial support provided to learners with low socio-economic background.	In Sweden there are mainstream portable grants provided for learners with low socio-economic background, while in Latvia there is no support provided to support learner with low socio-economic background.

Additionally, EUROSTUDENT data show that in Sweden 12.7% of students indicate that their parental financial status is “not well-off” or “not at all well-off”; in Latvia this percentage is even higher – 16.2%. In Latvia 46.4% of students indicate that their parental financial status is average, in Sweden – 37.9%. Consequently, 37.4% of students in Latvia indicate that their parental status is “well-off” or “very well-off”; in Sweden this percentage is higher – almost 50%.<sup>143</sup>

Table 5

**Indicator No. 5: Recognition of learning outcomes  
through ECTS in higher education<sup>144</sup>**

<b>Expected result by European Commission</b>	<b>Result in Latvia and Sweden: Comparative analysis</b>
The 2015 ECTS Users' Guide is used by external quality assurance agencies as the basis	According to European Mobility Scoreboard, the 2015 User's Guide is not used by external quality assurance agencies as the basis to assess the implementation of

<sup>142</sup> European Commission. *Higher education indicator 4: Mobility support provided to students with low socio-economic background*. Retrieved on 11 May, 2018 from: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators/scoreboard-indicator-4-mobility-support-provided>

<sup>143</sup> Student's assessment of parental financial status. Retrieved on 11 May, 2018 from: [http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=parent\\_wealth&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D&focusgroup=all\\_students](http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=parent_wealth&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D&focusgroup=all_students)

<sup>144</sup> European Commission. *Higher education indicator 5: Recognition of learning outcomes through ECTS in higher education*. Retrieved on 11 May, 2018 from: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators/scoreboard-indicator-5-recognition-learning-outcomes>

to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions (HEIs).	ECTS in higher education institutions. However, this indicator does not acknowledge that ECTS system would be implemented at low level in both countries.
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According to the data provided by EUROSTUDENT, 15.9% of students in Latvia as one of the obstacles for temporary enrolment abroad have indicated problems with recognition of results achieved abroad. In Sweden this percentage is slightly lower – 11%.<sup>145</sup>

Table 6

**Indicator No. 6: Recognition of qualifications  
for learner mobility<sup>146</sup>**

<b>Expected result by European Commission</b>	<b>Result in Latvia and Sweden: Comparative Analysis</b>
All higher education qualifications issued in other EHEA countries are recognised on an equal level with qualifications in the home country without any additional procedures in higher education institutions.	In Latvia there is no automatic recognition at system level. However, there are several conditions that apply to recognition practice. In Sweden, on the contrary, all higher education qualifications issued in other EHEA countries are recognised on an equal level with qualifications in the home country without any additional procedures in higher education institutions.

Therefore, as a result of comparative analysis, it can be concluded, that realities are different between Latvia and Sweden, however, there is no certain leader when speaking about the level of internationalization. Both countries can take several best practices from each other in order to improve the level of internationalization.

### 3.3. Development of Internationalization in Higher Education in Latvia

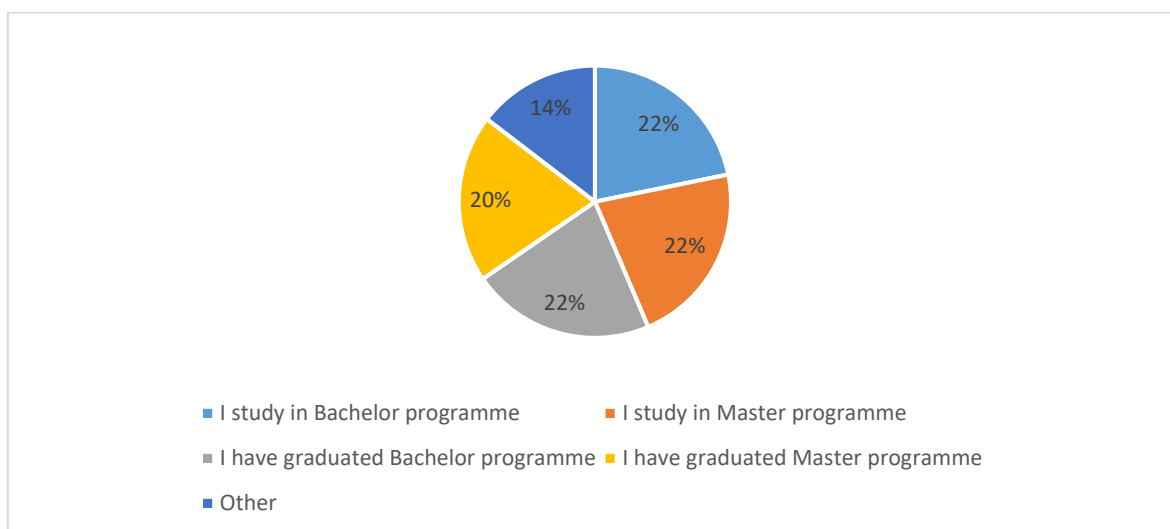
The survey was conducted electronically with the request to current students or graduates who have acquired their degree in the period from 2014 till 2017.

<sup>145</sup> Eurostudent.eu. *Obstacles to temporary enrolment abroad*. Retrieved on 12 May, 2018 from: [http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=mobility\\_enrol\\_noplan\\_obstacle&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D](http://database.eurostudent.eu/#topic=mobility_enrol_noplan_obstacle&countries=%5B%22LV%22%2C%22SE%22%5D)

<sup>146</sup> European Commission. *Higher Education institutions*. Retrieved on 12 May, 2018 from: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education-indicators/scoreboard-indicator-6-recognition-qualifications>

The survey was filled in by 75 respondents, asking them to indicate the following demographic information:

- the region where their higher education institution is located – in Riga, or in one of the regions of Latvia – Latgale, Zemgale, Vidzeme, or Kurzeme;
- the information regarding their study status – if the respondent is current Bachelor or Master student, graduate of Bachelor or Master studies, or other.
- The information regarding their field of studies: humanities and arts, social science, commercial law and law, natural science, IT or maths, engineering, production, construction, agriculture, health care and welfare, services, education, or other.



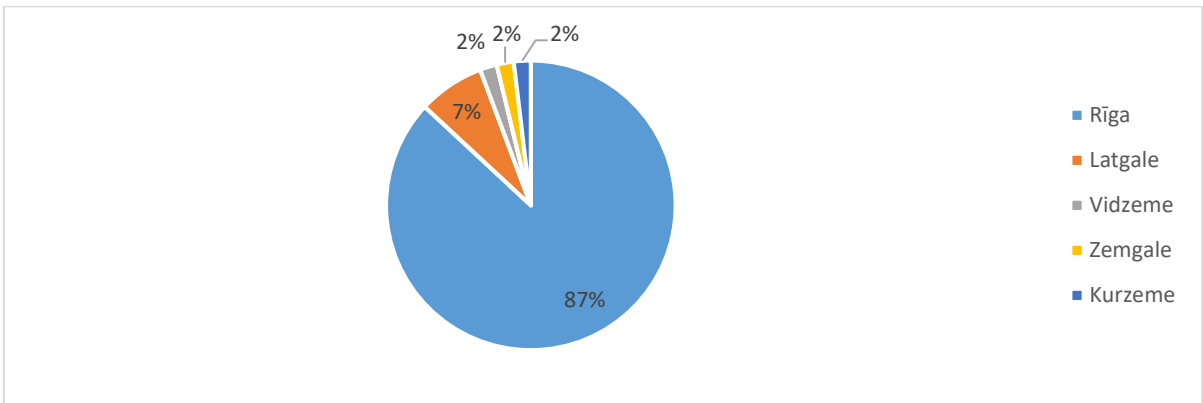
Graph 3.1.

### Current study status of respondents

Source: *author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Latvia (n=75) conducted by the author in 2018.*

As it is indicated in the graph No. 3.1. that the current study status of respondents has divided in quite equal parts – both Bachelor and Master students, as well as graduates, compile more than 20% of each. 15% have indicated the other study status – it is either the student of 1<sup>st</sup> level higher education, or students, who at the moment have study interruption.

Almost all students who study or have graduated studies in higher education institutions that are located in the other regions of Latvia (except Riga), study in Bachelor study programme, as well as there is one student that studies Master programme; exception are students who have study interruption, or they study 1<sup>st</sup> level of higher education. Furthermore, the graph below provides more detailed information regarding division of respondents among Riga and other regions of Latvia.



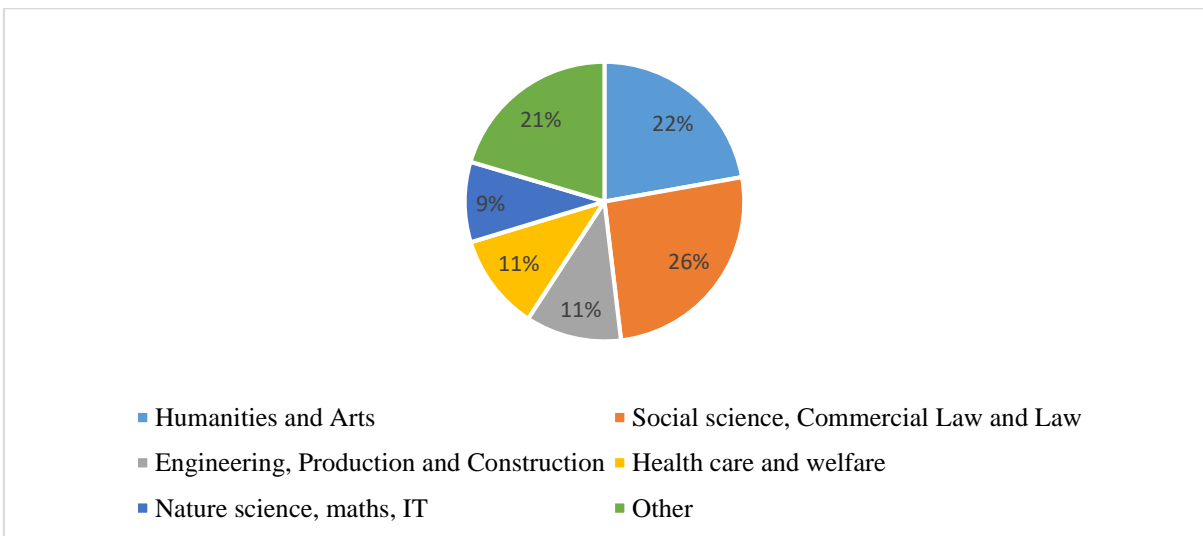
Graph 3.2.

**Geographical location of higher education institutions indicated by respondents in Latvia**

Source: *author's construction based on the survey of higher education students and graduates in Latvia (n=75) conducted by the author in 2018.*

The graph No. 3.2.. above shows that the highest proportion of respondents study or have graduated their studies in the capital city of Riga – 87% of all respondents. Moreover, almost all Master students and graduates have studied in Riga. That might be explained with the factor that in Riga there are more opportunities for students to obtain Master degree than in other regions in Latvia.

Furthermore, the graph below provides information regarding most common fields of studies for respondents who filled in the survey.



Graph 3.3.

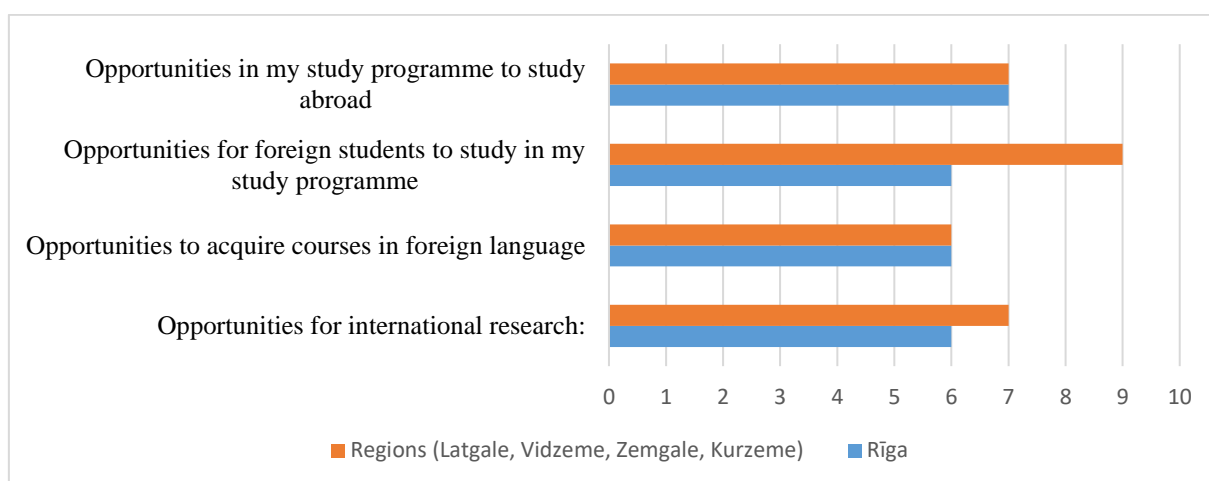
**Fields of the study programme indicated by respondents**

Source: *author's construction based on the survey of higher education students and graduates in Latvia (n=75) conducted by the author in 2018.*

The graph No. 3.3. points out that the most common fields of studies among respondents are humanities and arts, as well as social science, commercial law and law. The other fields such as engineering, production and construction, health care and welfare, as well as nature science, maths and IT are not so commonly represented in the survey – only 30% are allocated to these fields of studies.

Furthermore, evaluation provided by students and graduates of higher education institutions both in Riga and other regions of Latvia regarding provided opportunities in the field of internationalisation is analysed.

In the framework of survey students were asked to evaluate their opportunities regarding international cooperation in their higher education institution. Students were asked to express their opinion about opportunities in the scale from 1 till 10, where 1 means “very low” and 10 is “very high”.



Graph 3.4.

### Student opportunities for international cooperation in their study programme in Riga and regions of Latvia

Source: author’s construction based on the student and graduate survey in Latvia (n=75) conducted by the author in 2018.

**Opportunities in my study programme to study abroad.** According to the survey, students both in Riga and in other regions of Latvia averagely with 7 evaluate their opportunities to study abroad in the framework of their study programme. However, it is significant to note, that even if respondents evaluate their opportunities to study abroad quite highly, only 18% of all respondents used this opportunity to study abroad.

Moreover, several students who study in Riga have indicated that in the framework of their study programme the information about studies abroad was not provided, the mobility abroad was introduced by their own initiative. Furthermore, the specifics of the study

programme (e.g. pedagogy – the Latvian language and literature) is also mentioned as a reason for the lack of opportunities to study abroad.

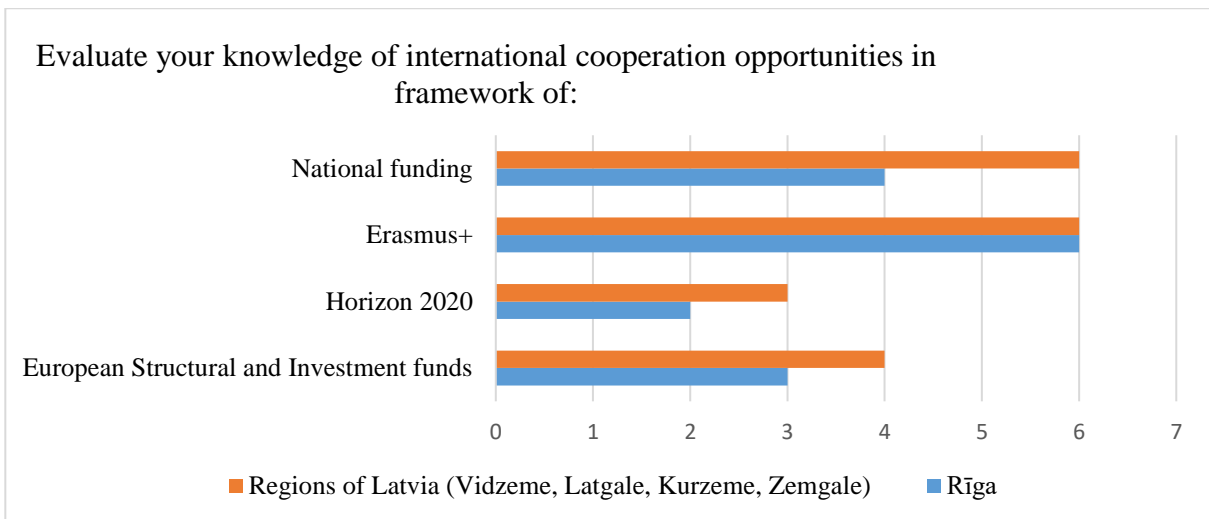
**Opportunities for foreign students to study in my study programme.** According to the survey, it can be concluded that students who study in regions of Latvia evaluate opportunities for foreign students to study in their study programme higher than in Riga. If in Riga this opportunity is evaluated as 6, then in regions of Latvia – 9. Furthermore, several students who study in Riga commented they have not been interested in this issue, therefore, they cannot provide a reply to this question. Other students set their evaluation based on their observation regarding the number of foreign students in their study programme.

**Opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language.** Students both in Riga and regions of Latvia, when asked about opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language in the framework of their study programme, have evaluated similarly – the average evaluation is 6. Furthermore, several students have provided comments that the level of the foreign language taught was not high. Others commented that there were several courses or guest lectures in English, however, the number of them was very low.

**Opportunities for international research.** Documents provided by European Union supervising institutions (e.g. European Commission, European Council) state that the level of international research in higher education institutions is quite low. Nevertheless, the survey shows that the gap among other previously mentioned international opportunities and research cannot be indicated according to this survey. Even if several respondents indicate the lack of information as problem, the evaluation provided both by regions of Latvia and Riga is in a good level – accordingly 7 and 6.

In the framework of survey students were also asked to evaluate their knowledge regarding opportunities in the framework of different programmes and funding in their higher education institution. Students were asked to express opinion about their knowledge in the scale from 1 till 10, where 1 means “I don’t know anything about that” and 10 is “I know the opportunities very well”.

The respondents were asked to express their opinion about their opportunities in the framework of national funding and such EU programmes as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, and European Structural and Investment Funds.



Graph 3.5.

### Student and graduate opportunities for international cooperation in Latvia in the framework of different provided by national and EU funds

*Source: author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Latvia (n=75) conducted by the author in 2018.*

**National funding.** According to the provided information by Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, national funding in higher education field is provided for budget study places in each higher education institution separately according to the provided study field. Furthermore, funding for research is widely supported by national funding. The national funding also goes also to different international projects where co-financing is necessary. Additionally, different arts and creative projects are also supported by the state.<sup>147</sup>

The results of the survey (graph No. 3.5.) show that students and graduates of higher education institutions in the regions of Latvia have evaluated their knowledge about their opportunities to use national funding for international cooperation higher than students and graduates in Riga. This can be explained with the factor that in the regions of Latvia there is quite high number of provided budget places in higher education institutions. Since the number of students in in these institutions is lower than in Riga, the higher percentage of students can obtain their studies using state funding.

Furthermore, this result can also be connected with the evaluation that students and graduates provided about their opportunities for international research (graph No. 3.4.) – in several cases higher education institutions in regions in Latvia specialize in certain fields – for instance, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, that is located in Zemgale, is the only place in the whole country where agricultural degrees can be obtained. Latvia

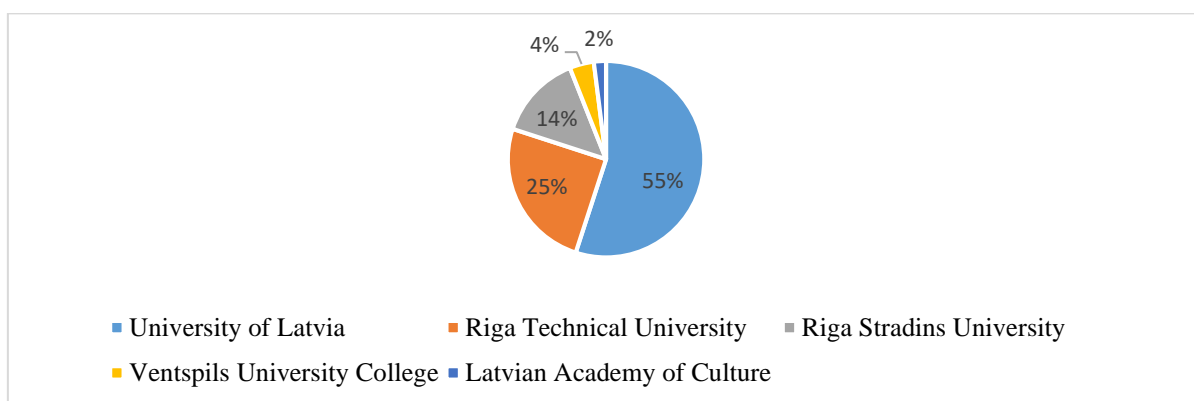
<sup>147</sup> Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. Augstākās izglītības finansēšanas modelis. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018, from: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/izglitiba/augstaka-izglitiba/augstakas-izglitibas-finansesanas-modelis>

University of Life Sciences and Technologies also implement projects in research field that are financed by university funding or by state funding (i.e. receives subsidies from Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia).<sup>148</sup>

However, students and graduates of higher education institutions in Riga evaluate their knowledge about provided opportunities in international cooperation in the framework of national funding quite low – the average mark is only 4 out of 10.

**EU programme Erasmus+.** Even if the programme can be supposed as the commonly known programme in EU when speaking about student mobility, both students and graduates in regions and Latvia and in Riga evaluate their knowledge about international cooperation opportunities only with 6 out of 10. Furthermore, during the survey it was revealed that only 18% of all respondents used this opportunity to study abroad.

**Horizon 2020.** According to the survey, the student and graduate knowledge about opportunities in the framework of Horizon 2020 programme is low – in Riga the average mark is 2, in other regions of Latvia – 3. That can be connected with the specifics of the programme – the programme mostly supports projects in the fields of science, production, research, as well as solution of topical issues in the society. However, in 2017 there were 49 projects supported that will be implemented in higher education institutions. In total in 2017 in the framework of Horizon 2020 programme more than 41 million euro are allocated for the implementation of 160 projects.<sup>149</sup>



Graph 3.6.

### Supported projects by Horizon 2020 programme in Latvia in 2017

*Source: the author's construction based on the list of supported projects by Horizon 2020 programme in 2017 provided by eCORDA<sup>150</sup>*

<sup>148</sup> Latvijas Lauksaimniecības universitāte. Apstiprinātie projekti. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: <http://www.llu.lv/lv/apstiprinatie-projekti-1>

<sup>149</sup> Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra. Apvārsnis 2020 atbalstītie projekti. Retrieved on 15 May from [http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/zinatnes\\_inovacijas\\_progr/apvarsnis\\_2020\\_red/h2020\\_atbalstitie\\_proj/](http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/zinatnes_inovacijas_progr/apvarsnis_2020_red/h2020_atbalstitie_proj/)

<sup>150</sup> Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra. Apvārsnis 2020 atbalstītie projekti. Retrieved on 15 May from [http://viaa.gov.lv/library/files/original/9878\\_H2020\\_projektu\\_saraksts\\_3009\\_2017.pdf](http://viaa.gov.lv/library/files/original/9878_H2020_projektu_saraksts_3009_2017.pdf)

As it is indicated in the graph No. 3.6. above, the most common implementers of Horizon 2020 programme in 2017 are University of Latvia and Riga Technical University. Furthermore, Riga Stradins University, as well as Latvian Academy of Culture implement Horizon 2020 projects. However, Ventspils University College is the only higher education institution among other regions of Latvia except Riga that were supported by Horizon 2020 funding in 2017. The low number (6 out of 16 state higher education institutions) of institutions that have been supported by this programme can be also the reason why the survey reveals the low level of knowledge regarding international cooperation opportunities in the framework of Horizon 2020.

**European Structural and Investment Funds.** According to the survey (graph No. 3.5.), students and graduates of higher education institutions both in Riga and regions of Latvia evaluate the knowledge about provided opportunities by European Structural and Investment Funds higher than for Horizon2020. However, the result of knowledge is still low: in Riga the average mark is 3, in regions of Latvia – 4. In this case also the specifics of the supported projects by this programme can be the explanation for the low level of knowledge. Furthermore, European Structural and Investment Funds are divided in different other funds (e.g. European Social Fund, the Cohesion fund, and others), that may be reason why students and graduates are not so commonly informed about projects under the title “European Structural and Investment Funds”.

According to the results of the public opinion research in 2017, the respondents were asked to identify the fields supported by EU funds, in which there are positive results achieved. In 2014 survey 14% of respondents replied that in the education field there are positive results achieved. By 2017 this percentage has reached 22% of respondents.<sup>151</sup>

Nevertheless, when respondents were asked to identify three main fields in which fields it is necessary to invest more EU funds, 33% of respondents in 2017 identified education field. In 2014 the percentage was lower – 24%.<sup>152</sup>

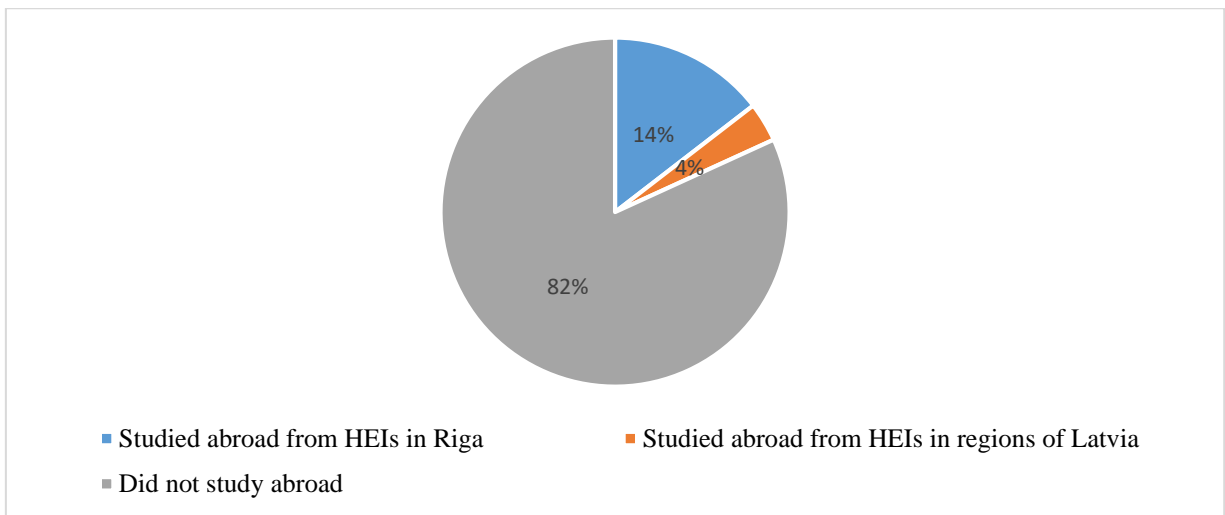
Therefore, the research also confirms the significance of investment in higher education in the framework of EU funds.

The graph below provides information regarding students and graduates who have studied abroad in the period from 2014 – 2017 in Latvia.

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<sup>151</sup> Sabiedriskās domas izvērtējums. Iedzīvotāju informētība un izpratne par Eiropas Savienības fondiem 2017. gadā. Latvian facts: 2017. Page: 75. Retrieved on 15 May from: [http://esfondi.lv/upload/Petijumi\\_un\\_izvertejumi/iedzivotaju-informetiba-un-izpratne-par-eiropas-savienibas-fondiem-2017.gada.pdf](http://esfondi.lv/upload/Petijumi_un_izvertejumi/iedzivotaju-informetiba-un-izpratne-par-eiropas-savienibas-fondiem-2017.gada.pdf)

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.



Graph 3.7.

### Students and graduates who have studied abroad in the period from 2014-2017 in Latvia

*Source: author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Latvia (n=75) conducted by the author in 2018.*

Even if the survey reveals that students and graduates are informed about the Erasmus+ quite well, as well as the opportunities for studying abroad are evaluated quite high, only 18% of all respondents have spent at least 1 semester abroad. Countries where students have studied are different: Norway, Estonia, Italy, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and others.

Respondents who have studied abroad highlight that in the other country there are more opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language, than in Latvia. Other respondents admit that in the foreign university the level of international cooperation is higher – the flow of foreign students is wider; however, others admit, that in Latvia the level of international cooperation is high - professional mobility coordinators provide all necessary information. The respondent who studied in Norway highlights, that in the university abroad also teachers from Latvia work – the cooperation between institutions is very good.

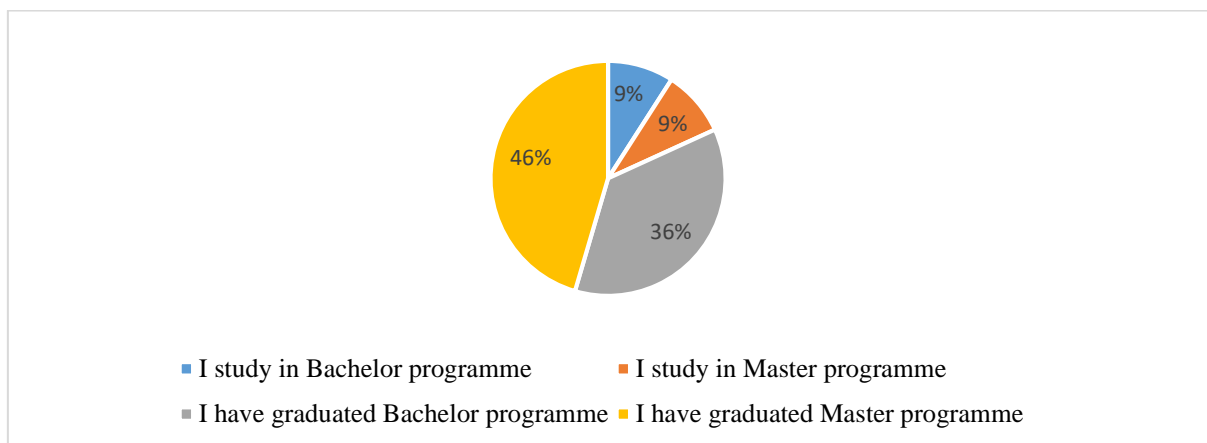
Furthermore, respondents point out several issues with recognition of courses in Latvia after returning from study semester abroad. That caused several debts in higher education institution in Latvia.

### 3.4. Development of Internationalization in Higher Education in Sweden

The survey was conducted electronically with the request to current students or graduates who have acquired their degree in Sweden in the period from 2014 till 2017.

The survey was filled in by 22 respondents, asking them to indicate the following demographic information:

- the region where their higher education institution is located – in Stockholm, Lund, Gothenburg, Uppsala, or other;
- the information regarding their study status – if the respondent is current Bachelor or Master student, graduate of Bachelor or Master studies, or other.
- The information regarding their field of studies: humanities and arts, social science, commercial law and law, natural science, IT or maths, engineering, production, construction, agriculture, health care and welfare, services, education, or other.



Graph 3.8.

### Current study status of respondents

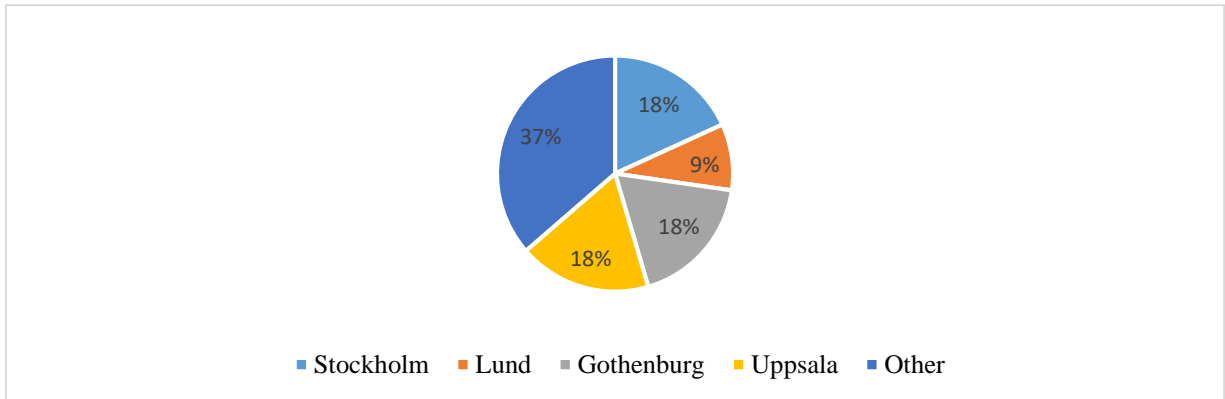
Source: *author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Sweden (n=22) conducted by the author in 2018.*

As it is indicated in the graph No. 3.8., the current study status of respondents is quite different – the largest part of respondents (46%) have graduated Master programme in Sweden. When analysing the results of the survey it can be concluded that several respondents are international students in Sweden; that can be also explained by the factor that the survey was conducted in English, which is not native language in Sweden. Furthermore, the tendency shows that international students mostly do their Bachelor studies in their home country and take a decision to study Master abroad, in this case - Sweden.

The second largest part of respondents (36%) have graduated Bachelor programme in Sweden. Proportionally smaller part of respondents are students of Bachelor and Master programmes – only 9% each.

Furthermore, the graph below provides the information regarding geographical division of respondents in Sweden. The respondents were asked to identify in which higher education institution they have studied or graduated.

Four largest universities in 2016 by number of full-time students were Stockholm University, Lund University, University of Gothenburg, Uppsala University.<sup>153</sup> On the basis of this data the respondents were asked to identify the city depending on the location of the institutions.



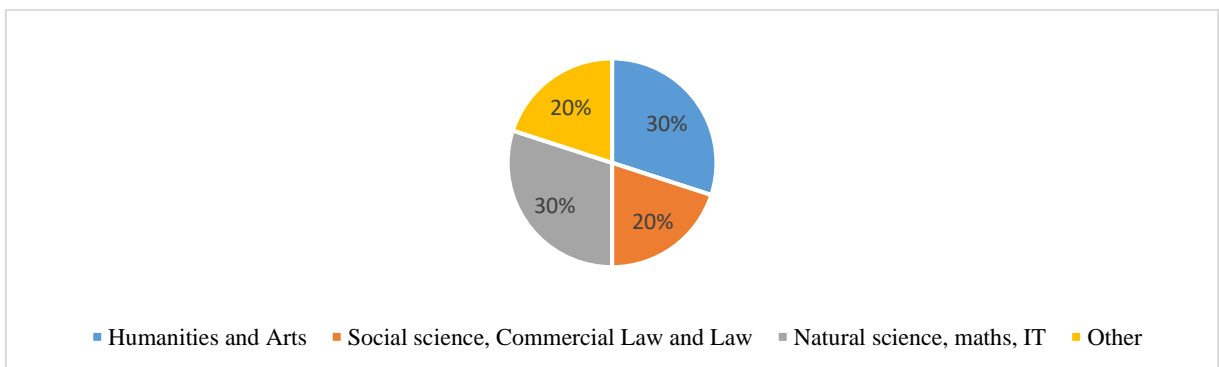
Graph 3.9.

### Geographical location of higher education institutions indicated by respondents in Sweden

Source: *author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Sweden (n=22) conducted by the author in 2018.*

The graph No. 4.3.2. above shows that more than half (54%) of respondents have studied in higher education institutions in Stockholm, Gothenburg or Uppsala - 18% of respondents in each. Only 9% of students have studied in Lund. However, large part or respondents (37%) have studied in other higher education institutions of Sweden – in the fields of education, natural science, maths, and IT.

Furthermore, in the graph below the fields of studies indicated by respondents in Sweden is described.



Graph 3.10.

### Fields of the study programme indicated by respondents in Sweden

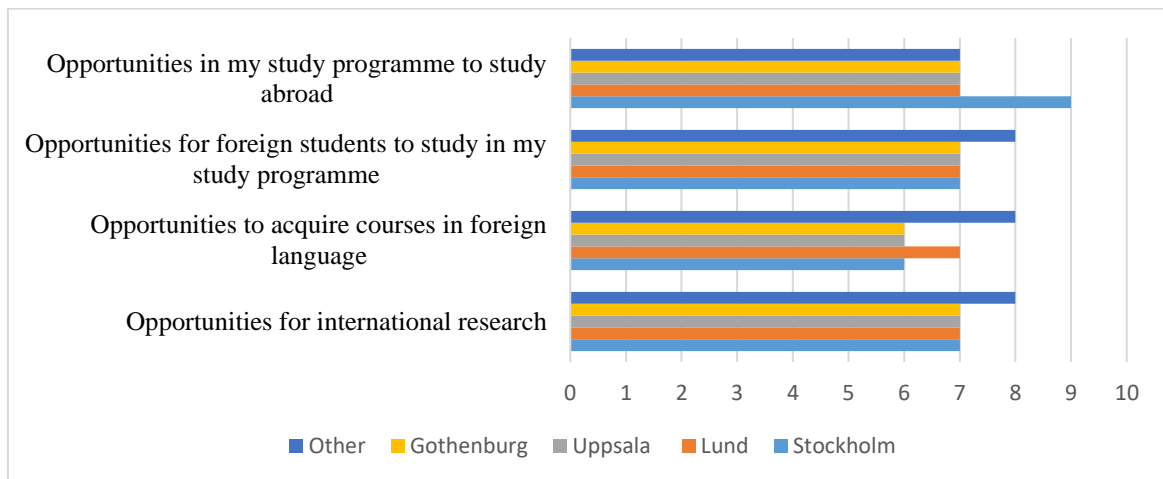
<sup>153</sup> The Statistics portal. *20 biggest universities in Sweden in 2016, by number of full-time students.* Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/533107/sweden-biggest-universities-by-number-of-students/>

Source: *author's construction based on the survey of higher education students and graduates in Sweden (n=22) conducted by the author in 2018.*

The graph No. 3.10. points out that the most common fields of studies among respondents are humanities and arts, as well as natural science, maths and IT. The other fields such as social science, commercial law and law are also represented in the survey (20), as well as other fields – such as education, welfare and others.

Furthermore, evaluation provided by students and graduates of higher education institutions in Sweden regarding provided opportunities in the field of internationalisation is analysed.

In the framework of survey students were asked to evaluate their opportunities regarding international cooperation in their higher education institution in Sweden. Students were asked to express their opinion about opportunities in the scale from 1 till 10, where 1 means “very low” and 10 is “very high”.



Graph 3.11.

### **Student opportunities for international cooperation in their study programme in Sweden**

*Source: author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Sweden (n=22) conducted by the author in 2018.*

**Opportunities in my study programme to study abroad.** According to the survey, respondents averagely with 7 evaluate their opportunities to study abroad in the framework of their study programme. The same mark in average for this question was provided also in Latvia case.

The exception is Stockholm – in this region the opportunities to study abroad are evaluated averagely with 9. Stockholm University, that is located in the capital city of

Sweden, is one of the oldest and largest universities in Scandinavia.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, the survey reveals that in Stockholm higher education institutions there are good opportunities to obtain scholarship for international students.

However, among respondents who study in Uppsala, there is opinion expressed that there were no students from certain study programme who used an opportunity to study abroad. Although, the respondent also admits that there are easy opportunities at Uppsala University for international students to study in Master programme – this opportunity was also used by the respondent.

**Opportunities for foreign students to study in my study programme.** According to the survey, it can be concluded that students who study in the higher education institutions that are located in the other cities, not Stockholm, Lund, Uppsala, Gothenburg, evaluate the opportunities for foreign students to study in their study programme higher – the average mark is 8. However, in the four cities where the largest higher education institutions are located, the mark is slightly lower – 7. Therefore, the difference is not very wide.

It can be emphasized that in order to provide comfortable conditions for international students, Stockholm University website provides information for students not only in Swedish and English languages, but also in Chinese, Russian, Spanish, French and German.<sup>155</sup> That can be considered as successful approach in order to reach international students not only from Europe, but also from the whole world.

Moreover, University of Gothenburg website provides opportunity not only to read the website in Swedish or English languages, but also the listening opportunity is provided. With this approach more people with special needs, especially hearing impairments can be reached – both Swedish and international students.<sup>156</sup>

According to the results of the survey conducted in Latvia, from respondents studying in Riga, this opportunity is evaluated slightly lower – the average mark is 6.

**Opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language.** Students in Gothenburg, Stockholm and Uppsala have evaluated their opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language quite low – the average mark is 6. That can be explained with respondent status and interpretation of question – most probably the English language in this question is not considered as foreign language since in most cases it is the language of instruction in study process of respondents. However, according to the survey, there is opinion expressed, that if

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<sup>154</sup> Times Higher Education. *World University Rankings. Stockholm University*. Retrieved on 20 May, 2018 from: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/stockholm-university>

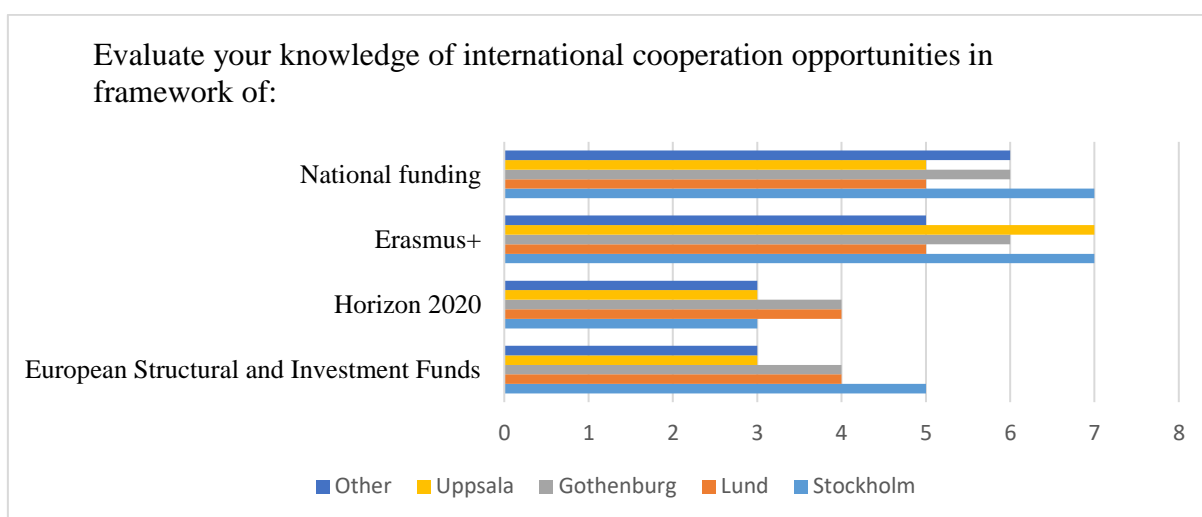
<sup>155</sup> Stockholm University. Education. *Stockholm University in other languages*. Retrieved on 22 May, 2018 from: <https://www.su.se/english/education>

<sup>156</sup> University of Gothenburg. Retrieved on 22 May, 2018 from: <https://www.gu.se/english>

international students are willing to study in the Swedish language, students have to prove their language skills.

**Opportunities for international research.** The situation regarding opportunities for international research is similar as in case of Latvia: the survey shows that the gap among other previously mentioned international opportunities and research cannot be indicated. The evaluation provided for international research in higher education institutions located in all four cities averagely is 7, in other cities – 8.

In the framework of survey students were also asked to evaluate their knowledge regarding opportunities in the framework of different programmes and funding in their higher education institution. Students were asked to express opinion about their knowledge in the scale from 1 till 10, where 1 means “I don’t know anything about that” and 10 is “I know the opportunities very well”.



Graph 3.12.

### **Student and graduate opportunities for international cooperation in Sweden in the framework of different provided by national and EU funds**

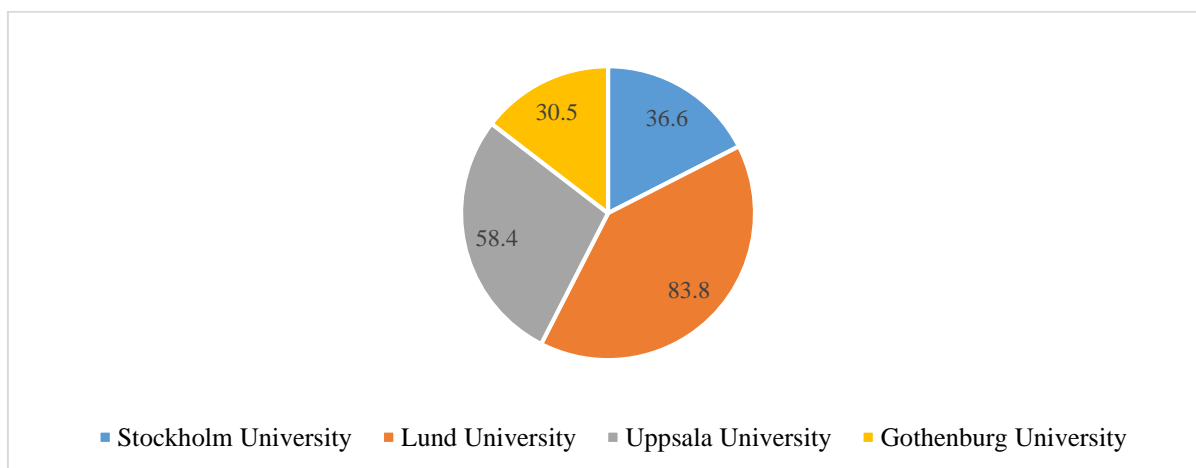
*Source: author’s construction based on the student and graduate survey in Sweden (n=22) conducted by the author in 2018.*

**National Funding.** The survey reveals that in Sweden case respondents evaluate international cooperation opportunities in the framework of national funds higher than in Latvia survey. In this case opportunities are evaluated in the range from 5 to 7. As mentioned previously, in the survey respondents emphasized that there are good opportunities to obtain scholarships for international students, other than provided by other funding, for instance, Erasmus+. Moreover, this can be explained with previously mentioned STINT programme, that provides additional funding for internationalization in the higher education and research field.

**EU programme Erasmus+.** The knowledge about international cooperation opportunities in the framework of EU programme Erasmus+ among students and graduates in Swedish higher education institutions is evaluated quite similar as in Latvian survey – the evaluation differs from 5 to 7. The result could be expected to be higher, since Erasmus+ is one of the most popular mobility programmes across whole Europe. Therefore, it can be concluded that both in Latvia and Sweden it is necessary to provide more information about opportunities of the programme.

**Horizon 2020.** The situation regarding student and graduate knowledge about provided opportunities by Horizon2020 is similar to the survey results in Latvia. Respondents evaluate their knowledge in the scale from 3 to 4. As mentioned previously, this can be connected with the specifics of the programme where students may not take a large role in the implementation of this programme by higher education institutions.

However, in Sweden quite remarkable funding is allocated to the implementation of Horizon2020, where largest universities in Sweden take important role. Below the division of funding (in million euros) is described among Gothenburg, Uppsala, Lund and Stockholm Universities.



Graph 3.13.

### **Division of funding among higher education institutions in Sweden (million euro)**

*Source: author's construction based on the list of Top 10 beneficiaries supported by Horizon 2020 programme in 2018 provided by eCORDA<sup>157</sup>*

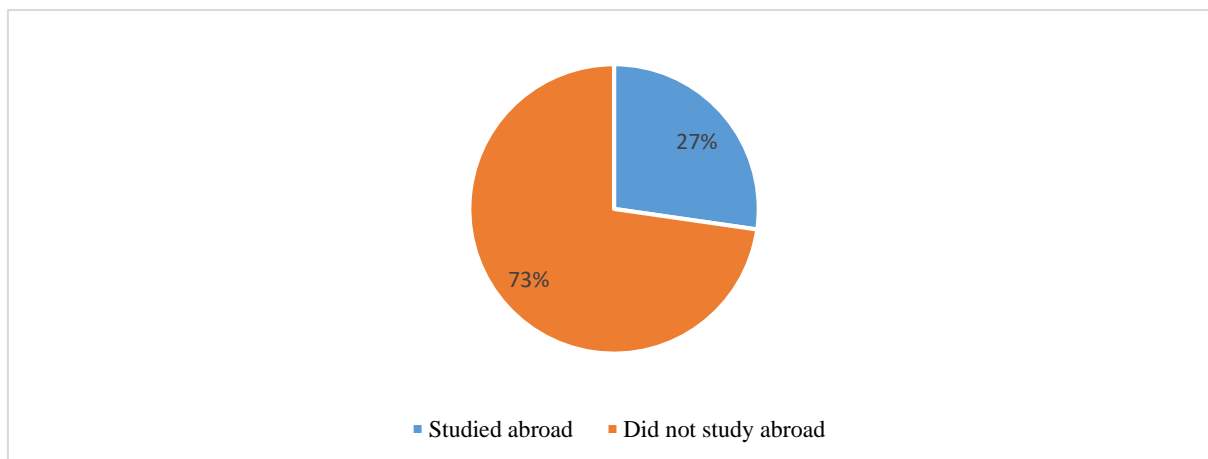
As it is indicated in the graph above, almost 210 million euros are allocated in the framework of Horizon2020 to four largest universities in Sweden. The largest amount – almost 84 million euro are supported to the projects implemented in Lund University, 58

<sup>157</sup> European Commission. Top 10 beneficiaries, EC financial contribution granted in H2020. Retrieved on May 23, 2018 from: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/country-profiles/se\\_country\\_profile\\_and\\_featured\\_projects.pdf#zoom=125&pagemode=none](http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/country-profiles/se_country_profile_and_featured_projects.pdf#zoom=125&pagemode=none)

million euro in Uppsala University, and more than 30 million euros to Gothenburg and Stockholm Universities.

**European Structural and Investment Funds.** Slightly better situation regarding respondent knowledge of international cooperation opportunities in the framework of European Structural and Investment Funds is represented in Sweden than for Horizon2020 programme. The evaluation depends on the cities; however, the varies averagely from 3 to 5.

The graph below provides information regarding students and graduates who have studied abroad in the period from 2014 – 2017 in Sweden.



Graph 3.14.

### **Students and graduates in Sweden who have studied abroad in the period from 2014-2017**

*Source: author's construction based on the student and graduate survey in Sweden (n=22) conducted by the author in 2018.*

According to the results of the survey, 27% of students have studied abroad; the result is higher than in Latvia's case. In Sweden case the respondents of the survey admit that higher education institutions in Sweden are more efficient in providing international cooperation opportunities than the ones they have studied before in other countries.

Moreover, it is significant to note that several respondents in the survey reveal that in the framework of their studies they had opportunities to study in the countries outside of Europe – for instance, in China, India (Asia), even in Rwanda (Africa). This tendency was not represented in Latvia's case; therefore, it can be concluded, that in Sweden there are more opportunities to study abroad outside of European Union than in Latvia.

## CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

### Conclusions

1. Both situation analysis and the results of questionnaire prove that in Sweden the internationalization of higher education is supported not only by the EU funds, but also high support in the framework of national funds can be observed. In the framework of national funds additional support to students, institutions and researchers in Sweden can be identified. On the contrary, even if there are several opportunities to acquire national funding in the field of higher education in Latvia, strong dependency on EU funds can be observed.
2. The results of the questionnaire prove that both in Latvia and Sweden the usage of such EU funds as Horizon2020 and European Structural and Investment funds is not so well known as the well-known EU programme Erasmus+. However, also the level of awareness among students regarding the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ can be higher, since also the percentage of students who use the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ is not very high.
3. The results of the questionnaire in Sweden, as well as analysis of the higher education institution websites in Sweden show that in Sweden more students use the provided opportunities by other mobility programmes to study outside European Union – students have possibility to study in Asia or Africa. This opportunity cannot be observed when doing the questionnaire in Latvia.
4. One of the challenges in higher education field in Latvia that is observed and identified by European Union supervising institutions is the low level of research, as well as the enduring reforms in the higher education field that is an obstacle for provision of faster development in higher education system. However, one of the largest challenges for Sweden is the high increase of the refugee amount, that generates new challenges regarding their integration also in the field of higher education.
5. According to the questionnaire of students both in Latvia and Sweden, opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language in the framework of study programme of respondents is evaluated averagely. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the opportunity for students to acquire courses in foreign languages both in Latvia and Sweden.
6. According to European Mobility Scoreboard and EUROSTUDENT data, in Sweden there is support provided (including grants) for students with low socio-economic

background, while in Latvia there are no mechanisms developed for students at this group.

7. In Latvia there is higher proportion of students who have 3 language proficiency (including native language) than in Sweden. That can be also explained with secondary education system, where in Latvia pupils learn more languages for longer period of time.
8. In Latvia the proportion of public higher education institutions is much higher against the population than in Sweden. This issue is also identified by European Commission, that reforms in higher education system in Latvia are necessary.
9. Even if in Latvia there are several conditions to higher recognition practice, there is no automatic recognition at system level. On the contrary, in Sweden all higher education qualifications issued in other European Higher Education Area countries are recognised on an equal level with qualifications in the home country without any additional procedures in higher education institutions. The issues with recognition are also identified in student and graduate survey in Latvia.
10. Lack of information regarding opportunities to study abroad, as well as to use the opportunities provided by mobility programmes, in student and graduate survey in Latvia is identified as one of the main issues and obstacles when speaking about internationalization. Moreover, according to European Mobility Scoreboard, in Latvia there is no website created that would provide information regarding outward mobility. On the contrary, in Sweden this criterion is fulfilled.
11. Students and graduates from Latvia, who filled in the survey, point out the professionalism of teachers in their higher education institutions abroad. Furthermore, lack of foreign guest lecturers is also mentioned in survey in Latvia.

## **Proposals**

### To higher education institutions in Latvia:

1. To develop the involvement of foreign guest lecturers in the study courses, thus diversifying the pace of the study courses, programmes, and institutions.
2. To provide more detailed and wider information, as well as larger support in the documentation preparation process for students regarding mobility opportunities in the higher education institution.
3. To establish new cooperation agreements with universities outside of Europe, thus providing larger mobility opportunities for students.

4. To provide wider opportunities for students to acquire courses in foreign languages, thus attracting additional foreign students, as well as developing the language proficiency of local students.
5. To provide more larger support for students regarding recognition issues after mobility programme.
6. To sign additional agreements with higher education institutions, thus providing wider opportunities for students to study abroad.
7. To provide wider information to students not only about mobility programmes, but also about other implemented projects in the institution, such as Horizon 2020 and European Structural and Investment Funds.

To the government of Latvia:

1. To coordinate the creation of new website regarding mobility opportunities for students.
2. To evaluate the opportunity in provision of additional support for students with low socio-economic background.
3. To evaluate opportunities in provision of additional support for mobility opportunities in the framework of national funding.
4. To evaluate the necessity to diminish the number of public higher education institutions, that is proportionally higher than in Sweden and other EU countries.
5. To provide additional support for foreign guest lecturers in higher education institutions.
6. To implement the expected reforms in the higher education system.

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## **APPENDIX**

**Questionnaire of students and graduates of  
higher education institutions in Latvia**

**Internacionalizācijas attīstība augstākajā izglītībā,  
izmantojot nacionālos un ES fondus 2014 - 2017**

Esmu Latvijas Universitātes Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātes studente Dita Usāre. Aicinu Jūs izteikt savu vērtējumu par internacionalizācijas attīstību augstākajā izglītībā, izmantojot nacionālos un ES fondus.

Aptaujas mērķis ir noskaidrot studentu vai absolventu vērtējumu par starptautiskās sadarbības iespējām savas studiju programmas un izglītības iestādes ietvaros.

Aicinu Jūs izteikt vērtējumu gadījumā, ja laika posmā no 2014. - 2017. gadam Jūs esat studējis vai absolvējis kādu augstākās izglītības iestādi.

Aptauja aizņems aptuveni 7 minūtes.

Aptauja ir konfidenciāla un dati tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.

**Studiju iespējas**

Aicinu Jūs izteikt vērtējumu par savu studiju programmu, kurā Jūs esat studējis un/vai absolvējis laika posmā no 2014. - 2017. gadam.

1. Lūdzu, novērtējiet savas iespējas (t. sk. informācijas pieejamību) par studiju mobilitātes iespējām ārvalstīs savas studiju programmas ietvaros:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – ļoti slikti, 10 – ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Komentāri/ieteikumi (ja ir):

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2. Lūdzu, novērtējiet citu ārvalstu studentu iespējas (t. sk. informācijas pieejamību) par studiju mobilitātes iespējām Latvijā savas studiju programmas ietvaros:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – ļoti slikti, 10 – ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Komentāri/ieteikumi (ja ir):

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3. Lūdzu, novērtējiet savas un citu studentu iespējas apgūt kursus svešvalodā savas studiju programmas ietvaros:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – ļoti slikti, 10 – ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Komentāri/ieteikumi (ja ir):

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4. Lūdzu, novērtējiet starptautiskās pētniecības iespējas savā studiju programmā:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – ļoti slikti, 10 – ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Komentāri/ieteikumi (ja ir):

---

### Nacionālo un ES fondu izmantošana augstākajā izglītībā

5. Lūdzu, novērtējiet savas zināšanas par nacionālā finansējuma piedāvātajām iespējām starptautiskajā sadarbībā studējošajiem savas studiju programmas ietvaros:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – neko nezīnu, 10 – pārzīnu ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Lūdzu, novērtējiet savas zināšanas par Erasmus+ programmas piedāvātajām iespējām savā augstākās izglītības iestādē:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – neko nezīnu, 10 – pārzīnu ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Lūdzu, novērtējiet savas zināšanas par Horizon 2020 programmas piedāvātajām iespējām savā augstākās izglītības iestādē:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – neko nezīnu, 10 – pārzīnu ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Lūdzu, novērtējiet savas zināšanas par Eiropas Struktūrfondu programmas piedāvātajām iespējām savā augstākās izglītības iestādē:

*(Vērtējumu skala 1-10, kur 1 – neko nezīnu, 10 – pārzīnu ļoti labi)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Komentāri/ieteikumi (ja ir):

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### Studijas ārvalstīs

9. Vai jūs esat studējis vismaz vienu semestri ārvalstīs?

Jā \_\_\_\_\_ Nē \_\_\_\_\_

10. Lūdzu, norādiet valsti, kurā Jūs esat studējis:

*(Lūdzu, sniedziet atbildi gadījumā, ja atbildējāt "Jā" uz iepriekšējo jautājumu)*

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11. Lūdzu, sniedziet savu vērtējumu par starptautiskās sadarbības līmeni savā izglītības iestādē un ārvalstu izglītības iestādē (vēlams salīdzināt)

*(Lūdzu, sniedziet atbildi gadījumā, ja atbildējāt "Jā" uz 9. jautājumu):*

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12. Lūdzu, sniedziet savus komentārus par kopējo starptautiskās sadarbības līmeni un ieteikumus tā uzlabošanai (ja ir) savā augstākās izglītības iestādē:
- 
- 
-

### Studiju statuss

13. Lūdzu, norādiet savu pašreizējo studiju statusu:

- Pašlaik studēju bakalaura programmā
- Esmu bakalaura studiju absolvents
- Pašlaik studēju maģistra programmā
- Esmu maģistra studiju absolvents
- Cits: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Lūdzu, norādiet savas augstākās izglītības iestādes atrašanās vietu Latvijā:

- Rīga
- Vidzeme
- Latgale
- Kurzeme
- Zemgale
- Cits \_\_\_\_\_

15. Lūdzu, norādiet savas studiju programmas jomu:

- Humanitārās zinātnes un māksla
- Sociālās zinātnes, komerczinības un tiesības
- Dabaszinātnes, matemātika, informācijas tehnoloģijas
- Inženierzinātnes, ražošana, būvniecība
- Lauksaimniecība
- Veselības aprūpe un sociālā labklājība
- Pakalpojumi
- Izglītība
- Cits \_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire of students and graduates of  
higher education institutions in Sweden**

**Development of Internationalization in Higher Education  
in the framework of national and EU Funds: 2014-2017**

I am Dita Usare, student at University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities, Baltic Sea region study programme.

I kindly ask you to fill in this questionnaire about development of internationalization in higher education in the framework of national and EU funds.

The aim of the questionnaire is to clarify the evaluation by students or graduates about opportunities of international cooperation in the framework of your study programme or higher education institution. As a result, the comparison of realities both in Latvia and Sweden will be provided.

I kindly ask you to fill in the questionnaire if during the period from 2014 till 2017 you have studied or graduated in any higher education institution in Sweden.

The questionnaire will take approximately 7 minutes.

The questionnaire is confidential and the data of survey will be used only in generalized form.

**Study opportunities**

Please fill in your evaluation about your study programme that you have studied and/or graduated in Sweden during the period from 2014 till 2017.

1. Evaluate your opportunities about availability of study mobility abroad in the framework of your study programme:

*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 is very low, 10 – very high)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments/suggestions (if any):

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2. Evaluate opportunities for foreign students about availability of study mobility abroad in the framework of your study programme:

*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 is very low, 10 – very high)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments/suggestions (if any):

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3. Evaluate your and other student opportunities to acquire courses in foreign language in the framework of your study programme:

*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 is very low, 10 – very high)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments/suggestions (if any):

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4. Evaluate your opportunities for international research in the framework of your study programme:

*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 is very low, 10 – very high)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments/suggestions (if any):

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### National and EU funds in Higher Education

5. Evaluate your knowledge about international cooperation opportunities for students provided by national funding in your higher education institution:  
*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 means "I don't know anything about my opportunities", 10 – I know the opportunities very well)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Evaluate your knowledge about provided opportunities by Erasmus+ programme in your higher education institution:  
*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 means "I don't know anything about my opportunities", 10 – I know the opportunities very well)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Evaluate your knowledge about provided opportunities by Horizon 2020 programme in your higher education institution:  
*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 means "I don't know anything about my opportunities", 10 – I know the opportunities very well)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Evaluate your knowledge about provided opportunities by European Structural and Investment Funds programme in your higher education institution:  
*(Evaluation scale 1-10, where 1 means "I don't know anything about my opportunities", 10 – I know the opportunities very well)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments/suggestions (if any)

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### Studies abroad

9. Have you studied at least 1 semester abroad?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

10. Please indicate the country where you have studied abroad:

*(Please reply to this question if you replied "Yes" in the previous question)*

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11. Please, provide your evaluation about level of international cooperation in your home higher education institution in comparison with your higher education institution abroad: *(Please reply to this question if you replied "Yes" in the question No.9):*
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12. Please, provide your comments about general level of international cooperation and recommendations (if any) for developing it in your higher education institution \_\_\_\_\_

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**Study status**

13. Please indicate your current study status:

- I currently study in Bachelor programme
- I have graduated Bachelor programme
- I currently study in Master programme
- I have graduated Master programme
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. Please indicate the location of your higher education institution in Sweden:

- Stockholm
- Malmo
- Uppsala
- Gothenburg
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please indicate the field of your study programme:

- Humanities and Arts
- Social science, Commercial Law and Law
- Natural science, maths, IT
- Engineering, production, construction
- Agriculture
- Health care and welfare
- Services
- Education
- Other \_\_\_\_\_