



Preliminary results

Study on Balanced and Inclusive Learning Mobility

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Study on balanced and inclusive learning mobility

- **Context:**

- Requested by countries in discussions on “**Europe on the Move**” Recommendation

- **Objectives:**

- Exploration of the concept of **(im)balanced mobility**
- Mapping of **degree, credit** and **inclusive** mobility
- Mapping of motivations and impacts at **regional, national & EU level**

Overall approach

Focus:

1. Degree mobility
2. Credit mobility (Erasmus+ and other temporary learning periods abroad)
3. Inclusive mobility

Scope:

- EEA countries
- ISCED 6-8

Methodology:

- EU-wide quantitative data analysis
- Literature review
- Country reports (x29), including interviews with national contact points.
- Thematic case studies
- Cross-country analysis
- Foresight analysis

1/3 Key trends in degree mobility



Balanced mobility: no common definition

Conceptual distinction

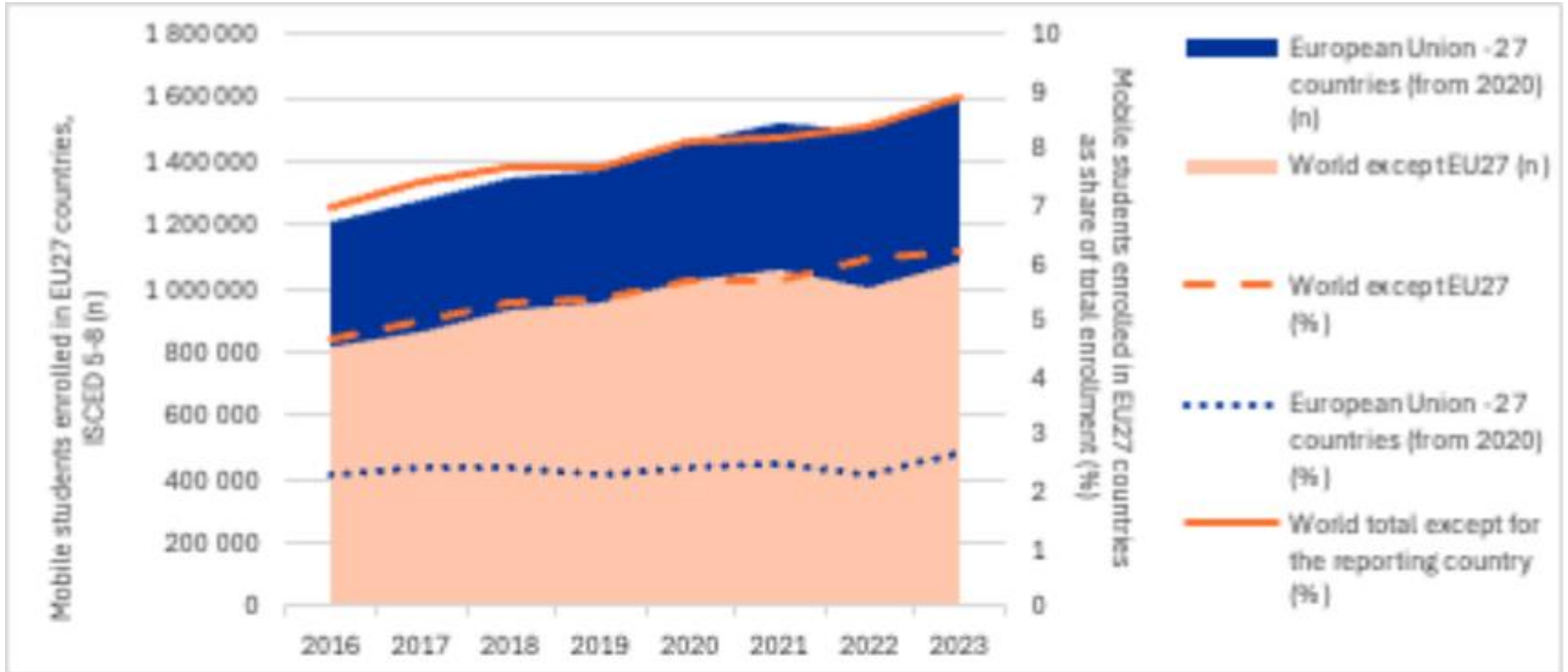
- **Mobility flows balance** - difference between incoming and outgoing students.
- **Balanced mobility** - a policy goal, considering the *net impact* based on costs and benefits.

Country-level insights

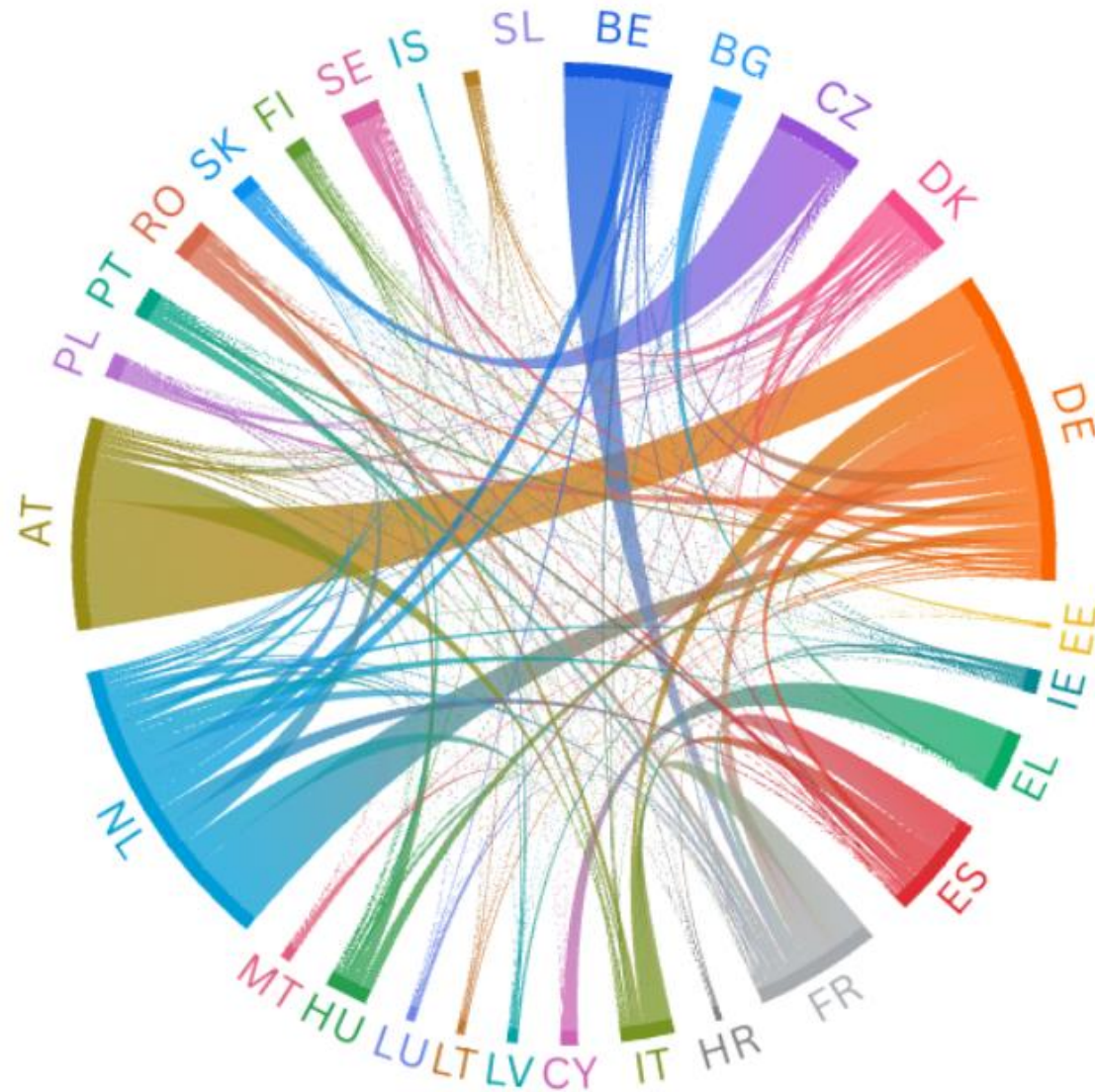
- Across the EEA, no country has formally defined the concept of “balanced degree mobility”.
- Some countries have a practical understanding of balance as a **numerical ratio between incoming and outgoing students**.
- Others **link balance to economic, financial, or labour market goals** rather than numbers (e.g. Denmark, Germany, France, Finland).



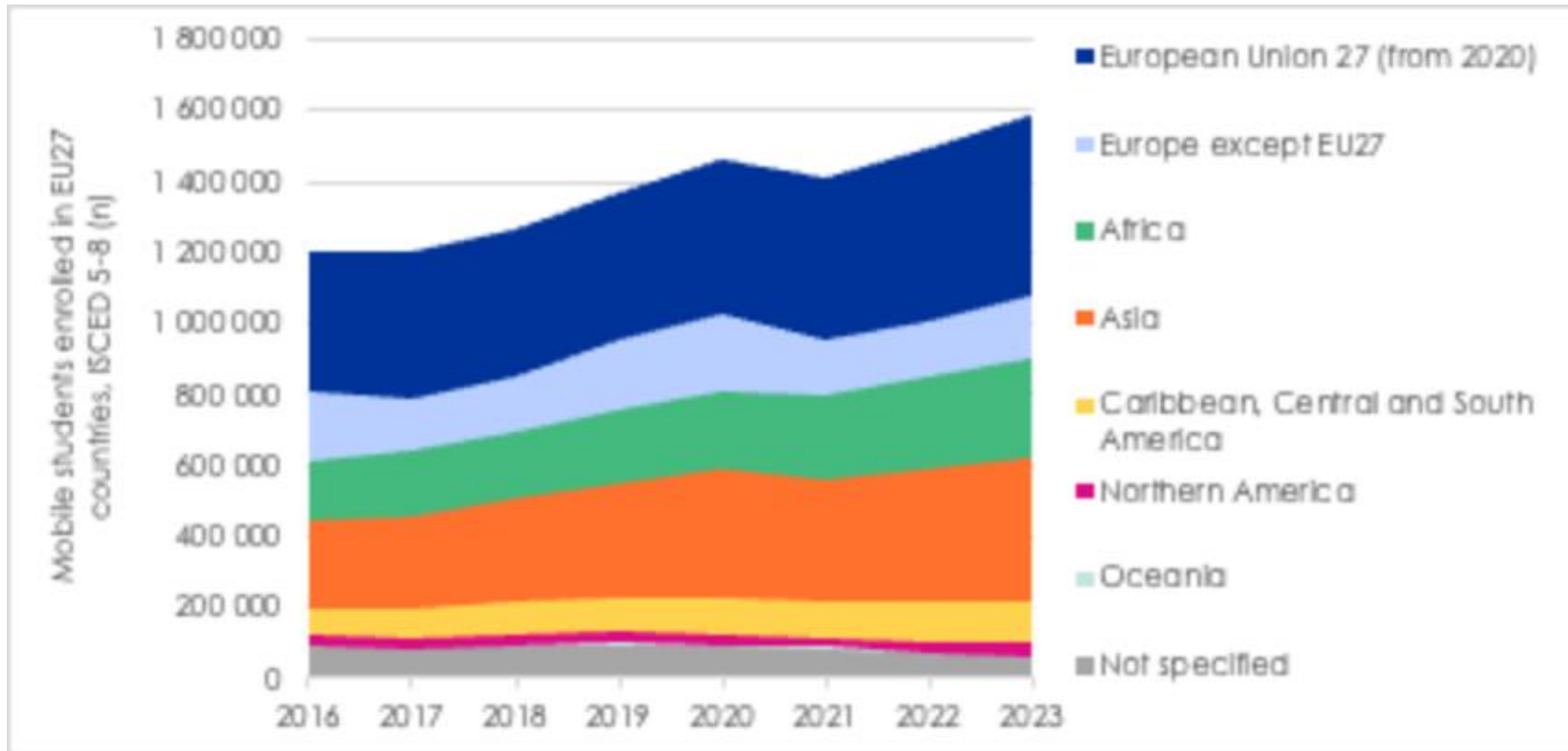
A steady increase in incoming students



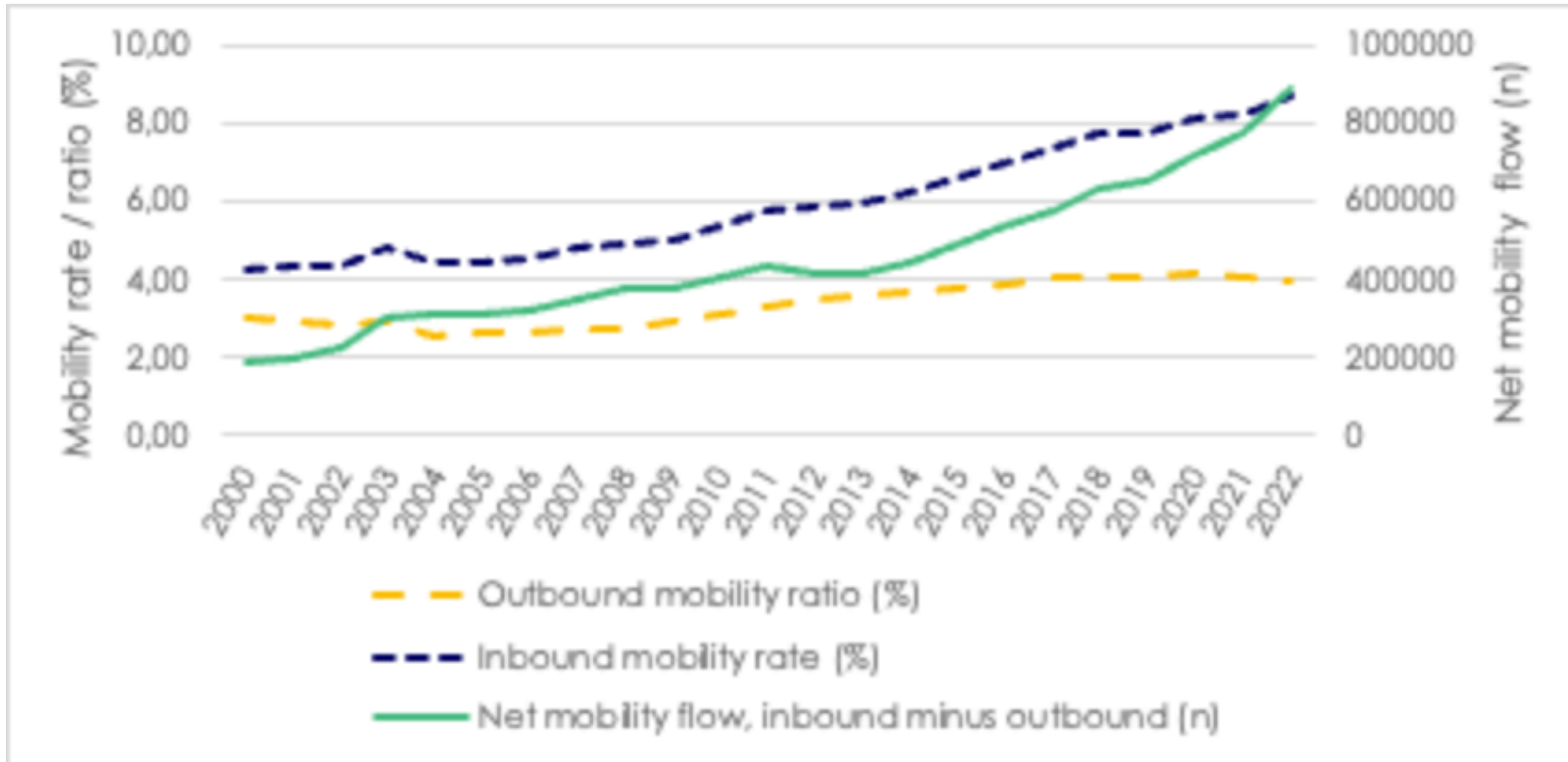
Intra-EU/EEA flows of degree mobility



Intra-European and Asian Students Drive Incoming Mobility to Europe



Europe is (increasingly) a net receiver



Perspectives of countries on Degree Mobility (im)balances (I)

Position / stance on imbalance	Main concern or feature	Countries (as reported)
1. Net receivers concerned about inflows	Financial, capacity and quality pressures from large incoming cohorts	Denmark, Netherlands
2. Net senders concerned about outflows	Brain drain, talent loss, low return rates	Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania, Slovakia
3. Mixed or field-specific concern	Imbalances seen as problematic in certain subjects (e.g. medicine, veterinary, psychology)	Austria, French Community of Belgium



Perspectives of MSs on Degree Mobility (im)balances (II)

Position / stance on imbalance	Main concern or feature	Countries (as reported)
4. Imbalance not a strategic concern; focus on openness/internationalisation	Symmetry not a policy goal; priority on attracting students or maintaining exchanges	Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Sweden
5. Imbalance recognised but low political salience (including cultural concerns)	Imbalances noted, but not a major policy driver; in Estonian case debate focuses on cultural implications of English-medium provision	Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France



EU-level data infrastructure for analysing degree mobility

Available data

- Eurostat (UOE): comprehensive annual data on **inbound degree-mobile students and graduates** (disaggregated by gender, ISCED, field, origin)
- UIS: **inbound and outbound mobility** rates and net flows (global coverage)
- Eurydice Mobility Scoreboard: qualitative monitoring of mobility-related policy conditions
- High degree of **methodological alignment** across databases

Remaining Gaps

- No direct EU-level data on outbound students' destination countries
- Eurostat cannot fully calculate net mobility flows (non-EU destinations missing)
- Limited data on graduate retention and labour market integration
- 2–3 year time lag in international datasets
- Missing or unspecified country-of-origin data in some Member States



National-level data infrastructure for analysing degree mobility

Available data

- General alignment with EU reporting categories
- Additional national disaggregation in some countries
- Partial monitoring of outgoing students via portable grants/loan systems (e.g. Nordic countries)
- Advanced graduate retention systems in a few countries (e.g. Denmark, Poland, Italy, Slovenia)

Remaining Gaps

- No country fully captures outgoing degree-mobile students
- Significant cross-country variation in data granularity, definitions, and accessibility
- Graduate retention data often ad hoc or under development



Achieving the 2030 Mobility Target Sustainably

↯ Core conclusion: rethinking balanced Mobility

- ↯ (im)Balanced mobility \neq numerical (a)symmetry of inflows/outflows
- ↯ It is a system-level, impact-oriented concept requiring **shared EU analytical framework** (flows + retention + capacity effects)
- ↯ Degree mobility generates **long-term asymmetric effects** across Member States
- ↯ EU policy should move from correcting ratios to **managing systemic interdependencies**

↯ Degree Mobility: Expand Access, Manage Concentration:

- ↯ **Expand joint degrees** in international languages in lower-inflow regions, a.o. through European University alliances
- ↯ Investment in **student accommodation** (incl. cohesion funds) with incentives for under-selected destinations
- ↯ Monitor degree mobility in an **explicitly separate target** integrated into existing monitoring
- ↯ Preserve equal treatment of EU students while managing system-level effects



International Student Mobility and Labour Market Integration

EU-level trends

- Many countries have reformed residence and work permit systems to ease transitions from study to employment
- Former international students form a major share of labour migrants e.g. France (52%), Italy (46%), of total work admissions (2019).

Labour Market Integration Measures

- Growing use of post-study work rights, internships, and employer partnerships to retain graduates.
- Implementation of targeted initiatives (e.g. mentoring, talent matching, regional skills programmes) to connect students with employers.
- Expansion of English-taught and labour-market-oriented programmes (especially in STEM, IT, and healthcare).

Motivating Factors to Stay

- Legal access to the labour market after graduation.
- Attractive career prospects, salary potential are decisive motivators
- Quality of life and further educational or personal development opportunities
- University career services and research-linked placements facilitate job entry and encourage staying



Push and pull factors

Educational and academic

- Push: Limited access to quality education, narrow study options, poor research infrastructure.
- Pull: Availability of English-taught or shared-language programmes, access to selective or unavailable fields abroad, and institutional prestige.

Economic factors

- Push: Low wages, high domestic tuition, limited funding.
- Pull: Free/subsidised tuition, scholarships, lower living costs, and post-graduation job opportunities.

Geographical and Linguistic Factors

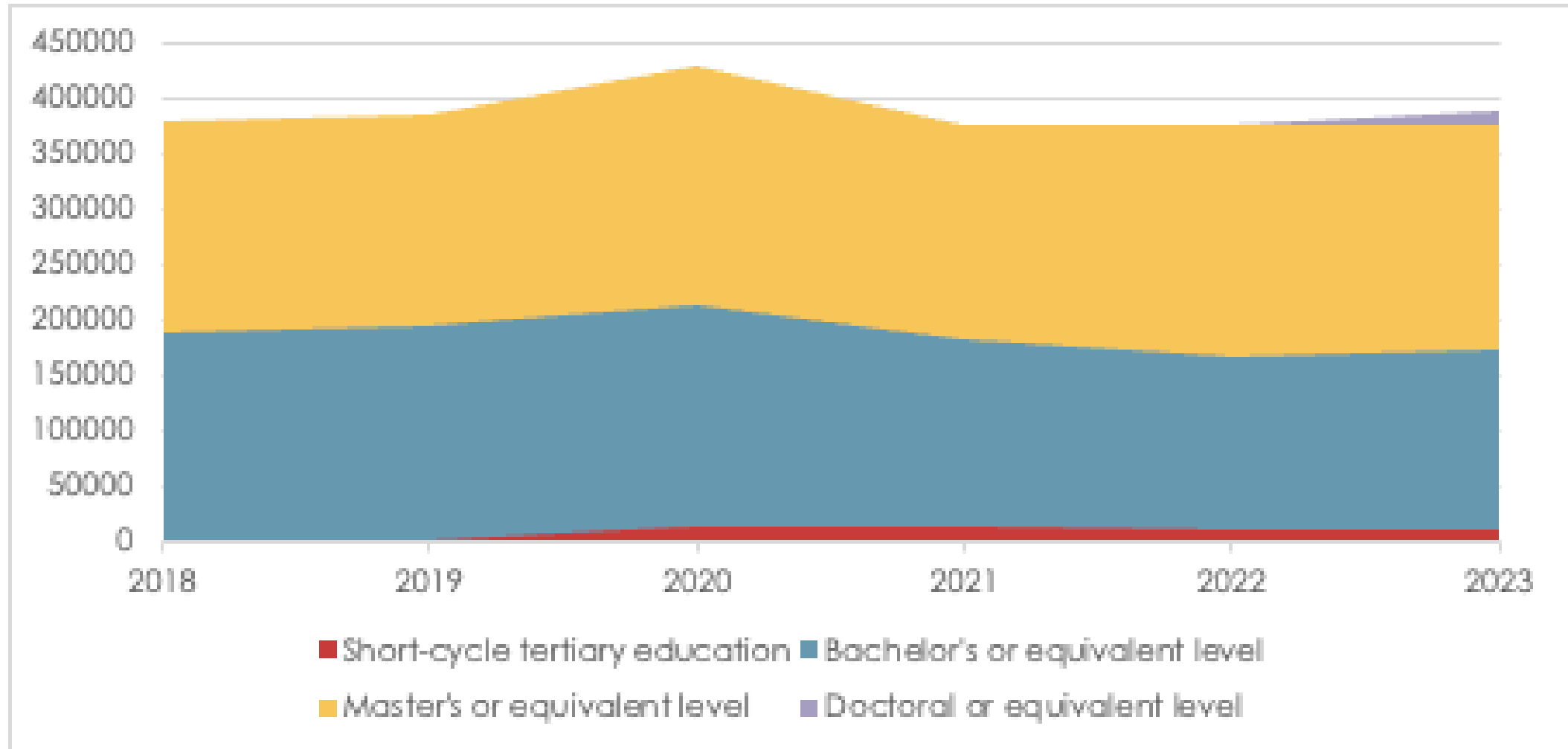
- Geographical proximity strongly shapes mobility — students tend to study in neighbouring countries.
- Shared language is a key determinant
- In 12 of 27 EU countries, over half of incoming students come from countries that are either neighbours or share a language.



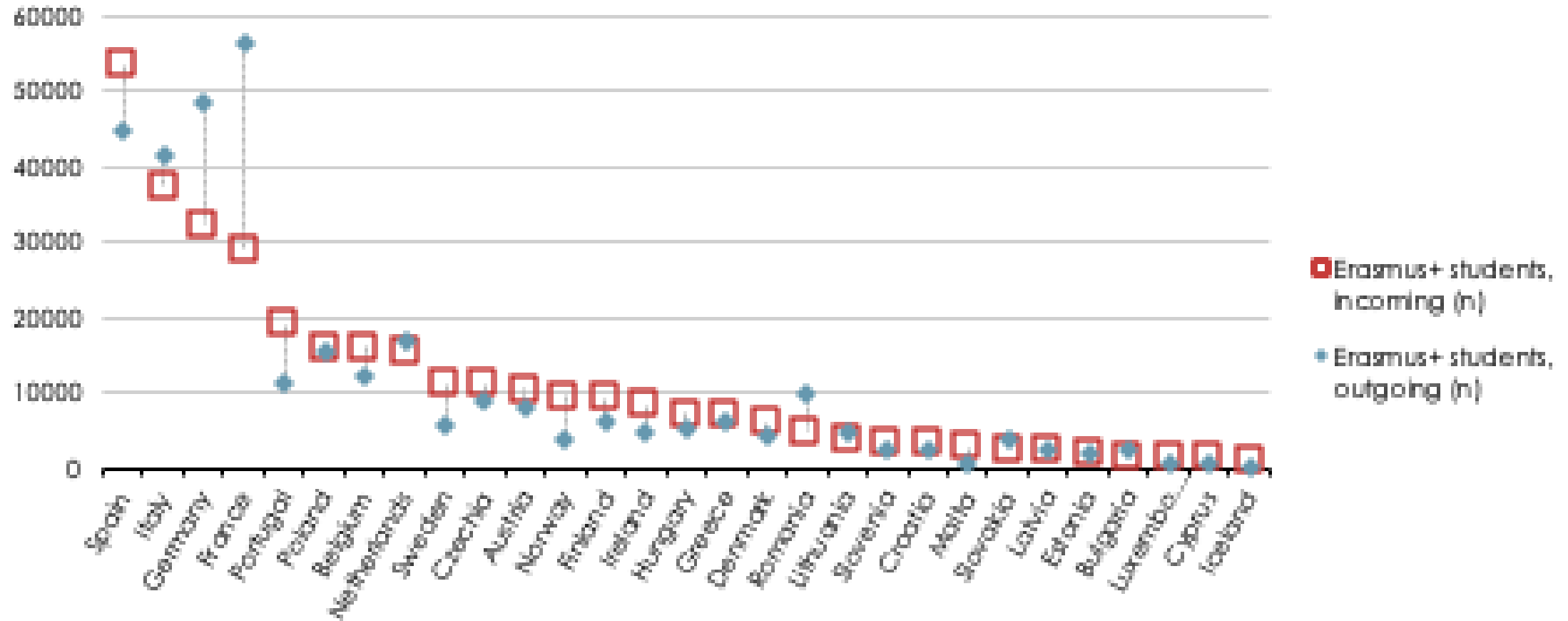
2/3 Key trends in credit mobility



Credit mobility has not recovered since Covid



Incoming and outgoing Erasmus-students



Obstacles to mobility (Eurostudent): Lack of resources vs administrative barriers

Financial barriers

- (Higher) academic expenses.
- (Additional) living expenses.
- Loss of scholarships, benefits or job if going abroad.

Insufficient language skills

Insufficient information

Credit recognition

Difficult integration of the study abroad period into the structure of their main study programme



3/3 Inclusive (degree & credit) mobility



Obstacles to Inclusive Mobility

Financial Barriers

Financial constraints remain the biggest barrier to mobility. Strong disparities by background:

- Low-income / first-generation students: 66% report financial barriers vs. 55% from higher-educated families.
- Migratory background: 64% vs. 58% of peers without migration background.
- Students with impairments: 71% cite financial obstacles vs. 58% without.

Social and Practical Factors

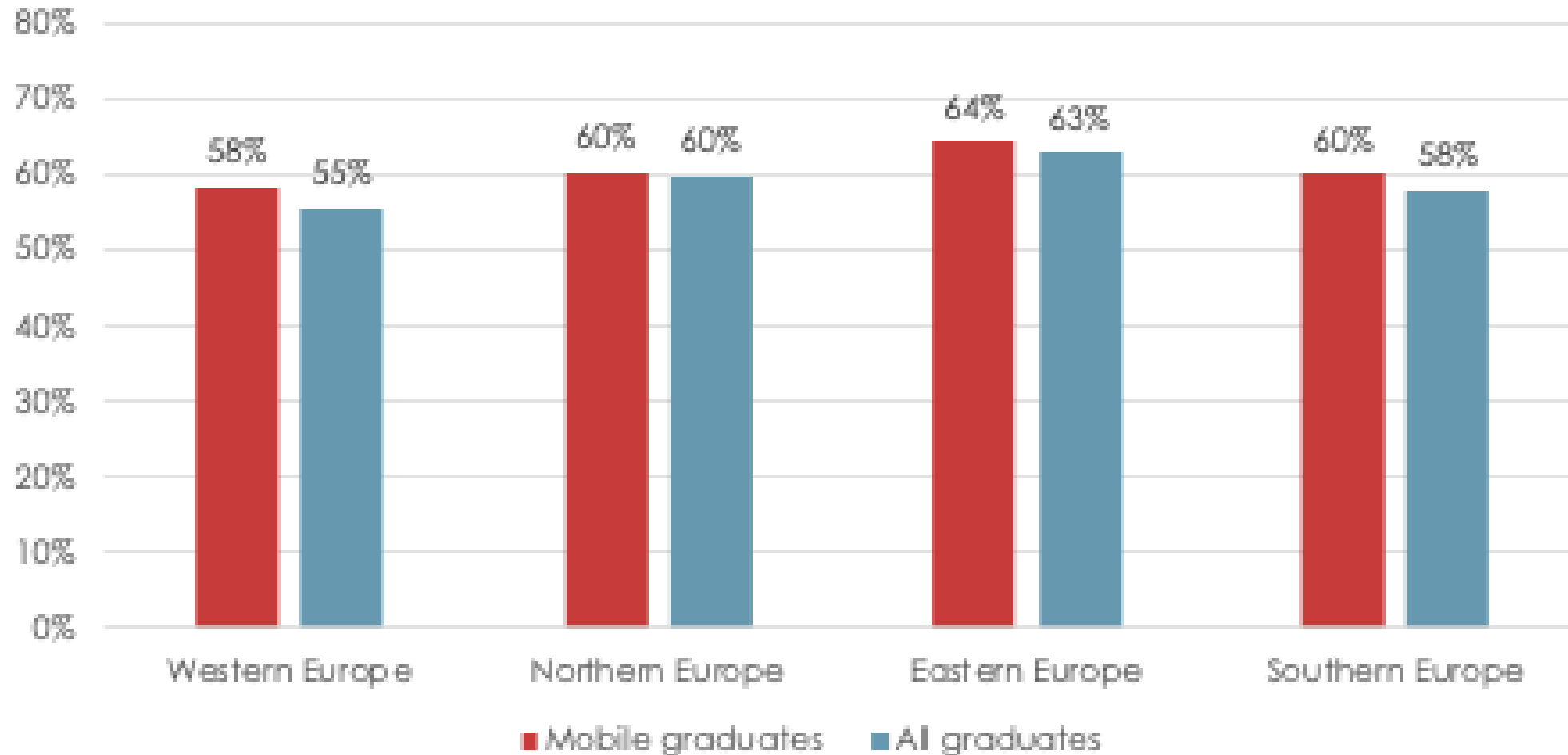
- Administrative hurdles (credit recognition, visa/residence rules, disability support) disproportionately affect disadvantaged students.
- Regression analyses show students from low-income, migrant, and non-tertiary family backgrounds are significantly more likely to report practical barriers.
- Students with impairments report higher burdens across all categories of practical difficulties — including transport, support continuity, and costs of care.

Information and Accessibility Gaps

- Social separation is a common barrier, with higher rates among those from non-tertiary-educated families (46% vs. 35%). Lack of information disproportionately affects students with impairments (29% vs. 23%).
- Limited awareness of mobility schemes and language requirements in rural or smaller institutions constrains participation.
- Students facing multiple disadvantages (e.g. low income + disability) are the least likely to engage in international mobility.



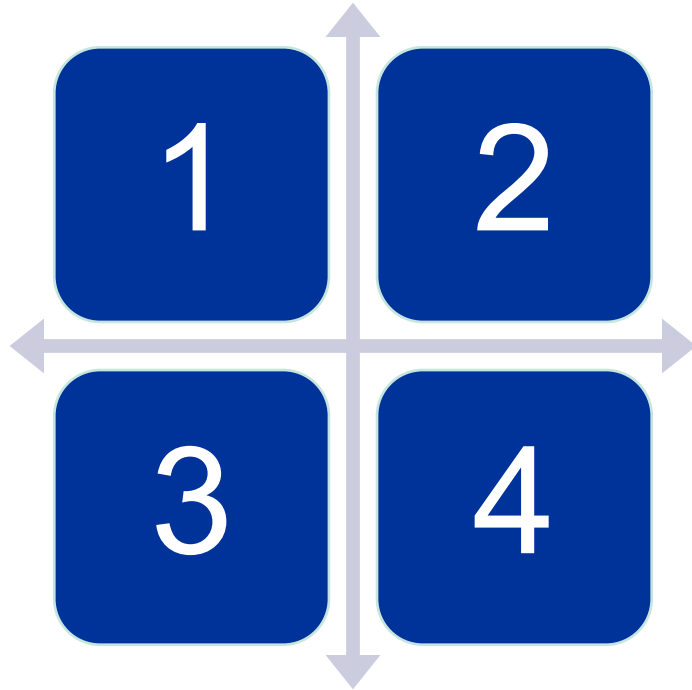
Gender does not significantly affect participation in credit mobility



Final Study Outcomes (upcoming)



Foresight Scenarios and Policy Priorities



Key drivers:

- Financial conditions
- Geopolitical context

Overview of Final Study Deliverables

Country-Level Insights:

29 country reports

summarising national trends, strategies, obstacles, and good practices in degree, credit, and inclusive mobility.

Thematic Case Studies:

Three in-depth case studies highlighting innovative policies and initiatives that promote balanced and inclusive mobility.

Comparative Analysis:

Cross-analyses as the basis of comprehensive European **comparative report**

Foresight Analysis:

A foresight exercise explores **possible future scenarios for learning mobility** in Europe, helping policymakers anticipate trends and shape forward-looking strategies.

Validation and Engagement:

Results will be discussed at a **stakeholder validation seminar**, ensuring that conclusions reflect the experience and perspectives of key stakeholders

**Save the date for
Validation seminar**

12 May 2026

Thank you



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