



ZENTRUM FÜR SOZIALE INNOVATION

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

Evaluation CEEPUS III

Evaluation of CEEPUS' teacher mobility

Frequent travellers under the microscope

Version commented by the CEEPUS Secretary General

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CONTENT

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction and aim of the study	5
3. Applied methods	6
4. Results	7
4.1. Frequency of travelling.....	7
4.2. Objectives, motivations and impact on teachers	9
4.3. Administration of the programme	16
4.3.1. Procedures and services	16
4.3.2. Budget and mobilities.....	18
4.3.3. Reporting and payment.....	22
4.4. Perception and visibility of the programme	24
4.5. Mobility-friendly institutions' competition	28
5. Recommendations	30
6. Post Script by the Central CEEPUS Office	33

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.2-1: Main purposes of the teacher's mobility and the achieved results differentiated by hosts/teachers, Part 1	10
Figure 4.2-2: Main purposes of the teacher's mobility and the achieved results from hosts/teachers, Part 2	11
Figure 4.2-3: Main motivations to apply for teacher mobility to one hosting institution	12
Figure 4.2-4 Impact of the teaching mobility on the grant holders life and career	14
Figure 4.2-5 Teacher's future after the mobility	15
Figure 4.3.1-1: Assessment of the support and information during the teaching mobility grant	17
Figure 4.3.2-1: Coverage of costs by other funding sources	19
Figure 4.4-1: How did you first learn about CEEPUS?	25
Figure 4.5-1: Criteria for mobility-friendliness on personal level	29
Figure 4.5-2: Criteria for mobility-friendliness on organisational level	29

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1: Participation in the online survey	7
Table 4.1-1: Frequency of travelling, distribution by involvement in CEEPUS networks	7
Table 4.2-1: Motivation to meet CEEPUS network partners, distribution by age.....	13
Table 4.2-2: Motivation to meet CEEPUS network partners, distribution by frequency of mobility.....	13
Table 4.2-3: Previous contacts in conferences, events; distribution by age	13
Table 4.2-4: Previous contacts in conferences, events; distribution by frequency of mobility	13
Table 4.2-5: Interest in the city/country, distribution by frequency of mobility	14
Table 4.2-6: Percentage of respondents who replied yes to the 4 most recurrent situations after the end of the mobility – differentiated by frequency of travel	15
Table 4.3.2-1: Evaluation of the funding	18
Table 4.3.2-2: Should there be additional funds?	19
Table 4.3.2-3: Is the mobility duration adequate?	20
Table 4.3.2-4: Experienced imbalances of mobilities	21
Table 4.3.3-1: Assessment of administrative procedures	23
Table 4.3.3-2: Satisfaction with reporting periods	23
Table 4.4-1: Experience with other mobility programmes	25

1. Executive Summary

CEEPUS is a programme with a long-standing tradition and is highly recognised in the academic sector.

This study focuses on teacher mobility, which is an important activity to achieve the programmatic objectives of CEEPUS.

Overall, inadequate high travelling frequencies are not very common. Instead of a one-size-fits-all rule, problematic cases should be tackled on a case by case basis.

CEEPUS programme is a long-established initiative that is nowadays highly recognised in the academic sector. There is a series of mobility programmes, operating in the CEEPUS countries. Within this diverse offer of mobility programmes, CEEPUS covers - with its regional focus - a very specific niche. Another unique selling proposition of CEEPUS is its special non-monetary funding system, which is based on national resources in a variable geometry.

The findings of this study have proven that CEEPUS is highly appreciated by the target group and that it operates as a well-functioning system. The service provided by the implementing bodies (Central CEEPUS Office and National CEEPUS Offices) is in general very well-assessed. Furthermore, the users positively evaluate the easy regulatory framework as well as the online-system providing assistance for the whole work-flow - from application to reporting.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in certain areas. In this study we focus on teacher mobility, because a few problematic cases in terms of very high and inadequate travel frequencies were raised by several CEEPUS NCOs. We start this evaluation by presenting the big picture of travel frequencies of individuals and have then also a closer look at the conditions and effects of teacher mobility. Our aim is to provide an evidence-base in this respect for further calibrating the programme.

On the one hand, for some cases it can be questioned whether a high frequency of travelling per teacher can be justified by the objectives to be achieved through CEEPUS. On the other hand, network coordinators claim that they do not have enough mobility grants to meet up with their partners.

When having a closer look at the results of the study, it can be summed-up that during the analysed time period (September 2012 until January 2015) most of the travelling teachers applied and were granted for only few mobilities. Frequent travellers can be observed only in a limited number of cases and these can be justified to a large extent by their involvement in a higher number of CEEPUS networks.

However, in case of reasonable ground for suspecting, it is recommended to apply a case by case approach as it is very difficult and maybe even obsolete to identify a general "one-size-fits-all" rule because the contexts and reasons of travelling are so diverse that a certain level of flexibility must be assured. Furthermore, it has to be secured that coordinators of big networks (e.g. from 10 partners on) receive enough possibilities to meet their partners physically to maintain and further develop the networks.

In order to prevent misuse of travel funds, adequate awareness raising measures on this issue should be implemented including an announcement that a sample of up to 10% of all travel grants will be audited in detail in the future.

→Comment by CCO:

The Central CEEPUS Office recommends a step by step approach i.e. first to better implement already existing regulations and then to take it from there. Awareness raising should be the first step. It is strategically important to keep the option of escalating measures.

CEEPUS teacher mobility has a positive effect on the grant holders' life and careers.

CEEPUS is highly influencing the lives and careers of the travelling teachers in a positive way. According to the poll of teachers we interviewed, CEEPUS mobility has a high impact on their lives after the conclusion of their mobility. 74% of the travelling teachers indicated, that CEEPUS mobility had an either very high or high impact on their lives and careers.

By providing concise information to the general public about the outcome and impact on teachers' career (but also on other aspects such as students' advancements and satisfaction; university collaboration etc.), other colleagues might be interested in participating in CEEPUS teaching mobility and/or to make use of the many other opportunities provided by CEEPUS.

Reporting should be enforced and reporting structures and procedures be improved.

In general, administrative procedures are working well. However, the fact that not all grant holders submit their mobility report after their return can make the scrutiny of the adequacy of the international travel and its outcome problematic. Moreover, this implies that the proof of stay is missing. Measures, automatically supported by the CEEPUS software, should be implemented to ensure that all grant holders report timely after their return. Such a system is already planned to be implemented by the CCO.

→Comment by CCO:

The issue is even more complex than that: merely sending a reminder will not do the job – users need to be aware of the context of what is being asked of them. The background of this phenomenon is the massive fluctuation of NCOs. With CEEPUS III alone, i.e. since 2011, there have been 22 changes in NCOs. The original idea of CEEPUS management as laid down in Art 4 of the CEEPUS III Agreement, with the NCOs promoting and advertising CEEPUS in their respective countries, cannot be fully implemented in view of constantly new personnel striving to grasp the requirements of the complex job in minimum time and with several other duties besides CEEPUS. A new NCO will understandably rather focus on pressing demands such as the awarding grants than on advertising and instructing.

→Comment by CCO:

Since it does not seem feasible that the massive NCO fluctuation will be remedied anytime soon, the only solution is a further software enlargement with the objective of advanced user guidance.

Furthermore, the reporting structure given by the system applies almost exclusively open questions, which make the analyses on a meta level difficult. Therefore we would suggest changing the reporting structure by including more closed-ended questions. This would allow instant analyses of data whenever needed and would help NCOs to better monitor the effects of CEEPUS teacher mobility.

→Comment by CCO:

The current structure of the mobility reports consists of closed questions concerning elements of CEEPUS administration. Questions related to outcome and impact of the stay abroad are indeed still open questions. A modified mobility report is one of the elements of the CEEPUS Software enlargement. In order to secure compliance with an enlarged report, positive incentives – e.g. use of the information for advertising – should be employed.

2. Introduction and aim of the study

CEEPUS is a mobility programme for university studies in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe.

CEEPUS is the “Central European Exchange Program for University Studies”. Its main aim is to develop and promote international cooperation within individual university networks through a portfolio of support activities; first of all mobility support for students and faculty members. The mobility of teachers is supported by the provision of scholarships in order to promote transnational inter-university cooperation and to foster the regional dimension of university curricula.

Problematic cases of frequently used teacher mobilities require to analyse past experiences and to elaborate recommendations for the future.

Having reached a remarkable number of awarded teaching mobilities, it is deemed necessary to evaluate the past experiences of this mobility support in order to fine-tune them within the current CEEPUS III programme and its forthcoming editions.

As noted by the National CEEPUS Offices (NCOs) and Central CEEPUS Office during the past CEEPUS evaluation conferences, there are some cases in which the quality of the awarded teaching mobility could be questionable. Spontaneous question can arise, such as on the necessity of awarding so many scholarships instead of giving the possibility to other teachers. Another consequent concern regards the assurance of the teacher’s performance level at his/her home institution with so frequent stays abroad.

ZSI was commissioned by the CEEPUS Central Office to implement this study.

Starting from the need to tackle problematic cases and the interest in general to have a closer look at the conditions and effects of teacher mobility and therewith to provide an evidence base to further develop the programme, the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in Vienna was commissioned by the CEEPUS Central Office in November 2014 to conduct a study analysing CEEPUS mobility. The main focus of the study is centred on the following research questions:

- What is the purpose of mobility within CEEPUS by taking into account observable differences between programmatic intentions and real use?
- What is the ideal use of mobility according to coordinators, NCOs and network partners? And how do these perceptions differ, if at all?
- Are there enough incentives for mobility (incl. cost coverage) provided within CEEPUS?
- What is and what should be the correlation of teacher and student mobility?
- Is there the need for rules or recommendations to regulate teacher mobility by the NCOs? And if yes, in which format (soft or hard guidance; list of criteria etc.)?
- What is and what should be the distribution of mobility in and between roles?
- What are the motivations to apply for mobility support?
- What is the outcome of mobility?

Furthermore a set of criteria is elaborated, which can be used by CEEPUS for awarding the CEEPUS Joint Program friendliest universities. Such award is planned to be implemented by the CEEPUS Central Office in the future.

3. Applied methods

Mixed methods applied

The present evaluation is based on a mix of methodologies. Document reviews, analysis of secondary data provided by the CEEPUS database, explorative interviews, and an online survey were used to get a comprehensive overview of the information which enabled us to answer the research questions. All evaluation steps were done in close cooperation and coordination with the CEEPUS Secretary General.

Document and secondary data review

The evaluation process started with the desk research and review of existing documents provided by the Secretary General. It included the consideration of the minutes from the 19th General CEEPUS Evaluation Conference, mobility reports, application forms for teacher mobilities and the programme documentation of CEEPUS II and CEEPUS III. Furthermore, data available in the internal workspace of www.ceepus.info, relevant for the thematic areas of the evaluation, were taken into consideration. The focus of this first step was laid on exploring the main purposes of mobility defined by the programme design, and to analyse the motivation for and outcome of mobility.

Explorative interviews

Semi-structured interviews with key CEEPUS stakeholders allowed retrieving more information on critical issues and opinions concerning teacher mobilities. The CEEPUS key players were mainly asked about implementation problems, approaches to solve the problems and the corresponding need for guidance or rules, as well as recommendations, which might be useful for the entire CEEPUS family. Interviews were carried out with the following stakeholders:

- the Secretary General
- selected national CEEPUS offices (NCOs) (3 interviews)
- selected teachers frequently using Teacher mobility (3 interviews)
- selected network hosts (3 interviews)

Online Surveys

An online survey was sent out in a further step to all faculty members that were involved in CEEPUS teacher mobility since September 2012, differentiated by their roles within the CEEPUS networks, either as teachers, hosts or both. The survey's focus of research was mainly on motivation, incentives for mobility within the CEEPUS network, ideal and real use as well as achieved outcomes.

The table below provides an overview of the participation of countries in the survey:

	Participated in survey	Invited to survey	Response rate
Albania	16	33	48%
Austria	46	120	38%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	25	49	51%
Bulgaria	63	115	55%
Croatia	61	161	38%
Czech Republic	70	210	33%
Hungary	84	247	34%
Kosovo (under UN resolution 1244)	4	8	50%
Macedonia	13	26	50%
Moldova	20	41	49%
Montenegro	7	12	58%
Poland	115	312	37%
Romania	109	247	44%

Serbia	79	132	60%
Slovakia	84	268	31%
Slovenia	60	131	46%
TOTAL	856	2112	41%

Table 3-1: Participation in the online survey

2112 teachers and hosts of funded mobilities from the application periods 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 were invited to the survey, whereof 856 replied. The survey was conducted in January/February 2015. The high response rate of 41% in total can be considered as a strong commitment to the CEEPUS programme.

4. Results

4.1. Frequency of travelling

High frequency of travelling can be justified to a large extent by the involvement in more CEEPUS networks

On the one hand, as raised by several CEEPUS NCOs, for some cases it can be questioned whether a high frequency of travelling per teacher can be justified by the objectives to be achieved through CEEPUS. On the other hand, network coordinators claim that they do not have enough possibilities financed by CEEPUS to meet up with their network partners. As a consequence, they have to cover the necessary additional funds.

When having a closer look at the data gathered through the online survey, it can be stated that the majority (68%) of travelling teachers received grants for 1 – 2 travels via CEEPUS from September 2012 to January 2015. 21% have been travelling between 3 – 5 times. Only 5% travelled between 6 – 8 times, 2% between 9 – 11 times and 2% 12 or more times. These numbers show that only a small group of travelling teachers can be considered as “frequent travellers”. Not surprisingly, a correlation between the number of travels and the frequency of involvement in CEEPUS networks can be observed. Frequent travelling seems to be to a very large extent justified by the involvement in more CEEPUS networks, as it is shown in the table below.

In how many CEEPUS networks have you been involved since September 2012? (N=856)						
How often did you travel funded by CEEPUS since September 2012	0 ¹	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	more often	Total
1 - 2 times	88%	74%	36%	10%	25%	68%
3 – 5 times	0%	19%	36%	38%	38%	21%
6 – 8 times	0%	4%	14%	14%	0%	5%
9 – 11 times	0%	1%	7%	19%	13%	2%
12 or more times	0%	1%	6%	14%	25%	2%
No answer	12%	2%	1%	5%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4.1-1: Frequency of travelling, distribution by involvement in CEEPUS networks

It is deemed necessary to discuss how to tackle single problematic cases as well as the frequent travelling required by large networks.

Despite this logical correlation, there are single problematic cases, where a high frequency of travelling are more difficult to be justified or cannot be justified at all. In very few cases there is even a reasonable suspicion of funding misuse. Such cases were discussed by the National CEEPUS Offices (NCOs) and CEEPUS Central Office during the past CEEPUS evaluation conferences. The need for recommendations or guidelines was raised to facilitate tackling such cases.

Another important message came up from the phone interviews with the Central CEEPUS Office and the NCOs. One of the main concerns is the prevention of multiple

¹ Travelling teachers not involved in CEEPUS networks are so-called free-movers.

travellers who do not seem to be mainly teaching-or research-oriented, but rather interested in sightseeing. When such cases arise, NCOs very often get in touch with the hosting institution to obtain more information to scrutinise the case. In addition they also control whether it is possible to substitute at the home institution the so often absent teacher by preserving a high level of offered education. Worth mentioning is that in most cases the explanations provided to the NCOs were sufficiently convincing and reassuring.

Some countries, for instance Slovenia, have set national rules to limit the number of visits per year. According to the interviewed Slovene NCO, only one teacher can travel for each Slovene partnership organization /participating unit. This was a decision taken by the Commission for foreign scholarship of the Slovene Minister for Education, Science and Sport. The measure was taken due to a lack of national financial resources, but also to limit/avoid unpleasant cases from the past, where the teacher was supposed to be more interested in touristic aspects of the mobility. The limitation has provoked mixed feelings among travelling teachers, but according to the NCO it had, all in all, a positive impact on the quality of teaching mobility. The Slovenian case was a political decision linked with economic constraints and programmatic concerns. This case shows how a CEEPUS country is regulating the frequency of travelling, but it cannot be taken as a model for the whole programme, as there are different factors which need to be taken into consideration.

When it comes to thinking about regulating travelling it is important to also bear in mind, that the frequency of travelling and the related "Scholarship Months" give an indication about the travel intensity. However, the currency "Scholarship Month" is not treated the same way in all countries: e.g. countries with low scholarship rates tend to pay a full month even for shorter stays to compensate for the unsatisfactory rate. Therefore an assessment of problematic cases has to take this into consideration too.

In some cases it seems, as in the aforementioned problematic of frequent travels, that teachers do not have the possibility to get enough travels granted. This is especially true for coordinators of big networks who have to keep in contact with their partners, especially with new network partners requesting physical meetings.

→Comment by CCO:

This is indeed an unsatisfactory situation but almost unsolvable without additional scholarship months. NCOs from countries seeing CEEPUS as a mere tool to promote student exchange will most likely award the grant to a student and not to the coordinator.

Problematic instances should be discussed on a case by case basis and awareness about the consequences of misuse should be raised.

On the basis of the discussed considerations, it is very difficult and maybe even obsolete to identify a general "one-size-fits-all" rule. Problems should rather be discussed and tackled on a case by case basis. It is recommended, that decisions on critical incidents should be analysed by the Central CEEPUS Office together with the responsible National CEEPUS Office to ensure a high acceptance of the joint decision by those concerned. Furthermore, it has to be ensured that coordinators of big networks (e.g. from 10 partners on) receive enough possibilities to meet their partners and to maintain and further develop the networks.

→Comment by CCO:

Such a procedure has in fact been in place for years and has now been unanimously confirmed on the occasion of the 19th Meeting of the Joint Committee of Ministers.

To avoid funding misuse, there is the need to raise awareness among the teachers who receive CEEPUS funding about the possible consequences of such a misuse. This

could be done e.g. by publishing anonymous “negative showcases” in CEEPUS relevant PR-materials (e.g. website), or more clearly highlighted clauses in the corresponding rules and regulations. Another recommendation in this respect is to announce a certain quota (e.g. up to 10%) of audits to scrutinise the adequacy of frequent travelling.

→Comment by CCO:

The Central CEEPUS Office recommends a step by step approach starting with raising awareness about one’s obligations. We should aim for the “lowest dosage” necessary so as to act in line with our positioning as a user friendly program.

4.2. Objectives, motivations and impact on teachers

Teaching lectures and building up sustainable contacts are the main objectives of teacher mobility but achieved results vary between hosts and teachers; so do the purposes.

One focal aspects to be determined in the current analysis is to identify the main objectives of teachers’ mobility for the main actors involved in it and to assess in parallel whether these objectives were met in practice.

All respondents have been asked: “What are for you the main objectives of the teacher’s mobility?” As it can be noticed in Figure 4.2-1, the main 7 objectives for the teacher’s mobility are, in order of importance, to

1. teach lectures (68%);
2. build up sustainable professional contacts (62%);
3. get an experience abroad in general (58%);
4. interest in a particular teaching domain of the partner institution (54%);
5. friendship (53 %);
6. the participation in a CEEPUS network (53%);
7. and the interest in internationalisation (52%).

The highest ranked motivation is also the one that was mostly referred to during the explorative interviews. This was not unexpected. What was more interesting to observe is that participants base their decision to apply for teaching mobility on aspects and to a rather high extent on motivations, which are not directly linked to pure scientific/academic/professional criteria. These are the desire to get an experience abroad (58%) as well as to meet friends (53%).

In a further step respondents were asked to comment on what they had achieved through their participation in CEEPUS as hosts or teachers. When we compare these direct outcomes with the data on the main motivations given above, we can observe that the situation in some cases differs. For the hosts the highest position is occupied by building up sustainable professional contacts (25%), followed by the interest in internationalisation (22%), friendship (22%), participation in a CEEPUS network (21%), and improvement of the own university’s visibility (20%).

For the teachers the three most important results are in line with the main motivations given. Friendship (38%) follows in the 4th position, instead of the interest in a particular teaching domain of the host university, which is ranked 5th (35%). This result might well reflect the different nature of their role within the CEEPUS teaching mobility. Furthermore it is important to keep in mind that the groups of teachers and hosts have a big overlap and most of the respondents answered the questions in both roles.

CEEPUS relevant issues like the coordination of networks are among the objectives considered as less important.

Figure 4.2-2 provides an overview on the objectives and their realisation which seem to be less important for the respondents. It is worth mentioning that on the lower positions among the objectives one can find apparently important aspects such as the coordination of a CEEPUS network, the supervision of PhD candidates as well as of students' final thesis.

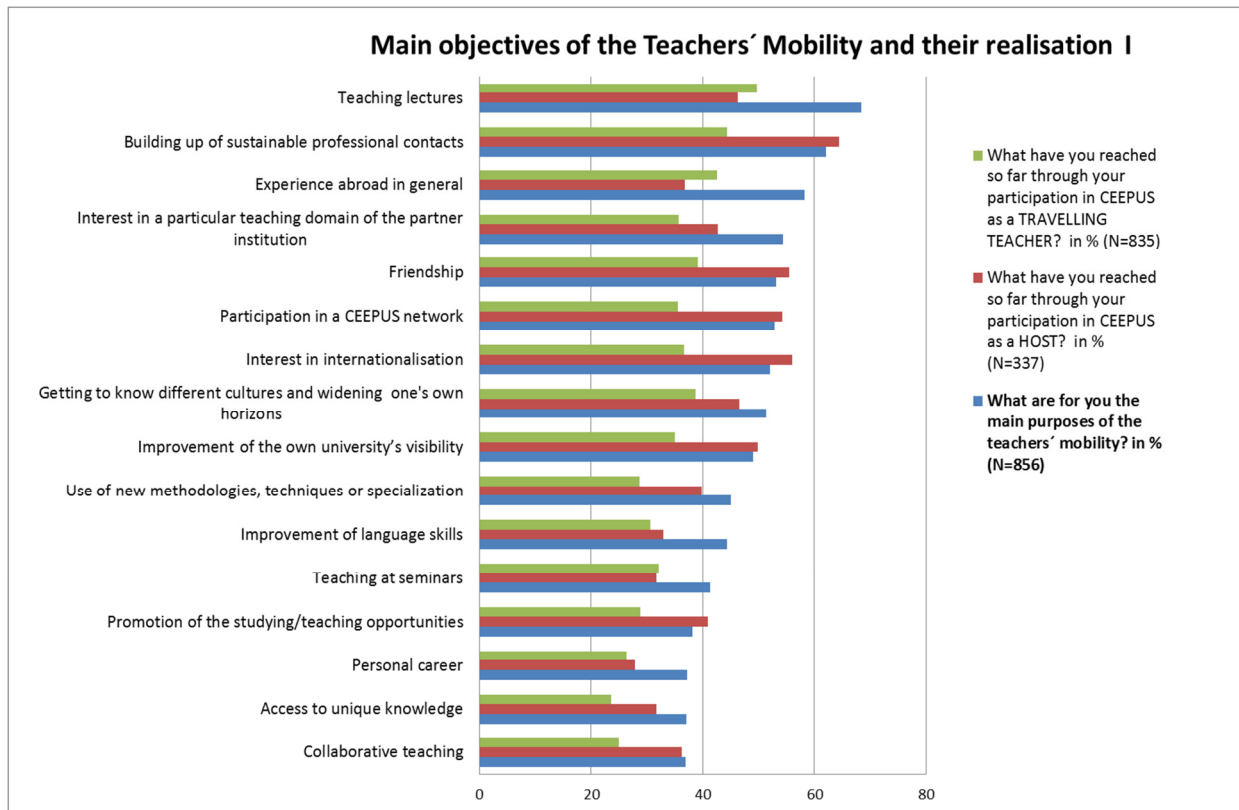


Figure 4.2-1: Main purposes of the teacher's mobility and the achieved results differentiated by hosts/teachers, Part 1

Main objectives of the Teachers' Mobility and their realisation II

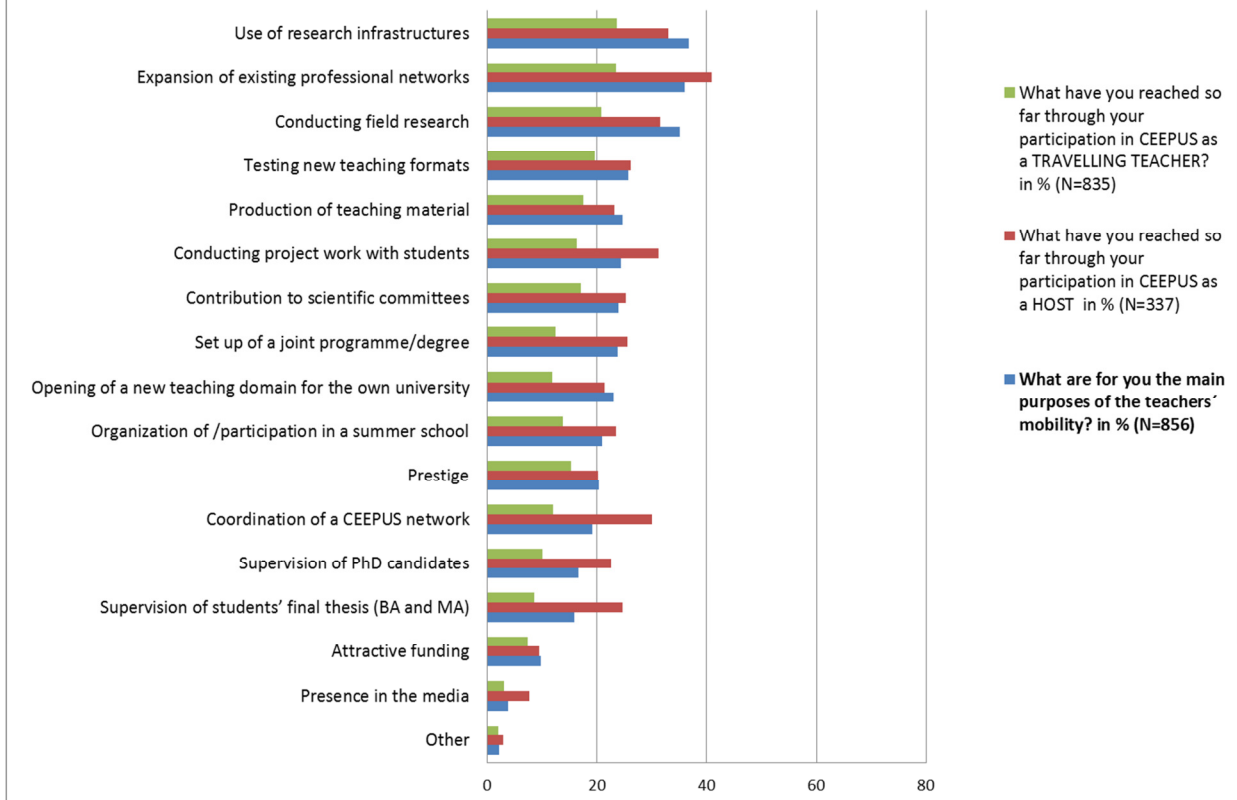


Figure 4.2-2: Main purposes of the teacher's mobility and the achieved results from hosts/teachers, Part 2

Teachers mainly apply for mobility to their network partners' organisations or because they have met at previous events. The city/country per se also plays a very important role.

The motivations to apply for teacher mobility to a specific university are presented in Figure 4.2-3. The majority of the respondents, 60%, base their selection on the need to meet partners, with whom they are working in a CEEPUS network. Another important reason (44%) is because they have met in conferences and/or previous events. This fact underlines the importance of having established good relationships before applying for teaching mobility. Similar to the case in Figure 4.2-3, a large share of the respondents still consider non-scientific/academic/professional motivations such as their interest in the city/country (39%) to be very influential during the application process. The rest of the items on the list are more directly related to work-specific issues.

When we look more into the detail of replies by age groups and frequency of visits, we can notice that for the most important motivation, i.e. "to meet the partners I am working with in a CEEPUS network", the following conclusions can be drawn, according to Table 4.2-1: the younger generations are not so much interested in meeting the partners with whom they work in a network, but this might be linked to the fact that older staff is usually more often in charge of the coordination of a network. The findings described in the second table (Table 4.2-2) clearly show that the more the teachers travel, the more they are interested in meeting their colleagues from the network.

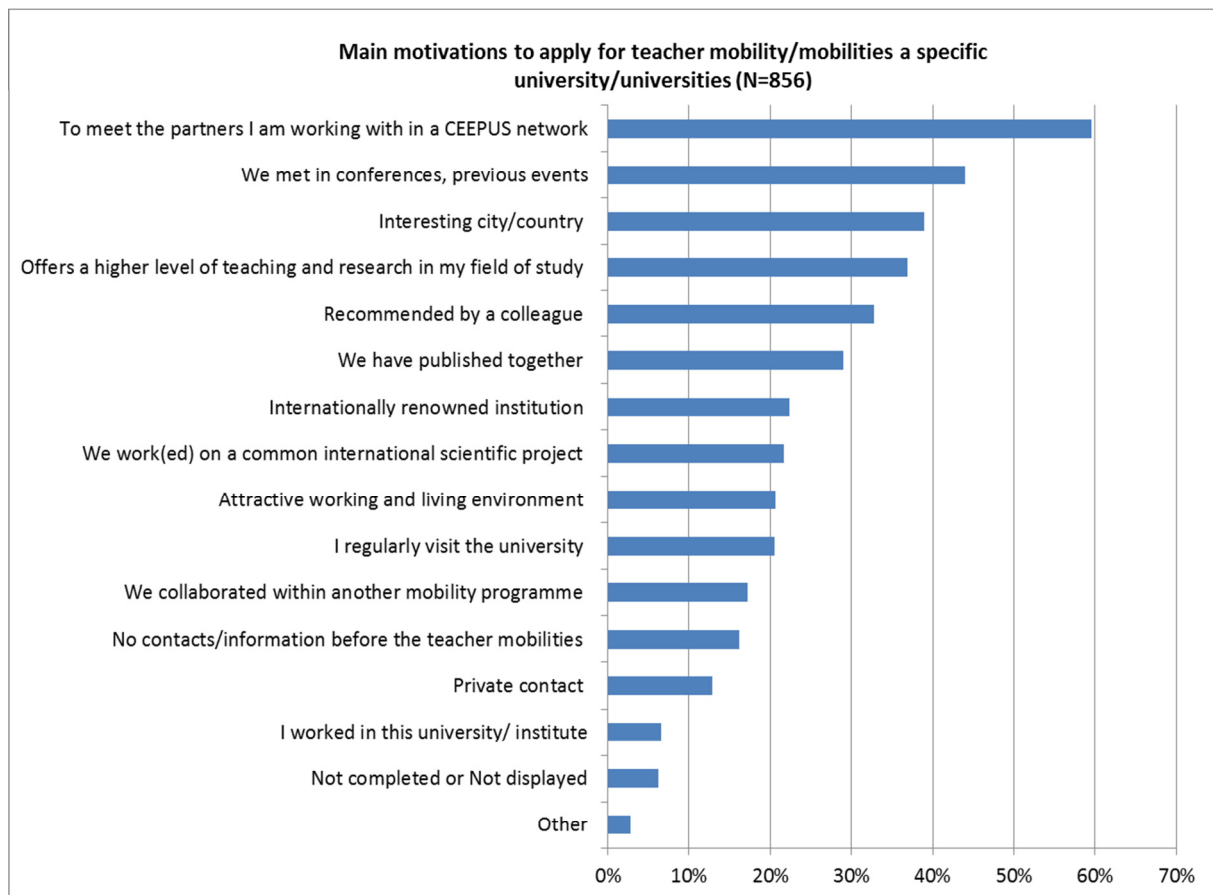


Figure 4.2-3: Main motivations to apply for teacher mobility to one hosting institution

Age group	% of respondents who replied yes (N=856)
21 – 36 years	41%
37 – 42 years	61%
43 – 58 years	64%
59 + years	72%

Table 4.2-1: Motivation to meet CEEPUS network partners, distribution by age

Frequency of visits	% of respondents who replied yes (N=856)
1 - 2 times	55%
3 – 5 times	76%
6 – 8 times	76%
9 – 11 times	71%
12 or more times	92%

Table 4.2-2: Motivation to meet CEEPUS network partners, distribution by frequency of mobility

Age and frequency of travelling correlate with the motivation “we met at conferences” when it comes to choosing a specific organisation for the stay abroad.

As regards the second most important motivation, “we met in conferences, previous events”, the following results can be observed: similarly to the previous tables, both age and frequency of travel increase the importance of this motivation when it comes to decide the hosting institution.

Age group	% of respondents who replied yes (N=856)
21 – 36 years	35%
37 – 42 years	38%
43 – 58 years	46%
59 + years	57%

Table 4.2-3: Previous contacts in conferences, events; distribution by age

Frequency of visits	% of respondents who replied yes (N=856)
1 - 2 times	40%
3 – 5 times	54%
6 – 8 times	71%
9 – 11 times	50%
12 or more times	83%

Table 4.2-4: Previous contacts in conferences, events; distribution by frequency of mobility

Frequent travellers are highly motivated to choose the host institution in a specific city/country which attracts their attention.

For the third motivation, *the interest in city/country*, the following can be stated: contrary to the first two examples, age does not have an influence on the choice. However, it is rather the frequent travellers (75%) who give a lot of priority to this motivation. This might lead to the conclusion that those who are travelling very often (12 or more times) have also “touristic” reasons in mind. But they might just as well be already very familiar with the environment of the host organisation and therefore decide to keep on travelling to the same institution. However, as the total number available in this section (14 out of 856 respondents) is very low, both interpretations have to be dealt with caution.

Frequency of visits	% of respondents who replied yes (N=856)
1 - 2 times	38%
3 – 5 times	42%
6 – 8 times	39%
9 – 11 times	36%
12 or more times	75%

Table 4.2-5: Interest in the city/country, distribution by frequency of mobility

The impact of the teacher mobility on the grant holders life and career is high.

According to the respondents (see Figure 4.2-4), the teacher mobility had a high impact on the lives of about 59% of respondents. For 15% the impact was rated as being very high, whereas 15% consider the impact being rather low. The overall positive impact on the grant holders' future lives is further detailed in Figure 4.2-5. Here it can be seen that after the conclusion of the mobility, most of the former travelling scholars continued scientific cooperation with the host institution (62%). About 50% who received already one or more grants for teacher mobility, applied for further teaching mobility and 42% have expanded their tasks/responsibilities at their home institution.

From these data it is quite clear that the positive experience during the first mobility period was the reason for applying to further ones and on top of that, the experience abroad has a very high impact also on the development of the career at the home institutions according to the self-assessment of the respondents.

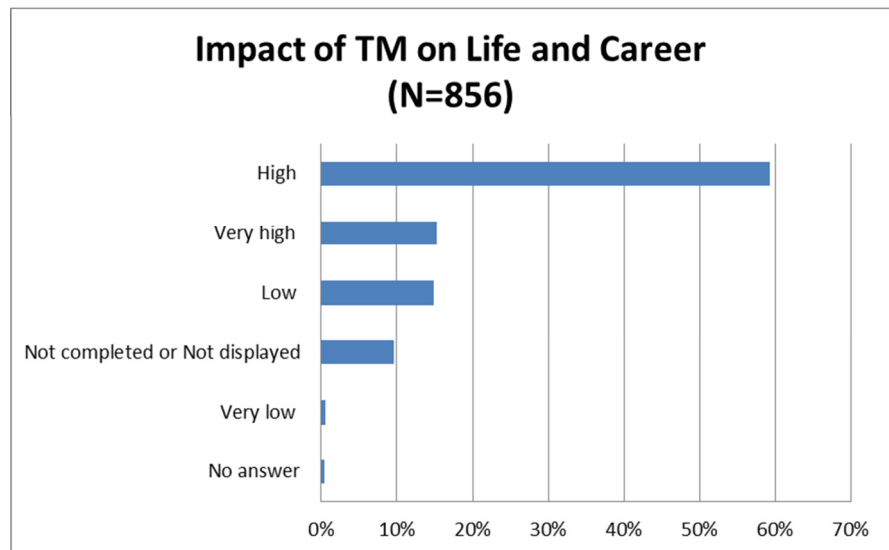


Figure 4.2-4 Impact of the teaching mobility on the grant holders life and career

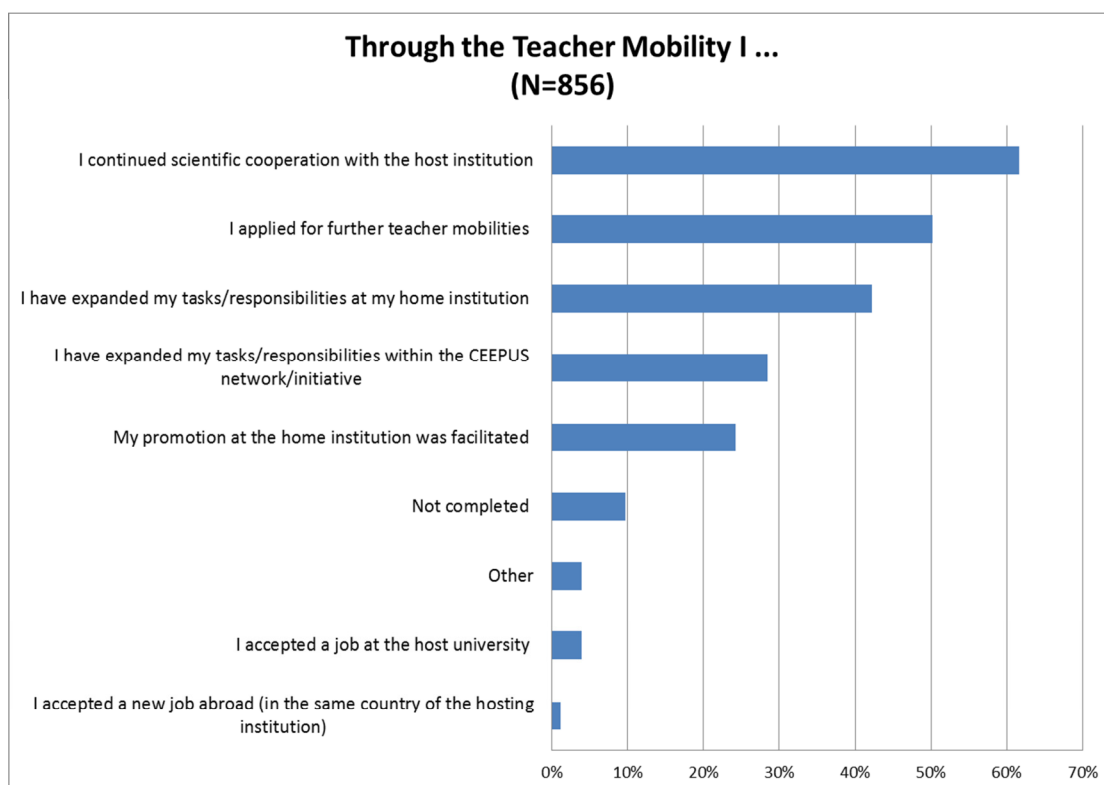


Figure 4.2-5 Teacher's future after the mobility

Frequency of travelling is highly influencing aspects of professional development.

In table 4.2-6 the division of replies on the question of mobility follow-ups by frequency of mobility is presented. The trend is similar all four answer categories. In general, the number of mobilities increases the impact on the teachers' career and life. In some cases, related to frequent travellers, almost 100% state a positive influence on the scrutinised aspects of professional development. There are no major increases/decreases linked with the age of the travelling teachers.

→Comment by CCO:
In order to learn more about these interesting findings, the Central CEEPUS Office has commissioned a follow up study.

Through teacher mobility,...

Frequency <i>(N=856)</i>	I continued scientific cooperation with the host institution	I applied for further teacher mobility	I have expanded my tasks/responsibilities at my home institution	I have expanded my tasks/responsibilities within the CEEPUS network/initiative
1 - 2 times	57%	47%	38%	23%
3 – 5 times	78%	59%	51%	42%
6 – 8 times	83%	61%	54%	44%
9 – 11 times	71%	71%	64%	50%
12 or more times	83%	92%	83%	100%

Table 4.2-6: Percentage of respondents who replied yes to the 4 most recurrent situations after the end of the mobility – differentiated by frequency of travel

4.3. Administration of the programme

Our focus in this section is on administrative procedures, (co)financing of expenses, and the misbalance/balance between teacher and student mobility.

In order to be well-functioning, a transnational programme needs to have organised and efficient administration procedures. In this section we will first look at the users' perception and opinion on the procedures and services provided by the CEEPUS programme. In a second step we will touch issues related to financing. Finally we will also look into an issue that raised concern among some NCOs and other members of the CEEPUS community: the question of imbalances between student and teacher mobility in favour of one or the other group.

Finally, we look into detail to some of the issues related to the reimbursement of grants that seem to cause displeasure among past grant holders. We also scrutinise whether the final report is perceived as a burden by the funded teachers, or not.

4.3.1. Procedures and services

The overall appreciation of the whole procedural/administrative system of the CEEPUS programme is high.

Within this evaluation we assessed the users' perception of the administration mechanisms and services of CEEPUS which they received during their teaching mobility. We have asked them to provide their satisfaction rate for the administrative procedures during all stages of the teaching mobility.

On the basis of the results from the online survey, the overall appreciation of the whole procedural/administrative system of the CEEPUS programme is high. This includes also the activities of the NCOs. If we sum up the positive feedback from the categories *very good* and *good*, the range across all 8 asked topics (see Figure 4.3.1-1 below) is between 71% and 76%; with an average of 73%. The category *just sufficient* has been chosen by an average of 13%, whereas only 2% (on average) considers the procedural/administrative system *insufficient*².

→Comment by CCO:

Negative reactions are understandable if the applicant encounters a NCO that does not respond, or is not familiar with the program or if there is an interregnum of no NCO at all.

Most of former grant holders believe that CEEPUS was best performing *during* their stay abroad.

→Comment by CCO:

This is so because during the stay abroad there is more interaction with the (host) NCO. What should also be considered is that due to the increasing diversification of payment modalities and a host of new national regulations it is very difficult for a home NCO to advise applicants on conditions in the host country.

The Central CEEPUS Office therefore suggests to at least try to group payment strategies according to certain paradigms for advertising purposes, e.g. per diem, half month, lump sum etc. At a NCO Meeting in October 2015 agreement on the various types was achieved.

It is hoped that the classification might be confirmed at the next Senior Officials' Meeting in December.

² 12% have not replied to this question.

About 44% rated the received support during their stay abroad *very good* and for 33% it was *good*. This item scored the highest percentage for the rating very high and only 2% considered it *insufficient*. The information provided about CEEPUS grant has also been positively assessed; it reached 31% *very good* rates and 42% *good*.

The fact that the experienced processes were in line with the guidelines (73% as either *very good or good*), demonstrates the clearness of the guidelines, and a well-structured provision of information before and during the submission of the applications.

The aspect that has received the most critical assessment is the transparency of the selection process. However, even this percentage -4% rated it as *insufficient* - is very low and should not skew the overall positive rating.

In the Figure 4.3.1-1 below all ratings are reported differentiated by categories.

→Comment by CCO:

The causes of insufficient transparency are either NCO problems as described above in certain countries or what the CEEPUS administration refers to as “overbooking”: networks nominate more applicants/months than foreseen in the Traffic Sheet. Since not all networks always use all their quota, the NCO can indeed top up the original Traffic Sheet – but how is it to know whom to select, without any guidance by the network?

It should be noted that the selection of their candidates is the prerogative of networks. The selection principles foreseen are part of the network application.

The Central CEEPUS Office is therefore considering a respective input option for networks to indicate how they rank their candidates.

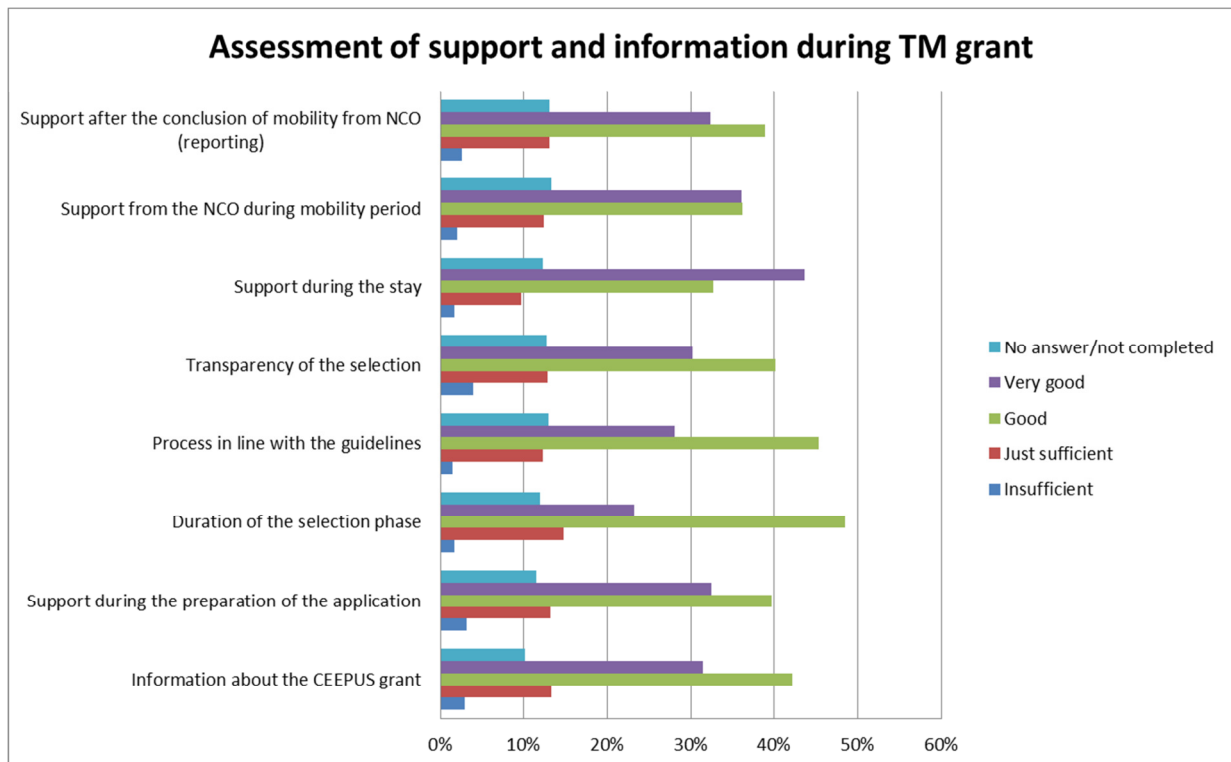


Figure 4.3.1-1: Assessment of the support and information during the teaching mobility grant

4.3.2. Budget and mobilities

10% of respondents considered the received funds as generous; 61% as just sufficient.

In this section we analyse how the travelling teachers evaluated the received funds and whether there is room for improvements. On the basis of the received answers, it can be summarised (see Table 4.3.2-1 below) that most teachers evaluate the funds being “*just sufficient*” – 61%, or even “*generous*” – 10%.

In opposition to this first positive finding, it must be highlighted that 17% of respondents consider the funds provided by the programme as not sufficient and, thus, should be increased.

When analysing all these data, it has to be born in mind that the evaluation of the received funding depends drastically on the hosting country. The CEEPUS programme encompasses countries with very different economic and social environments.

How do you assess the allocated amount of funding by CEEPUS?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Insufficient	142	17%
Just sufficient	521	61%
Generous	87	10%
I do not know	49	6%
No answer	2	0%
Not completed	55	6%

Table 4.3.2-1: Evaluation of the funding

Coverage of additional costs is mainly secured through private money.

The majority of CEEPUS travelling teachers uses additional funds to cover all the costs incurred during the stay. Our evaluation analysed how these additional funds are distributed and who the donors are.

Most of grant holders used their own private money to co-finance their teaching mobility. For the categories *travel and health insurance* the percentage reaches significant shares of around 46%. Some 37% also invest additional own resources to cover the travelling to/from the hosting institution. A rather limited issue seems to be the expenses linked with the Visa application, which is self-financed by around 12% of respondents.

In a significant number of cases the home university provides additional co-financing to cover travel costs (28%), but in some cases also travel and health insurance (13%). The least supported cost category by the home universities is related to Visa.

By descending order, some other domestic funds provide almost exclusively travel costs (10%), but significantly less than the home universities. The shares of co-financing from other donors are even lower for the remaining three cost categories, all below 3%.

The last mentioned two sources of co-financing in Fig. 4.3.2-1, the contribution from host universities and other mobility programmes, do not play an important role, since their contribution for all categories is always below 3%, with a slightly higher share for travel costs.

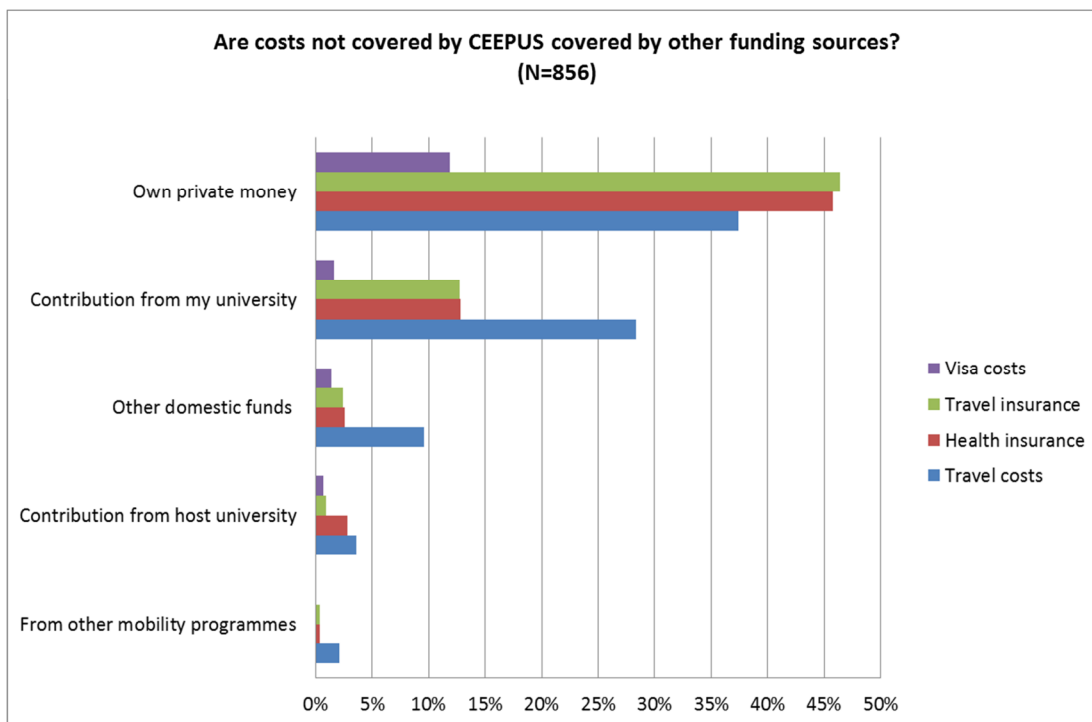


Figure 4.3.2-1: Coverage of costs by other funding sources

No clear opinion on the need for additional funds.

Given the fact that 17% of all respondents considered the allocated funds being insufficient (see Table 4.3.2-1), we aimed to identify whether they had a specific additional cost category in mind that needed to be financed by the programme. However, on basis of the answers received, no clear picture could be obtained, since 45% replied positively to the question whether one particular type of expenses should be additionally funded, and 48% replied negatively, which in practical terms signifies a difference of 30 answers – see table below.

What is worth highlighting is that not only the 17% of respondents, who consider the overall funding for teaching mobility insufficient, but also other respondents which in general are more satisfied with the funding, would opt for additional cost categories. This regards 382 people, about 240 more people than those from the 17%-group.

Should there be additional funds to cover one particular type of expenses?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	382	45%
No	412	48%
No answer	1	0%
Not completed	61	7%

Table 4.3.2-2: Should there be additional funds?

If there should be additional funds, these should cover travel expenses.

When we inquired about the specific cost category that should be additionally financed, the answer was very clear.

The majority of previously funded teachers would like to receive a more just reimbursement of travel costs. This topic was often mentioned also by the teachers contacted during the phone interviews and within the section of the online survey which was dedicated to general comments to the programme. Additional travel-related cost categories, such as health insurance, travel insurance, and accommodation were less often mentioned.

82% of grant holders believe that the duration of mobility is adequate.

When it comes to meeting the objectives of the CEEPUS teaching mobility, the relation between available time and produced results is crucial. Therefore we asked the teachers whether in their given time they had managed to reach their specific objectives. A vast majority of them – 82% – believes that the duration of the mobility is adequate. This positive result confirms that the current set-up of the programme is well-structured in this regard. Only 9% consider the stays as too short. 3% of teachers think that the visits are too long (see Table 4.3.2-3).

Is the mobility duration adequate to reach the set objectives?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	702	82%
Too short	75	9%
Too long	27	3%
No answer	0	0%
Not completed	52	6%

Table 4.3.2-3: Is the mobility duration adequate?

The CEEPUS community considers that mostly there are no imbalances between outgoing teacher and student mobilities.

One particular concern from NCOs and other bodies involved in CEEPUS was the balance respectively misbalances between outgoing students and teachers. The same concern was sometimes brought up by hosts and teachers of particular networks.

Based on the data gathered from the online survey, the balance between the number of travels of students and teachers seems to be mainly well distributed according to the assessment of the responding teachers. Only 17% of respondents believe that there are imbalances, while for 77% there are no imbalances. From those respondents who think that there is an imbalance, 50% indicated that this is a frequent situation in favour of teachers. For 50% this is not a frequent situation. Similarly, 47% believed that it is a frequent situation that students travel more often, while it is not for 53%. It is therefore not possible to say on which side more imbalances occur. In general, it seems that the perceived imbalances are case-specific and not a general cause for concern.

In your view, have you already experienced any imbalances between the number of travels distributed between students and teachers?

	Count	Percentage
Yes	147	17%
No	656	77%
No answer	0	0%
Not completed	53	6%

Table 4.3.2-4: Experienced imbalances of mobilities

Due to different contexts and requirements there is no general formula for an optimal balance between students and teacher mobility.

The topic of perceived teachers vs. students travel imbalances was also discussed during the phone interviews with network coordinators, hosts and NCOs. Their view is very important, as they provide a more holistic picture of the whole mobility flows. When discussing about the balance between teachers' and students' mobility there is a number of elements to take into consideration. First of all, the financial allocation of a network will undoubtedly influence the ratio. A one-month grant for teachers is more expensive than the one for students. Second, the ratio will be different on the basis of the type of network. Some are structured to focus on teacher mobility, others on students. Sometimes it happens that teachers apply to one particular university, because they are asked to provide one particular class/course. Third, also the type of activity to be performed has to be taken into account. Teachers might go abroad to teach in a specific university, to establish new contacts, to coordinate the network or to prepare the visits of students. Students, however, have different needs and expectations from mobility, which could require a stay for up to one semester. The users of the CEEPUS mobility demand different durations of mobility given their different needs and context, in which these are performed.

Some NCOs, like the Hungarian, have applied national rules that try to better balance the average between ongoing teachers and students. In this country, one third of the months goes to teaching mobility, whereas the remaining two thirds are dedicated to student mobility. The baseline for this decision is that students usually need to spend longer periods abroad than teachers and that a person month for teachers is higher than the one for students. From the information received it is difficult to assess whether such regulation has a positive impact on the quality of mobility. Nevertheless, NCOs are aware of potential unbalances and are taking actions to better regulate the flow of ongoing teachers/students.

All these examples confirm that there is no general formula for an optimal balance between students and teacher mobility.

4.3.3. Reporting and payment

Structure and completeness of the mobility reports should be improved.

The mobility reports are an important source of information of mobility outputs. The NCOs can mainly benefit from them, as they have the possibility to check these reports in detail. However, there are problems concerning the completeness and structure of the reports.

Grant holders have to fill in a mobility report after their return. The stay of the grant holder has to be proven by a letter of confirmation, which has to be submitted online by the host institution. When looking into the CEEPUS online database, it can be observed, that not all grant holders submit the mobility report. This confirmation and consequently a proof of stay is thus missing. NCOs have confirmed that there is a problem with the response rate. Very often they have to contact the grant holders to remind them to complete the reporting, which consumes a lot of the NCO's time. NCOs are therefore requesting more support, e.g. through the online platform to receive the delayed reports and to avoid incomplete reports.

→Comment by CCO:

As already mentioned earlier, the issue is even more complex than that: merely sending a reminder will not do the job – users need to be aware of the context of what is being asked of them. Creating additional work by spawning a flood of mails has to be avoided. Users need to be made aware of their obligations prior to their stay abroad. One attempt to achieve this was by making users to “accept” their grant online. To this end they have to confirm the “Obligations of a CEEPUS Grant Holder” which of course also lists the obligation to fill in the mobility report. – This approach does not really work because many NCOs – in spite of repeated instructions - award the grant anyway, and do not differentiate whether the application has been “accepted” or not.

Currently the mobility reports are structured around the following sections: Activities, Organizational issues, After your return, Network Performance, and Best Memory. The related questions in the sections are open questions allowing the grant holders a very free and extensive reporting. However, in practice the reporting is normally rather short and sometimes information is partly missing. Therefore we suggest including more closed-ended questions allowing an instant analyses whenever needed (e.g. number of teaching hours, number of students supervised/taught, type of activities fulfilled, ...). With such a measure also the strength of the CEEPUS website – to immediately extract descriptive statistics from the data base – can be better exploited.

48% of respondents from the online survey find the administrative procedures appropriate.

In this paragraph we scrutinise the administrative procedure that the funded teachers are requested to fill in to receive the final payment. In this respect CEEPUS has scored positively. 8% find them very easy, 21% rate them as easy and 48% of respondents from the online survey find them appropriate. On the negative side of the scale there are 11% who find the administrative procedures complicated and 3% assess them even as very complicated. Overall the conclusion can be drawn, that the programme is very user-friendly.

The CEEPUS online platform, which is playing a very important role in terms of reporting and payment, has been mainly positively assessed by the target group. However, some minor problems were mentioned (e.g. website is considered as too complicated).

→Comment by CCO:

The feedback of “too complicated” is a well-known phenomenon related to user type: teachers that need to use the website only once or twice a year and that

are not really familiar with CEEPUS procedures and not accustomed to internet procedures are sometimes frustrated. “How To” explanations on each page are meant to guide users but need to be read to this end. – These are teachers that are often involved also as network partners and have difficulties differentiating between administering their own mobility application or nominating applicants in their capacity as network partners.

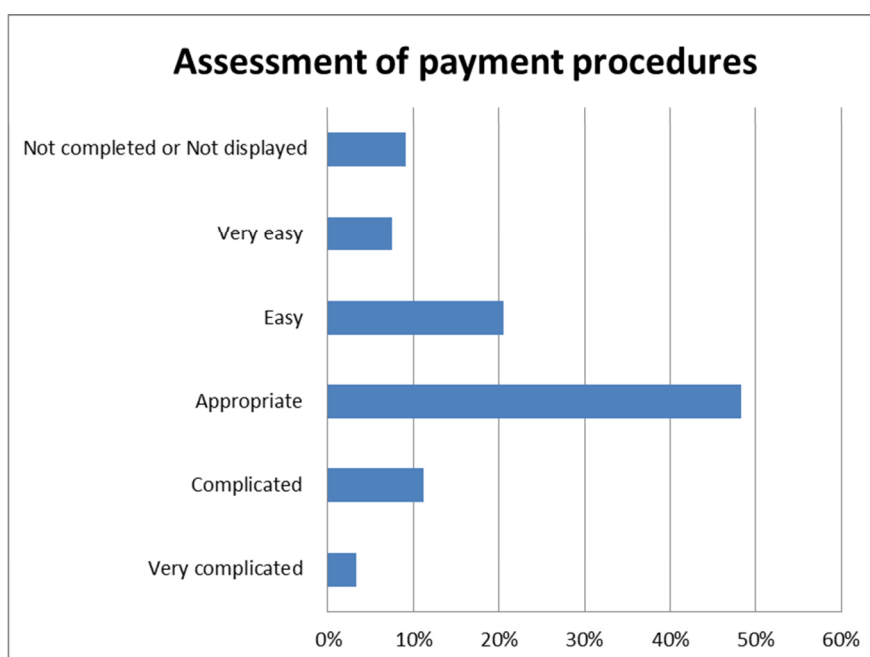


Table 4.3.3-1: Assessment of administrative procedures

The majority of users are satisfied with the CEEPUS online platform.

In a further step we have inquired the participants of the survey about the problems encountered during the processing of the reimbursement and to propose some solutions to these problems.

The procedures linked with the final reporting were positively assessed by the users. 87% are satisfied with it; 2% are not.

Are you satisfied with the final reporting procedures?

Are you satisfied with the final reporting procedures? (N=856)	
Yes	87%
No	2%
No answer	0%
Not completed	11%

Table 4.3.3-2: Satisfaction with reporting periods

When we look more into detail to the single free-text explanations underlying the scarce negative feedback, we can sum-up that for some users the procedures are simply too complicated.

→Comment by CCO:
Pls cf. above, comment to user type.

Furthermore, the travelling teachers criticised, that some countries have additional requirements concerning reporting which seems to create too much bureaucracy

in comparison to the granted amount of funds. According to the respondents an example in this respect is Slovakia. Others complain that the deadline for handing in the report is set at the end of December, or during Christmas holidays.

→Comment by CCO:

Deadline for Mobility Report: Nobody is being kept from submitting their network report any earlier! It was in fact a concession to postpone the original deadline of Oct 30 – this was regarded as too early. Deadlines in November were felt to interfere with other duties. There is no deadline to make everybody happy: For some networks it is useful though to combine the network report with the new network application.

Even for late comers there is a solution: They can enter the report after Feb 15 but are then not eligible for the Ministers' Prize Selection that is well under way by then. However, reviewers will be able to draw on the information provided in the network report during the selection round for the next academic year.

Another example of annoying bureaucracy is the regulation of some countries that the participants have to open a bank account in the hosting country. This process usually takes time and in some cases is still ongoing when the mobility period is over. This is often seen as a burden and is not facilitating the administrative flow.—

→Comment by CCO:

Unfortunately there are certain CEEPUS countries where grant payment is not optimally implemented. These issues are discussed at the Senior Officials' Meetings and the respective countries asked how they plan to address these problems.

We recommend to apply measures which ensure that grant holders receive their funds in time by applying simple procedures which are similar in all CEEPUS countries.

→Comment by CCO:

The prayer of the Central CEEPUS Office answered!

4.4. Perception and visibility of the programme

CEEPUS is a programme with a long-standing tradition and is highly recognised in the academic sector.

CEEPUS programme is a long-established initiative that is nowadays highly recognised in the academic sector. Currently several mobility programmes are operating in the CEEPUS countries. Some of them are EU-funded, others are bi- or multilateral, and there are also national programmes as well as specific university initiatives.

It is therefore important to analyse how the grant holders first learned about CEEPUS. Answers to these questions can provide crucial information for the planning of future activities of the programme and to better tailor the CEEPUS public relations. Moreover, we also investigated whether or not funded teachers also use other mobility programmes to cover their travel and academia activities.

Finally, this section will provide an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of CEEPUS programme in comparison with other similar programmes.

A vast majority learn about CEEPUS opportunities through

The majority of respondents of the online survey - 66% - have learnt about the mobility opportunities offered by CEEPUS through a colleague. This indicates the important role of university networks.

colleagues.

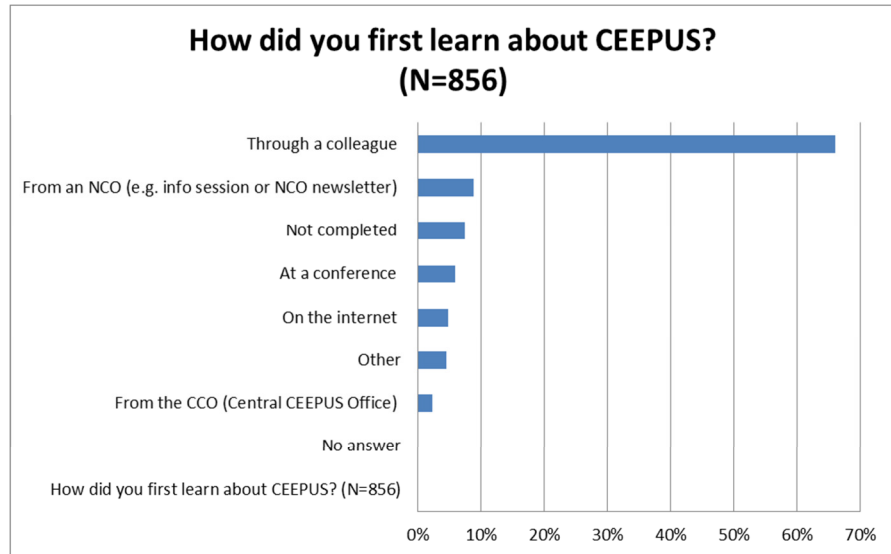


Figure 4.4-1: How did you first learn about CEEPUS?

The second most important channel for getting in touch with CEEPUS activities is through the NCOs with 9%. This first NCO-contact happened e.g. through info sessions, information provided on the NCOs websites or through newsletters. Some other grant holders have obtained initial information directly by the Central CEEPUS Office, but this share is with 2% limited too. About the same percentage was reached by those teachers who first found out about the programme on the Internet.

The fact that large groups of applicants were informed about CEEPUS by their colleagues also indicates a good work of CCO and NCOs.

From the gathered data we can thus divide the results into two categories. The first group totalled 72% of all replies and subsumes word of mouth information from other colleagues and contacts during conferences.

→Comment by CCO:
Word of mouth has always been an important factor in the CEEPUS community and now more than ever since networks have been enabled the last years to include several contact persons per participating units, a long standing wish. – The challenge is to keep everybody involved up to date. Given the scope of the task – currently there are more than 1000 contact persons and a very high overall NCO turnover - it is clear that this can only be attempted by innovative software functions such as the already successfully implemented Upload Change Request procedure for network documents.

In the second group we can find the promotional work done by NCOs and CCO. The effect here is much lower with a total share of 11%. But it is clear, that a good reputation of the programme and recommendations by colleagues can promote more the programme than targeted actions of the NCOs and CCO.

58% of CEEPUS grant holders are also experienced with other mobility programmes.

58% have experience with similar mobility programmes, whereas 33% only use CEEPUS for their teaching mobility.

Yes	58%
No	33%
No answer	1%
Not completed	9%

Table 4.4-1: Experience with other mobility programmes

Those who have experiences with other mobility programmes mostly travel with EU-funded schemes, such as Tempus. A significant amount of respondents has also used the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to travel abroad. Among less frequently used mobility programmes we can mention bilateral programmes, COST actions, Fulbright scholarships, Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo da Vinci, FP7 secondments, bilateral university or ministerial agreements.

Advantages and disadvantages are rather seen subjectively.

When we have a closer look to the advantages and disadvantages of the programme, we can see, that some of the information provided was for some an advantage and for others a disadvantage.

For instance the length of the mobility. Some teachers praised the current length and admitted that this was one of the main reasons for their application to the programme. Others compared the limited time provided by CEEPUS with other mobility programmes, where the international stay is longer. A longer period of mobility is in their opinion crucial for reaching their set objectives.

→Comment by CCO:

This is a long standing PR error by some former NCOs but unfortunately one that means to stay, no matter how hard we have been trying to eradicate this misconception. The actual rule is that teachers have a defined minimum stay of a work week (i.e. 5 work days) with 6 teaching or supervising hours per work week.

Usually NCOs struggle with requests of short stays, so some feel that this is the norm and are not fully aware that longer stays are not only possible but also promoted where applicable.

Let us provide another example: the regional coverage of the programme. On one hand, for most of the respondents the geopolitical mission of CEEPUS is an asset in comparison to other mobility programmes. For some countries in South-East Europe, CEEPUS represents one of the few possibilities to experience teaching abroad. This is definitely an important added value of the programme. On the other hand, other teachers would prefer to be allowed to travel also outside the programme area. In their point of view a weakness of the programme is the limited number of countries involves.

→Comment by CCO:

It is rather flattering that some users would appreciate even more CEEPUS member states than the current 15. – In order to incorporate also non – eligible institutions and university from other countries in CEEPUS activities, the option of a Silent Partner solution is foreseen (cf. CEEPUS III Work Program, Action 1, para 1). However, direct CEEPUS funding is not possible in Silent Partner cases and users need to be made aware of what a Silent Partner can do and what not. This is not the case everywhere – a new NCO will first try to tackle the basics and not deal with special cases such as this.

Flexibility is seen as an advantage, while bureaucracy procedures are partly criticised.

Another burning issue is the adequateness of required administration burden. Even for this topic, the opinions were very dissenting. A quite high number of teachers consider the flexibility in extending the duration of the mobility and the user-friendliness of the online platform, together with the light administrative procedure on overall an advantage in comparison with similar programmes. For a similar high rate of respondents, the bureaucracy linked with the programme is more complicated than other mobility programmes.

→Comment by CCO:

As far as the software solution is concerned, this again touches on the issue of

user types. As for bureaucracy, it is important to differentiate between the requirements of CEEPUS as such – these are deliberately minimal but strategically defined - and the ever growing number of new national regulations that need to be observed. These are increasingly difficult to administrate in line with the CEEPUS Corporate Identity as a user friendly program.

The Central CEEPUS Office recommends to at least try to find a way to group these requirements in certain patterns so that advertising will be easier.

It would also help if the Central CEEPUS is alerted in due time of pending new regulations and not only post festum, a point accommodated by the 19th Meeting of the Joint Committee of Ministers in April this year.

4.5. Mobility-friendly institutions' competition

A dedicated contact person for teacher and student mobility and access to library are the most important assets for a mobility friendly university.

The CEEPUS Central Office is planning to award prizes to the most mobility-friendly host institutions. To develop a set of criteria which could therefore be applied, the NCOs, teachers and host have been asked in the interviews and the online-survey about their opinion on criteria which they consider most important in terms of mobility friendliness. These criteria should be valid for both, teacher and student mobility. The results suggest the following distinction between two categories: the mobility friendliness on organisational level and the mobility friendliness on personal level. With such a distinction it can be ensured that not only richer and better-equipped universities have the chance to become awarded, but also those where the staff involved shows a high level of personal involvement and commitment.

Based on the input from the interviews, the hosts and teachers were asked in the online survey: "In your opinion, what makes a host institution mobility-friendly on organisational/personal level?" On the personal level, the top ranked criteria are:

- a dedicated contact person for teacher mobility and student mobility,
- the possibility to participate in other various activities of the institute,
- the opportunity to network also with the rest of the university staff/teachers other than those directly involved in the teacher mobility,
- Involvement of the leading staff to deepen contacts on institutional level,
- organisation of social events aimed at the integration,
- buddy network available for students,
- support and engagement by staff responsible for implementing Joint Degrees (e.g. rector, ...).

On the organisational level, the following issues are considered as most important:

- access to library,
- provision of accommodation (available, good, inexpensive both for students' and teachers' mobility),
- widespread use of English at university administration,
- usage of the teaching equipment or laboratory,
- provision of adequate work space,
- access to the canteen,
- mutual recognition of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) or compatible systems,
- visible promotion of CEEPUS at the host university,
- level of university co-funding, and access to the secretariat.

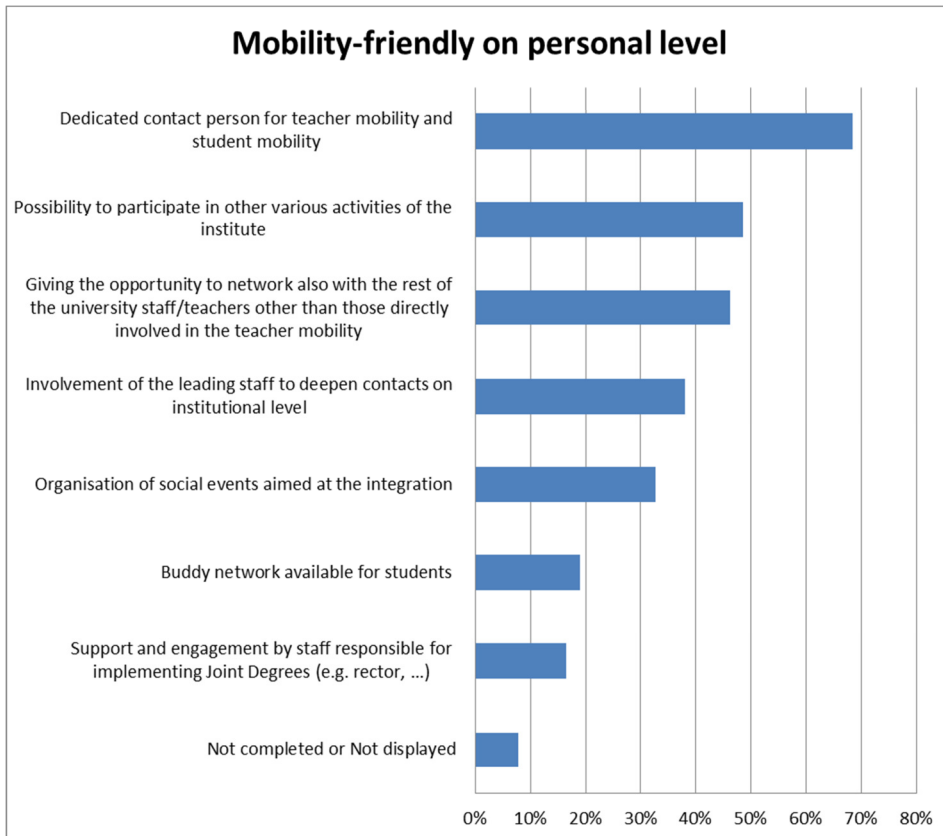


Figure 4.5-1: Criteria for mobility-friendliness on personal level



Figure 4.5-2: Criteria for mobility-friendliness on organisational level

5. Recommendations

Tackle problems with frequent travellers on individual level and take joint decisions backed up by both, the CEEPUS Central Office as well as the concerned National CEEPUS Office.

The possibility to limit the maximum travels of teachers to a specific number does not seem necessary because of several reasons. First of all because of different contexts. Some countries do not have the needed funds for numerous scholarships in comparison to other ones. Secondly, because of the different nature of mobility: sometimes the teacher is only accompanying students on mobility, others stay abroad for smaller periods and if they are summed up, the final period abroad is not very substantial. Moreover, our findings have clearly shown that very frequent travelling applies only to a small number of cases, and if so, these are to a very high extent justified by multiple involvements in several CEEPUS networks. In addition, we could identify that the frequency of travelling correlates positively with the career promotion. It is therefore very difficult and maybe even obsolete to identify a general “one-size-fits-all” rule. Problems should be discussed and tackled on a case by case basis. It is recommended that decisions on critical incidents should be taken jointly by the CEEPUS Central Office and the responsible National CEEPUS Office to ensure a high acceptance of the decision by those concerned. Furthermore, it has to be ensured that coordinators of big networks (e.g. from 10 partners on) obtain enough possibilities to meet their partners physically to maintain and further develop the networks.

→Comment by CCO:

Such consultation process has been in place for years and has been officially confirmed at the 19th Meeting of the Joint Committee of Ministers in April this year.

Raise awareness about the consequences of misuse.

To avoid funding misuse, however, there is recommended to raise awareness among the teachers who receive CEEPUS funding, about the possible consequences of misuse if grants. This could be done e.g. by publishing anonymously “negative showcases” in CEEPUS relevant PR-materials (e.g. website), or more clearly highlighted clauses in the corresponding rules and regulations. Another recommendation is to announce a certain quota (e.g. up to 10%) of audits to scrutinise the adequacy of frequent travelling.

→Comment by CCO:

The Central CEEPUS Office recommends a step by step approach i.e. first to better implement already existing regulations and then to take it from there. Awareness raising should be the first step. It is strategically important to keep the option of escalating measures.

Monitor the impact of mobility.

One of the aspects most fascinating to explore was the positive feedback on the overall impact of the teaching mobility on the participants’ further life and career. It will probably be useful and interesting to explore these aspects in more detail.

→Comment by CCO:

To learn more about these interesting findings, the Central CEEPUS Office has commissioned a follow up study.

Besides mobility reports, NCOs can play a crucial role here, as they have direct access to the funded networks. In general, the immediate outcomes and the less immediate impacts should be better monitored at the time of the final report, but most importantly, after some time after the completion of the mobility, in order to keep track of the long-term impact. By providing concise information to the general public about the outcome and impact on teachers’ career (but also on

other aspects such as students' advancements and satisfaction; university collaboration etc.), other colleagues might be interested in participating in CEEPUS teaching mobility and/or to further promote the many useful opportunities, activities and mission of CEEPUS.

→Comment by CCO:

The updated network report and mobility report are being designed to harvest information on personal or network achievement.

Improve the structure of mobility reports and use strengths of the CEEPUS online platform also for the reporting.

Currently the mobility reports are structured around the sections Activities, Organizational issues, After your return, Network Performance, and Best Memory. The related questions in the sections are open questions allowing the grant holders a very free and extensive reporting. However, in practice the reporting is normally rather short and or information is even missing. Therefore we would suggest including more closed-ended questions allowing an instant analyses whenever needed (e.g. number of teaching hours, number of students supervised/taught, type of activities fulfilled, ...) With such a measure also the strength of the CEEPUS website – to immediately extract descriptive statistics from the data base – can be better exploited.

To avoid a too superficial reporting and to improve it, it is also recommended to include for the open questions a certain minimum of characters for crucial questions.

→Comment by CCO:

Work in progress, these issues will be discussed at the upcoming meetings in order to collect relevant input for the planned software enlargement.

Improve the completeness of mobility reports.

When looking into the CEEPUS online database, it can be observed, that not all grant holders submit the mobility report and the confirmation of stay is sometimes missing. NCOs have confirmed that there is a problem with the response rate in this respect. Very often NCOs have to contact the grant holders to remind them to complete the reporting, which consumes a lot of their time. Technical solutions through the online platform could help to claim delayed reports and to avoid incomplete reports. A possibility would be automatic reminders directly sent out by the platform when the report is not submitted in due time. Such a system is already planned to be implemented by the CCO.

Harmonise Reporting.

Based on the criticism, that some countries have additional requirements concerning reporting which creates a not adequate additional bureaucracy in comparison to the granted amount of funds, we recommend to harmonise the reporting rules. Such harmonised reporting has to include information, indispensable for the NCOs, as well as for the Secretary General. The reporting should be completed, printed and signed by the grant holder as well as by the hosting institutions and be forwarded to those concerned.

→Comment by CCO:

Work in Progress. The issue was presented at the last Meeting of the Joint Committee of Ministers and will be discussed in detail at the upcoming meetings.

Delays of payment of scholarship should be reduced.

Beside bureaucracy, criticism came up also concerning national regulations resulting in delayed payments of travelling grants. Therefore measures are needed to ensure that grant holders receive their funds in time by applying simple procedures which should be comparatively similar in all CEEPUS countries.

Use a set of criteria for the award of the most mobility friendly university based on the feedback received from survey respondents.

→Comment by CCO:

An issue thoroughly supported by the Central CEEPUS Office that has put the issue on the agenda of various meetings. Recommendations of these meetings should be implemented.

Interview and survey outcomes show which aspects make universities most mobility friendly on personal and organisational level. To rank the host universities according to their mobility friendliness, we recommend working with the set of criteria given by the respondents in the online-survey. The criteria should be weighted according the position in the ranking.

→Comment by CCO:

Work in Progress, will be part of the software enlargement.

After the end of their mobilities, travelling teachers and students could be asked in the frame of the reporting to assess their host universities alongside these criteria. These values combined with the weighting and summed up to one composite indicator provides a value for each host institution which can be taken as the base for awarding the most mobility friendly university. To ensure that all hosting institutions have a fair chance to become awarded we recommend to award the most mobility friendly universities separately on organisational as well as on personal level.

6. Post Script by the Central CEEPUS Office

CEEPUS is a dynamic and user friendly program that has grown from an experiment into a considerable operation comprising 15 member states. In 2015/16, there are 72 operative networks with approximately 1000 university units involved. At least 2000 mobility applications are awarded each academic year, which is only the tip of the iceberg, as there are more applications submitted than can be awarded, so all in all about 6000 applications a year have to be processed.

CEEPUS covers both student and teacher mobility, with teacher mobility the more complex task to handle: teachers travel more often and for shorter periods, they need to teach or supervise 6 hrs per work week plus there is a wide variety of payment modalities for teacher grants in the CEEPUS countries. There has also been an ever-increasing number of national regulations affecting CEEPUS e.g. the taxation of teacher grants to name only one issue.

As far as the administration is concerned, the overall number of staff both at the Central CEEPUS Office and at the National CEEPUS Offices has remained the same through the years. What is more, there has been massive fluctuation among the National CEEPUS Offices. The complexity of the job of the National CEEPUS Offices is not always appreciated everywhere: Being a National CEEPUS Office does not mean that you just award some grants now and then. It means that you need to know all facets of the program so that you can really advise clients and advertise the program and that you are always in touch with the Central CEEPUS Office and the other National CEEPUS Offices. It is a bit like playing in an orchestra: It is not enough that you can produce the correct tone – this is where performing just starts. You need to be in tune with the other members of the orchestra and you need to be able to understand and implement what the conductor is signaling. And to begin with, you actually have to have time to show up at rehearsals and performances.

Since obviously a new NCO with little time on hand will focus on the most pressing tasks such as awarding grants, not all applicants are made sufficiently aware of their obligations as a CEEPUS Scholarship Holder, which might lead to a certain lack of discipline in filling in the mobility report. The Central CEEPUS Office has warned of the accumulative effect of this development already years ago and unfortunately has been right with the prognosis. This, of course, is high - level grumbling as the CEEPUS administration is still given high marks by users. But then CEEPUS is dedicated to excellency on all levels.

Of course there is the CEEPUS software, the backbone of the CEEPUS administration. Developed, financed and constantly updated by the Central CEEPUS Office, it covers each and every aspect of the program, from network application and network selection to mobility applications and dynamic online statistics.

The software is as intuitive as possible and all steps a user has to take are accompanied by “How To” explanations on the same page. Still, mindsets and user expectations are dynamic as well and to achieve maximum compliance these shifts in attitude and expectations have to be taken care of by adapting the software accordingly. This has been attempted successfully in the past and needs to be done again.

To sum it up, given that for each program cycle the CEEPUS Agreement demands a “review of the program based on an overall evaluation” the Central CEEPUS Office, being

in charge of the overall evaluation, has decided this time to commission a study with the focus on teacher mobility in order to analyse the questions that have been raised during the last years and to be able to take informed decisions.

The planned software enlargement was held until the results of the overall evaluation were available to make sure that the planned features were in line with the findings of the study.

The study by the ZSI has shown that CEEPUS teacher mobility is a valuable feature and the risk of abuse is minimal. It has also shown that CEEPUS teacher mobility has actually been a career factor for many teachers. In order to learn more about this interesting phenomenon, the Central CEEPUS Office has commissioned a follow up study.

The Overall Evaluation has since been unanimously accepted by the Joint Committee of Ministers and its findings are put to good use.



Elisabeth Sorantin
CEEPUS
Secretary General

Vienna, Nov 2015