

## Work Package 2: Identification of HEI Scenarios

### Synthesis report

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The objective of Work Package 2 is to identify the various different types of settings (scenarios) for the International HEI (e.g. teaching through the national language or another language to national and international students with lecturers teaching through their respective first, second or third languages) with a view to establishing a typology of such scenarios. However, this typology-based approach has proven to be untenable in the light of the sheer diversity of the information gleaned from the [questionnaire survey](#). In fact, the answers to the questionnaire reflect one of the key assets of Europe - heterogeneity is ubiquitous - but this also makes it very difficult to discern general trends. Nonetheless, we will try to tease out major tendencies and trends that have relevance for the internationalisation of the HEIs in the sample. It should be noted that while 47 people responded to the questionnaire, usually, but not always, representing a focus group, the sample covers 39 HEIs from Europe and beyond (altogether 28 countries).

For the purposes of the questionnaire, internationalisation has been considered in terms of a number of factors:

- Policy
- Volume
- Languages of instruction
- Support mechanisms

We will consider each of these factors in turn.

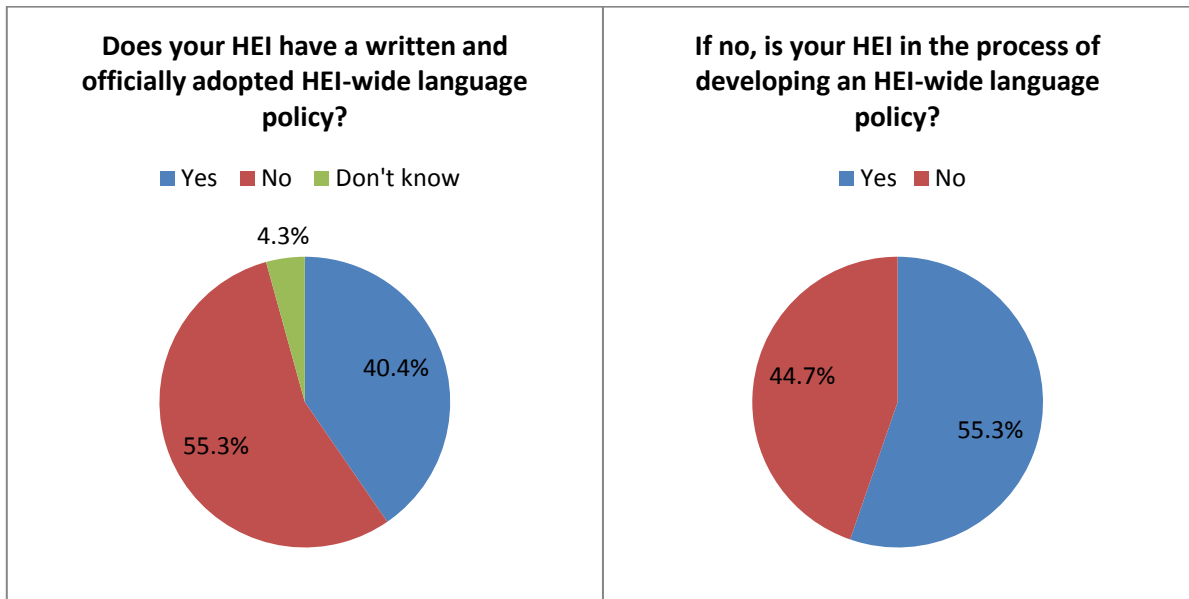
### Policy

One overarching issue of importance is whether aspects of internationalisation have been formalized into an institutional language policy or strategy. Two questions were asked in relation to a written, officially adopted HEI-wide language policy: does the institution currently have one and, if not, are there plans to develop one? Analysing responses in terms of institutions (rather than respondents), 55.3% of institutions do not have an official language policy while 40.4% do (two respondents did not know whether his institution had such a policy or not). Of those institutions which do not have an official language policy (21 in total), 55.3% are in the process of developing, or plan to develop, such a policy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This calculation takes account of a survey design problem which forced all respondents to answer this question even if their institution already has a language policy

**Figure 1-2: The language profile of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)**



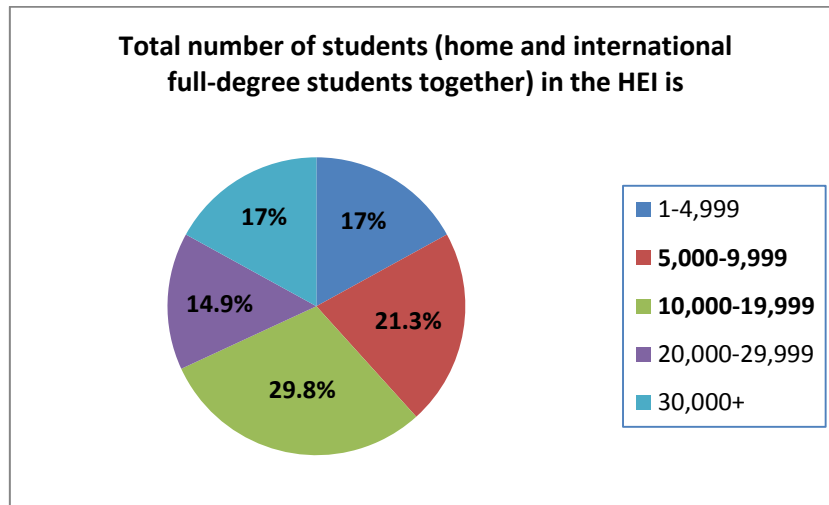
The focus of language policies, be these already in existence or under development, vary. Some take a bilingual perspective, dealing with the relationship between the national language and another language, usually specified as English. Others have a multilingual profile, and here the focus may be on students and issues of languages across the curriculum, range of languages taught, promotion of language learning, etc. Some respondents mention practical concerns, such as the use of CLIL, assessment of language in non-language subjects and the certification of language skills of staff.

## Volume

A number of questions dealt with information concerning the size of the HEI, numbers of incoming and outgoing exchange students at bachelor, master and PhD levels, and percentage of national staff. There are a number of difficulties with the resultant figures. Firstly, they cannot be unproblematically compared across institutions as different parameters for the collection of statistics are involved; for instance, not all institutions record numbers of incoming and outgoing exchange students in terms of levels (bachelor, masters etc.). Secondly, some respondents note that the figures given are guesstimates due to the lack of any official statistics, hence their reliability cannot be assumed. Finally, not all respondents were completing the questionnaire from the perspective of the entire institution, but that of a faculty or department within the institution. This probably explains in some cases why respondents from the same institution sometimes gave radically different answers to the same questions. However, at times it is far from clear what the figures are actually referring to. These issues must be kept in mind when considering the brief profile of the sample given below.

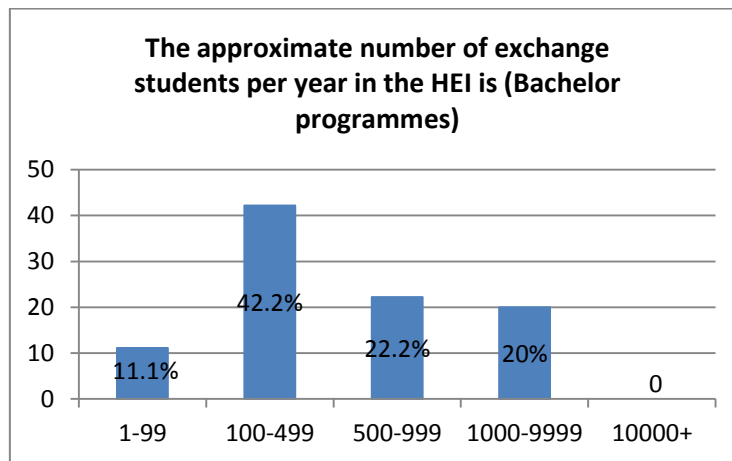
The majority of responses concerning the size of the HEI or unit lie in the range 5,000-19,999 students (51.1%). Next come the larger HEIs (20,000 students +) which make up 30.3% of the sample, followed by the smaller units (less than 5000 students) which make up 18.6% of the sample.

**Figure 3: Facts about HEI**



With regard to incoming exchange students, there appears to be a tendency of greater exchange at the bachelor level, at least in terms of absolute numbers. The majority of exchanges at bachelor level involve the range 100-499 students (42.2%), followed by 500-999 (22.2%) (1.000-9.999 students (20%)). Only 11.1% of respondents chose the range 1-99 students per year; this compares to 48.9% and 65.9% in this range for master’s and PhD exchanges, respectively.

**Figure 4: The approximate number of exchange students per year in the HEI is (Bachelor programmes)**



There is little difference between bachelor and master levels for outgoing exchange students; the favoured category is 1-9% of the total student population followed by 10-19%. Noticeable at PhD level is that 38.5% of respondents chose the higher categories (i.e. above 20% of the total student population). It is not possible to compare incoming and outgoing exchange students as a range of absolute numbers was used for the former while a range of percentages of the total student population was used for the latter.

## Language(s) of instruction

Several trends can be observed with regard to the languages of instruction.

### Monolingual

First of all, there are HEIs that are monolingual. One language is exclusively used as medium of instruction. This is true for the universities in the UK and Ireland, where English is (one of) the national language(s). It is also true for other of the HEIs that participated in the survey: e.g. in Cyprus, Greek is the Medium of Instruction at the University of Cyprus (Nicosia).

### **Bilingual**

All other HEIs can be considered bilingual or multilingual. Most northern European institutions (Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Belgium) offer programmes in the national language but also a variety of programmes in English. Even if a northern European country has more than one official national language, the choice is almost always twofold: either English or one of the official national languages. This is probably due to the proximity (both geographical and linguistically typological) of the UK, and to the fact that most languages in these northern European countries are languages that are less likely to be taught or used outside these countries themselves (LWUTL countries).

Many of the eastern European institutions also opt for this policy: programmes taught in (one of the) official language(s) or in English. The same is true for the majority of the mid-European institutions (Germany, Austria and Switzerland): next to (one of) the official language(s), English is the medium of instruction.

This trend – one national language plus English – is therefore the most frequently chosen option with regard to the language scenarios.

### **Multilingual**

A variety of linguistic choice is offered to a student in many of the eastern European institutions. In most cases English is included as a possible language of instruction, but often the national language of the neighbouring country is offered as a medium of instruction too, and also German and French (and sometimes even Spanish) can be chosen as medium of instruction for certain programmes.

With regard to the number of languages of instruction, we can conclude that, apart from the UK and Ireland, the general trend is the use of one national language and English. In general, the further south and east in Europe, the more programmes and courses are offered (exclusively) in the official language(s) of the country. In eastern Europe, many HEIs present a plurilinguistic picture with regard to the languages of instruction.

### **Border areas**

HEIs that are located in a border region may offer programmes taught in the language of the neighbouring country, next to the national language and English. However, half of the HEIs located in border regions do not adjust to this pattern: they only offer the national language and English<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> *Special cases:* Université Virtuelle de Tunis (TN); Koç University (Istanbul, TR; private university; all in English / predominant international outlook); Europa Universität Viadrina (Frankfurt Oder, DE); UBB Cluj-Napoca (RO); Szeged University (HU; home teachers teaching foreign students (from the same language community) through the medium of these students' first language, but not the first language of the lecturer).

**Development: the nature of the medium of instruction**

Based on the fact that many respondents in the survey stated that their HEI is in the process of developing an HEI-wide language policy, and that these respondents often come from southern, mid and east European countries (although also many northern European HEIs do not yet have a policy in place), we can discern a development in the nature of the (implicit or explicit) language policies of HEIs, and conclude that a spectrum of modalities can be discerned with regard to the medium of instruction.

**Figure 5: Spectrum of modalities – the medium of instruction**

National languages	Programmes and modules in English	English as an academic <i>lingua franca</i>	Parallel languages	Multilingualism	English only
<p>The national language is the medium of instruction.</p> <p>In multilingual countries, more than one national language may be promoted.</p>	<p>Some programmes are taught in English to attract students from other countries or to offer students an international orientation and career (i.e. the 'brain gain' argument).</p> <p>HEIs offer English equivalents of programmes formally taught in the national language. It is often a common practice that if no international students attend the programme, the language of instruction switches back to the national language.</p> <p>EMI programmes are primarily the result of bottom-up strategies.</p>	<p>Some programmes are taught in English, mostly to attract foreign students, but also to promote internationalisation at home.</p> <p>Language policies promote the use of English or another foreign language.</p> <p>Overall strategic development at the institutional level of the HEIs.</p>	<p>The national language loses domain as an academic language.</p> <p>Parallel language policies are adopted, in which it is specified that the coexistence of English and the national language(s) has to be observed and practised in the domains of teaching and administration (and sometimes also of publication).</p>	<p>The HEI opts for multilingual practices, where the idea of partial language competences and simultaneous use of multiple languages in one interaction is practised.</p> <p>The HEI has then become a multilingual learning space, which also has didactic and pedagogical consequences.</p>	<p>English is the unique language of instruction.</p> <p>If a HEI considers English to be the only academic <i>lingua franca</i>, then the promotion of English is seen as a <i>conditio sine qua non</i> in the international academic competition.</p>

**Support mechanisms**

A number of questions address issues to do with support mechanisms for students and staff in relation to teaching and learning cultures as well as integration. Starting with students, 65.2% of respondents note that there are special measures in place for students who are not familiar with the teaching and learning culture, and means of assessment, of the institution. These measures include introduction courses, orientation weeks, handbooks and online resources and buddy systems. Such measures are overwhelmingly optional in character (88.5%) and most or some of the students take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

With regard to integration measures for students of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds, 87.2% of respondents note that these are in place. These measures are primarily the responsibility of international offices, student unions and individual teachers and include mentoring systems, buddy programmes, Erasmus student networks, tandem programmes, individual consultation, social and cultural activities and establishment of cross-cultural groups in the classroom. One respondent notes that an international

student in the focus group questioned the impact of one-off activities at the beginning of the academic year. Certainly, measures such as introduction courses/weeks tend to be segregated, being organized specifically for international students. Some respondents refer to the social behaviour of students where international students and home students rarely mix.

In contrast to students, special measures for teaching staff not familiar with the local teaching and learning environment and assessment procedures are not frequently found. 75.0% of respondents report that no such measures have been implemented. Those measures which are found include orientation programmes, introductory courses and mentoring. Generally, participation is optional, and it seems that this participation is varied; 50% of respondents note that few lecturers get involved. A very similar question concerning teaching staff not familiar with the national or regional educational culture elicited similar responses in terms of extent, optionality and participation: 75.0% of respondents state that no special measures exist; measures implemented are usually optional (according to 63.3% of respondents) and few lecturers participate (according to 62.5% of respondents).

When presented with examples of measures in place for staff teaching multicultural and multilingual groups, 80.0% of respondents report the presence of informal networks and interaction among lecturers while 57.1% state there are in-service training courses; examples given of these courses include English language training, teaching in an intercultural classroom, and multicultural learning environments. Such courses are overwhelmingly optional.

## Concluding comments

Clearly, all universities are in the process of internationalisation and there are certain similarities in how this is being done. From a policy viewpoint, there would seem to be a degree of actual or planned strategic thinking at university level, although the focus can vary across institutions. With regard to the medium of instruction, several tendencies can be discerned. The majority of the HEIs offer programmes both in English and in the national language(s). Some HEIs have already reached a point where they have had to reconsider their policy: they have either implemented a parallel or multilingual language policy, or have opted for English as a unique *lingua franca*. Support mechanisms in place tend to be more student than staff-focused and are primarily optional. There seems to be a pool of techniques that universities dip into, e.g. buddy systems, orientations, although the impact of these on improved integration of students is open to discussion.

In terms of volume (absolute numbers) of student exchanges, incoming students tend to be primarily at bachelor level while outgoing exchange for both bachelor and masters students cluster predominantly in the lower percentage range.

Finally, a few general points about the questionnaire survey. It seems to have helped to spread awareness: many respondents note that their HEI does not have a clear and concrete overview of how they envision and practise internationalisation in terms of quantitative targets, institutional goals, didactic consequences, and language policy. It seems that the knowledge gathered in the questionnaire makes tacit knowledge for the first time explicit and tangible. Worth noting is that globalisation and excellence are now trending policy topics, but these generally reflect a top down strategy that does not correspond to the needs of the

“shop floor” or the existing internationalisation infrastructure. The existing infrastructure often depends on individuals and on ad hoc events –both of which make these bottom up strategies fragile.