

# Internationally Active – Professionally Valuable

## RESEARCH REPORT

The level of internationalization of academic  
staff at universities in Poland, Germany,  
Slovenia, Portugal and Cyprus



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Erasmus+, KA2: Strategic Partnerships  
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**University College of Enterprise and Administration, Poland**



**Frederick University, Cyprus**



**International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia**



**Instituto Politecnico De Setubal, Portugal**



**Technische Hochschule Deggendorf. Germany**

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## Results of the online survey: “Internationally active – Professionally valuable”

### INTRODUCTION

For the last 30 years the internationalization of Higher Education Institutes has become one of the main targets of national research centres and governments in Europe. The European programmes for mobility and research such as Erasmus+ and Horizon2020 have enhanced this effort and have promoted the exchange of students and researchers, the exchange of ideas, and interculturalism between the member states of EU.

However, active and committed participation of the academic staff of HEI is needed to achieve the internationalization targets. Unfortunately, employees of many European universities are not interested in participating in this process or are very reluctant to participate in it. Only a small percentage of employees of European universities show initiative in working with foreign students, applying for foreign grants for research and scientific work, publishing the results of work in international magazines, traveling to foreign universities to conduct research and work with students, or participating as hosts during study visits from other countries.

The main goal of the project **Internationally Active – Professionally Valuable** is to increase the interest of European HEIs staff, in participating in international activities implemented by their universities, by developing a set of tools and guidelines dedicated to HEI staff, giving to international offices real and practical tips on how to motivate academic staff, and on the other hand help employees to overcome barriers that inhibit their participation in international universities.

### INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE PARTNER COUNTRIES

Partners in this Project are the University College of Enterprise and Administration, in Poland (Coordinator), Frederick University, in Cyprus, Technische Hochschule Deggendorf, in Germany, Instituto Politecnico De Setubal, in Portugal and International School for Social and Business Studies, in Slovenia. All universities face challenges when trying to promote internationalization, either because of financial difficulties or lack of interest. In this section we briefly introduce the current situation in the participating countries.



**Poland:** The situation of universities in Poland, and thus also its employees, is influenced by many factors, the most important being the low level of expenditure on higher education, i.e. 1.3% of GDP, which translates into low wages and excessive teaching workload for employees. Universities in Poland encounter a number of barriers in the internationalization process, which is partly due to the specificity of their operation and concerns the following areas: The first limitation is financial issues, which means that many universities lack the resources to initiate cooperation and to carry out joint international projects. Another problem limiting the international mobility of employees of both private and public universities is the fact that the vast majority of employees work in two or three positions, which significantly limits their time for conducting additional activities. Finally, the limited knowledge of English language, especially among older staff often introduces a division into "younger workers" (more interested in mobility, knowing English, seeing an opportunity to participate in international projects) and "older workers" (rather not interested in participating in mobility programs, knowing English at a basic level, etc.).

**Cyprus:** Since 2007 when the Republic of Cyprus allowed the operation of private universities in addition to public universities, it has put in place an effective higher education framework, which emphasises on research, teaching, internationalization and employability. Internationalization in Higher Education in Cyprus is very much affected by the financial resources of each institution or university. As a result, there is a big difference between the internationalization of public and private universities. Economic breath to private universities gives the European Programme Erasmus+ which provides funds for mobility to students, staff and faculty.

**Germany:** The German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD) states that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) increasingly define themselves over their international reputation and efficiency as well as their presence on the "global market". In total over three quarters of Germanys HEIs have an internationalization strategy and only 10% of those strategies are older than five years. The mobility strategy of the European HEI-union is the base of the internationalization strategies of the HEIs. Germany's HEIs practice staff mobility with a lot of different countries, but still the outgoing staff mobility is not as high as it could possibly be: In 2015, only 7% of Germany's scientific staff took part in organizationally funded teaching/lecturing/researching abroad. Nevertheless, outgoing scientific and non-scientific staff have a great positive influence on the general internationalization of HEIs, as others can benefit from their experience and knowledge.

**Portugal:** Portugal has centuries-old tradition of higher education. The first Portuguese university was founded in 1290 and is one of the oldest in the world. The ability for the institutions to offer internationalization opportunities to its faculty largely depends on obtaining external funding,



especially through international mobility programs. This dependence on external programs means that funds are limited, and it is not possible to accept all requests for internationalization activities. On the other hand, it is observed that there is some lack of motivation for internationalization activities on the part of the faculty, generated by the fact that they do not consider that the necessary conditions are in place for them to carry out or propose internationalization activities.

**Slovenia:** The Strategy for Internationalization of Slovenian Higher Education 2016–2020 (Internationalization of Higher Education | GOV.SI, 2016) significantly directs the development of Slovenian higher education. The strategy is based on the vision of the internationalization of the Slovenian higher education area, defined in the Resolution on the National Higher Education Program 2011–2020 (Resolution on the National Higher Education Program 2011–2020, 2010). Although mobility is the most effective way of internationalising studies, only a tiny percentage of students and academic staff decide to go for mobility in Slovenia. To encourage this, it is essential to strengthening the horizons of students and academic staff, their intercultural and global skills and soft competencies, conditioned by quality, structured, integrated and systematically organised study experience embedded in the internationalised curriculum and the concept of internationalization at home.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to map the current situation on internationalization in the five partner countries, we launched a survey among HEI employees of the countries participating in the project entitled "**Internationally Active-Professionally valuable**". After discussion with the consortium, it was decided that the most appropriate survey to use, would be an online survey. Therefore, an online questionnaire was designed by Frederick University and sent to the partners of the consortium for comments and feedback. After discussions among partners, the questionnaire was improved, and sent for a pilot testing to 5 academics of Frederick University. The comments of the participants were then incorporated and the questionnaire was finalized.

The final version of the questionnaire includes mostly closed ended questions to make the tool easier and faster to be answered, but also easier for the data to be analysed and reach to conclusions. In addition, the questionnaire is also giving the option to the respondents for comments in each question allowing them to provide information that could not be captured from the questions. The questionnaire is divided in four (4) sections and includes 16 questions. The first section includes questions about the characteristics of the HEIs and their internationalization strategy. The second section consists of questions about the extent of personal internationalization of the respondent, the definition of internationalization, barriers that prevent internationalization and benefits of



internationalization. Finally, there is a question that seeks to capture what would enhance the respondent's involvement in international activities. The third section includes two questions on COVID-19 and to what extent it has affected the internationalization agenda of the respondent, and the last section consists of questions on demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The online questionnaire was set up on the 1ka platform <https://www.1ka.si/d/en>, an open source application that provides services for online surveys. The platform was created by the Centre for Social Informatics, at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

The survey, which lasted between 6 to 8 minutes, was sent on the 19th of April 2021 at the five partners universities, namely, the University College of Enterprise and Administration, in Poland (Coordinator), Frederick University, in Cyprus, Technische Hochschule Deggendorf, in Germany, International School for Social and Business Studies, in Slovenia and Instituto Politecnico De Setubal, in Portugal. The universities in turn, sent the link of the questionnaire to PhD holders working in HEI in their country. Following the timetable of the Gantt-chart Project, the survey was closed on the 30th of June 2021.

Based on the project proposal, the plan was that 150 PhD holders employed at the HEIs of the five (5) countries should answer fully the questionnaire, which means we had to have at least 30 respondents from each organization. The target was achieved and by the 30th of the June 2021, all partners had at least 30 responds each. Specifically, we know that the following recipients answered the questionnaire fully: 31 people from Cyprus, 51 from Germany, 52 from Poland, 81 from Portugal, and 42 from Slovenia-in total 257 respondents. Partially, 300 people answered the questionnaire.

In the next section we present the findings of the survey **Internationally Active-Professionally valuable**.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The frequency tables below show the answers for each question in absolute numbers and in percent form with some description of the highlights of each question. In addition, some graphs or figures are included, to emphasize specific findings.

### Demographics

Based on the results there was a balance between the number of men and number of women who participated. 50.4% of the respondents were women and just 1% did not reveal their gender. The most frequent age group was 41-50 years (40%) followed by 51-60 years (32%) and 31-40 years (19%). Concerning ranking, 30% of the respondents were Assistant Professors and 28% Full Professors. The next most frequent rank was Associate Professors (16%). The rest of the respondents (26%) were in



lower ranks or held other posts such as visiting or invited professors, directors or officers with PhD, or researchers. The majority of the respondents works full-time (82%) just 16% as part-timers and 2% are in another employment status such as contract.

Table 1 below shows the distribution of the respondents per country. All countries have at least 30 responds with Portugal (81 responds) and Poland (52) having the most responds.

Table 1.

Where do you currently live?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
<b>Cyprus</b>	31	10%	12%	12%
<b>Germany</b>	51	17%	20%	32%
<b>Poland</b>	52	17%	20%	52%
<b>Portugal</b>	81	27%	32%	84%
<b>Slovenia</b>	42	14%	16%	100%
<b>Valid</b>	257	86%	100%	

### Questions related to the status and strategies of the HEI

In the next section respondents were asked to answer questions related to the status and the strategies of the Higher Education Institution that are employed. According to the responds, the vast majority of the HEIs are public (69.7%), 17.3% of the HEIs are private for profit, and 13% private not for profit. In addition, 49% of the HEIs are focused both on teaching and research, 44% are predominantly teaching focused and only 6% of the HEIs are predominantly research focused. 1% of the respondents did not know whether the HEIs that they are working in, is focused on research, teaching or both. To the question, "is Internationalization mentioned in your institutional mission/strategic plan?" 87% replied positive, just 4% negative and 9% did not know whether internationalization is mentioned in institutional mission/strategic plan (Table 2a). In Table 2b it is clear that in all countries the vast majority of respondents are aware about internationalization mentioned in their institutional mission/strategic plan.





Table 2a.

Is Internationalization mentioned in your institutional mission/strategic plan?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
<b>Yes</b>	233	78%	87%	87%
<b>No</b>	10	3%	4%	91%
<b>I do not know</b>	24	8%	9%	100%
<b>Valid</b>	267	89%	100%	

Table 2b.

Is Internationalization mentioned in your institutional mission/strategic plan?						
	Cyprus	Germany	Poland	Portugal	Slovenia	Total
<b>Yes</b>	25	45	41	73	39	223
<b>No</b>	2	5	1	2	0	10
<b>I do not know</b>	4	1	9	6	2	22
<b>Total</b>	31	51	51	81	41	255

In Table 3 and Figure 1 below it is shown in hierarchical order, the importance that HE institutions from partner countries show towards various Internationalization activities.

For all five countries at least one of the following two, is among the first two activities that are of higher importance:

- International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.) and
- Development of institutional strategic partnerships

The least favourite activities for all countries according to the responds are the:

- Participation in international associations
- Participating in activities of Internationalization at Home (host international researchers, organize at home international conferences and meetings etc.)



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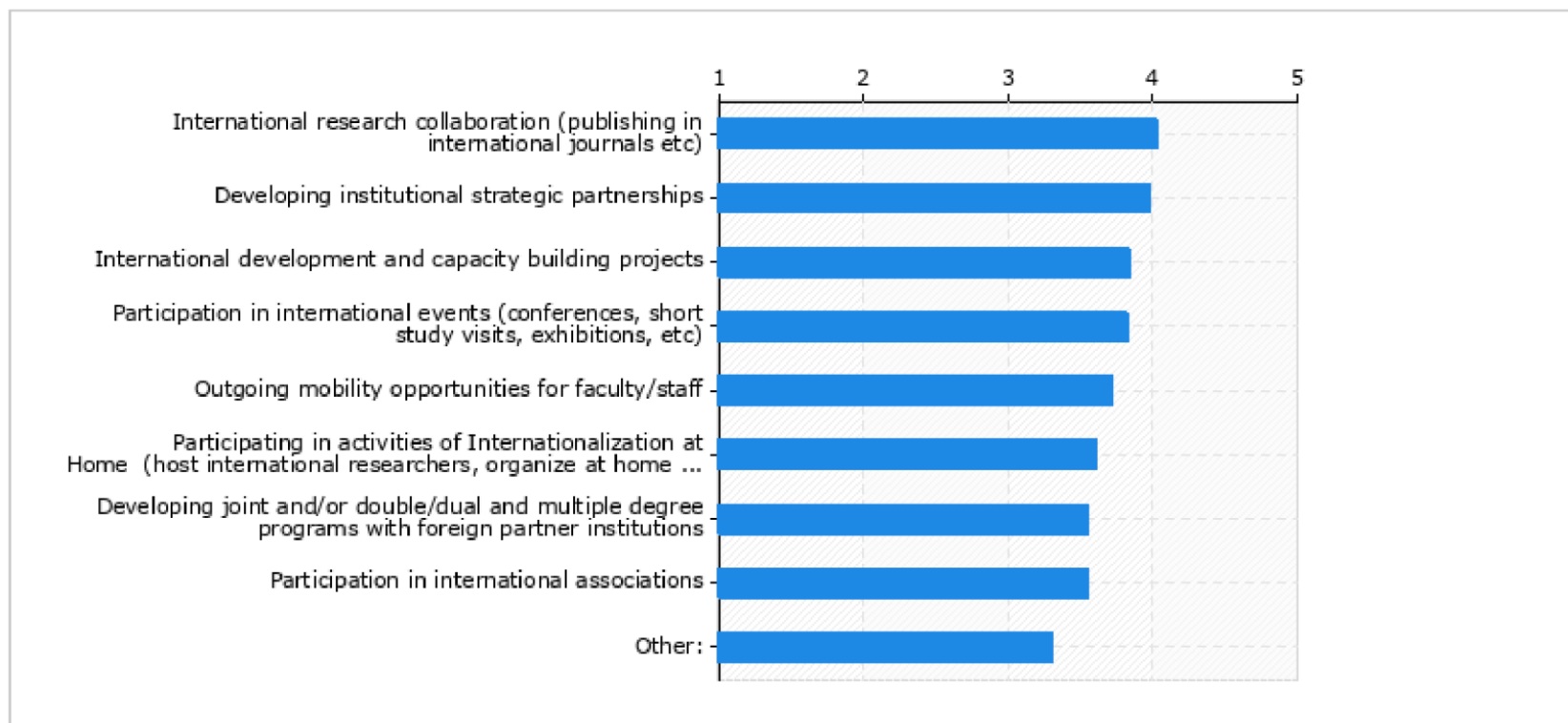
Table 3.

Please rank how important is for your institution the following Internationalization activities:								
	Not at all important	Little important	Do not know	Important	Very important	Valid	Average	Std. deviation
<b>International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.)</b>	5 (2%)	25 (9%)	31 (12%)	100 (38%)	104 (39%)	265 (100%)	4,0	1,0
<b>Developing institutional strategic partnerships</b>	3 (1%)	23 (9%)	42 (16%)	106 (40%)	90 (34%)	264 (100%)	4,0	1,0
International development and capacity building projects	8 (3%)	22 (8%)	47 (18%)	116 (44%)	72 (27%)	265 (100%)	3,8	1,0
Participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.)	6 (2%)	37 (14%)	29 (11%)	120 (45%)	74 (28%)	266 (100%)	3,8	1,1
Outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff	10 (4%)	41 (15%)	33 (12%)	112 (42%)	70 (26%)	266 (100%)	3,7	1,1
Developing joint and/or double/dual and multiple degree programs with foreign partner institutions	10 (4%)	33 (12%)	72 (27%)	99 (37%)	51 (19%)	265 (100%)	3,6	1,1
<b>Participation in international associations</b>	8 (3%)	47 (18%)	57 (21%)	97 (36%)	57 (21%)	266 (100%)	3,6	1,1
<b>Participating in activities of Internationalization at Home (host international researchers, organize at home international conferences and meetings etc.)</b>	6 (2%)	43 (16%)	53 (20%)	107 (41%)	54 (21%)	263 (100%)	3,6	1,1



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Figure 1.





### Internationalization of the respondents

In this section respondents are asked some questions related to their personal internationalization. Almost half of the respondents (48%) reported that they are little active, while 34% said that they are very active (Table 4). In Portugal, most of the responders consider themselves as little or not active at all (69%), in Poland almost half of the respondents (48%) believe that their activity is low, and in Germany approximately 60% of the respondents are "little active". On the other hand, in the two smaller countries of the consortium, 58% of the respondents in Cyprus and 55% of the respondents in Slovenia, consider themselves very active or extremely active.

Table 4.

To which degree you consider yourself Internationally Active?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
<b>Not at all active</b>	18	6%	7%	7%
<b>Little active</b>	128	43%	48%	55%
<b>I do not know</b>	11	4%	4%	59%
<b>Very active</b>	91	30%	34%	94%
<b>Extremely active</b>	17	6%	6%	100%
<b>Valid</b>	265	88%	100%	

For all countries except Germany "Participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.)" is the most popular internationalization activity that the respondents are involved. For Germany the two most popular activities are "International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.)" and "Developing institutional strategic partnerships".

For all countries except Germany again, "Developing joint and/or double/dual and multiple degree programs with foreign partner institutions" is the least favourite internationalization activity that the respondents are involved. For Germany the least favourite activity is "Outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff".

Table 5 shows in order the popularity of internationalization activities of all the respondents.

According to the table, the first three most popular activities are:

- Participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.)
- International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.)
- Outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff



On the other hand, the two least popular activities are:

- Participation in international associations
- Developing joint and/or double/dual and multiple degree programs with foreign partner institutions

When respondents were asked what are the biggest barriers that prevent academics for not being sufficiently Internationally active, respondents in all countries without exception ranked highest at least two of the following three barriers:

- Insufficient time (too many responsibilities at the institution)
- Insufficient financial resources and
- Administrative / bureaucratic difficulties

On the other hand, lack of interest and cultural barriers do not seem to be barriers that prevent academics for being sufficiently Internationally active. Table 6 shows the responds of all participants regardless of the country of origin.



Table 5.

Please rank the degree of your personal involvement in the following Internationalization activities:								
	Not at all involved	Little involved	Sufficiently involved	Very involved	Extremely involved	Valid	Average	Std. deviation
<b>Participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.)</b>	32 (12%)	65 (25%)	65 (25%)	73 (28%)	30 (11%)	265 (100%)	3,0	1,2
<b>International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.)</b>	45 (17%)	75 (28%)	57 (22%)	58 (22%)	30 (11%)	265 (100%)	2,8	1,3
<b>Outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff</b>	69 (26%)	77 (29%)	41 (15%)	58 (22%)	20 (8%)	265 (100%)	2,6	1,3
International development and capacity building projects	73 (28%)	77 (29%)	46 (18%)	46 (18%)	20 (8%)	262 (100%)	2,5	1,3
Developing institutional strategic partnerships	87 (33%)	68 (26%)	42 (16%)	38 (15%)	27 (10%)	262 (100%)	2,4	1,4
Participating in activities of Internationalization at Home (host international researchers, organize at home international conferences and meetings etc.)	85 (33%)	74 (28%)	38 (15%)	42 (16%)	21 (8%)	260 (100%)	2,4	1,3



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<b>Participation in international associations</b>	88 (33%)	75 (28%)	49 (18%)	35 (13%)	18 (7%)	265 (100%)	2,3	1,2
<b>Developing joint and/or double/dual and multiple degree programs with foreign partner institutions</b>	123 (46%)	66 (25%)	34 (13%)	30 (11%)	12 (5%)	265 (100%)	2,0	1,2
<b>Other:</b>	11 (35%)	6 (19%)	9 (29%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	31 (100%)	2,3	1,2



Table 6.

<b>What barriers prevent you personally for not being sufficiently Internationally active?</b>			
<b>Please select at most five (5) items</b>			
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid</b>	<b>Valid percent</b>
<b>Insufficient time (too many responsibilities at the institution)</b>	156	260	60%
<b>Insufficient financial resources</b>	129	260	50%
<b>Administrative / bureaucratic difficulties</b>	105	260	40%
Insufficient time due to dependents (kids or parents)	70	260	27%
It creates additional burden to my regular tasks	71	260	27%
Insufficient exposure to international opportunities	51	260	20%
Limited institutional empowerment and vision	37	260	14%
International engagement is not recognized for promotion or tenure at my institution	35	260	13%
Lack of knowledge of foreign languages	31	260	12%
Limited capacity / expertise	30	260	12%
Does not apply, I am Internationally active	27	260	10%
Lack of or poor resources by the office responsible for Internationalization	21	260	8%
Lack of self confidence	22	260	8%
<b>I am not interested</b>	6	260	2%
<b>Cultural barriers</b>	2	260	1%
<b>Total valid</b>		260	

It is widely accepted that internationalization has many positive aspects which includes brain gain, exchange of views and improvement of academic quality. For the respondents of all five partners the two most important benefits of internationalization are that it "Allows the exchange of knowledge and experience" and "Establishes new scientific contacts". In addition, for all countries, except Poland, the third most important benefit is that it "Increases one's international network", while for Poland is that it "Improves one's professional development". Table 7 summarizes the results of all respondents regardless of the country of origin.



Table 7.

Which of the following you consider as benefits when you are Internationally Active?							Valid	Units	Average	Std. deviation
	Not all	Little	Do not know	A lot	Very much	Valid				
<b>Allows the exchange of knowledge and experience</b>	5 (2%)	15 (6%)	11 (4%)	98 (38%)	129 (50%)	258 (100%)	258	300	4,3	0,9
<b>Increases my international network</b>	3 (1%)	20 (8%)	11 (4%)	101 (39%)	124 (48%)	259 (100%)	259	300	4,2	0,9
Establishes new scientific contacts	5 (2%)	21 (8%)	9 (3%)	94 (36%)	130 (50%)	259 (100%)	259	300	4,2	1,0
Improves my professional development	5 (2%)	24 (9%)	13 (5%)	108 (42%)	108 (42%)	258 (100%)	258	300	4,1	1,0
Improves the quality of my academic work	6 (2%)	33 (13%)	12 (5%)	106 (41%)	101 (39%)	258 (100%)	258	300	4,0	1,1
Increases my academic achievements	9 (3%)	31 (12%)	27 (10%)	102 (40%)	89 (34%)	258 (100%)	258	300	3,9	1,1
Other	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	9 (36%)	7 (28%)	6 (24%)	25 (100%)	25	300	3,5	1,2



Other benefits of internationalization that were mentioned are: that it broadens personal horizon, improves social networking, and brings visibility to someone's university.

The last question of this section refers to the needs of the academics to enhance their involvement in International activities. Top in the suggestions of the responders to enhance their involvement in international activities are the most expected (Table 8). In addition, in all five partner countries the results were exactly the same, that is, academics need:

- more financial resources
- less teaching times and
- more administrative support

Table 8.

What would you personally need to enhance your involvement in International activities			
	Frequency	Valid	Valid percent
<b>More financial resources</b>	157	257	61%
<b>Less teaching time</b>	137	257	53%
<b>More administrative support</b>	117	257	46%
More exposure to International opportunities	69	257	27%
Recognition of International engagement from my institution	56	257	22%
Support from the office responsible for Internationalization	49	257	19%
More empowerment and motivation	41	257	16%
More trainings	29	257	11%
More self-confidence	24	257	9%
Other	19	257	7%
Total valid		257	

Other needs of the academics that are not included in the list above are, to value internationalization at home and language or translator support.



### COVID-19 Question

The last couple of years inevitably the COVID-19 pandemic has affected in one-way or another everybody's life. Table 9 shows, in absolute numbers, how the pandemic COVID-19 has influenced the academics' international activities per country. In the two smaller countries of the consortium, Slovenia and Cyprus, the number of people who have been affected a lot or extremely are more than the people who have been affected a little or not at all. For the other three countries, Poland, Germany and Portugal, the results are opposite. More people have been affected little or at not all than a lot or extremely. This is reflected to the overall results as almost one third of the participants (31%) reported that COVID-19 had influenced their international activities a little, while 28% a lot.

For all countries without any exception the two most affected from Covid-19 activities of internationalization are:

- Outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff
- Participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.)

Finally, the least affected activities from Covid-19 are for all countries the following two:

- International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.) and
- Participation in international associations

Table 10 summarizes the results from all respondents.

Table 9.

Has the pandemic COVID-19 influenced your International activities?						
	Cyprus	Germany	Poland	Portugal	Slovenia	Total
<b>No, not at all</b>	1	13	10	21	8	53
<b>A little</b>	11	15	19	28	8	81
<b>A lot</b>	13	16	12	17	14	72
<b>Extremely</b>	6	6	11	15	11	49
<b>Other</b>	0	1	0	0	1	2
<b>Valid</b>	31	51	52	81	42	257



Table 10.

Please select how your personal International activities have been influenced from the COVID-19 pandemic:								
	Extremely negative	Negatively	Not affected	Positively	Extremely positive	Valid	Average	Std. deviation
<b>Outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff</b>	112 (44%)	70 (28%)	66 (26%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	254 (100%)	1.9	0.9
<b>Participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.)</b>	87 (34%)	78 (31%)	63 (25%)	19 (8%)	6 (2%)	253 (100%)	2,1	1.0
<b>Developing institutional strategic partnerships</b>	20 (8%)	70 (28%)	147 (59%)	13 (5%)	1 (0%)	251 (100%)	2,6	0.7
<b>International development and capacity building projects</b>	20 (8%)	79 (32%)	139 (56%)	9 (4%)	2 (1%)	249 (100%)	2,6	0.7
<b>Participating in activities of Internationalization at Home (host international researchers, organize at home international conferences and meetings etc.)</b>	32 (13%)	80 (32%)	111 (44%)	19 (8%)	9 (4%)	251 (100%)	2,6	0.9



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<b>Developing joint and/or double/dual and multiple degree programs with foreign partner institutions</b>	16 (6%)	63 (25%)	163 (65%)	6 (2%)	1 (0%)	249 (100%)	2,7	0.7
<b>International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.)</b>	16 (6%)	53 (21%)	171 (67%)	11 (4%)	4 (2%)	255 (100%)	2,7	0.7
<b>Participation in international associations</b>	10 (4%)	50 (20%)	181 (72%)	9 (4%)	2 (1%)	252 (100%)	2,8	0.6



## CONCLUSIONS

The importance of internationalization in the five countries and the universities they represent is proven by the fact that the vast majority of the respondents in all countries (87%) reported that the term internationalization is mentioned in the institutional mission/strategic plan of their universities. In the two smaller countries of the consortium, Slovenia and Cyprus, the academic staff who answered the questionnaire is more internationally active as 55% of the respondents in Slovenia and 58% of the respondents in Cyprus, consider themselves very active or extremely active. On the other hand, in the three bigger countries, academic staff is less active, as in Portugal most of the responders consider themselves as little or not active at all (69%), in Poland almost half of the respondents (48%) believe that their activity is low, and in Germany approximately 60% of the respondents are “little active”.

For all countries except Germany participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.) is the most popular internationalization activity that the respondents are involved. For Germany the two most popular activities are “International research collaboration (publishing in international journals etc.)” and “Developing institutional strategic partnerships”.

Barriers are common across all partner universities and countries. Insufficient time (too many responsibilities at the institution), insufficient financial resources and administrative/bureaucratic difficulties are the most common difficulties that prevent academics from being internationally active. According to the respondents overcoming these barriers will enhance their involvement in international activities. Also, for the respondents from all five countries, the two most important benefits of internationalization are that it a) allows the exchange of knowledge and experience, and b) it establishes new scientific contacts.

Covid-19 did not leave any university or country unaffected. In the two smaller countries of the consortium, Slovenia and Cyprus, the number of people who have been affected a lot or extremely are more than the people who have been affected a little or not at all. For the other three countries, Poland, Germany and Portugal, the results are opposite. More people have been affected little or not at all than a lot or extremely. This is reflected to the overall results as almost one third of the participants (31%) reported that COVID-19 had influenced their international activities a little, while 28% a lot. As a result, the outgoing mobility opportunities for faculty/staff and the participation in international events (conferences, short study visits, exhibitions, etc.) where the two most affected activities in all HEIs.

What this survey shows is that the challenges of Internationalization are common for the five HEI in Poland, Cyprus, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia and therefore, university policies, governments and EU should find the means and the ways to enhance internationalization in academia.



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