

Turkish Students, Isolation and the Erasmus Challenge

ESI Background Paper
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Ever abroad for education/training (age 15-35, in per cent)

Luxembourg	41
Cyprus	39
Norway	28
Austria	28
Sweden	24
Denmark	21
Iceland	21
Finland	21
Germany	21
Estonia	21
Spain	19
Ireland	19
Netherlands	18
Slovenia	18
Hungary	18
Slovakia	16
Belgium	16
Latvia	15
Czech Republic	14
Malta	14
France	14
Lithuania	14
Portugal	13
...	
Turkey	3

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Executive summary

In 2002, Turkey had 76 universities. In 2013 the number was 175 (104 public and 71 private). During this period the number of Turkey's university students increased from 1.2 million to more than 4.4 million.

However, few Turkish students spend any part of their studies abroad. A 2011 survey found that only 3 per cent of Turks aged 15-35 had been abroad for education or training. This is very low. In Germany and Sweden the numbers were 21 and 24 per cent, respectively.

In 2012 only 14,412 Turkish students embarked on the Erasmus student exchange scheme. Their share among all Turkish students was 0.3 per cent, the lowest ratio among all 33 participating countries.

This paper looks at some of the reasons behind these numbers. It identifies major issues that prevent Turkish students from going abroad in higher numbers: a foreign language deficit; a lack of attractive courses for foreign students in Turkey, which makes it harder for many universities to sign cooperation agreements with foreign partners; a lack of funding for Turkish Erasmus students; and complicated visa application procedures.

If the Turkish authorities would set themselves an ambitious goal – such as doubling the number of Turkish Erasmus students in the EU to 30,000 by 2016 – this analysis suggests what is needed to achieve such a goal:

- Make improving the knowledge of foreign languages, in particular English, among Turkish students a top priority at Turkish universities;
- Start an initiative by education authorities to help universities offer more courses in foreign languages at Turkish universities;
- Increase funding for student exchanges both to complement the Erasmus grant for Turkish students and to increase the number of students that can receive a grant;
- Include debates on faster and cheaper Schengen visa application procedures for Turkish students in current EU-Turkey debates on visa liberalisation.

“A life-changing experience”

The EU’s student exchange scheme, Erasmus, is one of the most popular EU programmes. Launched in 1987, it has so far allowed more than three million students¹ from 34 European countries² to study at a partner university or participate in a traineeship at a company in another European country. These studies and traineeships, between three and twelve months in duration,³ count towards the students’ degree at their home university.

The EU provides a grant that covers part of the costs. Currently it ranges between €150 and €500 per month for studies and between €250 and €700 for internships.⁴ In late 2012, when funding for Erasmus looked uncertain, more than 100 European artists, academics and journalists – including Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar – wrote an open letter to EU governments, stating:

“A whole generation has learned what it means to live and work alongside people from another culture, and to develop the skills and versatility which are vital for the modern labour market. We hope that the 2012/2013 budgets for Erasmus will be sufficient ... otherwise thousands could miss out on a potentially life-changing experience.”⁵

For Erasmus students, the time abroad is an exciting and enriching time. They meet new people, experience new education systems and improve their foreign language skills. Films have been made about the Erasmus generation.⁶ Websites of former Erasmus students are full of praise for the Erasmus experience.⁷

Turkey and Erasmus

Since 2004, the Erasmus experience has also been open to Turkish students. “My world has expanded,” said Esmâ Çetin, 23, a student of Business Management at Bozok University in Yozgat, a small town in Central Anatolia. Esmâ spent five months at the University of Lublin in Poland in spring 2013.⁸ There she made friends from Poland, Portugal and Spain and far-away places like South Korea and Cambodia. Nobody said anything bad about her headscarf – “People

¹ European Commission press release, [Number of Erasmus students tops 3 million](#), Brussels, 8 July 2013.

² 28 EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and Macedonia. Switzerland’s participation has been suspended following a Swiss referendum in February 2014 that limits access to Switzerland for EU citizens. See European Commission, [Information Note on the Participation of Switzerland in Erasmus+](#), 9 February 2014.

³ From 2014 on, it is also possible to do internships of 2 months.

⁴ European Commission, [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#), valid as of 1 January 2014, pp. 42-44.

⁵ The letter can be found on the Facebook page “[Save the Erasmus Programme](#).”

⁶ In 2002, a French-Spanish movie told the story of a French Erasmus student in Barcelona. It was called “L’Auberge Espagnole” in French and “The Spanish Apartment,” “Pot Luck” or “Euro Pudding” in English. It earned more than €22 million and won several awards. More information at [Box Office Mojo](#) and [Rotten Tomatoes](#).

⁷ See reports from Erasmus students at Erasmusu, [Erasmus experiences](#); at Erasmus Student Network, [Erasmus Programme](#); and at the British Council, [Student case studies](#).

⁸ Lublin is a town in eastern Poland. ESI interview January 2014.

just smiled at me,” she said. “Now I can go to any country in the world alone,” she added, “I am no longer afraid.” Esmâ plans to do her Master degree in the UK, to go back to Poland to see her friends and to visit France. Uğur Korkmaz, 22, who studies electrical engineering at Bozok University, was an Erasmus student in Portugal during the spring semester 2012/13. He used his free time to also visit other EU countries.⁹ “It was fascinating to see all these different cultures,” he said. “From Turkey I cannot travel as easily – my freedom is limited here.” He was referring to the Schengen visa requirement for Turkish citizens, which makes travelling difficult. Both Uğur and Esmâ hope that Turkey will eventually join the EU.

Merve Ekiz, 21, a student of Psychology at Marmara University in Istanbul, spent three months at the end of 2013 in Denmark.¹⁰ Merve experienced Danes as “polite and laid-back.” Her time helped her overcome prejudices that she had, believing that Danes were anti-Muslim, a widespread perception in Turkey following the Danish Mohammed cartoon affair in 2005.¹¹

Turkey joined the Erasmus exchange programme in 2004. In the academic year 2012/13 the number of Turkish Erasmus students reached 14,412.¹²

Since 2001 Turkey has opened itself to the world, in particular the EU, by now Turkey’s biggest trading partner and largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In 2012, more than 70 per cent of FDI in Turkey came from the EU.¹³

Turkey has also experienced an educational revolution. The number of Turkey’s university students has risen from 1.2 million in 2002 to 4.4 million in 2012.¹⁴ In 2002, Turkey had 76 universities. In 2013 the number was 175 (104 public and 71 private).¹⁵

However, despite these trends young people in Turkey, including students, remain isolated. A 2011 survey showed that only 3 per cent of Turks (age 15-35) had been abroad for education or training. This is by far the lowest number among the 31 countries surveyed. The average was 14 per cent.

⁹ Uğur studied at the Universidade de Beira Interior in the town of Corilhã in central Portugal, 300km northeast of Lisbon. ESI interview with Uğur Korkmaz, Yozgat, 8 January 2014.

¹⁰ Merve studied at the Social Education School Fröbel at the University College UCC in Frederiksberg, Copenhagen. ESI phone interview with Merve Ekiz, 4 February 2014.

¹¹ In September 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons of the prophet Mohammed. This led to a growing wave of protests in Islamic countries, which culminated in January and February 2006 in violence and a boycott of Denmark.

¹² Overall, a fifth of all Erasmus students do an internship. In Turkey it is only one-seventh (2,056 students of 14,412 in 2012/13). European Commission, [Erasmus. Facts, Figures and Trends](#), 10 July 2013.

¹³ European Commission, [Turkey 2013 Progress Report](#), Brussels, 16 October 2013, p. 24.

¹⁴ [Eurostat Interactive Database](#), Tertiary students (ISCED 5-6) by field of education and sex, dataset code [educ_enr15], accessed 30 June 2014.

¹⁵ [Website of QS Top Universities](#) (QS is a commercial global career and education network).

Table: Share of 15-35 year olds who ever studied/trained abroad¹⁶

Country	Percent
1. Luxembourg	41
2. Cyprus	39
3. Norway	28
4. Austria	28
5. Sweden	24
6. Denmark	21
7. Iceland	21
8. Finland	21
9. Germany	21
10. Estonia	21
11. Spain	19
12. Ireland	19
13. Netherlands	18
14. Slovenia	18
15. Hungary	18
16. Slovakia	16
17. Belgium	16
18. Latvia	15
19. Czech Republic	14
20. Malta	14
21. France	14
22. Lithuania	14
AVERAGE	14
23. Portugal	13
24. Greece	13
25. Poland	13
26. Italy	12
27. Croatia	12
28. Romania	10
29. United Kingdom	10
30. Bulgaria	9
31. Turkey	3

There were 14,412 Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13. However, their share among all Turkish students was only 0.3 per cent, the lowest ratio among all participating countries.

¹⁶ European Commission, Flash Eurobarometer. [Youth on the move. Analytical report](#), May 2011, p. 24. The sample was 30,309 people including 1,000 Turks and the fieldwork was done in January 2011.

Table: Share of Erasmus students among all students

Country	Share of Erasmus students	Erasmus students in 2012/13 ¹⁷	Students in 2012 ¹⁸
1. Luxembourg	6.66 %	405	6,085
2. Liechtenstein	2.71 %	26	960
3. Latvia	2.21 %	2,149	97,041
4. Lithuania	2.01 %	3,529	175,066
5. Spain	1.99 %	39,249	1,965,829
6. Portugal	1.80 %	7,041	390,273
7. Finland	1.78 %	5,496	308,924
8. Slovenia	1.75 %	1,821	104,003
9. Estonia	1.71 %	1,153	67,607
10. Malta	1.70 %	208	12,203
11. Czech Republic	1.66 %	7,299	440,230
12. Belgium	1.62 %	7,741	477,712
13. France	1.54 %	35,311	2,296,306
14. Austria	1.52 %	5,714	376,498
15. Ireland	1.43 %	2,762	192,647
16. Slovakia	1.36 %	3,008	221,227
17. Italy	1.34 %	25,805	1,925,930
18. Iceland	1.34 %	255	19,099
19. Denmark	1.33 %	3,646	275,009
20. Netherlands	1.27 %	10,061	793,678
21. Germany	1.19 %	34,891	2,939,463
22. Hungary	1.15 %	4,387	380,757
23. Cyprus	1.10 %	350	31,772
24. Switzerland	1.06 %	2,860	269,573
25. Sweden	0.82 %	3,728	453,328
26. Poland	0.81 %	16,221	2,007,212
27. Norway	0.72 %	1,707	238,224
28. Romania	0.71 %	5,011	705,333
29. Croatia	0.71 %	1,124	157,289
30. Bulgaria	0.68 %	1,952	284,995
31. Greece	0.64 %	4,249	663,698
32. United Kingdom	0.58 %	14,572	2,495,780
33. Turkey	0.33 %	14,412	4,353,542

¹⁷ European Commission, Erasmus statistics from 2012/13, [Number of outbound students by country \(studies and placements\)](#), 10 July 2014.

¹⁸ [Eurostat Interactive Database](#), accessed 14 July 2014. These include students of short-cycle, Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes, all of whom are eligible for Erasmus.

The number of Erasmus students from EU countries going to Turkey is low: 6,145 went in 2012/13, less than to Portugal, Finland and the Czech Republic.

Table: Destinations of Erasmus students in 2012/2013¹⁹

Country	Erasmus students hosted
1. Spain	40,202
2. Germany	30,368
3. France	29,293
4. United Kingdom	27,182
5. Italy	19,964
6. Sweden	10,791
7. Poland	10,772
8. Netherlands	10,298
9. Portugal	9,894
10. Belgium	9,124
11. Finland	7,255
12. Czech Republic	6,437
13. Denmark	6,400
14. Ireland	6,277
15. Austria	6,187
16. Turkey	6,145
17. Norway	4,610
18. Hungary	4,318
19. Switzerland	4,295
20. Greece	2,507
21. Lithuania	2,326
22. Romania	2,149
23. Slovenia	1,920
24. Malta	1,655
25. Slovakia	1,553
26. Estonia	1,274
27. Latvia	1,134
28. Bulgaria	1,056
29. Cyprus	827
30. Croatia	701
31. Island	620
32. Luxembourg	546
33. Liechtenstein	62

¹⁹ European Commission, Erasmus statistics from 2012/13, [Erasmus student mobility: home and destination countries](#), 10 July 2014. This includes studies and internships.

What would it take to change this? If the Turkish government and Turkish universities – and their EU partners – would aim to double this number to 30,000 Turkish Erasmus students in 2016/17, what would need to happen?

The foreign language deficit

The lack of foreign language skills in Turkey limits both the number of Turkish Erasmus students and the number of EU students coming to Turkey. For Ilyas Ülgür, the Erasmus manager at the national agency that coordinates the implementation of the EU's education and training programme in Turkey, the lack of knowledge of foreign languages is the main obstacle. He speaks of “a national weakness.”²⁰ At a recent Erasmus conference in Turkey that dealt with language competence he asked: “There have been English classes for 50 to 60 years in Turkey. What is the problem with us?”²¹

Turkey ranked *last* when the European Commission asked at the end of 2005 people in 29 EU members and candidate countries: “Which languages do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, excluding your mother tongue?” 67 per cent of the Turkish respondents said they did not know any language other than Turkish well enough to converse in it.²²

In October/November 2011, the Turkish research institute SETA and the Turkish Ministry for Youth and Sports conducted a large survey across Turkey of 10,174 *young* citizens, aged 15 to 29.²³ The result was sobering: 59 per cent of the young people said they “did not know any foreign language.” The same survey found that only 10.5 per cent of the interviewees had ever been abroad.

English is the dominant language of the study courses attended by all Erasmus students, accounting for 50 per cent of the languages used at host universities.²⁴ The percentage of young Turks with no foreign language skills was 35 per cent among those with a university education. This is a high percentage. SETA also warned that respondents indicated a better level of knowledge than they really had. Many Turks who have studied a language for years may know some grammar and vocabulary, but are lost if they have to hold a simple conversation or comprehend somebody speaking in the foreign language.

²⁰ ESI interview with Ilyas Ülgür, Ankara, 22 October 2013. Turkey's national agency is called [Centre for European Union Education and Youth Programmes](#).

²¹ Conference organised by the National Agency on Erasmus work placements and language competencies, Anadolu University, Eskişehir, 1 November 2013.

²² European Commission, [Special Eurobarometer: Europeans and their languages](#), February 2006, p. 9. The sample was 28,694 citizens across Europe including 1,005 Turkish citizens.

²³ Bekir S. Gür et al., “Türkiye'nin gençlik profile” (Profile of Turkey's Youth), SETA, March 2012. The report can be purchased on [SETA's website](#).

²⁴ In 2011/2012, English was used in 50 percent of the courses attended by Erasmus students. Spanish: 13 percent; French: 12 percent, German: 10 percent; Italian: 7 percent; Turkish: 0.4 percent. European Commission, [A Statistical Overview of the Erasmus Programme in 2011-12](#), Nov. 2013, p. 24.

*Knowledge of foreign languages in Europe*²⁵

Question asked: “Which languages do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, excluding your mother tongue?”

Country	None	At least 1 language	At least 2 languages	At least 3 languages
Luxembourg	1 %	99 %	92 %	69 %
Slovakia	3 %	97 %	48 %	22 %
Latvia	5 %	95 %	51 %	14 %
Lithuania	8 %	92 %	51 %	16 %
Malta	8 %	92 %	68 %	23 %
Netherlands	9 %	91 %	75 %	34 %
Slovenia	9 %	91 %	71 %	40 %
Sweden	10 %	90 %	48 %	17 %
Estonia	11 %	89 %	58 %	24 %
Denmark	12 %	88 %	66 %	30 %
Cyprus	22 %	78 %	22 %	6 %
Belgium	26 %	74 %	67 %	53 %
Croatia	29 %	71 %	36 %	11 %
Finland	31 %	69 %	47 %	23 %
Germany	33 %	67 %	27 %	8 %
Austria	38 %	62 %	32 %	21 %
Czech Republic	39 %	61 %	29 %	10 %
Bulgaria	41 %	59 %	31 %	8 %
Greece	43 %	57 %	19 %	4 %
Poland	43 %	57 %	32 %	4 %
France	49 %	51 %	21 %	4 %
Romania	53 %	47 %	27 %	6 %
Spain	56 %	44 %	17 %	6 %
Hungary	58 %	42 %	27 %	20 %
Portugal	58 %	42 %	23 %	6 %
Italy	59 %	41 %	16 %	7 %
United Kingdom	62 %	38 %	18 %	6 %
Ireland	66 %	34 %	13 %	2 %
Turkey	67 %	33 %	5 %	1 %

The problems have deep roots. Foreign language teachers in Turkey are often badly trained and do not speak the language well themselves. Teaching methods and materials are inadequate. Foreign languages are not among the subjects examined in the national university admission test.

²⁵ European Commission, [Special Eurobarometer: Europeans and their languages](#), February 2006, p. 9. The sample was 28,694 citizens across Europe including 1,005 Turkish citizens.

This test is very competitive: in 2013, 1,805,125 people took it. Only the best 672,417 managed to enrol in university.²⁶ Many students start to study a year before the test and even take private classes. At the same time many school students stop paying attention to foreign languages from grade 10 on, focusing on the subjects that will be examined.

Recently the Ministry of National Education has taken some measures. These include in-service training of English and German language teachers (2009-2011), the introduction of new textbooks and digital teaching materials and lowering the age when foreign language teaching starts in school from the fourth to the second grade (since 2012). In 2010, the ministry suggested hiring, over four years, 40,000 native English-speaking teachers to support Turkish English teachers. After protests by Turkish teacher unions, the ministry dropped the idea. For YÖK, the Higher Education Council of Turkey that recognises, regulates and supervises universities in Turkey and allocates funding to them, the internationalisation of Turkish universities is a priority.²⁷ However, not much has happened as regards the language issue.

For universities like Bozok in Central Anatolia, founded in 2006, the foreign language deficit is a big problem for participation in Erasmus. In 2012 some 8,500 students were enrolled at the university. 90 students applied for an Erasmus study exchange. Of those, just 10 passed the English test organised by the university. The test was not difficult, requiring lower intermediate skills (B1²⁸). In the end, eight of the ten students went on the Erasmus exchange – and in two of those cases, Bozok University received complaints from the host university about the students' insufficient English skills.²⁹

The European Commission, which runs the Erasmus student exchange scheme, does not prescribe the level of language skills that Erasmus students should have. Sometimes this is regulated in the “Inter-Institutional Agreements” that universities have to conclude before they exchange students. In these agreements, two universities fix the number of students, set timelines and commit to waiving tuition fees and to recognising credits for courses taken by students. If they do not specify the language requirements too, then the issue is up to the national agencies implementing EU education programmes in the participating countries, as well as the sending universities.

Turkey's National Agency stipulates that, when universities select Erasmus students, language competence and student grades should each count half of the overall score, but it does not set any

²⁶ In addition, there were 71,746 people who had a special access right: they finished vocational schools and enrolled for studies in their professional field, which exempts them from the test. [Website of ÖSYM](#) (Ölçme, Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi; Student Selection and Placement Centre).

²⁷ See interview with Professor Gökhan Çetinsaya, the YÖK Chairman, in Daily Sabah, [Higher Education System Turkey's New Soft Power](#), 24 May 2014.

²⁸ Under the “[Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment](#)”, there are six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. A1 is beginner, B1 intermediate lower level and C2 proficiency.

²⁹ ESI phone interview with the head of the International Relations Office of Bozok University, Mustafa Boyukata, 31 July 2013.

minimum language level requirement.³⁰ Unless the receiving university demands a higher level, Turkish universities usually test for B1 level.

Under the Turkish Law on Higher Education, all universities have to offer a one-year foreign language course to students, alongside a number of other mandatory courses.³¹ The language usually taught is English. However, YÖK requires that classes are only two hours per week. At Bozok University, the English language classes are overcrowded with 80 to 100 students per class. “If everyone spoke even just for one minute, the class would be over,” said one of the teachers.³²

Esma Çetin, who went to Poland in spring 2013, managed to improve her English despite these problems.³³ She took the English course seriously and also studied English during her second year at the Department of Management, one of the few departments that offers English classes to its students. She also learnt English outside university by surfing the Internet and listening to English songs. Uğur Korkmaz, who went to Portugal, was also an exception. He knew English before he enrolled at Bozok, learning it while helping out at his parent’s hostel in Istanbul.³⁴

The foreign language problem is not limited to provincial universities, however. Marmara University was founded in 1883. With 70,000 students it is one of the largest universities in Istanbul. Marmara University sends a relatively high number of students on Erasmus. In the academic year 2011/12, when 128 Turkish universities sent students to Europe on Erasmus, it ranked sixth with 377 outgoing students.³⁵ However, as many as half of the students applying for an Erasmus study place or internship do not qualify. The main problem is again language, according to Emel Özel from the International Office.³⁶ What explains the university’s success at Erasmus is that several faculties and departments³⁷ teach in English, French, German or Arabic.

At all Turkish universities, students enrolling in a degree programme in which at least 30 per cent of the courses are taught in a foreign language are required to take a language test before they start their studies. If they fail this, they have to complete one preparatory year of intensive language studies. They also continue to take language classes during their degree programmes. Aytül Durmaz, Erasmus coordinator at the Department of French Translation and Interpreting of

³⁰ The minimum requirements, as established by the National Agency, are a grade points average (GPA) of 2.2 out of 4 for undergraduates and 2.5/4 for graduate students. In addition, they must speak the language used at the host university. Universities can be stricter and add additional requirements.

³¹ Other compulsory subjects are Atatürk’s Principles and the History of the Turkish Reforms, and Turkish and Turkish language. [Law on Higher Education](#), law number 2547, 1981, Article 5, paragraph (i).

³² ESI interview with English language teacher Ahmet Özcan, Bozok University, Yozgat, 7 January 2014. We also discussed the problems with other English language teachers at Bozok University

³³ ESI interview with Esma Çetin, Yozgat, 7 January 2014.

³⁴ ESI interview with Uğur Korkmaz, Yozgat, 8 January 2014.

³⁵ Website of the Turkish national agency implementing the EU’s education and training programme in Turkey, [2011/12 Erasmus Mobility Figures](#).

³⁶ ESI phone interview with Emel Özel, 15 August 2013.

³⁷ These include the Faculties of Economics, Business, Political Science, Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry and Theology and the Department of French Translation and Interpreting under the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Marmara University, said the students enrolled in the foreign language programmes have no problems passing the Erasmus language test. She added that departments that teach exclusively in Turkish do not even bother concluding Inter-Institutional Agreements with universities in the EU since they do not think that their students would pass the language barrier.³⁸ Thus even Marmara University could send more students on Erasmus if it was not for the language issue. In 2012, it had 612 inter-institutional Erasmus agreements with universities in Europe, providing for some 1,200 places, but it sent only 386 students.³⁹

Some elite universities in Turkey are less affected by the foreign language problem. Due to the university admission system, they get the best students who often know a foreign language. They also offer many degree programmes in foreign languages (including the mandatory preparatory year for students who do not yet master the language in question when they enrol).⁴⁰

The foreign language deficit also has an impact on incoming Erasmus students. They usually enrol in programmes taught in a foreign language, but professors and lecturers frequently switch back to Turkish when they realise that most Turkish students are not able to follow. Sometimes foreign students are told that they do not need to attend the classes, but have to submit papers instead. The Erasmus Student Network, which is represented at some 25 Turkish universities, helps students by advising them which courses to avoid.⁴¹

Improving the knowledge of foreign languages in Turkey will take determined and coordinated efforts by the government. Already now, however, universities can take action to improve their students' foreign language skills:

- First, the universities should improve the quality of the state-required one-year foreign language course. They should make sure that there are only a limited number of students in each class, increase the number of hours per week and hire qualified native speakers to teach these classes.
- Second, *all* universities should offer their students language courses in English and other foreign languages throughout all degree programmes.

³⁸ ESI interview with Aytül Durmaz, Istanbul, 3 February 2014.

³⁹ ESI interviews with Hatice Gökçen Öcal, Fevzi Cengiz and Emel Özel from the International Office of Marmara University, Istanbul, 26 December 2013.

⁴⁰ Five Turkish universities featured among the world's best 400 universities in the 2012/13 [Times Higher Education World University Rankings](#): the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, also called Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (305 outgoing Erasmus students in 2011/12 – all figures of Erasmus students are for 2011/12); Bilkent University in Ankara (265); Koç University in Istanbul (142); Boğaziçi University in Istanbul (302); Istanbul Technical University (340). The same five and another four could be found in the [QS World University Ranking 2012-2013](#) of 872 universities: Sabancı University in Istanbul (136); Istanbul University (285); Hacettepe University in Ankara (386); and Çukurova University in Adana (301). The numbers of Erasmus students by university can be found on [a webpage of Turkey's National Agency](#).

⁴¹ ESI interview with Begüm Naz Kayacan, the Deputy National Representative of the Turkey section of the Erasmus Student Network, Istanbul, 30 July 2013.

Something to offer: foreign language degree programmes at Turkish universities

A student wishing to study abroad under the Erasmus programme must first check whether his/her university has an Inter-Institutional Agreement with a partner university that covers the same or a very similar programme. While the numbers of exchange students do not have to be equal, and sometimes are not, universities often prefer to establish a balance.⁴² Inter-institutional agreements can be made within a few weeks and are usually valid for one to two years. They can be renewed. They can be initiated by Erasmus coordinators, the International Relations Office at each university or even by students themselves if they discover a university programme that they would like to follow. A formal requirement for an Inter-Institutional Agreement is that both universities have been awarded an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission.⁴³ In July 2014, across Europe 4,272 universities had received this charter, including 162 universities in Turkey. Another 14 Turkish universities had applied.⁴⁴

Given that Turkey joined the Erasmus student exchange scheme only in 2004, Turkish universities have at times had problems to establish Inter-Institutional Agreements with universities that already have many such agreements. Some Turkish universities, in particular those outside Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, face the additional problem that they are not considered attractive, in particular if they do not offer degree programmes and courses in English or another foreign language. These universities should consider introducing entire degree programmes taught in a foreign language. This measure would have benefits for Turkish students, but would also bring more Erasmus and other international students to Turkey.⁴⁵

Funding Turkish students abroad

According to a 2011 survey, “family commitments” was the main reason why Turkish 15-35 year olds have not gone abroad for education or training purposes: 24 per cent of respondents chose this answer out of 11 options. However, the second reason most frequently mentioned was “lack of funding/too expensive” (10 per cent).⁴⁶

⁴² A template of such an Inter-Institutional Agreement can be found on European Commission’s website “[Erasmus+ Quality Framework](#)”.

⁴³ In the application for a Charter, universities have to describe themselves and their activities, and they must commit to the respecting all the conditions for participating in the activities under EU education programmes. For student exchanges, the requirements include a regularly updated course catalogue, a waiver of tuition fees, the recognition of courses taken by outgoing and incoming Erasmus students, assistance and guidance for the students, to name a few (see [template Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020](#)). Universities can apply for the charter annually, and it remains valid for the duration of the programme, which currently runs from 2014 to 2020.

⁴⁴ European Commission [Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2014-2020 - Selection 2014](#), updated list, and information received from Ilyas Ülğür, Coordinator of the Higher Education Unit at the Turkish National Agency, 21 July 2014

⁴⁵ At the moment, it is not clear how many Turkish universities offer degree programmes in foreign languages. YÖK has recently launched a new website – [Study in Turkey](#) – that allows users to search for specific disciplines taught in English, but it does not mention totals.

⁴⁶ European Commission, Flash Eurobarometer. [Youth on the move, analytical report](#). May 2011, p. 112. The sample was 30,309 people including 1,000 young Turks.

One of the aspects that make the Erasmus student exchange scheme attractive is the grant provided by the EU. However, the grant does not cover all costs. The European Commission notes that it is only meant “as a contribution to costs for travel and subsistence during the period of study or traineeship abroad”.⁴⁷

The average grant for studies and internships was just €232 in the academic year 2011/12, ranging between an average €123 per month for Spanish students and €614 per month for Cypriot students.⁴⁸ The reason for the difference is that until 2013 the Commission only set *maximum* amounts that students could receive per country and month. These were rather generous.⁴⁹ The National Agencies had to respect these ceilings, but were otherwise free to decide how to distribute the available funding to their Erasmus students. Some National Agencies preferred to send fewer Erasmus students with higher grants, while others preferred to have more Erasmus students, but each student supported with less money. Under the rules, this decision had to take into account whether the students could receive co-funding.

In Spain, which paid the lowest Erasmus grants in 2011/12, there was a lot of co-funding available; the government itself gave each Erasmus student an additional €100 to €180 per month, depending on the student’s economic background. Regional governments and the private sector also co-funded.⁵⁰ In Turkey there is currently no additional funding available to Erasmus students.

In the academic year 2011/12, the average Erasmus grant that a Turkish student received was €428 per month.⁵¹ The amount varied depending on the country of destination. Turkish students going to the UK received €602 per month, those going to Bulgaria only €281.⁵² For Runa-Vigdis Gudmarsdottir, who deals with Erasmus in Turkey for the European Commission, co-funding would be the key to increasing Turkish participation in Erasmus. This would be “the single most effective measure,” she said.⁵³

⁴⁷ European Commission, [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#), valid as of 1 January 2014, p. 42.

⁴⁸ European Commission, [A Statistical Overview of the Erasmus Programme in 2011-12](#), Nov. 2013, p. 18.

⁴⁹ The lowest ceiling, for Bulgaria, was €401 per month, and the highest – for Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland – was €939. [Lifelong Learning Programme Guide 2013](#), Part I, p. 32.

⁵⁰ A student from Barcelona could receive 100-180 Euro from the Ministry of Education, €200 from the regional government, and possibly a scholarship from a bank or foundation. The amounts varied according to the economic situation of the student. Due to the economic crisis, some regions have reduced or cut the allocation. Information provided by the Spanish National Agency per email on 17 July 2013 and retrieved from El Pais, [Educación quita la ayuda a miles de ‘erasmus’ a mitad de curso](#), 4 November 2013.

⁵¹ The student received on average €426 per month for studies and €449 per month for internships. The grants for internships are always a bit higher. European Commission, [Erasmus Country Statistics 2000-2012](#), Turkey.

⁵² Turkish EU Ministry/Centre for EU Education and Youth Programmes, [Lifelong Learning Programme, 2012 Calls for Proposals](#) (translated from Turkish), 9 Sept. 2011, pp. 23-24. The grant levels remained the same in 2013. Turkish EU Ministry/Centre for EU Education and Youth Programmes, [Lifelong Learning Programme, 2013 Calls for Proposals](#) (translated from Turkish), 1 Oct. 2012, p. 26.

⁵³ ESI interview with Runa-Vigdis Gudmarsdottir, Programme Manager covering Turkey at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Brussels, 6 June 2014.

Esma Çetin from Bozok University received €345 per month for her studies in Lublin in Poland in 2013.⁵⁴ She found a cheap room in a students' dormitory, which she shared with an Erasmus student from Ankara. Her family sent her additional money; her father and several uncles chipped in. Uğur Korkmaz used his own savings to complement the Erasmus grant of €381 per month for Portugal.⁵⁵ He said he needed around 550 Euro. For several years, he has worked every summer for a company producing electrical goods in Istanbul, which allowed him to save money. Merve Ekiz from Marmara University had to be particularly careful in Denmark, where living costs are high.⁵⁶ She tried in vain to get a place in a dorm and ended up sharing a room with a Turkish friend in an apartment they shared with a French girl. Her grant was €601 per month and her parents supplemented it.

From 2014 on, Turkish students will receive lower grants. The reason is that the Commission has now set maximum *and minimum* levels for the Erasmus grants.⁵⁷ Under the new system Turkish students will receive less money than in the previous years in 19 countries. The cuts reach €101 and €102 in the case of Denmark and the UK, respectively. Only in 8 countries they will receive more than before, with modest increases of between 11 and 24 Euro.⁵⁸

*Erasmus grants depending on countries*⁵⁹

Group	Countries	EU-set range	Grant to Turkish students
Group 1: Countries with <i>higher</i> living costs	Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Sweden, (Switzerland), United Kingdom	€250-500	€500
Group 2: Countries with <i>medium</i> living costs	Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey	€200-450	€400
Group 3: Countries with <i>lower</i> living costs	Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia	€150-400	€300

⁵⁴ ESI interview with Esma Çetin, Yozgat, 7 January 2014.

⁵⁵ ESI interview with Uğur Korkmaz, Yozgat, 8 January 2014.

⁵⁶ ESI interview by phone with Merve Ekiz, 4 February 2014.

⁵⁷ European Commission Memo, [Erasmus+ Frequently Asked Questions](#), Brussels, 19 November 2013.

⁵⁸ It is 27 countries because Turkish students could previously not go to non-EU member states (Croatia, which acceded to the EU only in July 2013; Liechtenstein; Macedonia; Norway and Switzerland.) From 2015 on, they will be able to go to any of the participating countries.

⁵⁹ European Commission, [Erasmus+ Programme Guide](#), valid as of 1 January 2014, p. 43, and Turkish National Agency, [KA1- Bireylerin Öğrenme Hareketliliği, Yükseköğretim Öğrenci ve Personelinin Öğrenme Hareketliliği, Sik Sorulan Sorular](#) (Erasmus+, Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility of Individuals, Mobility for Higher Education Students and Staff).

In any case, the grant will not be enough to cover students' living and travelling costs abroad.

Co-funding of €150 to €200 per month and student would make a substantial difference and attract more students to Erasmus. Like in Spain, this money could come from the Turkish government, local governments or the private sector. In particular business associations, chambers of commerce and foundations could provide additional funding since they stand to gain from graduates with international experience and improved foreign language skills.

There is another important aspect to co-funding. At this moment, the student exchange scheme is facing a funding crisis in Turkey, which has its origin in the transition to a new EU education programme.

The EU's budget for activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sports, which now run under a programme called Erasmus+, amounts to €14.8 billion for 2014-2020. This is an increase of 40 per cent over the previous budget period.⁶⁰ Turkey, as a candidate country, needs to pay for its participation in Erasmus+. Citing budget constraints, Turkey announced it could only contribute about half of the amount proposed by Brussels (€800 million instead of €1.6 billion for the seven-year period),⁶¹ though part of this amount will be reimbursed through EU funds. The percentage covered by EU funds is still under negotiation.

The limited contribution means that in 2014 only €34.5 million will be available for the student exchange scheme – down from €42 million in 2013. The Turkish National Agency, which implements Erasmus+ in Turkey, fears that it will be able to provide only 12,000 students with grants, down from 14,412 in the academic year 2012/13.

The Turkish government or Turkish donors could offer to pay grants to all students that have passed the Erasmus selection for the academic year 2014/15, but cannot receive a grant from the National Agency. They should also stand ready to do this in the coming years if the number of students that pass the selection exceeds the number of students that can receive a grant from the National Agency. In addition, co-funding schemes should supplement this grant.

Irrespective of this, it might also make sense for the Turkish government to increase its contribution to Erasmus+. The beneficiaries of Erasmus+ are not only university students, but also academic and other educational staff, school pupils, apprentices, volunteers, youth workers and civil society activists, who can travel to gain new knowledge, establish networks and receive training. Erasmus+ also supports cooperation between universities, and policy reform in the field of education.

⁶⁰ European Commission Memo, [Erasmus+ Frequently Asked Questions](#), Brussels, 19 November 2013.

⁶¹ [Agreement between the EU and Turkey on Turkey's participation in Erasmus+](#), signed 19 May 2014, entry into force 18 June 2014, published in Turkey's Official Gazette 17 June 2014. The agreement can be always amended.

The student visa problem

Another obstacle on the way to more Turkish Erasmus students in Europe is the visa requirement. Turkish citizens need a short-stay visa just to enter *any* of the countries participating in Erasmus except Macedonia. If they stay longer than three months, like Erasmus students usually do, they need a longer-term visa or residence permit.

Erasmus students from all other participating countries can freely travel between these countries⁶² and usually get a residence permit easily and for little money. Turkey has also recently introduced new provisions that make the visa/residence issue for Erasmus students from Europe easy. But for Turkish Erasmus students, things are different.

To obtain a visa or residence permit, Turkish Erasmus students need to collect many documents and pay between €100 to €400 in fees and other expenses (see table in the annex). According to Meltem Müftüler-Baç a professor of International Relations and European Integration and a Jean Monnet Chair at Sabancı University, the application procedure is “a humiliating experience” for most Turkish citizens, including students.⁶³ “Potential Erasmus students from Turkish institutions think twice before they apply,” she told us.

When a country proves to be difficult – many people told ESI this has been the case with Belgium lately – it is not only students who are deterred. “We shy away from signing Erasmus agreements with Belgian institutions,” said Prof. Müftüler-Baç. “Instead we go for countries that allow greater mobility.”⁶⁴

The rules applying to Turkish Erasmus students vary greatly. We have looked at eight EU member states: the six countries with the highest numbers of Turkish Erasmus students – Poland, Germany, Italy, Spain, France and the Netherlands – as well as Belgium and Denmark.

Some of them, such as Poland and Germany, demand few documents. These usually include letters of confirmation from the host university/organisation and the home university, proof of the Erasmus grant and evidence of a medical travel insurance. Others, like Spain and Belgium, demand a lot of documents.

Some accept the Erasmus grant as evidence that the Turkish students can support themselves during their stay abroad. Others want to see parents’ bank statements going back up to a year, or a trust-worthy “sponsor” in the destination country who will cover all costs that the student might incur, including the costs of deportation if the student overstays the visa.

⁶² The only exception are Macedonians who need a visa for the UK and Ireland.

⁶³ Meltem Müftüler-Baç, [Who wants to travel to Europe? The Schengen Wall for Turkish nationals](#), Istanbul Policy Centre/Mercator, May 2014, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴ ESI email conversation with Meltem Müftüler-Baç, 14-16 July 2014.

Some countries ask for evidence of accommodation at the place of destination; a medical examination showing that the applicant does not suffer from a dangerous disease; a civil status certificate; a birth certificate; a certificate of good conduct (lack of a criminal record) or copies of diplomas and grade reports. In all cases the costs for fees, translations and the medical insurance are above €100. In the case of the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium, they are between €255 and €365.

Some countries issue a visa within one or two weeks after submission of the application (Poland, Netherlands, France and Spain), others may take two or three months (Denmark and Belgium).

Merve Ekiz paid a total of €400 for her residence permit for Denmark. It took the Danish consulate in Turkey two months to issue the permit, so Merve missed the orientation days at the University College UCC in Copenhagen. Uğur Korkmaz⁶⁵ who went to Portugal in 2013 did not have to pay for the entry visa (Portugal waives the visa fee for Erasmus students), but he had to travel from Yozgat to the Portuguese consulate in Ankara and overnight in the Turkish capital to submit his application. This cost him 100 Euro. In addition, he paid 60 Euro for the mandatory medical travel insurance and, later in Portugal, 160 Euro for a residence permit. His visa was processed quickly, in just 16 days. Esmâ Çetin⁶⁶ had the fewest visa issues. She, too, had to go to Ankara, but obtained her visa for Poland within one week and paid a total of €100 for the visa and the medical insurance.

Poland's light procedure is one of the reasons why it is popular among Turkish students. In the academic year 2012/13, it surpassed Germany as the top country hosting Turkish Erasmus students, after Germany had led the list in the previous three years.⁶⁷ Other reasons for Poland's popularity include a good academic programme in English, modest living costs and openness to cooperate with Turkish universities. Belgium, on the other hand, was often cited during our research as a negative example when it comes to issuing visas.

The European Commission is aware of the fact that EU member states treat visa applications from Turkish students in very different ways. In fact, there is an EU Directive, the so-called "Students Directive," which should have made it easy since 2007 for third-country students to get a long-term visa or a residence permit.⁶⁸ Particular reference is made to participants of "Community programmes enhancing mobility towards or within the Community" (such as Erasmus), whose admission should be facilitated even more, for example through lower fees and faster procedures.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ ESI interview with Uğur Korkmaz, Yozgat, 8 January 2014.

⁶⁶ ESI interview with Esmâ Çetin, Yozgat, 7 January 2014.

⁶⁷ European Commission, [Erasmus country statistics 2000-2012](#), section Turkey, and European Commission, Erasmus 2012-2013, [Erasmus student mobility: home and destination countries](#), 10 July 2014.

⁶⁸ [Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service](#), also known as the "Students Directive". EU member states should have transposed this Directive into national legislation by 12 January 2007. The Directive does not apply to Denmark, Ireland and the UK.

⁶⁹ [Students Directive](#), Article 6, paragraph 2. For the interpretation of "facilitating admission", see European

However, the Students Directive merely sets a framework. So far it has not been implemented well. It obliges EU member states to issue a long-term visa or residence permit to students “within a period that does not hamper the pursuit of the relevant studies”⁷⁰, and specifies the documents that the applicants have to submit.⁷¹ However, it leaves it at the discretion of member states to ask for additional documents “in case of doubts” and to set a fee for the processing of applications.⁷²

In 2011 the European Commission found that foreign students still experienced difficulties to come to the EU to study. It saw the need to amend the Directive.⁷³

The proposal for an amended Directive, which the Commission presented in March 2013, expands the rights of students from third countries.⁷⁴ EU member states will have to issue a visa/residence permit to participants of EU programmes within 30 days, and to other students within 60 days. If the visa application is rejected, the consular authorities will have to explain the reasons, and there will be the possibility of a legal challenge. EU member states will continue to be able to charge a fee, but “The amount of such fees shall not endanger the fulfilment of [the Directive’s] objectives.”⁷⁵ These include “to promote the Union as a world centre of excellence for studies and training.”⁷⁶ The European Parliament and the Council are expected to adopt the new Directive in the course of 2014.⁷⁷

The new Directive should improve the situation, but EU member states as well as all the other countries participating in the Erasmus student exchange scheme should take action already now:

- They should waive the fee for the visa/residence permit for Erasmus students;
- They should issue the visa/permit within two weeks (some already do);
- They should accept the Erasmus grant as evidence of sufficient financial means;

Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive 2004/114/EC](#), COM(2011) 587 final, Brussels, 28 September 2011, p. 3.

⁷⁰ [Students Directive](#), Article 8, paragraph 1.

⁷¹ Students have to show a valid travel document, a sickness insurance, sufficient means to finance the studies and the trip, and evidence that they have been accepted by a higher education establishment in the member state. If the member state in questions requests it, they also have to provide evidence of the necessary language skills and of payment of the study fees. [Students Directive](#), Articles 6 and 7.

⁷² [Students Directive](#), preamble, recital 15, and Article 20.

⁷³ European Commission, [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive 2004/114/EC](#), COM(2011) 587 final, Brussels, 28 September 2011.

⁷⁴ European Commission, [Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the conditions on entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au-pairing](#), Recast, COM(2013) 151 final, Brussels, 25 March 2013.

⁷⁵ [Recast proposal](#), Article 30.

⁷⁶ [Recast proposal](#), preamble, recital 14.

⁷⁷ European Parliament Legislative Observatory, Procedure file: [Third-country nationals: conditions of entry and residence for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, training, voluntary service and au pairing](#), accessed 30 June 2014.

- They should keep document requirements to a minimum – letters of confirmation of the sending and receiving university and evidence of the Erasmus grant and a medical insurance should suffice.

In comparison to the troubles of Turkish Erasmus students have to go through, EU Erasmus students have an easy time. Turkey introduced new rules specifically designed for foreign exchange students, which entered into force on 11 April 2014 as part of a new law on foreigners.⁷⁸ Now Erasmus students from countries whose citizens can enter Turkey without a short-stay visa – 21 out of the 33 countries participating in Erasmus – can simply come to Turkey and then, within one month, apply for a student's residence permit here. This costs 50 Turkish lira (€17). Those that need a visa to enter Turkey can obtain it online without any supporting documents for 15 Euro.⁷⁹

Even before April 2014, the requirements were not onerous. European Erasmus students had to obtain a student visa from a Turkish consulate before they came, but the document requirements were straight-forward (confirmation letters from the sending and receiving universities and Erasmus grant) and the visa cost €60. The fee for a student's residence permit was 200 Turkish lira (around €65).⁸⁰ The only problem that Erasmus students in Istanbul faced in the past was a waiting time for a residence permit of several months. After submission of an application for a residence permit, applicants are not allowed to leave Turkey. However, things are currently in flux due to the entry into force of the new law of foreigners, so the waiting times may be changing, too.

Conclusion

In this background paper we identified a number of specific problems: a foreign language deficit in Turkey; a lack of attractive courses for foreign students in Turkey, which would make it easier to sign cooperation agreements for Turkish universities with foreign partners; a lack of funding for Turkish students; and often expensive and complicated visa application procedures that act as a deterrent.

The key measures to overcome these problems are:

- Improving the knowledge of foreign languages, in particular English, among Turkish students through effective English language courses at Turkish universities;
- Offering more foreign-language degree programmes and courses at Turkish universities

⁷⁸ These are provisions under the new [Law on Foreigners and International Protection](#), law number 6458.

⁷⁹ These are students from 11 countries that participate in Erasmus: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the UK. For Maltese, Turkey waives the visa free. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Fees for E-visas and visas on arrival at Turkish airport](#), 1 June 2014.

⁸⁰ Information obtained from the International Office of Okan University, Istanbul, 21 July 2014.

to attract foreign students;

- Increasing the funding for student exchanges to complement the Erasmus grant for Turkish students and to allow a higher number of Turkish students to do Erasmus;
- Simpler, faster and cheaper Schengen visa application procedures for Turkish students.

The best step forward would be for Turkey to set up a task force with representatives of universities and national institutions – including the Turkish National Agency, the Higher Education Council YÖK and the Ministry of National Education – to discuss and implement these and other measures. The goal of 30,000 Turkish Erasmus students in 2016/17 is ambitious, but achievable.

Annex: Turkish Erasmus students and the visa hurdle

Country	List of required documents	Translation costs ⁱ	Medical insurance for 6 months ⁱⁱ	Visa fee ⁱⁱⁱ	Fee for external service provider ^{iv}	Residence permit	Minimum costs ^v
Poland ^{vi} 2,705 <i>Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</i> ^{vii}	<u>Long-stay visa for participants of academic exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus):</u> Application form (in Polish, English or Turkish), passport, photocopy of the first page, 2 biometric photos, documents confirming the purpose and conditions of the planned stay in Poland, proof of sufficient financial means (Erasmus grant is enough), medical insurance (coverage €30,000), certificate from the home university and from the host university <u>Processing time:</u> 1 week	-	€ 40	€ 61 (177 TL)	€ 18.50 (53.50 TL)	Not needed (the long-stay visa suffices provided it covers the whole period of the stay)	€ 120
Germany ^{viii} 2,472 <i>Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</i>	<u>Visa for participants of EU education programmes:</u> 2 application forms in German, a short questionnaire, passport, 3 biometric passport photos, health insurance (coverage €30,000), civil status certificate, confirmation from the host university in Germany, confirmation from the home university, letter of motivation <u>Processing time:</u> “several weeks”	-	€ 40	No fee	€ 5 (for fixing an appointment; application must be submitted to a consulate)	€ 50 (student residence permit for 1 year)	€ 95
Italy ^{ix} 1,207 <i>Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</i>	<u>Schengen visa for participation in EU education, training and research programmes:</u> Visa application form (in English or Turkish), passport, 1 biometric photo, photocopy of the bio-data page of passport/pages with previous visas, assurance of means of livelihood or proof of a student grant, health insurance (coverage € 30,000), proof of accommodation, flight/travel reservation, original invitation by the host university, letter from the National Agency of Turkey, student certificate <u>Processing time:</u> “from a few weeks to several months”	€ 10	€ 40	No fee	€ 21 (61 TL)	€ 152 (fee € 107.50 + duty stamp € 14.62 + special registered letter € 30)	€ 225

<p>Spain^x</p> <p>1,059 Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</p>	<p>Student visa (more than 90 days): Application form (in Spanish or English), 1 biometric photo, photocopies of passport data pages and relevant previous visas, medical certificate and criminal record (for both translation in Spanish or English with a The Hague apostil), proof of registration at the educational centre, information about intermediaries if any, kind and level of studies to be followed, diplomas and certificates acquired, certificate of proficiency in foreign language, address in Spain, if granted a scholarship: information about the level of the grant and other financial resources (such as bank accounts showing the movement of money for the last year and pay slips from the parents) (Erasmus grant is not enough), travel medical insurance</p> <p><u>Processing time:</u> “2 weeks”</p>	€ 70	€ 40	€ 60	-	€ 5 (student's card)	€ 175
<p>France^{xi}</p> <p>657 Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</p>	<p>Visa to study in France: 2 visa application forms (in Turkish, English or French), a valid passport, photocopies of all passport pages containing visas or stamps, photocopy of government-issued identity card, 3 photos, copy of the flight ticket for departure, certificate of registration at a French academic institution/proof of a French government scholarship, copy of the latest school/university diploma obtained in Turkey, certificate of sponsorship to cover expenses in France, proof of the parents' financial resources (bank account statement for the last three months), registration number issued by Campus France, certificate of pre-registration issued by Campus France, OFII form, completed medical certificate form, supporting documents regarding accommodation during the first 3 months of the stay in France, health coverage (minimum € 30,000)</p> <p><u>Processing time:</u> 1 week</p>	€ 20	€ 40	€ 50 (no visa fee as such for Erasmus students, but € 50 to be paid to Campus France, a French agency dealing with student mobility, which has to review the application)	€ 24.50	€ 58	€ 145

<p>Netherlands^{xii}</p> <p>558 <i>Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</i></p>	<p><u>Application for the Entry and Residence Procedure (TEV; an application for both a long-stay visa and a residence permit):</u> Application form, a copy of the passport, a photo, the original Erasmus grant statement, health insurance, proof of financial means (at least € 833.22 per month), antecedents certificate (self-declared clean criminal record)</p> <p>All documents need to be in English, German, French or Dutch.</p> <p><u>Processing time:</u> 2 weeks</p>	€ 20	€ 40	€ 304	- (No intermediary for long-stay visas)	Fees included in TEV	€ 365
<p>Belgium^{xiii}</p> <p>368 <i>Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</i></p>	<p><u>Student Visa:</u> passport, photocopy of all pages of the passport with stamps and visas, 2 visa application forms (in French, Dutch, German or English), signed declaration on desired language, 2 photos, a pledge of financial support from the host university in Belgium, approved by the authorities in Belgium (or other evidence of financial means), a certificate of good conduct (+ translation, photocopy, apostil), a medical certificate from a doctor approved by the consulate (€ 140 to 200)</p> <p><u>Processing time:</u> several weeks to several months</p>	€ 40 + € 140 (for medical examination by an approved doctor)	€ 40	No fee	€ 17 (50 TL)	€ 20 (fee may vary from commune to commune)	€ 255
<p>Denmark^{xiv}</p> <p>232 <i>Turkish Erasmus students in 2012/13</i></p>	<p><u>Residency permit application in view of educational purposes:</u> application form, 2 passport photos, passport, original birth certificate, letter of acceptance issued by the educational institution in Denmark, evidence of sufficient funds or letter of scholarship, student's registration (all translated in Danish or English)</p> <p><u>Processing time:</u> 2-3 months</p>	€ 10	-	-	€ 22 (63 TL)	€ 228 (residence permit fee for students)	€ 260

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We contacted a few translation companies in Turkey including [Alafranga Language Solutions](#) to find out about translation costs for various documents and the costs of a The Hague apostil.

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- ii Most EU/Schengen countries member states require from Erasmus students evidence of a travel medical insurance with a coverage of at least € 30,000. The health insurance usually covers unexpected illness, accidents, treatment and hospital services and emergency medical transfer to the home country. In May 2014, we checked several insurance agencies offering such insurances, including [Seyahat Sogortasi](#), [Yapikredi Sigorta](#) and [Allianz Sigorta](#). The cheapest offer for such an insurance for the duration of six months (which is the period that Erasmus students usually spent abroad) was € 40.
- iii All prices in Turkish lira have been converted to Euro with the [Oanda Currency Converter](#) in July 2014.
- iv Most EU/Schengen countries work with external service providers who collect the visa applications, provide explanations to the applicants and later send them the passport with the visa. The visas are still issued by the consulates. For more information about external service providers, see the ESI paper [Trust and travel. Easing the visa burden for Turks in five steps](#) (24 February 2014).
- v The cost exclude travel costs, which vary depending on the distance to the next application centre, and smaller costs (fees for the issuance of certain documents, biometric photos, photocopies etc.).
- vi The information for Poland is taken from the website of VFS Global, the external service provider that handles visa applications for Poland, [Visa information for participants of academic exchange programs \(e.g. Erasmus\) for stays exceeding 90 days](#), and the website of the national agency implementing EU education and training programmes, [Coming to Poland – formal issues](#). Further questions were clarified by email with VFS Global in July 2014.
- vii The numbers of Turkish Erasmus students are from the European Commission, Erasmus statistics from 2012/13, [Erasmus student mobility: home and destination countries](#), 10 July 2014.
- viii The information for Germany is taken from the website of the German Consulate in Ankara, [Merkblatt für die Beantragung von Visa von Teilnehmern / Stipendiaten des EU-Placement-Bildungsprogramms](#) (Information sheet for participants of EU education programmes), [Allgemeine Hinweise zur Visabeantragung](#) (General Information on Visa Applications), and the website of the Humboldt University in Berlin, [Student residence permit](#). Further questions were clarified by email with iDATA, the external service provider used by Germany, in July 2014.
- ix The information for Italy is taken from the website of the authorised external service provider iDATA, [Documenti necessari per la richiesta visto](#) (Documents required for visa applications), the website of the Free University of Bozen, [Requirements for your stay in in Italy - Erasmus Mundus](#), the website of the Università degli Studi di Catania, [Residence Permit](#), and the website of the programme Erasmus Mundus MSc in Mathematical Modelling in Engineering, [Visa Information](#).
- x The information for Spain is taken from the Spanish Embassy in Ankara, [Student visa for more than 90 days](#); [Estudiar en Espana](#) (Studying in Spain); [Visados de larga duracion](#) (Long stay visits); [Requisitos de entrada](#) (Entry requests), and from the website of the Universitat Jaume, [Legal formalities for residence and work permits](#). Email information on visa fees and further clarifications received from the Consular Section of the Embassy of Spain in Ankara on 9 and 11 July 2014.
- xi The information for France is taken from the Embassy of France in Turkey, [OFII \(Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration\) étudiants](#) and [Procédure de visa long séjour pour étudiant](#); and the website of the VFS Global external service provider in Turkey with whom France cooperates, [Documents required for visa to study in France](#).
- xii The information for the Netherlands is taken from the website of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice/Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND), [Educational Institution](#); the website of the In Holland - University of Applied Sciences, [Important information on entry visa and residence permit](#); Study in Holland, [Visas and Permits](#); and the website of Maastricht University, Student Service Centre, [Information Entry Visa](#).
- xiii The information for Belgium is taken from the website of the VFS Global external service provider with which Belgium cooperates, [All about visas for students](#) and [All about visas - Required medical certificate for long term applications](#), and the website for the Expats in Belgium Expatica.com, [Moving to Belgium: Guide to visas and permits](#).
- xiv The information for Denmark is taken from the website of the Official Portal for Foreigners - New to Denmark, [Studying in Denmark](#) and [Overview of case categories and fees for coming to Denmark](#); the website of VFS Global, the external service provider that handles visa applications for Denmark, [Student Documents required](#); the website Study in Denmark, [Do I need a visa?](#) and the website of Aalborg University, [Residence Permit & Visa for international Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus students](#).