Erasmus+ Mobility of Students with Disability

State-of-the-art report on the accessibility of exchange programs for students with visual impairment

February 2016

CONTENTS

1. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

To live and study abroad is the dream of many students all over Europe. They are curious to learn about new cultures and new ways of thinking. The Erasmus+ programme offers them wide opportunities to reach their goals. Beside their studies they learn new things, the way they collect new information, make new connections, organise their time, and identify with new lifestyles All these experiences are very gratifying and the students will certainly enjoy the benefits in the future. Erasmus+ offers opportunities to use skills to grow as a person with a global mind set. (by Cláudia Vale Da Silva thoughts - http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm)

Students with disabilities such as a visual impairment would like to have the same opportunities. The Erasmus+ programme is open to all students in Europe. In order to obtain a clear picture of the possibilities and barriers of exchange programs for university students with visual impairments (VI), the European Blind Union (EBU) and the International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment, Europe (ICEVI-Europe) has set up a research group. The research group consists of a researcher from ELTE University Bárczi Faculty of Special Education, Budapest (Hungary), a specialist in visual impairment from ICEVI-Europe, a university disability coordinator from Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia) and a member of EBU. The research group has gathered information about the experience of students with VI and Erasmus+ coordinators.

2. __SUBJECTS AND METHODS__

In this pilot study, our research group would like to find the real cause of the small number of students with visual impairments attending mobility programs. The group would also aim to study the views and attitudes of Erasmus coordinators and disability coordinators on this topic.

We carried out the pilot study by acquiring basic information on the services provided for outgoing and incoming students by European universities. We used an on-line questionnaire to interrogate the disability and Erasmus+ coordinators. (N=5). We interviewed students with VI who have mobility experience with a semi-structured interview. (N=7). We got in touch with an EU officer to obtain relevant statistical data on students with VI involved in the Erasmus+ programme and the policy to promote inclusion of students with VI.

3. <u>DATA, INCLUSION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES</u>

3.1. Data on students with disabilities and with visual impairments involved in the Erasmus+ program

We learned the following from Daphne Scherer (Policy Officer, European Commission) : the Erasmus programme allowed 401 students with disabilities to receive additional funding to participate in the programme during the academic year 2013-14 (the last year for which statistics are available), a 3.35% increase as compared to the previous year (388 students in 2012-2013).

● Number of grants for special needs
Note: only countries with at least one special needs grant are displayed in the chart
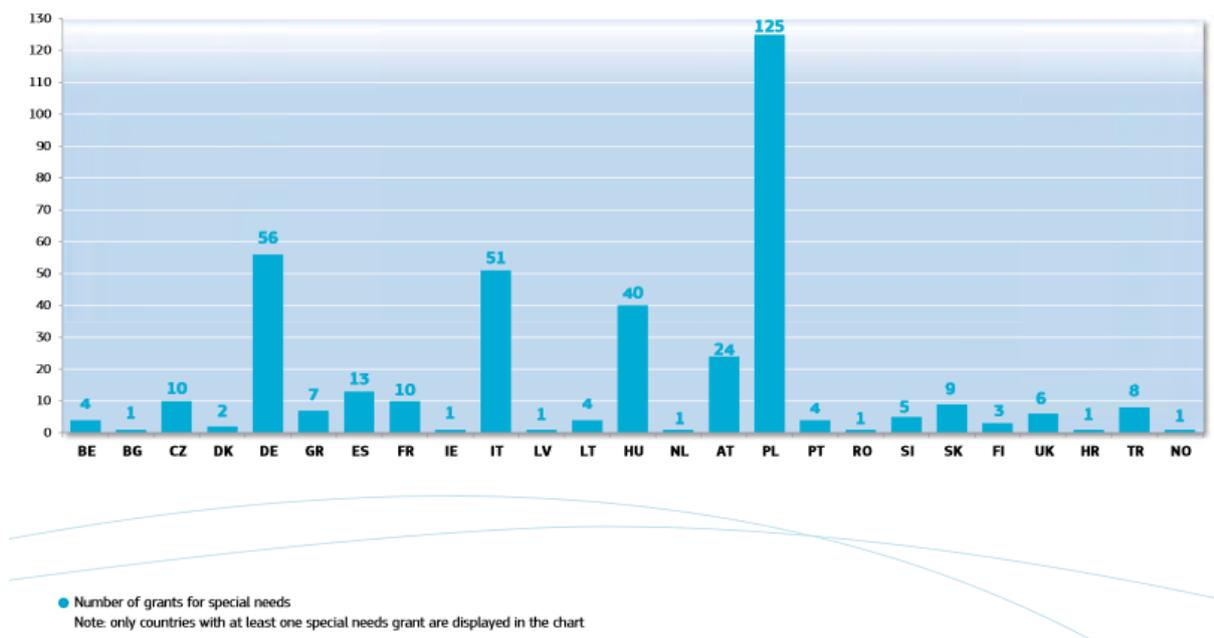
*Graph 1: Number of students with special needs
participating in student mobility in 2012-13[1]*

Alternative text for graph 1:
Belgium – 4 students
Bulgaria – 1 student
Czech Republic – 10 students
Denmark – 2 students
Germany – 56 students
Greece – 7 students
Spain – 15 students

---

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/facts-figures_en.pdf

France – 10 students
Ireland – 1 student
Italy – 51 students
Latvia – 1 student
Lithuania – 4 students
Hungary – 40 students
Netherlands – 1 student
Austria – 24 students
Poland – 125 students
Portugal – 4 students
Romania – 1 student
Slovenia – 5 students
Slovakia – 9 students
Finland – 3 students
United Kingdom – 6 students
Croatia – 1 student
Turkey – 8 students
Norway – 1 student

Below are the statistics of the students with disabilities that received additional funding to participate in the Erasmus programme from 2007-2008 to 2013-2014:

2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
165	213	257	255	336	388	401

Graph 2: Students with disabilities participating in
the Erasmus programme from 2007-2008 to 2013-2014

3.2. Policy to promote inclusion of students with disabilities and with visual impairment

The European Commission will continue monitoring this number every year with Erasmus+ and share best practices with all the universities involved in the programme, in Europe and beyond.
For privacy and disclosure reasons, the Commission does not gather information on students with disabilities who participated in Erasmus or Erasmus+ programmes, but only collects the information on the students and staff with disabilities that received an additional support grant, which

is meant to cover additional costs directly related to participants with disabilities.

Strengthening the social dimension is one of the priorities in the European agenda for the modernisation of higher education. An overall objective for efforts in this area is the Bologna Process principle of having a student body that reflects the composition of the general population. Looking at the social-economic or educational background of students, the European Commission sees that this is still a relevant, overall objective to pursue. Looking specifically at the percentage of higher education students with disabilities, it is clear that this percentage does not reflect the overall percentage of citizens with disabilities

The priority of strengthening the social dimension therefore includes looking into diverse opportunities for access to higher education and necessary support measure for the completion of programmes, including for underrepresented groups which also counts students with disabilities. The priority is supported through various means and activities. Amongst others, the Commission supports establishing a better evidence base for policy-making that addresses and identifies appropriate access systems and support measures. The Commission also works on ensuring better access of underrepresented groups, such as students with disabilities, in European programmes supporting education.

Within the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020), the support to the access of learners from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and their success in education and training is mainstreamed in all the funding opportunities and activities available in the programme.

This is specifically mentioned in the [Erasmus+ legal base](#) - article 23: '*When implementing the Programme, inter alia as regards the selection of participants and the award of scholarships, the Commission and the Member States shall ensure that particular efforts are made to promote social inclusion and the participation of people with special needs or with fewer opportunities.*' and reflected in all *Key Actions* of the Erasmus+ programme.

3.3. Key Actions of the Erasmus+ programme

3.3.1. Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (Learning Mobility) programme

It provides opportunities for students to study or train abroad. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to participate in Erasmus+ learning mobility and can benefit from additional support which is meant to cover additional costs directly related to participants with disabilities ('Erasmus+ special needs grant').

In order to participate in the Erasmus+ programme, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must sign the *Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.* By doing so, they commit to ensuring the same access and opportunities to Erasmus+ students as to their local students[2].

The commitments to which Erasmus+ universities sign up go beyond simply ensuring a good quality academic or training experience. The wider wellbeing of Erasmus students is also a priority.

In fact the Charter specifically mentions: *'Promote and support student and staff mobility, including from underrepresented groups, and further develop non-discrimination policies. Respect in full the principles of non-discrimination set out in the Programme and ensure equal access and opportunities to mobile participants from all backgrounds'.*

The Guidelines for implementation of the Charter also state that *'To ensure fair and equitable opportunities are provided to all potential participants, including those from groups which are usually under-represented in mobility programmes (students or staff with disabilities, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with family responsibilities or with part-time jobs, etc.), institutions should provide supplementary support for inbound/outbound mobility participants from these groups by, for example, offering top-up grants according to national/institutional requirements, appointing special counsellors, developing learning/teaching techniques within an environment adapted to students from disadvantaged groups or promoting blended mobility (short-term physical mobility combined with virtual mobility which can be supported through strategic partnerships). With this in mind, institutions should devise and publicise a system that actively promotes study abroad to students from disadvantaged groups and ensures that their support needs can be met and their privacy respected. Institutions should invite all students applying to the exchange programme to disclose the fact that they belong to a disadvantaged group*

---

[2] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/funding/2014/documents/annotated_guidelines_en.pdf

if they wish, so that appropriate support can be provided at the host institution. Within the framework of the Programme, institutions will be able to further develop and advance their non-discrimination policies, thereby widening access to mobility for under-represented groups, notably through strategic partnerships that promote blended mobility.'

Thus, foreign students with disabilities have access to the same services as national students with disabilities at the receiving institution. For example, if a university offers support services for students with visual impairments, these will also be available to Erasmus students during their mobility period abroad. Likewise, students and staff with disabilities can benefit from the support services that the receiving institution offers to its local students and staff.

In addition, in order to better identify what services each institution can offer to mobile participants, HEIs that participate in the programme can specify whether they have the infrastructure to welcome students and staff with disabilities in their inter-institutional agreements with their partner institutions, and outlining what kind of support services are offered to students[3].

The National Agencies in charge of implementing the Erasmus+ programme in each country are in charge of monitoring the compliance of HEIs with the Charter and ensuring that the principle of equal access and opportunities to participants from all backgrounds is respected. In addition, students participating in Erasmus+ will report directly to the Commission on their satisfaction with their stay abroad when they come back, allowing the Commission to detect any problem.

3.3.2. Erasmus+ Key Action 2 programme

(Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices)
The programme makes it possible for organisations from different participating countries to work together, to develop, share and transfer best practices and innovative approaches. Strategic partnerships foster cooperation between organisations in different countries engaged in education. These projects have the possibility to develop new modes of delivery to offer new opportunities for this target group – such as blended mobility (less than 2 months of physical mobility blended with virtual mobility).

---

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/iia_en.pdf

An example of a project selected in 2014 under Erasmus+ in this area is the German-lead 'MOOC Accessibility Partnership'. This project aims at implementing a sustainable strategic partnership between European universities that excel in both teaching accessible design in ICT and providing an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities.

3.3.3. Erasmus+ Key Action 3 (Support for policy reform) programme

It provides opportunities for a wide variety of actions aimed at stimulating innovative policy development, policy dialogue and implementation, and the exchange of knowledge.

An example of a project selected in 2015 under Erasmus+ in this area is *ALdia (Accessible Learning design, implementation and accreditation)*. This project will create an innovative, comprehensive and sustainable framework that will promote the equal access of students and trainees with disabilities to University education and vocational training. This framework will a) define student needs in both higher education and VET sectors, b) develop and implement a flexible, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for higher education and VET education professionals on accessible learning design and c) validate the acquired expertise through certification that will be based on the ECVET principles, thus facilitating its use across Europe.

3.3.4. Cooperation projects

Several cooperation projects have been funded within the framework of the Erasmus Programme under LLP on the theme of including persons with disabilities, and their outcomes have been used to feed into the preparation of the new Erasmus+ programme.

These projects include, for example, the *Audio Description: Lifelong Access for the Blind*[4] project, the *ExchangeAbility: Fostering Mobility of Students with Disabilities* project[5], aimed at facilitating the participation in student mobility of persons with disabilities, the *European Action on Disability within Higher Education*[6], and the *LINK (Learning Inclusively –*

---

[4] www.adlabproject.eu
[5] www.esn.org/sites/default/files/ea_handout.pdf
[6] www.eadhe.eu

Network + Know-how) project, coordinated by AHEAD (Association of Higher Education Access and Disability).

Several student and staff Ambassadors selected to promote the Erasmus+ programmes are persons with disabilities, including with visual impairments. Their experience, feedback and input were used in preparation of the Erasmus+ programme. Their stories can be found here.

An ongoing discussion is also being carried out with relevant stakeholders.

In June 2014, the Commission received positive feedback about the opportunities provided in Erasmus+ to students and staff with disabilities by the participants of the Mapability training and conference[7], which included representatives of European organizations of persons with disabilities.

Commission services have also held meetings with ONCE and ONCE Foundation and exchanges with the incluD-ed network, the European Network on Inclusive Education & Disability.

The Commission has participated in a panel session organised by the Expert Community Access and Inclusion in international higher education (ACCESS) of the EAIE (European Association for International Education) at the EAIE Conference 2015 to discuss the promotion of equal participation of students and staff with disabilities in all aspects of higher education, especially in mobility.

The Commission established in 2015 a dedicated group of National Agencies, higher education institutions and experts working on the promotion and support to participants with disabilities in higher education mobility activities. This group will gather and share best practices on how to reach persons with disabilities and increase their participation in Erasmus+, and will develop common guidelines on promoting the programme to participants with disabilities. The group will also identify current obstacles, gaps and needs for improvement. Its next meeting will take place at the end of February in Budapest (date to be confirmed).

---

[7] http://exchangeability.eu/news/mapability-training-and-conference-2014

4. <u>PILOT STUDY ABOUT BASIC INFORMATION ON THE SERVICES PROVIDED FOR OUTGOING AND INCOMING STUDENTS BY EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES</u>

We (the working group) interviewed seven Erasmus or Erasmus+ programme students with VI who had mobility experience as outgoing students. We found that all the universities which were chosen by students with VI are not on the 'list of the Top 100 higher education institutions receiving Erasmus students'[8]. In our sample there were four blind and three low vision students.

4.1. Experience with studying abroad; choice of the university; helpfulness of the coordinators

All of them had had experiences studying abroad before they chose this program. Four of them had received an Erasmus or an Erasmus+ scholarship, three of them had either been exchange students or gone abroad to learn languages. Previous experience motivated them to participate in the Erasmus+ program and spend a semester at the host university.

Six students chose the university because it fitted their previous studies and only one university offered some support to the student with VI. Furthermore, six students mentioned that they were supported exclusively by the home coordinator. There were some complaints about the host coordinators of one Austrian, one Hungarian, one Dutch, one Polish, and two Norwegian universities. The host coordinator of the University of Limerick (Ireland) was praised by students. As a best practice it is useful to get familiar with the routine of this university: students are supported by the international Office of the University of Limerick from the very beginning of the enrolment process. The online registration, which is completed in advance, includes information on visual impairment. A special form is sent by email to the student with VI to be filled in. In that document the student with VI is asked about his/her disability and special needs. The document is sent back to the International Office staff, who forwards it to the Disability Office at the University of Limerick.

---

[8] http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/annex-3_en.pdf

4.2. Web accessibility; Good services, special helps

Students found that information on the web is mostly accessible but sometimes it is hard to navigate and find. Students with VI often got some help from their families and from home coordinators. In many cases, information provided by friends and peers proved to be more useful than information from the webpage. As for its homepage, students' feedback on the University of Limerick was again positive: the *'home page is pretty easily accessible, furthermore the International Office was constantly sending emails to Erasmus students before the mobility started, and throughout the semester. Students, consequently, were very well informed about everything.'* [9]

Out of the seven students, only two were provided some services or special support from the host universities: one of the institutions offered transferring books to braille to the student with VI but he didn't use this service. Special services at the University of Limerick: *'The International office gave me a personal guide at the beginning of the semester. Connor helped me to learn my way around the campus. The university provided some really great services, such as a counselling office, and workshops on different matters. Furthermore, UL had a writing centre, which could be accessed freely by every; this office provided help with writing essays.'*

4.3. Extra grant

All the students with VI were eligible to receive an additional grant, which they found satisfactory for covering costs of a sighted guide, making study materials accessible, expenses concerning a guide dog and veterinary costs, and for paying a higher fee for accessible accommodation and public transport. One of the students said: '*without it I would have died*'.

Two students from seven had some form of personal assistant. One student's personal assistant was her best friend who lived with her 24 hours per day. The offer of the University of Limerick was the following: '*The International office gave me a personal guide at the beginning of the semester. XY helped me to learn my way around the campus. We exchanged phone numbers, when I needed his help I just texted him. He never said no. He was always there for me. The same goes for all the*

---

[9] All citations are original from Erasmus or Erasmus+ students with VI. The sentences are written without any changes.

International Office people, they were immensely helpful and generous with their time.'
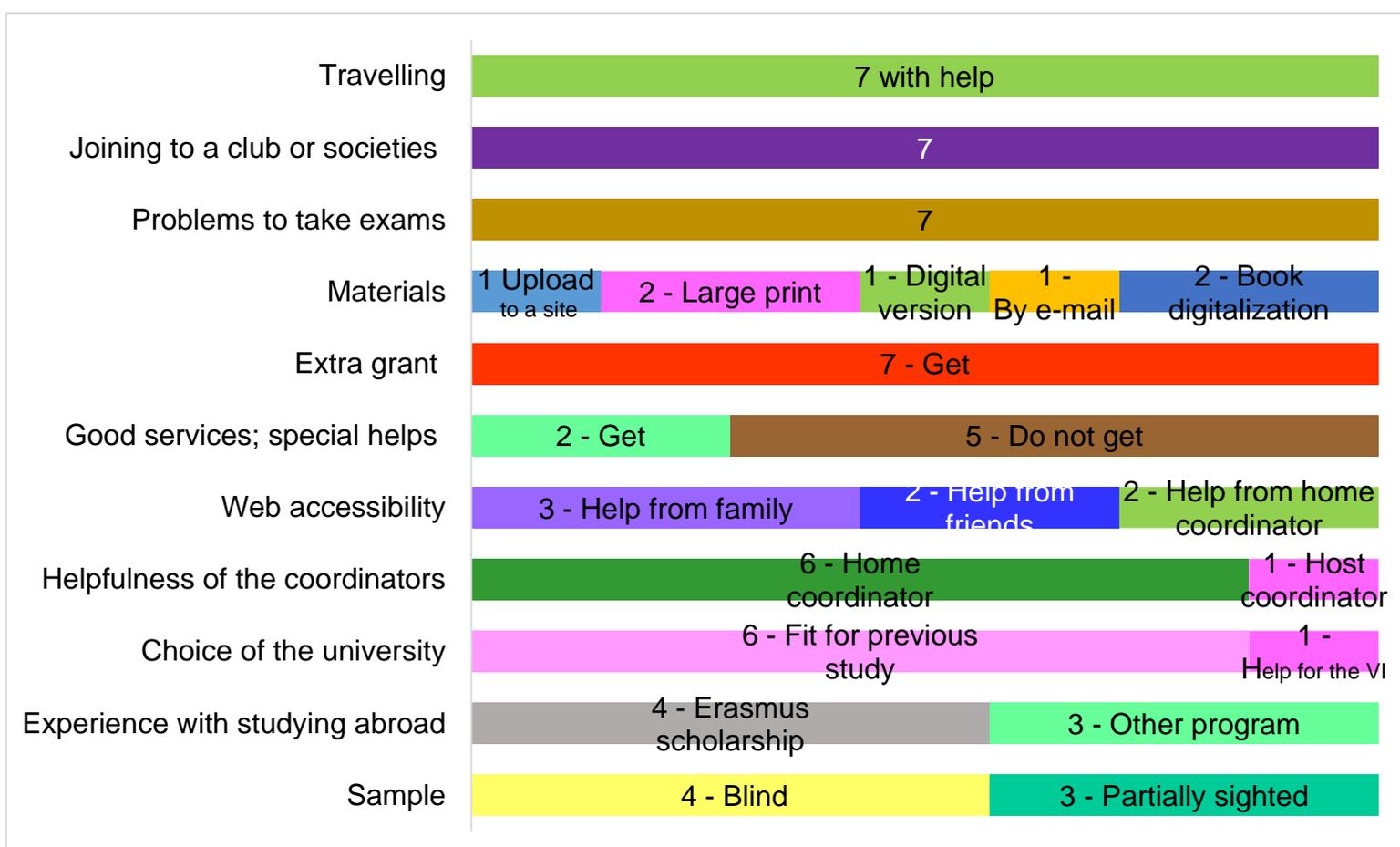
4.4.   Materials; Problems to take exams

Study materials are usually uploaded to a site called Sulis, where all students had access to them (University of Limerick). For low vision students, professors provided large print. One student had access to nearly all of the materials as they were basically uploaded in a digital version to the electronic network of the university, another student got the material by email. One of the students asked the international coordinator of his host university if it was possible to digitalise the books he needed. The coordinator helped him solve this problem. When he urgently needed a book, the coordinator arranged that all pages be scanned within a day. Students with VI had lots of difficulties taking exams or writing tests and papers: '*They were very strict in rules for testing. I did not receive special condition acceptance for Space physics exams. Fortunately, this influenced only one mid-term written test, the final test was oral, for everyone, this was OK with my needs. For xy language I was given special conditions during exams – I could have more time to finish my written final test.' 'That's one of the worst thing I experienced through my exchange semester. The university I attended had very strict rules on taking exams and they showed stable inflexibility. Even if the international coordinator tried to help me discuss this with the decision makers, I couldn't get any appropriate solution. I was not allowed to use my own computer for writing exams and they didn't have a screen reader software on their own, so a "personal assistant" read the questions for me and he wrote my answers on the papers. As you might imagine, it's not very easy for international economics theory, not to mention that the assistant had problems even with speaking and understanding English.'*

4.5.   Joining clubs or societies; travelling

Joining a club or group of friends depended on the personality of students with VI. Some of them attended ESN, others joined several groups of young people and made some friends. There was a student who made friends with locals while walking his dog. One student said that the host university had an exceptionally good and active network of foreign students he also joined. The university uses Facebook for communication

and organizes quite a lot of social and leisure time activities. They have a program called Special Events so he could make some new friends.
All the students with VI used public transportation with help which was either a new friend from the host university or the personal assistant. Accessible things which helped or eased students with VI to study abroad include: some material digitalization and quick scanning; some university conditions which were mostly general conditions such as the possibility to print 300 pages on library printers per semester for free (University in Oslo, Norway).

There were some barriers, like the behavior of some teachers in the host university who were not helpful or used only their mother tongue. '*Strict and sometimes bureaucratic academic system with nonflexible rules. I do not think that their special needs support system is organized at appropriate level.*' '*Writing exams without a computer and a screen reader software. Out of that, the thing I missed the most is studying in smaller groups (like seminars), but this is not so closely related to my disability.*'

Travelling	7 with help				
Joining to a club or societies	7				
Problems to take exams	7				
Materials	1 Upload to a site	2 - Large print	1 - Digital version	1 - By e-mail	2 - Book digitalization
Extra grant	7 - Get				
Good services; special helps	2 - Get	5 - Do not get			
Web accessibility	3 - Help from family	2 - Help from friends	2 - Help from home coordinator		
Helpfulness of the coordinators	6 - Home coordinator	1 - Host coordinator			
Choice of the university	6 - Fit for previous study	1 - Help for the VI			
Experience with studying abroad	4 - Erasmus scholarship	3 - Other program			
Sample	4 - Blind	3 - Partially sighted			

Graph 3: Diagram about the numbers of VI students' experiences who have mobility as outgoing students (N=7)

One of the students had an additional comment: 'I would encourage all students to experience this.'

5. <u>DISABILITY AND ERASMUS+ COORDINATORS</u>

Our working group sent an on-line questionnaire to five disability coordinators in Portugal, Ireland, Italy, England and Germany. Only one questionnaire was filled in and returned. It is from the University of Limerick, Ireland. This university got the best evaluation from the Erasmus students. As we can see, this university can offer the widest and the most effective support to students with VI.

At the university, on the university homepage and in the academic information system, information and study programs for students with visual impairment are available and accessible. Colleagues have experience with students with VI because the university has so far worked with 45 incoming and outgoing students with VI. The available support services for students with VI are the following: mobility and orientation training, production of digital texts, Braille production, video narration, tactile graphics, note taker, transport, free technology. However, international students are required to pay for some of the services. The university offers students with VI lessons organized exclusively for them. International students with VI are offered individual conditions (which meet their special needs) during lessons. The university has a support centre for students with disabilities including students with VI and has trained staff (teachers and/or staff) especially for students with VI. The university prepares for supporting students with VI as follows: requesting information on previous exams, classroom, and living accommodations; organising relevant technology and pre arranging training where possible. There are no landmarks at the university and related areas to facilitate physical accessibility but a guide dog is allowed at the university and related areas. In the library the following assistive technologies are available for students with VI: CCTV - desktop video magnifier, screen-reader software, scanner, Braille Printing, Braille Notes, magnifiers. The university has Laptops, Magnifier CCTVs, Distance Cameras and Talking Calculators for rent. The university has no ESN (Erasmus Student Network) mentors to support students with VI. Funding for international students varies. Usually the home university pays for any large expenses (daily living needs) but anything that is part of the course is usually free (technology, ebooks, etc.). The university can normally finance technology for a student. Orientation and mobility training - though organised by the university - is undertaken by the National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI). They do not have tactile/braille signage.

6. <u>SUGGESTIONS</u>

After the evaluation of the answers the research group has some suggestions:

About the on-line questionnaire for the Erasmus coordinators:
- We think, two more questions need to be added to the online questionnaire:
  - 'What kind of services do international students pay for?'
  - 'What kind of services are paid by the host university for international students?'

About the questionnaire for the Erasmus students:
- We believe that further two questions should be included in the questionnaire:
  - 'What kind of special support would you have needed from the home coordinator or university as a blind/partially sighted student?'
  - 'What kind of special support would you have needed from the host coordinator or university as a blind/partially sighted student?'

New aspect for the research:
- The research should provide the student and the host coordinator from the incoming Erasmus+ student with the same questionnaire then coordinate the answers.

For host universities:
- The host universities have different rules and requirements. Unified rules and requirements for Erasmus+ students with VI should be developed. The adherence of these would be checked by Erasmus changing program.
- Students with VI need the same exam conditions in all universities, such as: additional time to complete the test; an oral exam instead of a written exam; unified access to study materials by email or uploaded in accessible digital version to the electronic system of the university.
- Homepages need further improvements for students with VI. All of them are accessible but searching for specific information is difficult. Erasmus+ students with VI need more user-friendly parts of the website with thematically gathered information and with easier navigation.

Motivation:

- The research group learned that some of the host coordinators need motivation to properly support Erasmus+ students with VI. We believe it is necessary to elaborate guidelines on helping students with VI to motivate host coordinators.
- We also think that host universities need some motivation with a certification by EC's Erasmus+ services. By way of example, a university which helps students with disabilities gets a sign on the homepage which proves and underlines its competence. This may help students find the appropriate university, and motivates universities to improve their Erasmus+ offer and to take part in social integration.

7. <u>**CONCLUSION**</u>

In summary, it could be said that Erasmus+ mobility programmes try to open more opportunities for students with disabilities all over Europe. Students with visual impairments also can find universities which offer them special help, tools, learning material etc.
According to our research, many Erasmus+ coordinators think that an incoming Erasmus+ student with a visual impairment means problems and lots of new, difficult challenges. In contrast with this finding, home coordinators provide a lot of help to their outgoing Erasmus+ students with VI.
Our research group thinks that more information about visual impairment and the needs of Erasmus+ students with VI is necessary for host coordinators.
University web pages are mostly accessible for the Erasmus+ students with VI but sometimes navigation and finding the relevant information is difficult. In the future it is necessary to solve this problem in order to support the independence of students with VI.
As we can see, the biggest problems are the lack of accessible material specially adapted for students with visual impairment and the different and incoherent requirements and conditions of exams in the host universities. It is necessary to ensure (almost) the same reasonable adjustments for exams in the different universities which accept students with VI.
Erasmus+ students with VI need henceforward an extra grant to support their special needs.

According to this pilot study it is important to find out more causes of the small number of students with VI attending mobility programs, but in the meantime, we can start to solve the problems.

8. EVALUATION REPORT FOR ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SLOVAK WEBSITE

We carried out an accessibility assessment on the Slovak Erasmus+ website because the official Erasmus+ website is planned to be changed in the near future.

Website name:	Erasmus+
URL:	www.erasmusplus.sk
Date of evaluation:	23.11.2015

This report describes the conformance of the Erasmus+ Web site with § 14 Decree No. 55/2014 of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic issued March 4, 2014 about standards for information systems of Government. The Web site was tested manually.	
8.1.1. Executive summary	
8.1.2. Evaluating Accessibility	
Success criteria evaluation:	
Failed (high impact)	**8**
Failed (slight impact)	**9**
Passed	**19**
Interpretative summary of review results:	
Value of failure	**53**
Conformance to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (%)	**52,68%**
Accessibility level	**low**
Overview of audit results:	

Website is partially accessible.

Based on this evaluation, the Erasmus+ Web site is close to meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines given in Decree No. 55/2014 amendment of act No. 276/2014 Z. z. The evaluation found slight failure in 9 samples and Important failure in 8 samples. Detailed review results are available in the next section.

Principle 1: Perceivable information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

1.1 All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose. Non-text content means any content that is not a sequence of characters that can be programmatically determined or where the sequence is not expressing something in human language. This includes ASCII Art (which is a pattern of characters), emoticons, leetspeak (which uses character substitution), and images representing text.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=21
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Aktuality)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=22
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Podujatia)

Slight failure: Missing text alternative, frequently occurring issue.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 2: Distinguishable colour is not used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.

2.2 Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=24
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Časté otázky)

Important failure: A contrast ratio of less than 3.5:1, frequently occurring issue.

Other criteria relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 3: Adaptable – Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure.

3.1 If the technologies being used can achieve the visual presentation, text is used to convey information rather than images of text.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=31
  (The Main page / Knižnica / Publikácie)

Slight failure: Non-text content is primarily intended to create a specific sensory experience, missing text alternatives, frequently occurring issue.

3.4 The attribute values or element properties in style sheet are defined in relative units. The actual point size is calculated by the user agent for display. The visually rendered text, including text-based controls can be scaled successfully so that it can be read directly.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/css/style.css
  (style sheet)

Slight failure: All the content scales uniformly.

3.5 Section headings are used to organize the content.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=21
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Aktuality)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=70
  (The Main page / Čo ponúka program / Prehľad)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=34
  (The Main page / Knižnica / Pre médiá)

Important failure of success: Missing or incorrect using of the Headings.

3.6 All lists must contain one or more list elements.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=241&faq=5&shw=1#n5
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Časté otázky)

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=739
  (The Main page / Čo ponúka program / Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie /
  Výučba na vysokej škole)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=26
  (The Main page / Knižnica / Prezentácie)

Slight failure: Incorrect structure of the lists.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 4: The Language setting.

4.3 Set default language of document. If multiple language versions are available, then conforming alternate versions are required for each language offered.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page + related pages)

Important failure: The language of document is not defined (using lang="en" xml:lang="en" instead of lang="sk" xml:lang="sk").

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 5: Tables.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 6: Robust – Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

6.2 For all user interface components (including but not limited to: form elements, links and components generated by scripts), the name and role can be programmatically determined; states, properties, and values that can be set by the user can be programmatically set; and notification of changes to these items is available to user agents, including assistive technologies.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page)

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=41
  (The Main page / Ako získať grant)

Important failure: The focus state of a user interface component not being programmatically determinable or no notification of change of focus state available.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 7: Enough Time – Provide users enough time to read and use content.

Criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 8: Operable – User interface components and navigation must be operable.

8.2 Provide universal keyboard input, make all functionality available from a keyboard.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page + related pages)

Important failure: Content cannot be operated through a keyboard or keyboard interface.

8.3 When the order of the HTML source matches the visual order of the Web page, tabbing through the content follows the visual layout of the content.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page + related pages)

Important failure: Focus not visible.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 9: Compatible: Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies.

9.4 Web page can be navigated sequentially and the navigation sequences affect meaning or operation, focusable components receive focus in an order that preserves meaning and operability.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page + related pages)

Important failure: Incorrect using of the tabIndex property.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 10: Temporary solutions.

10.1 Changes of context are initiated only by user request or a mechanism is available to turn off such changes.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=21
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Aktuality)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=70
  (The Main page / Čo ponúka program / Prehľad)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/ecvet/index.php?sw=4&log=0
  (The Main page / Čo ponúka program / Odborné vzdelávanie a príprava / Európsky systém prenosu kreditov v odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave (ECVET) / Kontakt

Slight failure: Missing information about opening of the new windows that are not requested by the user, frequently occurring issue.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 11: Using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and W3C Recommendation

Criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 12: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are.

12.4 Labeling a form control by setting its accessible name.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=41&submenu=7&vyzva=0
  (The Main page / Ako získať grant / Výsledky výberu)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=51
  (The Main page / Mám projekt / Číslo projektu)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=31
  (The Main page / Knižnica / Publikácie)

Slight failure: Form fields are not correctly interconnected with descriptions, frequently occurring issue.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 13: Providing an opportunity to navigate sites.

13.3 Providing a Table of Contents, providing a site map, using the link element and navigation tools.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page + related pages)

  Important failure: Missing site map, frequently occurring issue.

13.6 Grouping blocks of repeated material in a way that can be skipped. A mechanism is available to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple Web pages.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/
  (The Main page + related pages)

Slight failure: Missing of a mechanism to bypass block of content.

13.11 a) The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its programmatically determined link context, except where the purpose of the link would be ambiguous to users in general.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=21
  (The Main page / Všeobecné / Aktuality)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=71
  (The Main page / Čo ponúka program / Školské vzdelávanie)
- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/ELL/vyzva.php
  (The Main page / Čo ponúka program / Európske iniciatívy / Európska
  značka pre jazyky / Výzva)

Slight failure: Providing link context only in content that is not related to the link, missing information about size of the target document.

13.15 Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose.

Tested sample:

- http://www.erasmusplus.sk/index.php?sw=64&swm=50
  (The Main page / Kontakty)

Slight failure: The title of a Web page not identifying the contents.

Other criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

Principle 14: Documents have understandable structure.

Criteria are relied upon to meet conformance or the page does not include this kind of content.

The Slovak National Agency for Erasmus+ program was informed of the results of testing the accessibility of the website. They pledged to remedy the deficiencies in the short term.

APPENDIX 1 - COVER LETTER AND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH VI STUDENTS

Dear student,

The European Blind Union (EBU) and the International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) decided to launch a common project on accessibility of mobility programs for students with visual impairment in Europe. This project has two phases – we are at the first phase and our purpose is to write a state-of-the-art report of the present situation in the field of accessibility of mobility programs for blind and partially sighted students of all over Europe.

For completion of our goals we have asked the ELTE University (Budapest – Hungary) to carry out the research. We would like to ask you to participate in the pilot research of this topic in the form of a semi-structured interview in English.

Along with the ELTE researcher a working group was set up consisting of – Krisztina Kovács (representative of International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment), Tímea Hóková (representative of European Blind Union) and Elena Mendelová (representative of Support Centre for Students with Special Needs at the Comenius University in Bratislava). I received your contact through this working group as I was informed that you took part in Erasmus+ mobility programme.

If you agree in participating in a semi-structured interview please give me your Skype name and your availability (the best till the end of 2015) so that I can contact you since I am from Budapest.

The interview will take about 30 minutes. It will be recorded and only used for further analysis without mentioning your name. After this analysis I will of course delete the recording.

Questions

1. Type of visual impairment:

- Blind

- Low vision

- Profound low vision

- Mild low vision (partially sighted)

- Multiple disability (visual + other disability)

2. Which program did you attend (Erasmus, Erasmus+, Ceepus etc.) - Please describe:

3. How was the preparation for your stay abroad?
    - Did you have some consultations with professionals (disability coordinators, social counsellors … etc.)?
    - Did you ask for experience other VI peers?
    - Did you attend any courses/trainings to improve your skills related to – computers, assistive technology use, mobility and orientation …
    - Anything else? …

4. How did you choose the university?
    - Study programme
    - Helpful disability coordinator – of the home / host university
    - Accessible information on the web
    - Good services for VI students
    - Other (please specify):

5. Did you ask for extra grant and did you get any on the basis of your disability?
   - Was it enough or not?
   - What did you spend it for?

6. How long did you stay? And at which university did you study?
   - What did you study?
   - Did you manage to bring any credits?

7. How did you solve mobility and orientation issues at the university / campus?
   - Did you contact an organization to support VI people?
   - Did you get any support directly from the university?
   - Was this service free of charge?
   - Did you travel together with your peer / assistant / other?

8. Could you please describe what you liked and what helped you with your accessible study abroad?
   - Accessibility at the university
   - Was the learning material accessible?

9. Could you please describe what you didn't like and what barriers did you face?

10. Did you find any friends during your stay abroad?
   - What did you like to do during your leasure-time?

11. Did your study and stay abroad meet your expectations?

12. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

Thank you!

APPENDIX 2 - COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DISABILITY COORDINATORS

Dear Sir / Madame,

The European Blind Union (EBU) and the International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) decided to launch a common project on accessibility of mobility programs for students with visual impairment in Europe. This project has two phases – we are at the first phase and our purpose is to write a state-of-the-art report of the present situation in the field of accessibility of mobility programs for blind and partially sighted students of all over Europe.

For completion of our goals we have asked the ELTE University (Budapest – Hungary) to carry out the research.

We would like to ask you to participate in the pilot research of this topic in the form of a questionnaire in English.

Along with the ELTE researcher a working group was set up consisting of – Krisztina Kovács (representative of International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment), Tímea Hóková (representative of European Blind Union) and Elena Mendelová (representative of Support Centre for Students with Special Needs at the Comenius University in Bratislava). I received your contact through this working group.

I would like to kindly ask you to fill in the enclosed form till the end of 2015.

Questionnaire

- Is there any available information for students with visual impairment on your university and study programs in English?

   YES   NO

- Is there any accessible information for VI (visual impaired) students on your university websites and the academic information system?

   YES   NO

- Do you have any experience with VI students?

   YES   NO

- If YES, how many incoming and outgoing VI students did you work with?

- Are there any available support services for VI students?

   YES   NO

- If YES, what services are there:
  - mobility and orientation training
  - production of digital texts
  - Braille production
  - video narration
  - tactile graphics
  - note taking
  - other: computer pool

- Do international students need to pay for the services?

   YES   NO

   Are the services paid for international students?

   YES   NO

- Does your university offer students with VI lessons organized exclusively for them?

  YES   NO

- Are international students with VI provided individualized conditions (which meet their special needs) during the lessons?

  YES   NO

- Does your university have a support centre for students with disability including VI students?

  YES   NO

- Does your university have trained staffs (teachers and/or staff) prepared especially for VI students?

  YES   NO

- How does your university prepare for supporting the study of VI students?
  - Workshops for teachers and other staff
  - other:

- Are there any availability of landmarks at your university and related areas to ease physical accessibility?

  YES   NO

- If YES, what are these:
  - tactile signs
  - audible signs
  - visual signs
  - 2 of them: ……………………………………………………….
  - all

- Is guide dog allowed at the university and related areas?

YES   NO

- Does any assistive technology available at the library for VI students?

YES   NO

- If YES, what are these:
    - CCTV - desktop video magnifier
    - screen-reader software
    - scanner
    - other:

- Does your university have any equipment for rent?

YES   NO

- If YES, what are these:
    - laptop
    - magnifier
    - other:

- Does your university have ESN (Erasmus Student Network) mentors to support VI students?

- Do you have any additional comments or suggestion?

    ………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for answering the questions!

APPENDIX 3 - COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONS FOR THE EU OFFICER

Dear Sir / Madame,

The European Blind Union (EBU) and the International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) have decided to launch a common project on accessibility of mobility programs for students with visual impairment in Europe. This project has two phases – we are at the first phase and our purpose is to write a state-off-the-art report of the present situation in the field of accessibility of mobility programs for blind and partially sighted students of all over Europe.

For completion of our goals we have asked the ELTE University to carry out the research. We would like to ask you to answer several questions related to the Erasmus+ programme and the involvement of students with visual impairment.

Along with the ELTE researcher a working group was set up consisting of – Krisztina Kovács (representative of the International Council for Education and Re/habilitation of People with Visual Impairment), Tímea Hóková (representative of the European Blind Union) and Elena Mendelová (representative of the Support Centre for Students with Special Needs at the Comenius University in Bratislava). I have received your contact through this working group.

I would like to kindly ask you to answer the following questions via e-mail if possible by the end of 2015.

Do you have any relevant statistics on students with visual impairment who participated in Erasmus or Erasmus+ programme in the last 10 years from all EU countries?

If not, do you have any other data on the participation of students with disabilities in general in the past 10 years?

Or could you please provide me with a link containing these statistic data?

Does the EU have any policy to promote the inclusion of students with visual impairment (or with disabilities in general) in mobility programs?

If yes please give me the link where I can study it.

Do you have an action plan to promote the participation of students with disabilities into the mobility programs for the next period?

If yes, please give me the link or shortly describe this action plan.

When planning for the new Erasmus+ programme did you collaborate with any European organizations of persons with disabilities (E.G. European Disability Forum, European Blind Union, European Agency on Special Needs and Inclusive Education etc.)? Can you please shortly describe in which way?