SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study

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Edited by

Ulrich Teichler
Jean Gordon
Friedhelm Maiworm

Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung
Universität GH Kassel, Germany
(wz1@hochschulforschung.uni-kassel.de)

European Institute of Education and Social Policy,
Paris, France
(ieeps@dauphine.fr)

Gesellschaft für Empirische Studien
Kassel, Germany
(GES.Maiworm@t-online.de)

IN CO-OPERATION WITH

Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies,
University of Twente, Netherlands

European Forum on Education Administration

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1. Aims and Procedures of the Evaluation Study

By Jean Gordon, Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler

1.1 The SOCRATES Programme and Its Evaluation Schedule

The European Community action programme on education, SOCRATES, was adopted by the European Parliament and Council Decision No 819/95/EC of March 1995 for the period from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1999. Several former educational programmes and actions (ERASMUS, LINGUA, EURYDICE and ARION) were integrated, revised and supplemented, and new programme components were established (notably COMENIUS and OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING). Hence, the SOCRATES programme set in motion the implementation of an overall programme in the field of education at a European level.

The general objective of the SOCRATES programme is described in Article 1 of the Council Decision regarding the establishment of SOCRATES: “This programme is intended to contribute to the development of quality education and training and the creation of an open European area for cooperation in education”. In the perspective of lifelong learning, its is to optimise the skills and competencies of the citizens of Europe, to strengthen equal opportunities and to encourage the development of active and responsible citizenship with a European dimension. These general objectives are made operational by nine specific aims described in Article 3 of the Council Decision:

“a) to develop the European dimension in education at all levels so as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each Member State;

b) to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement of the knowledge of the languages of the European Union, and in particular those which are least widely used and least taught, leading to greater understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the European Union, and to promote the intercultural dimension of education;

c) to promote wide-ranging and intensive cooperation between institutions in the Member States at all levels of education, enhancing their intellectual and teaching potential;

d) to encourage the mobility of teachers, so as to promote a European dimension in studies and to contribute to the qualitative improvement of their skills;

e) to encourage mobility of students, enabling them to complete part of their studies in another Member State, so as to contribute to the consolidation of the European dimension in education;

f) to encourage contacts among pupils in the European Union, and to promote the European dimension in their education;

g) to encourage the academic recognition of diplomas, periods of study and other qualifications, with the aim of facilitating the development of an open area for cooperation in education;

h) to encourage open and distance education in the context of the activities of this programme;

i) to foster exchanges of information and experience so that the diversity and specificity of the educational systems in the Member States become a source of enrichment and of mutual stimulation."

Article 8(1) of the Council Decision obliges the European Commission to undertake a continuous monitoring and evaluation of the SOCRATES programme and Article 8(2) stipulates that the Commission must "submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, before 30 September 1998, an interim report on the launch phase, and before 30 September 2000, a final report on the implementation of this programme."

In Spring 1999, the European Commission invited to tender for the external evaluation of the SOCRATES Community action programme in the field of education in general (DGXXII/05/99) as well as for specific aspects of the SOCRATES programme (DGXXII/06/99). Following the call for tender, the European Commission awarded a contract to the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work at the University of Kassel, Germany, to carry out the overall evaluation of the SOCRATES programme, subsequently called "SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation". Additionally, three specific evaluations were commissioned which cover the participation in the SOCRATES programme of persons with specific educational needs (European Agency for Special Needs, Copenhagen), the impact of Erasmus in the area of engineering (Sociedade portuguesa de inovação, Porto), and the results of Comenius Action 1 and Lingua Action E (Deloitte and Touche, Brussels).

1.2 The Organisation and Management of the Evaluation Study

The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation is coordinated by Professor Ulrich Teichler, director of the Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung (WZ I), Universität GH Kassel (Germany). The deputy coordinator is Friedhelm Maiworm, head of the Gesellschaft für Empirische Studien (GES), Kassel (Germany).

Most of the evaluation study is divided into two sub-projects:

- Sub-project A on ERASMUS was undertaken by the team in Kassel (project director: Ulrich Teichler, in cooperation with Friedhelm Maiworm),

- Sub-project B on COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning, Adult Education and Questions of common policy interest was undertaken by the European Institute of Education and Social Policy (EIESP), Paris (France) (project director: Jean Gordon).

The sub-projects cooperated closely in conceptual and administrative matters. Moreover, they jointly undertook the study of European policies and activities at national level related to the SOCRATES programme and the survey at European level. Finally, both sub-projects closely cooperated in writing those parts of the final report which are transversal to all or some strands of the programme.

Within the framework of sub-project A, the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) of the University of Twente, Enschede (Netherlands) (coordinator: Marijk van der Wende) have taken over various functions, in particular the analysis of policies in the national context and the results of the work of the Thematic Networks. Sub-project B was supported by the European Forum on Education Administration (EFEA) through the organisation of a workshop and various consultancy activities.

Both projects involved other staff members of these institutions who participated in the information gathering and the analysis: Annette Fleck and Christoph Gilleßen (GES), Anne Klemperer and Sander Lotze (CHEPS), David Parkes and Stéphanie Caillé (EIESP). The international team brought together organisations and experts from nine countries: as consultants and interviewers: Astrid Berg (Denmark), John Heywood (Ireland), Barbara M. Kehm (Germany), Petri Lempinen (Finland), Montserrat Santos Sanz (Spain), Adrain Stoica (Romania), Pina Scalera (Italy) and Eva Michelidaki (Greece). Christina Keyes (EIESP) supported the study by editing the texts and Sybille Meyer (WZ I) by taking over the financial administration of the project.

1.3 Major Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

According to the invitation to tender, the main purposes of the SOCRATES evaluation are :

- to assess how far the objectives of the programme have been achieved,
- to provide quantitative and qualitative data regarding results and the range and types of impact on the target population and the education systems,
- to assess the effectiveness and the efficiency of the organisational and operational mechanisms.

The key questions to be addressed are as follows:

(1) *The impact of the programme:* It should be analysed generally and for each Action with regard to the overall objectives set down in the decision to establish SOCRATES, as well as the specific objectives for each Action. The analysis was expected to integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches.

(2) *Use of Community funds:* The evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the use of Community funds to reach the objectives.

(3) *Implementation:* The evaluation was expected to examine whether or not the structures and mechanisms established for the implementation were appropriate and efficient.

(4) *Dissemination:* Results and processes should highlight the types, range and target audiences of dissemination to create a multiplier effect.

Overall, the evaluation study was expected to examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency as well as the utility and sustainability of SOCRATES. Hence, a complex methodology was called for, establishing the relevant qualitative and quantitative evaluation criteria to be implemented.

1.4 Project Design

1.4.1 The Initial Evaluation Proposal

The evaluation study envisaged by the evaluation team involved a highly complex methodology, integrating four broad dimensions:

- the overall agenda of assessing the major organisational and operational aspects, the activities undertaken and the outcomes and impacts,
- the many actions within the SOCRATES programme,
- the various levels of actions (European, national, institutional, departmental, individual), and
- the variations between countries and possibly other dimensions (e.g. subject areas).

Since one feared a dilution of the essential issues if the evaluation study was too broad, some strategic options were suggested. Four are described below.

The first was to take the commonly expressed opinions of the actors and beneficiaries about the strengths and weaknesses of SOCRATES as a starting point of the analysis. As the key reasons for the programme's popularity did not need not be reiterated, the evaluation team only listed typical criticisms, the validity of which they aimed to verify. They were: over-bureaucratisation, under-funding (resources too thinly spread out), superficiality (emphasis on visible actions rather than on substantial educational change), 'fuzziness' of the overall configuration of activities, mix of over- and under-steering, the quality versus the spread dilemma for various areas of activities and finally the "innovation trap" (conflict between continuation of successful components and shift of funds towards new activities).

Secondly, the team intended to analyse the SOCRATES activities from a development point of view. The question was whether or not the same activities would continue to be supported.

Thus, the evaluation study sought to focus on possible improvements over time with the same goals and procedures. But the question could be asked whether or not a change of goals and measures would be the most suitable next step for the development of European educational activities. It was felt that this issue could be addressed notably with respect to ERASMUS because it had the longest history and the early development of ERASMUS was explained in-depth by various studies.

Thirdly, the evaluation study aimed to take into account a broad range of goals and expectations. It was not viewed as sufficient to examine SOCRATES simply from the point of view of the goals in the Council decision. Moreover, it was considered appropriate to examine the extent to which the programme had been shaped by informal goals and hidden agendas by those responsible for it and to what extent the goals of the beneficiaries came into play, i.e. does SOCRATES provide room for bottom-up strategies?

Fourthly, the decision was taken to collect information on the actors‘ and beneficiaries’ experiences and views, in addition to statistics and documents. A comparison of the different standpoints helped to provide detailed knowledge and the necessary distance from the specific value judgements of individual groups of respondents and interviewees. But this meant that it would not be possible to spend the limited time and financial resources on collecting information about other persons of interest, e.g. the reasons for non-participation. However, the authors suggest to carry out an in-depth study on non-participation as one of the evaluation activities during SOCRATES II.

Finally, some areas of SOCRATES could not be included in the analysis because this would have required additional expertise and budget. The evaluation team therefore decided not to examine EURYDICE, the NARICs and ARION, nor the activities set up in the framework of exchange of information and experience. This decision was taken not the least because other methodologies would have to be chosen and other persons would have to be addressed. From the authors’ point of view, it would be desirable to commission specific evaluation studies in the near future.

1.4.2 Adjustment to Major Thrusts and Methods

From the outset, an agreement was reached between the Directorate General Education and Culture and the contractor that the design of the evaluation study was open to some modifications during the early stages. It was agreed that the specification would be readjusted during the first two months in order to take on board suggestions by the European Commission and possibly by the permanent advisory bodies and ad-hoc advisory groups of the SOCRATES programme.

Several meetings took place with the Liaison Group, made up of educational experts and representatives of various stakeholder groups, as well as with various units of DG Education and Culture and the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office supported by telephone

conversations and exchange of e-mails. All these activities led to a re-design of the programme of individual studies and to valuable modifications of the substantive elements of various individual studies and of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study as a whole. Hence, the following modifications were made:

(1) The COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL, Adult Education part of the evaluation was strengthened in the design of the inquiries.

(2) The studies of COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and Adult Education addressed more specifically the features of the individual actions.

(3) The analysis of Adult Education was substantially developed, taking into account the design of the new action GRUNDTVIG.

(4) Issues of teacher training received more attention, notably through studies on COMENIUS 3.1 and LINGUA B. This addition was made because a specific evaluation project envisaged in this area had not been commissioned.

(5) In the analysis of COMENIUS 2, where possible, the focus for the target population will be on Gypsies and children of migrant workers and, for the themes, the focus was put on intercultural education.

(6) The long-term impact of ERASMUS was given greater weight by including an additional survey of former graduates.

(7) Close links between the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study and the three specific evaluation studies were established, partly through collaborative data gathering and, more generally, through exchange of information.

(8) More attention was given to the role played by the institutional environment in the processes and outcomes of SOCRATES.

(9) As a result of this discussion, the evaluation study also raised the question of how the evaluation and monitoring of SOCRATES could be improved.

In addition, the discussion served to raise awareness about various general issues of the SOCRATES programme, such as the benefits and drawbacks of its overall composition, the contribution of equality of opportunity and changes in the use of languages.

1.4.3 Methods Used for the Evaluation

The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study used a wide range of modes of information-gathering. Previous studies, available statistics and various reports submitted by the beneficiaries were analysed. Questionnaire surveys were undertaken with large numbers of persons. When previous studies had been undertaken this facilitated standardising approaches. Finally, interviews and workshops played a key role in the data collection where

complex responses were asked for and a confidential environment of questions and answers was essential. They aimed to elicit reflection on possible future directions for SOCRATES.

Table 1
Individual Studies Undertaken in the Framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study

(A) ERASMUS

- (A1) Analysis of ERASMUS administrative databases
- (A2) Analysis of applications and reports of Thematic Networks
- (A3) Analysis of documents and workshops with coordinators and partners in Curriculum Development (CD) and Intensive Programme (IP) projects
- (A4) Postal survey of ERASMUS institutional coordinators
- (A5) Postal survey of academic staff
- (A6) Postal survey of ERASMUS students 1998/89
- (A7) Survey of former ERASMUS students

(B) COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL, ADULT EDUCATION

- (B1) Analysis of the databases of COMENIUS 2 Transnational Cooperation Projects (TCPs)
- (B2) Postal survey of project coordinators in COMENIUS 2 TCPs
- (B3) Analysis of the databases of COMENIUS 3.1 TCPs
- (B4) Postal survey of project coordinators of COMENIUS 3.1 TCPs
- (B5) Analysis of the databases of LINGUA A TCPs
- (B6) Postal survey of project coordinators of LINGUA A TCPs
- (B7) Analysis of the databases of LINGUA D TCPs
- (B8) Postal survey of project coordinators of LINGUA D TCPs
- (B9) Analysis of the databases of ODL TCPs
- (B10) Postal survey of project coordinators of ODL TCPS
- (B11) Analysis of databases of Adult Education TCPs
- (B12) Postal survey of project coordinators of Adult Education TCPs
- (B13) Postal survey of teachers who followed a European training course under COMENIUS 3.2
- (B14) Postal survey of teachers who followed a European training course under LINGUA B
- (B15) Postal survey of LINGUA C assistants
- (B16) Interviews with project coordinators (COMENIUS 2; COMENIUS 3.1; LINGUA A; LINGUA D; ODL and ADULT EDUCATION)
- (B17) National and transnational workshops on selected issues concerning COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION

(C) The SOCRATES Programme

- (C1) Postal survey and interviews with key persons at the national level
- (C2) Interviews with key persons at the European level

The evaluation study comprised 26 individual studies (see Table 1). Altogether they provided a complex range of approaches and methodologies. Whereas the postal surveys played a major role in the sub-project on ERASMUS, interviews and workshops were very important in the sub-project on COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION. The different approaches reflected the various stages of development and degrees of participation in the respective chapters and actions of the SOCRATES programme.

Most of the individual studies had already been envisaged when the evaluation team submitted the tender. The subsequent discussion led to additional studies and surveys on ADULT EDUCATION, on teachers who received a grant to follow European training courses, and LINGUA C assistants, as well as a survey on former ERASMUS students several years after graduation.

1.5 Structure and Content of the Report

The seven chapters of the first section of the report address ERASMUS. Each chapter either focuses on particular groups of actors or beneficiaries (e.g. teachers at higher education institutions), specific activities (e.g. curriculum development and thematic networks) or sources of information (statistics). A final chapter summarises the findings and discusses their implications for the future. The second section includes an introductory chapter which presents the approach to the analysis of COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING, and ADULT EDUCATION and explores issues which have a bearing on these issues overall. There are individual chapters on each action and a final chapter in the section which summarises the findings and suggests improvements. The chapters of the third section address SOCRATES as a whole. Two chapters address experiences at the national level and the administration of the SOCRATES programme. Finally, an overall summary of the findings of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study and recommendations are presented. Table 2 provides brief abstracts of the chapters.

Table 2
Abstracts of the Chapters of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study

Chapter 2 provides a statistical overview of the participation of higher education institutions, the types of activities supported and of the profile of mobility within ERASMUS. It is primarily based on an analysis of the data provided by the SOCRATES Technical Assistants Office (TAO) on approved activities supported within Institutional Contracts.

Chapter 3 brings answers to the question of how key persons of the centre of the higher education institutions perceive their institutional policies, how SOCRATES is administered, and how the impacts of SOCRATES are assessed. More than half the higher education institutions that participated in SOCRATES in 1998/99 provided information on these issues by answering a specific questionnaire survey.

Chapter 4 describes the experiences and outcomes of student mobility from the perspective of students who spent an ERASMUS-supported period abroad in the academic year 1998/99. About 1,300 ERASMUS students returned the questionnaire and provided information on institutional support, living and studying conditions in the host country, academic and cultural achievements and recognition of study abroad. A comparison with a similar survey undertaken in the early 1990s makes it possible to measure, amongst other things, the change over time regarding the institutional support and recognition of academic achievements acquired abroad.

Chapter 5 analyses the impact of study abroad on the transition to work and on the early careers of former ERASMUS students. Participants in a major European survey of 1994/95 graduates who had spent a period of study in another European country were sent a second questionnaire in order to obtain specific information. Furthermore, the results of a longitudinal study on the second cohort of ERASMUS students (1988/89) were used to identify possible changes over time in the impact of student mobility on employment.

Chapter 6 focuses on the experiences of academic staff members involved in ERASMUS either in specific functions in the departments or at the central level of higher education institutions or as mobile teachers spending a short teaching period at one of the partner institutions. With the help of a questionnaire survey, more than 1,400 academic staff provided information on the changing role of academics in the transition from the former network-oriented ERASMUS to the institution-coordinated ERASMUS under the umbrella of SOCRATES, the conditions, activities and impacts of teaching staff mobility and the overall assessment of the ERASMUS programme by the academics.

Chapter 7 is concerned with changes in curricula, teaching and learning introduced through curriculum development projects and Thematic Networks supported during the first phase of SOCRATES. The major results on content, objectives, teaching and learning processes were analysed on the basis of interim and final reports provided by the coordinators of the projects to the European Commission.

Chapter 8 summarises the results described in chapters 2 to 7 related to different activities supported by ERASMUS, the actors and beneficiaries involved and different sources of information used for the evaluation.

Chapter 9 introduces Section II of the evaluation report. It presents the methodology used for the actions examined under sub-project B of the evaluation study (COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION). It then explores selected issues which have a bearing on these actions: policy and strategy, key elements in providing an identity, outcomes and dissemination, evaluation, sustainability.

Chapter 10 examines COMENIUS and presents the findings of the postal surveys and interviews undertaken and the workshops organised, as well as an analysis of the data provided by the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and the National Agencies. The analysis is presented by action and there is a summary of the important points at the end of each action.

Chapter 11 examines LINGUA and presents the findings of the postal surveys and interviews undertaken and the workshops organised, as well as an analysis of the data provided by the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and the National Agencies. The analysis is presented by action and there is a summary of the important points at the end of each action.

Chapter 12 examines OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and presents the findings of the postal surveys and interviews undertaken and the workshops organised, as well as an analysis of the data provided by the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels. There is a summary of the important points at the end of each action.

Chapter 13 examines ADULT EDUCATION and presents the findings of the postal surveys and interviews undertaken and the workshops organised, as well as an analysis of the data provided by the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels. There is a summary of the important points at the end of each action.

Chapter 14 concludes Section II of the report, picks up on the issues outlines in chapter 9 and compares them with the conclusions from the evaluation of the COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION actions. Recommendations are presented in the final section of the chapter.

Chapter 15 is concerned with the way in which European action programmes are implemented and managed at the national level, the role they play in the national policy context and the interaction between European programmes and national policies for internationalisation of higher education. Information was mainly gathered through personal interviews with key persons responsible for European policies or for the implementation of SOCRATES at the national level.

Chapter 16 addresses issues of the SOCRATES programme and its administration. The general characteristics of the programme are examined, e.g. the links between the large-scale programmes and the selective programmes, the logic of financial support and the perceived interaction between top-down and bottom-up policies. This is followed by an extensive discussion on the ways the SOCRATES programme is administered by the Commission.

Chapter 17 discusses the major issues addressed in the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study. Without listing the major findings of the individual chapters and sections, it summarises the findings regarding the goals, the framework and the administration of the programme as a whole, as well as outcomes of SOCRATES in terms of the major goals pursued. Finally, improvements to dissemination and evaluation are discussed.

1.6 Conditions Affecting the Concept, the Processes and Results of the Evaluation Study

The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study provides an opportunity to take stock of five years' experience, i.e. examining the goals, the financial and administrative setting, the educational activities and their outcomes and drawing conclusions regarding the future of SOCRATES. In order to understand the potentials and limits of this evaluation study, the conditions in which it was conducted must be taken into account. Eight observations deserve attention.

(1) Before the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study was completed and the experiences of the SOCRATES I period were summarised, the key decisions had already been made for SOCRATES II for the period 2001-2006. This evaluation study can therefore contribute to modifications within a given framework and address long-term future perspectives, but, by definition, it cannot enlighten key decisions about the major directions of SOCRATES II.

(2) But the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study is in some respects premature. In many areas, too few activities have been completed. Therefore, most activities cannot yet be analysed on the basis of final reports and visible impacts. Many activities within COMENIUS and OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING are still at an early stage of development. Also, the postponement of the transition of ERASMUS to a new setting under SOCRATES from 1995 to 1997 limits the opportunity of examining outcomes of pluriannual activities and gradual developments. Finally, the involvement of Central and Eastern European countries in SOCRATES is so recent that it cannot yet be fully evaluated.

(3) The evaluation study can draw from available statistical data, such as an interim evaluation addressing the state of affairs in 1997 and various specific evaluation studies. However, available information is scarce. Only a few SOCRATES activities are covered by satisfactory statistics. Efforts to establish a regular monitoring system are still at an early stage, and the thematic range of specific evaluation studies conducted in the latter half of the 1990s was small.

(4) The time span for conducting this evaluation study was short (for administrative reasons 10 months instead of the 12 envisaged in the call for tender), and the range of themes to be analysed was very broad. This was in part compensated by the experienced evaluators who were familiar with the substance and the methodology. But the limits of time and resources led to decisions to limit the themes under scrutiny. Not included were EURYDICE, the NARICs and ARION, or those activities set up in the framework of exchange of information and experience (which, it is hoped, could be addressed in future evaluation studies). Last but not least, the material gathered could not be analysed as comprehensively as would have been desirable.

(5) The major evaluation study was accompanied by three studies on special themes. The possible benefits for in-depth study of select areas were increased through cooperation

among the teams in charge, but the parallel timing of administering these studies did not allow for an integration of the findings into the major study because of the time press.

(6) The specifications of the evaluation study were defined in the early stages of the project through communication with experts and representatives of the European Commission. The evaluation study benefited both from the establishment of a Liaison Group made up of experts and stakeholders and from the diligent support of the person in charge in the Commission. But the concurrent major reorganisation within the Commission limited the possibilities of iterative improvement of the study through communication between those commissioning and those conducting the study.

(7) The evaluation study aimed to gather information from all the major groups of actors and beneficiaries. A mix of questionnaire surveys, interviews and seminars, as well as document analysis helped to collect fruitful information about the experiences and assessments of those involved and to compare their perspectives. A reiteration in 1999/2000 of questions already posed around 1990 made it possible to measure change over time in ERASMUS and thus contribute to a higher level of sophistication than customary in most evaluation studies of this kind. Also, it was possible to contact former ERASMUS students and compare their experiences with those of students going abroad with other means and those not going abroad.

Ideally, one would have liked to have undertaken more studies with a similar type of approach, e.g. direct assessment of educational achievements or comparisons with other similar support schemes and with non-participants. Monitoring and evaluation studies which could benefit in several respects from the experience of this evaluation study could be undertaken in the future.

(8) Many beneficiaries of SOCRATES and actors were willing to support the evaluation study by taking time to answer the questionnaires and participating in interviews or meetings. However, one cannot ignore some evaluation fatigue as a consequence of the high administrative and reporting workload put on participating institutions and the gradual normalisation or routine of ERASMUS which no longer guarantees enthusiastic participation in evaluation studies.

The authors of this study aimed to undertake a more comprehensive evaluation study of SOCRATES than any previous studies on the education programmes of the European Commission. Altogether, 26 studies were undertaken and some 10,000 persons provided information about their experiences. All levels of actors and most groups of beneficiaries were covered. Detailed information was gathered on the objectives, activities and the outcomes. The authors hope that this will stimulate a fruitful debate on possible further improvements of SOCRATES and the future of education in Europe.

2. Participation in ERASMUS: Figures and Patterns

By Friedhelm Maiworm

2.1 Sources of Information and Limitations of the Study

This chapter provides a statistical overview of the participation of institutions, students and academic staff members, and the ERASMUS activities supported during the first phase of SOCRATES. Largely due to the availability of data, but also because of the systematically late start of SOCRATES, the analysis focuses on the period since the Institutional Contract was introduced, i.e. the academic years 1997/98, 1998/99, and 1999/2000. The analysis is based on the following data:

- contract database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office (TAO) in Brussels,
- databases from National Agencies on realised student mobility 1997/98.

A database on ERASMUS students 1993/94 created by the Centre in Kassel was used to compare patterns of student mobility within the former ERASMUS Inter-University Cooperation Programmes (ICPs) and the Institutional Contracts (ICs),

Most of the statistics presented in this chapter are based on approved but not realised activities. Hardly any statistics on the latter are available because the final reports on ERASMUS activities undertaken within the Institutional Contracts were neither assessed by the Commission nor stored in a database at the time the evaluation was carried out . Especially in the cases of student and teaching staff mobility, we know from previous years that the real number of mobile persons is much lower than originally intended.

2.2 The Institutional Approach of SOCRATES

The integration of ERASMUS into SOCRATES was accompanied by a rearrangement of the institutional counterparts of the European Commission. In the former ERASMUS years, networks of departments of higher education institutions (Inter-University Cooperation Programmes (ICPs)) were provided financial support to organise the mobility of students and staff, curriculum development, and intensive programmes. Recipients of direct support from the Commission were single departments in each ICP. These coordinating departments were responsible for the allocation of the budget among the partner institutions and departments, as well as for the financial accountability *vis-à-vis* the Commission.

With the implementation of SOCRATES, this "department approach" was replaced by an "institutional approach", i.e. the counterparts of the Commission are now the centres of the higher education institutions. Each institution is requested to apply individually for financial

support and can be awarded an "Institutional Contract" from the Commission for a maximum of three years.

However, the transition from the department approach to the institutional approach took place only two years after the launching of SOCRATES. During the interim period, the support of Inter-University Cooperation Programmes was continued. Altogether, 2,673 ICPs were approved in 1995/96 and 2,483 in 1996/97.

The Institutional Contract was introduced in the academic year 1997/98. As Table 2.1 shows, the number of approved Institutional Contracts was 1,479 in the academic year 1997/98, 1,624 in 1998/99, and 1,764 in 1999/2000. The increase in the number of ICs is mainly due to the fact that institutions from certain Central and Eastern European Countries became eligible for participation in ERASMUS in 1998/99 and 1999/2000.

Concurrently, the vast majority of Institutional Contracts were renewed for a second and third year. Only about 5 to 8 per cent were not prolonged after the first year.

Table 2.1
Number of New and Renewed SOCRATES Institutional Contracts – by Academic Year (absolute numbers)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
New	1,479	259	201	1,939
Second year	-	1,365	244	1,609
Third year	-	-	1,319	1,319
Total	1,479	1,624	1,764	4,867

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office (TAO)

This chapter focuses on participation and activities supported within Institutional Contracts and refers to the years of transition from Inter-University Cooperation Programmes to Institutional Contracts in order to compare patterns of participation and mobility.

2.3 Participation of Countries

The number of countries which were eligible for ERASMUS support increased during the first phase of the SOCRATES programme:

- In 1995/96, 1996/97, and 1997/98, only the 15 Member States of the European Union and three countries of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA), i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, were eligible.

- In 1998/99, the pool of eligible countries grew with the inclusion of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Slovak Republic, as well as Cyprus, thus increasing the number of eligible countries to 24.

- In 1999/2000, a further extension took place by opening ERASMUS to higher education institutions in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovenia. Thus, the number of eligible countries grew to 29.

Most universities and other large institutions of higher education in the eligible countries participate in ERASMUS. The highest number of ICs was awarded to French institutions (about 20%), followed by Germany (about 15%), and the United Kingdom (about 11% of all awards).

As Table 2.2 shows, the number of eligible higher education institutions which were awarded an Institutional Contract slightly increased from 37 per cent in 1997/98 to 38 per cent in 1998/99 and 40 per cent in 1999/2000. As regards the individual countries, the quotas ranged from about 20 to more than 90 per cent in each year. With less than one third, the lowest contract rates could be observed for Portugal, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Austria, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. But two-thirds or more of the higher education institutions in Belgium, Spain, Greece, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, and most of the CEE countries were awarded an Institutional Contract in 1999/2000.

The participation rate in ERASMUS among the eligible institutions from individual countries in SOCRATES must be considered a weak indicator for the success of the programme for two reasons:

- The number of institutions actually participating in SOCRATES is higher than the number of institutions signing an Institutional Contract because some act as partner institutions only. From the overall number of about 3,100 higher education institutions listed in approved Institutional Contracts during the first three years of SOCRATES, 1,886 were contract holders and the remainder took part in the programme only as partner institutions.

- The quota of participating institutions is low in countries with many small colleges. Thus, a small number of institutions, e.g. in Spain and Italy, may represent a high number of students and study programmes offered.

Table 2.2
SOCRATES Institutional Contracts – by Country[1] and Academic Year (absolute numbers)

		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000	
	Eligible institutions	Institutional contracts		Institutional contracts		Institutional contracts	
	Number	Number	Participation rate*	Number	Participation rate*	Number	Participation rate*
AT	176	52	29.5	58	33.0	59	33.5
BE	97	93	95.9	79	81.4	77	79.4
DE	376	230	61.2	236	62.8	241	64.1
DK	239	80	33.5	87	36.4	88	36.8
ES	90	63	70.0	66	73.3	73	81.1
FI	391	94	24.0	77	19.7	77	19.7
FR	1,237	308	24.9	306	24.7	324	26.2
GR	48	31	64.6	31	64.6	33	68.8
IE	53	31	58.5	28	52.8	29	54.7
IT	155	87	56.1	91	58.7	96	61.9
LU	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	2	40.0
NL	115	66	57.4	66	57.4	63	54.8
PT	299	53	17.7	67	22.4	71	23.7
SE	57	50	87.7	48	84.2	40	70.2
UK	568	189	33.3	188	33.1	192	33.8
LI	3	1	33.3	2	66.7	2	66.7
IS	11	8	72.7	8	72.7	7	63.6
NO	63	41	65.1	40	63.5	42	66.7
CY	10	-	-	2	20.0	7	70.0
EU and EFTA	3,993	1,479	37.1	1,482	37.2	1,523	38.2
BG	36	-	-	-	-	8	22.2
CZ	27	-	-	22	81.5	23	85.2
EE	14	-	-	-	-	10	71.4
LT	24	-	-	-	-	16	66.7
LV	22	-	-	-	-	13	59.1
HU	86	-	-	36	41.9	44	51.2
PL	153	-	-	46	30.1	76	49.7
RO	49	-	-	30	61.2	32	65.3
SI	10	-	-	-	-	5	50.0
SK	21	-	-	8	38.1	14	66.7
CEE	442	-	-	142	42.3	241	54.5
Total	4,435	1,479	37.1	1,624	37.6	1,764	39.8

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office
*Per cent of eligible institutions

[1] AT Austria, BE Belgium, BG Bulgaria, CH Switzerland, CY Cyprus, CZ Czech Republic, DE Germany, DK Denmark, EE Estonia, ES Spain, FI Finland, FR France, GR Greece, HU Hungary, IE Ireland, IS Iceland, IT Italy, LI Liechtenstein, LT Lithuania, LU Luxembourg, LV Latvia, MT Malta, NL Netherlands, NO Norway, PL Poland, PT Portugal, RO Romania, SE Sweden, SI Slovenia, SK Slovak Republic, UK United Kingdom

The Institutional Contracts are based on bilateral agreements between the contract holder and the partner institutions from other eligible countries. With the exception of CEE countries and a few smaller EU and EFTA countries, most countries participated through one or more institutions in at least half the Institutional Contracts. As Table 2.3 shows, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France were most strongly represented (80% or more).

Table 2.3
Participation of Countries in SOCRATES Institutional Contracts – by Academic Year (percentages)

	Academic year			Total
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
AT	48.9	51.3	50.1	50.2
BE	64.6	65.0	62.8	64.1
DE	82.3	83.6	83.0	83.0
DK	55.6	55.0	53.7	54.7
ES	74.3	74.3	74.3	74.3
FI	66.2	66.0	64.8	65.6
FR	82.0	81.0	79.1	80.6
GR	51.8	51.5	50.4	51.2
IE	51.0	46.5	43.5	46.8
IT	64.2	64.4	62.8	63.8
LU	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8
NL	70.2	69.7	67.8	69.1
PT	56.7	54.9	55.2	55.6
SE	60.4	60.1	58.1	59.5
UK	88.4	85.0	81.4	84.8
CH	2.8	.6	.7	1.3
LI	.1	.2	.2	.2
IS	11.3	11.1	11.0	11.1
NO	44.8	42.3	40.0	42.3
BG	.0	.0	3.6	1.3
CY	.0	2.8	4.9	2.7
CZ	.1	20.0	26.2	16.2
EE	.0	.0	6.5	2.4
HU	.1	23.3	31.7	19.3
LT	.0	.0	8.2	3.0
LV	.0	.0	6.3	2.3
MT	.1	.0	.1	.1
PL	.0	24.4	37.1	21.6
RO	.1	19.7	25.2	15.8
SI	.0	.1	5.0	1.8
SK	.0	3.7	9.5	4.7
(n)	(1,479)	(1,624)	(1,764)	(4,867)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

On average, each Institutional Contract covers the international cooperation of institutions from 10 countries. However, there are large differences between the individual contracts in this respect. A maximum of 5 countries could be observed in about one quarter of the contracts, 6-10 countries in another quarter, 11-14 in the third quarter, and 15 or more countries in the remaining quarter.

The growing cooperation between institutions from EU and EFTA countries on the one hand and the CEE countries on the other is underlined by the fact that two- thirds of the Institutional Contracts in 1999/2000 cover institutions from both regions. Information provided in interviews suggests that the TEMPUS programme played a major role in establishing the ties that facilitated a rapid integration in SOCRATES.

2.4 Range of Activities and Financial Support

The SOCRATES Institutional Contracts cover a broad range of possible cooperation activities:

- Organisation of student mobility (OMS),
- Teaching staff mobility (TS),
- Introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS),
- Curriculum development:
  - curricula at initial or intermediate level (CDI),
  - programmes at advanced level (CDA),
  - modules focusing on the history, society, culture, politics, or economics of other European countries (EM),
  - integrated language courses (ILC),
- Intensive programmes.

As Table 2.4 shows, almost all Institutional Contracts included financial support for the organisation of student mobility and the vast majority included teaching staff mobility. Financial support for the introduction of ECTS is provided by more than half the contracts. This stresses the importance of the implementation of formal recognition mechanisms by the participating institutions and the European Commission.

The relatively low proportions of ICs which comprise the development of curricula or intensive programmes are misleading, because only the coordinating institutions are taken into account. The overall number of institutions involved is substantially higher. For example, we heard of estimates according to which some 30 per cent of all institutions participating in

SOCRATES between 1997/98 and 1999/2000 were engaged in curriculum development either as coordinator or as a partner institution.

Table 2.4
Activities Supported by SOCRATES Institutional Contracts – by Academic Year (percentages)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
Student mobility (OMS)	97.3	98.3	96.8	97.4
Introduction of ECTS	51.9	58.0	55.9	55.4
Teaching staff mobility (TS)	81.0	85.8	88.8	85.4
Curriculum development (CDI, CDA, EM, ILC)*	11.6	13.2	10.9	11.9
Intensive programmes**	13.3	12.5	12.5	12.8
(n)	(1,463)	(1,608)	(1,752)	(4,823)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

* Percentage of institutions coordinating at least one single CD of IP among all institutions signing an IC

The average ERASMUS support per institution awarded by Institutional Contracts was about €17,000 in 1997/98 and about €20,000 each in 1998/99 and in 1999/2000. These figures do not include the mobility grants for students because student grants were administered by National Agencies.

In comparing these figures with the amount applied for by the higher education institutions we note that only 25 per cent on average was finally awarded. The average amount called for in the applications dropped after the initially high expectations of 1997/98 were not met. This is the prime cause for the increase from 12 per cent to 32 per cent of the ratio of grants that were awarded in relation to grants that were applied for (see Table 2.5).

Table 2.5
Budgets Requested and Awarded in the Framework of Institutional Contracts – by Academic Year (mean)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
Budget requested (Euro)	173,635	113,373	93,874	125,538
Budget awarded (Euro)	16,930	19,983	19,615	18,941
Mean of ratios * of grant awarded to grant requested (%)	12.8	27.7	32.0	24.6
(n)	(1,479)	(1,624)	(1,764)	(4,867)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office
* The ratios of grants that were awarded in relation to grants that were requested are calculated separately for each individual institution. The table shows the mean of the individual ratios.

The average level of budgets for individual activities per institution of higher education were €3,533 for the introduction of ECTS, €6,281 for organisation of student mobility, €7,239 for teaching staff mobility, €16,001 for intensive programmes, and €22,206 for curriculum development (see Table 2.6). As already mentioned, the budgets for intensive programmes and for curriculum development had to be shared between the coordinating institution and their partner institutions.

By and large, a slight increase in the average budgets per activity could be observed. The only exception is the budget for teaching staff mobility, which decreased from €7,755 in 1998/99 to €6,730 in 1999/2000.

On average, funds made available for each mobile student named in the successful application increased from €68 in 1997/98 to about €105 in the following years. In the calculation of the OMS-budget, an economy-of-scale factor was employed, i.e. the higher the number of mobile students, the less the average support per student.

Table 2.6
Budgets Awarded for Individual Activities Within Institutional Contracts – by Academic Year (mean of Institutional Contracts including respective activities)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
Student mobility (OMS)	5,146	6,713	6,803	6,281
(n)	(1,377)	(1,573)	(1,690)	(4,640)
Introduction of ECTS	3,252	3,385	3,892	3,533
(n)	(760)	(932)	(980)	(2,672)
Teaching staff mobility (TS)	7,305	7,755	6,730	7,239
(n)	(1,159)	(1,375)	(1,549)	(4,083)
Curriculum development (CDI, CDA, EM, ILC)	20,215	22,131	23,987	22,206
(n)	(158)	(195)	(185)	(538)
Intensive programmes (IP)	13,446	16,050	18,195	16,001
(n)	(191)	(199)	(218)	(608)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

On average, €244 were made available per mobile teacher named in the successful application in the academic year 1997/98, €300 in 1998/99, and €263 in 1999/2000. Institutions participating in curriculum projects either as coordinators or as partners could expect a SOCRATES support of about €2,650 per year.

Data on realised ERASMUS student mobility provided by the National Agencies suggest that, in 1997/98, each ERASMUS student was awarded a grant of €959 on average to cover the additional costs for the period abroad (€153 on average per month). The overall grant is

€132 lower (the monthly grant by about €20) than in the academic year 1993/94 for which respective figures were available.

Substantial differences in the level of student grants could be observed by home country. While students from Austria, Belgium, Spain, and Finland received less than €100 per month they received more than €300 in Greece and Iceland, and more than €800 in Sweden.

Table 2.7
Amount of Actual ERASMUS Student Grant 1997/98 – by Country of Home Institution (mean in Euro)

Country of home institution	Total grant	Monthly grant
AT	592	91
BE	442	86
DE	863	121
DK	584	113
ES	707	98
FI	410	82
FR	788	111
GR	1,595	318
IE	845	124
IT	1,120	166
NL	697	135
PT	1,389	237
SE	4,439	806
UK	891	148
IS	1,949	323
NO	734	151
Total	959	153

Source: Data provided by the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office (grants) and by the National Agencies on realised ERASMUS student mobility

2.5 Bilateral Cooperation Arrangements

Higher education institutions applying for a SOCRATES Institutional Contract must establish bilateral cooperation arrangements with eligible partner institutions in other European countries. According to the database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office, 46.6 bilateral arrangements are made on average per Institutional Contract. However, large differences in the number of arrangements could be observed. As Table 2.8 shows, about half the institutions cooperate with at most 20 partner institutions. A further 20 per cent of the contracts comprise up to 50 partners, 15 per cent up to 100 partners, and 15 per cent more than 100. No significant changes in this respect could be seen during the period under observation.

The number of partner institutions is closely correlated with the size of the higher education institutions in terms of numbers of enrolled students. Smaller institutions with at most 500 students on average established only about 10 bilateral cooperation arrangements, while large institutions with more than 20,000 students cooperated with 150 partner institutions on average in the framework of ERASMUS.

Institutions in the United Kingdom (on average 16% of the bilateral arrangements), Germany (14%), France (12%), and Spain (10%) were most frequently represented in ICs, while most other countries were represented on average by less than 5 per cent of the partner institutions.

Table 2.8
Number of Bilateral Cooperation Arrangements Between Higher Education Institutions – by Academic Year (absolute numbers and mean)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
1 - 5	17	18	20	18
6 - 10	15	12	13	14
11 - 20	17	19	16	17
21 - 50	20	21	21	20
51 - 100	16	15	14	15
More than 100	15	16	15	15
Total	100	100	100	100
(n)	(1,449)	(1,594)	(1,739)	(4,782)
Average number of partner institutions	45.9	47.0	46.9	46.6

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Higher education institutions in the CEE countries are often represented in Institutional Contracts, as shown above. Table 2.9 indicates, however, that the spread of partners by country is somewhat lower than on the part of institutions from EU and EFTA countries. Notably, institutions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania primarily cooperate with institutions in Finland. As regards the larger EU countries, German institutions are over-represented as partners in all CEE countries, while the proportion of British institutions is below average. French institutions are most common partners of Romanian institutions (31%) but play a minor role for other CEE institutions.

Among EU and EFTA institutions, we note cooperation between institutions from neighbouring countries. Also, common or similar languages play an important role.

2.6 Student Mobility

During the first phase of SOCRATES, the "estimated" number of mobile ERASMUS students, i.e. the number of students named in successful applications, increased from about 160,000 in 1995/96 to about 220,000 in 1999/2000. This corresponds to an annual increase of about 9 per cent. Part of this increase (about 2%) is due to the opening up of SOCRATES to CEE institutions.

As Table 2.10 shows, the average number of ERASMUS student applications per SOCRATES Institutional Contract is more or less constant at about 123 over three academic years. More than half the ICs envisaged at most 50 students. Only about one third comprised applications for more than 100 students.

Table 2.10
Number of "Estimated" Mobile Students* per Institutional Contract – by Academic Year (absolute numbers and mean)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
None	4	3	4	4
1 - 10	17	18	18	17
11 - 20	13	13	13	13
21 - 50	19	19	18	19
50 - 100	12	12	12	12
101 - 250	18	20	18	19
More than 250	16	15	16	16
Total	100	100	100	100
(n)	(1,484)	(1,625)	(1,765)	(4,875)
Average number of "estimated" ERASMUS students	122.3	122.4	123.4	122.7
Quota of "estimated" ERASMUS students**	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.8
(n)	(1,298)	(1,527)	(1,695)	(4,520)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office
* "Estimated" = number of students named in the successful application
** Percentage of "estimated" ERASMUS students among total enrolment

In about 30 per cent of the Institutional Contracts which were renewed for a first or second time, the number of estimated mobility grants decreased. In a further 10 per cent the number was constant and in the remaining 60 per cent it increased.

The quota of the "estimated" number of ERASMUS students among all students enrolled is 2.8 per cent. Taking into account

- a study period of 4 to 5 years on average,

- an actual mobility of almost half the "estimated" ratio of ERASMUS students,
- an enrolment of about 80 per cent of all students from eligible countries at higher education institutions with ICs,

we can estimate a participation rate of 5 per cent in ERASMUS student mobility over the course of study. This is about half the target envisaged in 1987. We should bear in mind that the participation of students from CEE is currently far below that quota.

Table 2.11
Home Country of the "Estimated" ERASMUS Students – by Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

	Academic year								Total 1997/98 – 1999/2000	
	1995/96		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
AT	3,193	2.0	3,783	2.1	4,405	2.2	4,672	2.1	12,860	2.1
BE	8,111	5.1	7,615	4.2	8477	4.3	9,023	4.1	25,115	4.2
DE	23,927	14.9	30,551	16.8	32,668	16.4	35,584	16.3	98,803	16.5
DK	3,747	2.3	3,977	2.2	4,573	2.3	4,946	2.3	13,496	2.3
ES	18,101	11.3	23,169	12.8	25,540	12.8	28,704	13.2	77,413	12.9
FI	3,917	2.4	6,341	3.5	7,457	3.7	8,195	3.8	21,993	3.7
FR	27,263	17.0	31,057	17.1	31,644	15.9	33,933	15.6	96,634	16.1
GR	4,726	2.9	4,016	2.2	4,511	2.3	5,023	2.3	13,550	2.3
IE	4,422	2.8	3,573	2.0	3,504	1.8	3,754	1.7	10,831	1.8
IT	13,482	8.4	16,576	9.1	18,090	9.1	20,215	9.3	54,881	9.2
LU	21	0.0	39	.0	36	.0	42	.0	117	.0
NL	9,491	5.9	10,032	5.5	11,069	5.6	10,488	4.8	31,589	5.3
PT	4,763	3.0	4,477	2.5	5,406	2.7	6,201	2.8	16,084	2.7
SE	4,534	2.8	6,579	3.6	6,999	3.5	7,581	3.5	21,159	3.5
UK	28,826	16.7	26,947	14.9	26,175	13.1	25,080	11.5	78,202	13.1
CH	1,738	1.1	-		-		-		-	
IS	132	0.1	250	.1	262	.1	311	.1	823	.1
NO	2,087	1.3	2,473	1.4	2,871	1.4	3,000	1.4	8,344	1.4
BG	-		-		-		98	.0	98	.0
CY	-		-		119	.1	191	.1	310	.1
CZ	-		-		1,126	.6	1,523	.7	2,649	.4
EE	-		-		-		350	.2	350	.1
HU	-		-		1,102	.6	2,048	.9	3,150	.5
LT	-		-		-		432	.2	432	.1
LV	-		-		-		339	.2	339	.1
PL	-		-		1,524	.8	3,207	1.5	4,731	.8
RO	-		-		1,542	.8	2,396	1.1	3,938	.7
SK	-		-		71	.0	462	.2	533	.1
SI	-		-		-		240	.1	240	.0
Total	160,470	100.0	181,455	100.0	199,171	100.0	218,038	100.0	598,664	100.0

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

The following analysis refers to data of "estimated" mobility gathered from databases of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office and to data on realised students mobility, i.e. data about individual students supported by ERASMUS which were handed over to the Commission by institutions of higher education via the National Agencies as part of the reporting procedure. The latter, however, were not yet available for the academic years 1998/99 and 1999/2000.

Table 2.12
Host Country of the "Estimated" of ERASMUS Students – by Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

	Academic year								Total 1997/98 – 1999/2000	
	1995/96		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
AT	2,993	1.9	4,040	2.2	4,587	2.3	5,114	2.3	13,741	2.3
BE	7,591	4.7	8,094	4.5	9,183	4.6	9,597	4.4	26,874	4.5
DE	21,355	13.3	26,050	14.4	29,201	14.7	31,964	14.7	87,215	14.6
DK	3,475	2.2	4,281	2.4	4,695	2.4	5,180	2.4	14,156	2.4
ES	18,038	11.2	21,294	11.7	23,497	11.8	26,209	12.0	71,000	11.9
FI	3,368	2.1	5,738	3.2	6,696	3.4	7,798	3.6	20,232	3.4
FR	28,362	17.7	31,547	17.4	32,412	16.3	34,775	15.9	98,734	16.5
GR	3,646	2.3	4,355	2.4	4,521	2.3	5,052	2.3	13,928	2.3
IE	6,321	3.3	4,629	2.6	4,438	2.2	4,721	2.2	13,788	2.3
IT	11,732	7.3	14,739	8.1	16,912	8.5	18,798	8.6	50,449	8.4
LU	14	0.0	27	.0	46	.0	44	.0	117	.0
NL	9,586	6.0	10,548	5.8	11,341	5.7	11,464	5.3	33,353	5.6
PT	4,000	2.5	4,710	2.6	5,123	2.6	5,824	2.7	15,657	2.6
SE	4,340	2.7	6,646	3.7	7,310	3.7	8,168	3.7	22,124	3.7
UK	32,816	20.4	31,925	17.6	32,055	16.1	31,471	14.4	95,451	15.9
LI	0	0.0	0	.0	1	.0	5	.0	6	.0
IS	98	0.1	294	.2	320	.2	365	.2	979	.2
NO	1,826	1.1	2,538	1.4	2,720	1.4	2,864	1.3	8,122	1.4
CH	1875	1.2	0	.0	20	.0	0	.0	20	.0
BG			-		-		64	.0	64	.0
CY			-		66		148	.1	214	.0
CZ			-		878		1,403	.6	2,281	.4
EE			-		-		255	.1	255	.0
HU			-		1,009		1,785	.8	2,794	.5
LT			-		-		295	.1	295	.0
LV			-		-		257	.1	257	.0
PL			-		1,135		2,504	1.1	3,639	.6
RO			-		889		1,483	.7	2,372	.4
SK			-		114		268	.1	382	.1
SI			-		2		163	.1	165	.0
Total	160,470	100.0	181,455	100.0	199,171	100.0	218,038	100.0	598,664	100.0

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

As already mentioned above, the number of "estimated" mobile ERASMUS students increased by about 9 per cent per year during the first phase of SOCRATES. A similar growth rate can be observed regarding individual countries (see Table 2.11 and 2.12). Some exceptions deserve attention:

Table 2.13
Home Country of the "Estimated" and Real Numbers of ERASMUS Students 1997/98 – (absolute numbers and percentages)

	Estimated mobility		Realised mobility		"Take-up rate"
Home country	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
AT	3,783	2.1	2,438	2.8	64.4
BE	7,615	4.2	4,233	4.9	55.6
DE	30,551	16.8	13,785	16.0	45.1
DK	3,977	2.2	1,796	2.1	45.2
ES	23,169	12.8	12,468	14.5	53.8
FI	6,341	3.5	3,052	3.5	48.1
FR	31,057	17.1	15,263	17.7	49.1
GR	4,016	2.2	1,431	1.7	35.6
IE	3,573	2.0	1,509	1.7	42.2
IT	16,576	9.1	9,334	10.8	56.3
LU	39	.0	*	*	*
NL	10,032	5.5	4,171	4.8	41.6
PT	4,477	2.5	1,834	2.1	41.0
SE	6,579	3.6	3,173	3.7	48.2
UK	26,947	14.9	10,582	12.3	39.3
IS	250	.1	123	.1	49.2
NO	2,473	1.4	1,071	1.2	43.3
Total	181,455	100.0	86,263	100.0	47.5

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

As regards the home country:

- the transition from Inter-University Co-operation Programmes to Institutional Contracts was accompanied by a subsequent decrease in the number of "estimated" students from Greece, Ireland, and Portugal in 1997/98, but they increased again in 1999/2000,
- the number of "estimated" mobile students from the United Kingdom decreased continuously.

As regards the host country:

- the number of students "estimated" to be hosted by Irish higher education institutions decreased after the introduction of the Institutional Contract,
- similarly, the number of students "estimated" to be hosted by British institutions slightly decreased initially.

There were approximately 86,300 ERASMUS students in 1997/98. This corresponds to only 48 per cent of the “estimated” number. This "take-up rate” of ERASMUS mobility had dropped from 60 per cent in 1990/91 to 53 per cent in 1993/94 and to 48 per cent in 1997/98, i.e. more than one per cent a year. Obviously, the introduction of Institutional Contracts has not led to a halt of the continuously increasing over-booking of mobility grants on the part of the institutions.

Table 2.14
Host Country of the “Estimated” and Real Numbers of ERASMUS Students 1997/98 – (absolute numbers and percentages)

	Estimated mobility		Realised mobility		“Take-up rate”
Host country	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
AT	4,040	2.2	1,744	2.0	43.2
BE	8,094	4.5	2,855	3.3	35.3
DE	26,050	14.4	10,991	12.7	42.2
DK	4,281	2.4	1,562	1.8	36.5
ES	21,294	11.7	11,426	13.2	53.7
FI	5,738	3.2	1,836	2.1	32.0
FR	31,547	17.4	15,193	17.6	48.2
GR	4,355	2.4	994	1.2	22.8
IE	4,629	2.6	2,844	3.3	61.4
IT	14,739	8.1	5,697	6.6	38.7
LU	27	.0	8	.0	29.6
NL	10,548	5.8	4,939	5.7	46.8
PT	4,710	2.6	1,382	1.6	29.3
SE	6,646	3.7	2,941	3.4	44.3
UK	31,925	17.6	20,938	24.3	65.6
IS	294	.2	88	.1	29.9
NO	2,538	1.4	818	.9	32.2
Total	181,455	100.0	86,256	100.0	47.5

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

The gap between estimates and actual participation varies substantially according to home country (see Table 2.13). In 1997/98, the ratio of actual to initially estimated students was highest in Austria (64%), Italy and Belgium (56% each), and lowest in Greece (35%) and the United Kingdom (39%). In looking at the “take-up rate” by host country (see Table 2.14), we notice that the ratio of students actually hosted to those estimated was highest in the case of those going to the United Kingdom (66%) and Ireland (61%), while it was lowest in the case of those going to Greece (23%). A similar pattern was already observed in 1993/94 (see U. Teichler and F. Maiworm. *The ERASMUS Experience. Major Findings of the ERASMUS Evaluation Research Project*. 1997).

As Table 2.15 shows, the ratio between the incoming and outgoing students varies substantially by country. The United Kingdom, Ireland, and the Netherlands hosted more ERASMUS students than they sent abroad in 1997/98. France, Sweden, and Spain hosted

about the same number, while Belgium, Italy, and Finland hosted only about 60 per cent of the number of ERASMUS students they sent abroad. If we compare the situation in the early 1990s (see Teichler/Maiworm 1997, p. 34), we see that the Netherlands are no longer an "exporting" but an "importing" country.

Table 2.15
Ratio of ERASMUS Students Hosted to Students Sent in 1997/98 – by Country (absolute numbers)

	Number of students 1993/94			Number of students 1997/98		
Country	Hosted	Sent	Ratio	Hosted	Sent	Ratio
UK	15,737	10,255	1.53	20,938	10,582	1.98
IE	2,155	1,455	1.48	2,844	1,509	1.88
NL	3,739	4,306	0.89	4,939	4,171	1.18
FR	12,375	8,590	1.44	15,193	15,263	0.99
SE	1,208	1,747	0.69	2,941	3,173	0.93
ES	6,560	6,873	0.95	11,426	12,468	0.92
DK	1,063	1,522	0.70	1,562	1,796	0.87
DE	7,754	10,887	0.71	10,991	13,785	0.80
NO	365	748	0.49	818	1,071	0.76
PT	1,000	1,299	0.77	1,382	1,834	0.75
AT	717	957	0.75	1,744	2,438	0.72
IS	9	57	0.16	88	123	0.72
GR	820	1,424	0.58	994	1,431	0.69
BE	2,559	2,747	0.93	2,855	4,233	0.67
IT	3,944	6,643	0.59	5,697	9,334	0.61
FI	373	962	0.39	1,836	3,052	0.60
Total	60,378	60,472	1,00	86,256	86,263	1.00

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

The distribution of students according to field of study remained more or less stable over the years. This also holds true for the first phase of the SOCRATES programme, as the statistics on "estimated" ERASMUS students suggest (see Table 2.16). About 20 per cent are studying business studies, about 15 per cent foreign languages, 12 per cent engineering and technology, and 10 per cent social sciences. Other fields of study comprised between one per cent and at most seven per cent of the "estimated" ERASMUS students.

A comparison of realised student mobility in 1997/98 with the "estimated" student numbers shows that the students in business studies (24%) and languages (19%) were more strongly represented among mobile students, while fewer students in engineering and technology (9%) participated in ERASMUS.

Though the ERASMUS classification of subject areas differs from classifications used by Member States, it is evident that students in business studies and foreign languages are clearly over-represented among ERASMUS students. Most other fields are somewhat under-

represented, with some – notably medical fields and teacher training – being strongly under-represented.

Table 2.16
Field of the "Estimated" ERASMUS Students – Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

	Academic year								Total 1997/98 – 1999/2000	
	1995/96		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Agricultural sciences	3,876	2.3	4,180	2.3	4,406	2.2	5,048	2.3	13,634	2.3
Architecture, urban and regional planning	4,729	2.9	4,659	2.6	5,558	2.8	6,185	2.8	16,402	2.7
Art and design	5,782	3.6	6,785	3.7	8,069	4.1	8,946	4.1	23,800	4.0
Business studies, management sciences	30,005	18.7	35,458	19.5	37,639	18.9	40,264	18.5	113,361	18.9
Education, teacher training	5,879	3.7	7,501	4.1	7,936	4.0	8,544	3.9	23,981	4.0
Engineering, technology	18,910	11.8	22,220	12.2	24,069	12.1	27,225	12.5	73,514	12.3
Geography, geology	3,049	1.9	3,769	2.1	4,314	2.2	4,832	2.2	12,915	2.2
Humanities	5,304	3.3	7,802	4.3	8,903	4.5	9,489	4.4	26,194	4.4
Languages, philological sciences	14,103	8.5	27,799	15.3	29,382	14.8	31,749	14.6	88,930	14.9
Law	11,035	6.9	12,171	6.7	13,378	6.7	14,317	6.6	39,866	6.7
Mathematics, information sciences	5,549	3.5	6,715	3.7	7,195	3.6	8,213	3.8	22,123	3.7
Medical sciences	6,185	3.9	9,265	5.1	10,567	5.3	11,497	5.3	31,329	5.2
Natural sciences	8,795	5.5	10,254	5.7	11,445	5.7	12,477	5.7	34,176	5.7
Social sciences	15,623	9.7	17,650	9.7	20,544	10.3	22,724	10.4	60,918	10.2
Communication and information sciences	2,211	1.4	3,044	1.7	3,245	1.6	3,853	1.8	10,142	1.7
Other subject areas	1,676	1.0	2,183	1.2	2,521	1.3	2,675	1.2	7,379	1.2
Framework agreements	5,961	3.7								
LINGUA	12,018	7.5								
Total	160,470	100.0	181,455	100.0	199,171	100.0	218,038	100.0	598,664	100.0

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Altogether, the patterns of student mobility awarded support within the framework of Institutional Contracts under SOCRATES in recent years did not change significantly from those in Inter-University Cooperation Programmes in previous years. However, data are not yet available which can show the possible impact of the SOCRATES approach. It seems obvious that, with the introduction of Institutional Contracts, the Commission weakened their instruments to shape the composition of ERASMUS students by field of study and countries. Therefore, one can expect that the concentration of student mobility in certain host countries and fields may increase in the future.

2.7 Teaching Staff Mobility

With the launching of SOCRATES, support for teaching staff mobility increased. The number of “expected“ mobile teachers grew from 13,866 in 1995/96 and 12,755 in 1996/97 to 30,486 in 1997/98, 34,035 in 1998/99, and 40,891 in 1999/2000. Greater teaching staff mobility was expected to provide a European dimension for non-mobile students and to contribute to curricular innovation. Unfortunately, no figures on the actual numbers were available at the time this study was carried out. Thus, the actual development is not yet known. According to estimates, the “take-up rate” dropped to about 20-25 per cent.

On average, each new or renewed Institutional Contract comprised 22 “estimated” mobile teachers. Only small numbers, i.e. between 1 to 10, were named in 38 per cent of the contracts, between 11 and 50 grants in 34 per cent, and more than 50 grants in 12 per cent of the Institutional Contracts. By and large, the average number did not change significantly during the period under study (see Table 2.17). The proportion of institutions which did not apply for teaching grants fell from 20 per cent in 1997/98 to 12 per cent in 1999/2000.

If the number of teachers named in the applications actually went abroad, 8 per cent of the teaching staff of the institutions holding an Institutional Contract could teach abroad.

Table 2.17
Number of “Estimated” Mobile Teaching Staff per Home Institution – by Academic Year (absolute numbers and mean)

	Academic year			Total (new/renewed)
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
None	20	15	12	16
1 - 5	21	23	24	23
6 - 10	14	16	15	15
11 - 20	15	14	16	15
21 - 50	18	20	20	19
More than 50	12	12	13	12
Total	100	100	100	100
(n)	(1,484)	(1,625)	(1,766)	(4,875)
Average number of grants	20.5	20.9	23.2	21.6
Quote of grants for academic staff	7.7	7.9	9.2	8.3
(n)	(1,362)	(1,550)	(1,706)	(4,618)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

According to the countries named in the application, about 60 per cent of mobile teachers come from the five largest Member States of the European Union: 14 per cent each from Germany and the United Kingdom, 12 per cent from France, 11 per cent from Spain, and 9 per cent from Italy. Most of the other countries received only between 1 and 2 per cent of the grants. With the exception of France, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Iceland, a small increase in

the number of mobile teachers named in the successful applications could be observed between 1997/98 and 1999/2000. However, it was not continuous in Italy and Sweden (see Table 2.18).

Table 2.18
Home Country of "Estimated" Number of Mobile Teaching Staff – by Academic Year
(absolute numbers and percentages)

	Academic year							
	1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
AT	528	1.7	668	2.0	748	1.8	1,944	1.8
BE	1,314	4.3	1,644	4.8	1,854	4.5	4,812	4.6
DE	4,380	14.4	4,905	14.4	5,701	13.9	14,986	14.2
DK	761	2.5	673	2.0	762	1.9	2,196	2.1
ES	3,611	11.8	3,927	11.5	4,504	11.0	12,042	11.4
FI	1,638	5.4	1,716	5.0	2,126	5.2	5,480	5.2
FR	4,520	14.8	3,846	11.3	4,421	10.8	12,787	12.1
GR	1,195	3.9	1,206	3.5	1,637	4.0	4,038	3.8
IE	510	1.7	446	1.3	500	1.2	1,456	1.4
IT	3,059	10.0	2,910	8.6	3,476	8.5	9,445	9.0
LU	9	.0	4	.0	3	.0	16	.0
NL	1,545	5.1	2,032	6.0	1,960	4.8	5,537	5.3
PT	966	3.2	1,113	3.3	1,453	3.6	3,532	3.4
SE	1,150	3.8	1,050	3.1	1,253	3.1	3,453	3.3
UK	4,761	15.6	4,733	13.9	4,898	12.0	14,392	13.7
LI	0	.0	1	.0	1	.0	2	.0
IS	48	.2	39	.1	47	.1	134	.1
NO	491	1.6	531	1.6	526	1.3	1,548	1.5
BG	0	.0	0	.0	73	.2	73	.1
CY	0	.0	48	.1	79	.2	127	.1
CZ	0	.0	572	1.7	772	1.9	1,344	1.3
EE	0	.0	0	.0	112	.3	112	.1
HU	0	.0	530	1.6	809	2.0	1,339	1.3
LT	0	.0	0	.0	147	.4	147	.1
LV	0	.0	0	.0	141	.3	141	.1
PL	0	.0	683	2.0	1,230	3.0	1,913	1.8
RO	0	.0	745	2.2	1,297	3.2	2,042	1.9
SK	0	.0	13	.0	230	.6	243	.2
SI	0	.0	0	.0	131	.3	131	.1
Total	30,486	100.0	34,035	100.0	40,891	100.0	105,412	100.0

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

The distribution of expected teaching staff mobility by host country shows a pattern that is similar to the distribution by home country. Without intervention through selective awards on the part of the Commission, the proportion of teachers going to and coming from individual

countries is fairly balanced. However, some countries are under-represented, notably the CEE countries.

Some priorities of teaching staff flows reflect the priorities of bilateral cooperation arrangements: Academic staff members from CEE countries are often inclined to teach in Germany and less often in the United Kingdom. Finland is a favourite host country for teachers from Estonia, whereas Romanian and Bulgarian teachers go to France. The distribution of academic staff members from EU and EFTA countries by host country is more widespread. This might be a result of more than 10 years of student and staff exchange in the ERASMUS programme. However, there is a disproportionately high exchange of teaching staff among Southern European countries (France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy), while exchanges among Nordic countries are rather limited.

Table 2.19
Fields of "Estimated" Mobile Teaching Staff – by Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

	Academic year							
	1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Agricultural sciences	923	3.0	1,075	3.2	1,329	3.3	3,327	3.2
Architecture, urban and regional planning	1,074	3.5	1,285	3.8	1,391	3.4	3,750	3.6
Art and design	1,629	5.3	2,040	6.0	2,462	6.0	6,131	5.8
Business studies, management	3,564	11.7	3,665	10.8	4,317	10.6	11,546	11.0
Education, teacher training	1,851	6.1	2,010	5.9	2,432	5.9	6,293	6.0
Engineering, technology	3,628	11.9	4,491	13.2	5,519	13.5	13,638	12.9
Geography, geology	959	3.1	1,090	3.2	1,280	3.1	3,329	3.2
Humanities	1,705	5.6	1,674	4.9	2,043	5.0	5,422	5.1
Languages, philology	4,250	13.9	4,172	12.3	5,010	12.3	13,432	12.7
Law	1,550	5.1	1,515	4.5	1,763	4.3	4,828	4.6
Mathematics, informatics	1,682	5.5	1,967	5.8	2,474	6.1	6,123	5.8
Medical sciences	1,935	6.3	2,349	6.9	2,714	6.6	6,998	6.6
Natural sciences	1,432	4.7	1,841	5.4	2,220	5.4	5,493	5.2
Social sciences	3,352	11.0	3,766	11.1	4,514	11.0	11,632	11.0
Communication and information sciences	466	1.5	492	1.4	630	1.5	1,588	1.5
Other fields	486	1.6	603	1.8	793	1.9	1,882	1.8
Total	30,486	100.0	34,035	100.0	40,891	100.0	105,412	100.0

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Table 2.19 suggests that teaching staff mobility among "estimated" mobile teachers is frequent in engineering and technology (13%), languages and philology (13%), business and management (11%), and social sciences (11%). No major changes can be observed in recent years.

The current situation in the CEE countries is characterised by a concentration of "expected" teaching staff mobility within a selected number of fields. Engineering and technology and natural sciences are over-represented in most CEE countries. Taking into account that in the TEMPUS Phare programme cooperation in these areas was on the priority list, it is not surprising to note that the already established cooperation agreements in these fields continued in the first two years of participation in SOCRATES.

2.8 Curriculum Development

Curriculum project awards were still granted in the framework of Inter-university-Cooperation Projects to 226 ICPs in 1995/96 and to 157 ICPs in 1996/97. With the introduction of the Institutional Contract, 206 new curriculum development projects were supported by the European Commission in 1997/98. Most were continued in the following year and 87 new projects were established (see Table 2.20). In the academic year 1999/2000, another 43 curriculum projects were set up, as well as 216 projects which had continued either in1997/98 or 1998/99.

From a total of 336 projects that were awarded support since the introduction of the Institutional Contract,

- 70 were classified as curricula at initial or intermediate level (CDI),
- 117 as programmes at advanced level (CDA),
- 131 as modules focusing on the history, society, culture, politics or economics of other European countries (EM), and
- 18 as integrated language courses (ILC).

Table 2.20
Number of Curriculum Development Projects – by Academic Year (absolute numbers)

	Academic year									Total	
	1997/98			1998/99			1999/2000				
	New	Renewed	Total	New	Renewed	Total	New	Renewed	Total	New	Renewed
CDI	48	-	48	14	45	59	8	54	62	70	59
CDA	65	-	65	27	54	81	25	63	88	117	78
EM	82	-	82	40	74	114	9	87	96	131	104
ILC	11	-	11	6	8	14	1	12	13	18	12
Total	206	-	206	87	181	268	43	216	259	336	253

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

While the total number of supported projects did not change substantially in the last two years of SOCRATES I, the number of newly approved projects decreased significantly. Besides the limitations of available budgets for this strand, uncertainties about the future of SOCRATES could explain this support policy.

A curriculum development project comprised on average 12.5 higher education institutions from 5 different countries. The average number of participating institutions was highest in projects concerned with curricula at initial or intermediate level (13.7) and lowest in projects working on integrated language courses (9.8).

Table 2.21
Fields of Curriculum Development Projects – by Type of Project (percentages)

	Type of CD-Project				Total
	CDI	CDA	EM	ILC	
Agricultural sciences	4	5	3	0	4
Architecture, urban and regional planning	0	7	3	0	4
Art and design	6	8	8	6	7
Business studies, management	6	3	13	17	8
Education, teacher training	14	7	9	6	9
Engineering, technology	21	9	5	22	11
Geography, geology	7	3	4	0	4
Humanities	1	4	4	0	3
Languages, philology	1	5	2	28	4
Law	1	3	11	6	6
Mathematics, information sciences	7	8	3	0	5
Medical sciences	11	9	8	17	10
Natural sciences	1	6	2	0	3
Social sciences	10	14	19	0	14
Communication and information sciences	6	3	2	0	3
Other fields	1	4	6	0	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(70)	(117)	(131)	(18)	(336)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Most of the curriculum development projects were established in social sciences (14%), engineering and technology (11%), medical sciences (10%), education and teacher training (9%), and business and management (8%). As Table 2.21 shows, the development of initial and intermediate curricula was most often undertaken by engineering and technology departments (21%) and education and teacher training departments (14%). The development of courses at an advanced level was relatively frequent in social sciences (14%) and the development of modules was frequent in the history, society, culture, politics or economics of other European countries (19%). The strong role of languages and philology in the development of integrated language courses is less of a surprise than the relatively high proportion of engineering faculties in this area (22%).

One out of four curricula projects was coordinated by an institution from the United Kingdom, a seventh by a French, and a tenth by a German institution. Other countries where more than 5 per cent of the projects were coordinated are the Netherlands (9%), Italy (8%), Finland and Belgium (6% each). As Table 2.22 shows, institutions in the United Kingdom coordinated most projects concerned with the development of European modules (33%) and programmes

at advanced level (26%), while German institutions coordinated most projects for curricula development at the initial or intermediate level (21%).

Although institutions in Central and Eastern Europe played only a minor role as coordinators of curricula projects (3%), they began establishing cooperation agreements immediately after their eligibility to participate in SOCRATES in 1998/99. In the final year of SOCRATES I, they took part in about one-third of the new projects and in about one-fifth of the continued projects.

Table 2.22
Country of Coordinating Institution of Curriculum Development Projects – by Type of Project (percentages)

	Type of CD-Project				Total
	CDI	CDA	EM	ILC	
AT	4	3	4	0	4
BE	6	5	5	22	6
DE	21	4	8	22	10
DK	4	0	2	0	1
ES	1	5	2	6	3
FI	9	3	8	6	6
FR	7	15	18	6	14
GR	0	6	2	0	3
IE	0	1	1	0	1
IT	9	15	2	0	8
NL	9	9	8	22	9
PT	0	0	1	0	0
SE	7	3	2	0	4
UK	19	26	33	11	26
IS	0	1	0	0	0
NO	0	0	2	0	1
CZ	0	0	0	6	0
HU	3	0	2	0	1
PL	1	1	0	0	1
RO	0	3	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(70)	(117)	(131)	(18)	(336)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Institutions from all EU and EFTA countries participated in some curricula development projects. As Table 2.23 shows, institutions in the United Kingdom were either coordinators or partners in 70 per cent of the projects, institutions in Germany in 56 per cent, and institutions in France in 52 per cent. Institutions in Austria (13%), Ireland (13%), and Denmark (16%) participated far less.

Table 2.23
Participating Countries in Curriculum Development Projects – by Type of Project (percentages)

	Type of CD-Project				Total
	CDI	CDA	EM	ILC	
AT	19	15	11	0	13
BE	29	29	28	22	28
DE	67	50	52	72	56
DK	17	17	15	11	16
ES	37	53	44	39	46
FI	41	26	37	44	35
FR	50	52	53	44	52
GR	16	25	22	6	21
IE	23	10	12	6	13
IT	30	44	36	6	36
LU	1	0	0	0	0
NL	39	41	39	44	40
PT	20	30	20	22	24
SE	31	24	25	33	26
UK	74	64	75	56	70
CH	0	0	1	0	0
IS	1	1	0	6	1
NO	10	8	15	6	11
BG	1	0	0	0	0
CY	1	0	0	0	0
CZ	6	7	5	11	6
EE	1	0	0	0	0
HU	4	5	8	6	6
LT	0	1	0	0	0
LV	0	1	0	0	0
PL	6	4	2	0	4
RO	3	9	5	0	6
SI	0	1	0	0	0
SK	0	2	1	0	1
Total	529	519	505	433	511
(n)	(70)	(117)	(131)	(18)	(336)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

2.9 Intensive Programmes

Intensive Programmes (IP) supported by SOCRATES are short study programmes, i.e. between 10 days' and 3 months' duration, that bring together students and staff from different participating European countries. The aim is to:

- enable specific topics to be taught efficiently and multi-nationally,
- enable students to work together in multinational groups,
- enable members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content and approaches.

The number of IPs that were supported before the transition from Inter-University-Cooperation Programmes to Institutional Contracts was 337 in 1995/96 and 341 in 1996/97. When the Institutional Contract was used, the number of IPs dropped to 295 in 1997/98 and to 288 in 1998/99. In the final year of the first phase of SOCRATES, a slight increase to 310 IPs can be observed. As Table 2.24 shows, about two-thirds of the IPs that were awarded support in the framework of an Institutional Contract were continued for a second or even a third year.

Table 2.24
Number of Intensive Programmes Awarded Support by SOCRATES Institutional Contracts – by Academic Year (absolute numbers)

	Academic year			Total
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	
New	295	133	119	547
Renewed	-	155	191	346
Total	295	288	310	893

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

On average, 15 higher education institutions in 7 countries participated in an Intensive Programme. Most Intensive Programmes involve institutions from more than three countries, i.e. the minimum requirement: 15 per cent include institutions in 4 countries, 16 per cent in 5 countries, 25 per cent in 6 to 7 countries, and 31 per cent institutions in more than 7 countries (see Table 2.25).

Almost equal numbers of Intensive Programmes were coordinated by higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (14%), France (13%), the Netherlands (13%), and Germany (12%). All other countries coordinated between 1 and 6 per cent of the IPs. All institutions in CEE countries together coordinated only 5 per cent.

Institutions in the United Kingdom (74%), Germany (67%), France (59%), Spain (54%), and the Netherlands (50%) participated in half or more of the Intensive Programmes. Low

percentages could be observed for Irish (20%), Austrian (22%), and Danish (25%) higher education institutions.

Table 2.25
Number of Countries Represented in Intensive Programmes – by First Year of Support
(Percentages and Mean)

	First year of support			Total
	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	
Up to 3 countries	13	13	14	13
4 countries	15	17	13	15
5 countries	17	13	16	16
6-7 countries	23	31	26	25
More than 7countries	33	26	31	31
Total	100	100	100	100
(n)	(295)	(133)	(119)	(547)
Average number of countries	6.7	6.3	6.5	6.6

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Most Intensive Programmes were set up in social sciences (13%), education and teacher training (12%), engineering and technology (10%), and medical sciences (9%).

Generally speaking, the composition of Intensive Programmes by participating countries and field is very similar to projects concerned with curriculum development. This could be due to the fact that a core of higher education institutions in Europe has already established academic cooperation beyond mobility, whereas, for the majority of institutions, the exchange of students and teachers is the only way to internationalise teaching and learning.

3. ERASMUS and the Policies of Higher Education Institutions

By Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler

3.1 Aims, Design, and Procedures of the Survey

When the ERASMUS programme began to be administered according to the new principles of SOCRATES, the centres of the higher education institutions were expected to play a more important role than in the past. Instead of networks of cooperating departments, each institution had to submit an application. It had to provide evidence that mobility and cooperation between institutions were based on bilateral agreements and included a European Policy Statement which explained the institution's rationales of the European activities and the role SOCRATES support would play in this framework. The new SOCRATES approach was expected to strengthen the role of the centre of the higher education institutions both with respect to:

- setting coherent goals for the Europeanisation and developing or strengthening of strategic thinking in order to pursue these goals successfully, and
- improving the quality and efficiency in terms of decision-making, administration of the programme, and support and services.

A SOCRATES-ERASMUS 2000 Higher Education Institutions Survey was undertaken to examine how the key persons of the centre of the higher education institutions perceived their institutional policies, how SOCRATES was administered, and how its impacts were assessed. All the institutions which were granted SOCRATES support in 1998/99 were sent a questionnaire and asked to provide information on:

- the institutional profile (fields of study, number of students and staff, etc.),
- SOCRATES-supported activities undertaken,
- objectives of Europeanisation and internationalisation,
- administration and funding of SOCRATES-supported activities,
- support and services rendered with respect to cooperation and mobility, and
- their assessment of the SOCRATES-supported activities and their impact.

The questionnaire comprised 24 questions and over 600 variables. It was mailed to 1,608 institutions in the first week of February 2000. About six weeks later a reminder letter with a copy of the questionnaire was sent to all the institutions which had not answered. By the end of May 2000, 875 questionnaires were returned and integrated into the database for the statistical analysis. The return rate of 54.4 per cent is slightly higher than that of a similar survey undertaken in 1994 on institutions participating in ERASMUS in 1992/93 (F. Maiworm, W. Sosa and U. Teichler. *The Context of ERASMUS. A Survey of Institutional Management and Infrastructure in Support of Mobility and Cooperation.* 1996).

Some of the limitations of the survey should be borne in mind. Its length was kept in bound in order not to overload the institutions, which might see it as a further administrative burden in

addition to the already time-consuming processes of application, procedure management, and reporting obligations. Besides, an institutional survey faces the risk that the respondents may express the views of different types of respondents, i.e. the leadership of the institution or administrators of international relations. One must also remember that, in most cases, information could only be gathered on a generalisation across departments and not on individual departments and fields. Finally, the respondents had only experienced the new SOCRATES approach for three years. This could be premature to assess its effects.

The interpretation of the findings of this survey was enriched with the help of a previous study on the institutional context of the ERASMUS programme undertaken six years earlier by some of the authors of the present study (Maiworm, Sosa and Teichler 1996). This enabled us to examine a change in the course of time in some respects. The EUROSTRAT surveys conducted by the CRE – Association of European Universities - on the European policies and related institutional strategies of the higher education institutions participating in SOCRATES (A. Barblan et al. *Emerging European Policy Profiles of Higher Education Institutions.* 1998; A. Barblan and U. Teichler. *Implementing European Policies in Higher Education Institutions.* 2000) may also provide relevant information to interpret the results of the present survey.

3.2 Objectives of Europeanisation and Internationalisation

In the 1990s, many higher education institutions in Europe put great emphasis on strengthening the international and European components of their activities. When asked about the role that various objectives of Europeanisation and internationalisation had played in their institution, most respondents of the SOCRATES-ERASMUS 2000 Higher Education Institutions Survey stated that:

- strengthening Europeanisation and internationalisation in general,
- improving the international visibility of the institution, and
- establishing a coherent policy

were on the agenda in the late 1990s and that SOCRATES was seen as playing an important role here. These objectives are most strongly underscored by large institutions of higher education (over 20,000 students). Higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe stress these objectives more strongly than their Western European counterparts (see Table 3.1).

A comparison between the statements on the objectives of Europeanisation and internationalisation in general and the role SOCRATES is expected to play shows that many higher education institutions in Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Norway and many Central and Eastern European countries see the role of SOCRATES as crucial for their internationalisation and Europeanisation policies. In contrast, SOCRATES is least emphasised as a key element for internationalisation policies in Sweden, the United Kingdom and some Central and Eastern European countries.

Table 3.1
Importance of Overall Objectives of Europeanisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in the Late 1990s and the Role SOCRATES was Expected to Play – by Country Groups (percentages*)

	Country groups		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
Strengthening Europeanisation/internationalisation in general			
Importance of Objective	85	95	86
Expected role of SOCRATES	77	87	78
Introduction of a coherent policy for Europeanisation/internationalisation			
Importance of Objective	68	81	70
Expected role of SOCRATES	65	84	67
Improvement of the international visibility of the institution			
Importance of Objective	82	90	83
Expected role of SOCRATES	70	86	71

Question 1.1: How important were the following Europeanisation and internationalisation objectives at your institution during the last five years and what role was SOCRATES expected to play in this context?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "very important" to 5 = "not important at all"

Table 3.2
Important Objectives Regarding Mobility and Cooperation During the Last Five Years – by Country Group (percentages*)

	Country Groups		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
Improvement of the quality of teaching/learning for mobile students			
Importance of Objective	71	80	71
Expected role of SOCRATES	60	83	62
Improvement of recognition (e.g. ECTS)			
Importance of Objective	70	79	70
Expected role of SOCRATES	76	85	77
Increase in number of outgoing students			
Importance of Objective	86	98	87
Expected role of SOCRATES	84	96	85
Increase in number of incoming students			
Importance of Objective	78	86	78
Expected role of SOCRATES	77	76	77
Increase in number of outgoing teaching staff			
Importance of Objective	67	86	69
Expected role of SOCRATES	67	85	69
Increase in number of incoming teaching staff			
Importance of Objective	65	86	67
Expected role of SOCRATES	63	74	64
Improvement of the administrative support for mobile students			
Importance of Objective	72	76	73
Expected role of SOCRATES	62	70	63
Improvement of academic advice and support for mobile students			
Importance of Objective	72	80	73
Expected role of SOCRATES	62	74	63

Question 1.1: How important were the following Europeanisation and internationalisation objectives in your institution during the last five years and what role was SOCRATES expected to play in this context?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "very important" to 5 = "not important at all"

As regards specific activities, most institutions participating in SOCRATES aim to:

- increase the number of mobile students,
- improve the quality of teaching and learning, the administrative support and academic advice for mobile students, and the arrangements for recognition, and
- increase the mobility of teachers (see Table 3.2).

Notably, higher education institutions in Finland, Spain and Portugal, as well as in most Central and Eastern European countries, pursued these aims and SOCRATES is generally seen as playing an important role here. Again, these objectives are advocated most strongly by the largest institutions.

The proportion of SOCRATES-supported institutions that put emphasis on improvements for non-mobile students, curricular matters, research cooperation, and activities which were not necessarily based on mobility is somewhat smaller than for those that emphasise mobility. This is also confirmed by the results of the EUROSTRAT project.

Table 3.3
Important Objectives of Europeanisation and Internationalisation at the Institution During the Last Five Years – by Country Group (percentages*)

	Institution from		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
Improvement of the quality of teaching/learning for non-mobile students			
Importance of Objective	51	70	53
Expected role of SOCRATES	31	37	32
Improvement of teaching/learning measures (e.g. ODL)			
Importance of Objective	35	54	37
Expected role of SOCRATES	22	41	24
Europeanisation/internationalisation of curricula			
Importance of Objective	59	78	61
Expected role of SOCRATES	55	76	57
Development of joint curricula			
Importance of Objective	42	61	44
Expected role of SOCRATES	44	56	45
Participation in thematic networks			
Importance of Objective	29	50	31
Expected role of SOCRATES	34	48	35
Improvement of the quality of research			
Importance of Objective	50	66	52
Expected role of SOCRATES	20	23	20

Question 1.1: How important were the following Europeanisation and internationalisation objectives in your institution during the last five years and what role was SOCRATES expected to play in this context?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "very important" to 5 = "not important at all"

Most of the institutions which lay stress on these activities stated that SOCRATES had a less important role for these than it had with regard to mobility. SOCRATES is not only viewed as

playing a limited role in research, but also in the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning for non-mobile students (see Table 3.3). However, the views vary according to the countries: more than three-quarters of Greek and Central and Eastern European institutions expect SOCRATES to play a major role in contributing to the internationalisation and Europeanisation of the curricula.

Most SOCRATES-supported institutions of higher education seem to pursue the goal of developing their international and European activities. They want to involve many departments and fields and increase the number of their partners both in Europe and beyond (see Table 3.4), especially those in Spain and various Central and Eastern European countries.

A considerable number of institutions intend to concentrate their international activities on certain fields or partners. Some prefer this to a further spread, whereas others pursue both a policy of concentration and of spread. Dutch and Irish higher education institutions stated that they aimed to concentrate on their international and European activities.

Table 3.4
Important Objectives of Changing the Pattern of SOCRATES-Supported Activities During the Last Five Years – by Country Group (percentages*)

	Institution from		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
Increase of number of partner institutions in Europe			
Importance of Objective	63	93	66
Expected role of SOCRATES	74	89	76
Concentrate/reduce partnerships to the most suitable ones			
Importance of Objective	53	49	53
Expected role of SOCRATES	47	44	47
Increase of number of partner institutions outside Europe			
Importance of Objective	53	42	52
Expected role of SOCRATES	14	6	13
Spread of European/international activities across many subject areas			
Importance of Objective	55	73	57
Expected role of SOCRATES	43	65	45
Concentration of major European/international activities on a selected number of subject areas			
Importance of Objective	32	40	32
Expected role of SOCRATES	28	40	29

Question 1.1: How important were the following Europeanisation and internationalisation objectives in your institution during the last five years and what role was SOCRATES expected to play in this context?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "very important" to 5 = "not important at all"

3.3 Participation in European Programmes and Mobility

The SOCRATES-supported institutions of higher education that answered the questionnaire had an average share of some 6 per cent of foreign students and 1 per cent of foreign staff and some 3 per cent of their students studied abroad. The total number of incoming and outgoing ERASMUS (or LINGUA) students was about 50 on average per institution; slightly over 1 per cent of the student population was ERASMUS students.

The most frequent partner institutions were in:

- Germany (16.6%),
- United Kingdom (16.0%),
- France (14.1%), and
- Spain (10.0%).

The SOCRATES-supported institutions of higher education mainly cooperate with institutions from nine countries.

The institutions reported that ECTS was introduced in the majority of the groups of fields of study for which SOCRATES support was applied for. The way the question was raised does not allow us to see whether ECTS was introduced in the group of fields as a whole or in only one or a few single programmes. According to the answers, ECTS was introduced in about two-thirds of the groups of fields of study in management, engineering, humanities, language studies and law (see Table 3.5).

21 per cent of the institutions coordinated curriculum-related projects (IP, CD, ODL) in the academic year 1998/99. A further 30 per cent were only involved as partners. Another 32 per cent saw one or more applications for curriculum-related projects rejected.

90 per cent of the SOCRATES-supported institutions of higher education provided language training for incoming students or staff, either by themselves or in another institution on their behalf. 78 per cent provided language training in the host country language for ERASMUS students, whereby the courses were, in most cases, also open to other foreign students. In addition, most institutions provided language training in an average of five foreign languages, among which the most frequent were English, French, German and Spanish.

Institutions of higher education in the United Kingdom (38%) and Greece (35%) often played a coordinating role in curriculum-related projects. Participation was most frequent in Spanish, Greek and Irish institutions (about two-thirds each) and least frequent in institutions in Norway and most Central and Eastern European countries.

From the answers to the questionnaire, 98 per cent received ERASMUS support and 18 per cent LINGUA (Action C) support. Many higher education institutions supported by SOCRATES also received support from other European programmes:

- 54 per cent from LEONARDO da VINCI,
- 43 per cent from TEMPUS,

- 23 per cent from Jean Monnet Action,
- 14 per cent from Training and Mobility of Researchers (TMR),
- 2 per cent from MED CAMPUS, and
- 25 per cent from other European countries.

As one might expect, Central and Eastern European institutions were substantially more involved in TEMPUS. But the pattern of participation in other European programmes was similar to that in 1993/94 (see Maiworm, Sosa and Teichler 1996, pp. 35-40).

Table 3.5
ECTS Implemented in Groups of Fields of Study for Which SOCRATES Support was Applied for in 1998/99 (percentages)

Group of fields of study	Implemented already up to 1995/96	Implemented recently	Not implemented	Total	(n)
Agricultural sciences	9	43	48	100	(159)
Architecture, urban and regional planning	16	29	55	100	(206)
Art and Design	16	26	58	100	(289)
Management, business studies	19	47	34	100	(486
Education, teacher training	20	37	42	100	(300)
Engineering, technology	28	41	31	100	(426)
Geography, geology	14	33	54	100	(252)
Humanities	20	45	35	100	(264)
Languages and philology	19	47	34	100	(306)
Law	19	46	35	100	(211)
Mathematics, informatics	18	39	43	100	(371)
Medical sciences	14	36	50	100	(262)
Natural sciences	19	39	42	100	(293)
Social sciences	17	37	47	100	(381)
Communication and information sciences	16	46	38	100	(238)
Other areas of study	16	42	41	100	(235)

Question 6.4: Please provide information on the disciplinary profile of your institution and the implementation of ECTS in the academic years 1995/96 and 1998/99.

3.4 Funding of European and International Activities

This study also aims to explore how far the higher education institutions spent other funds for European and international activities. As modes of calculation differ among the countries, the institutions were asked to state the sources of their budget for mobile students and their international expenditures, excluding regular staff costs. The answers suggest (see Table 3.7) that:

- on average, about 60 per cent of the funds provided for student mobility grants are SOCRATES funds, and 40 per cent derive from other sources,
- on average, about one-third of the expenses linked to the international policies of the higher education institution are borne by SOCRATES, more than one third by the institutions themselves, and less than one-third by other sources.

Institutions in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, and the Netherlands succeeded in obtaining more other funds than ERASMUS (and possibly LINGUA) funds to provide grants to students. The Nordic countries and the Netherlands rely least on the European programmes to fund their European and international activities linked to the development of their policies.

3.5 Administration of European and International Activities

According to the analysis of the European Policy Statements and interviews during site visits at selected institutions, the EUROSTRAT study suggests that many SOCRATES-supported institutions established new responsibilities in order to ensure more targeted policies and better management of their European and international activities. The SOCRATES-ERASMUS Higher Education Institutions Survey confirms this, but suggests that substantial changes in the reallocation of responsibilities were less frequent than expected, as is seen in Table 3.8:

- The number of institutions that appoint a pro-rector as the person responsible for European and international activities increased from 9 per cent in 1995 to 14 per cent in 1999/2000.
- The number of institutions that have established committees that are partly in charge of international activities or exclusively in charge of SOCRATES and possibly other European programmes increased from 37 per cent to 50 per cent.
- Clear distribution of responsibilities at the department level for European and international activities increased from 79 per cent to 88 per cent, notably through the appointment and election of individual academics (from 38% to 44%).
- The number of institutions where departments established committees in charge of European and international issues or specifically SOCRATES and possibly other programmes increased from 25 per cent to 37 per cent during the period examined.

The highest increase in institutionalisation of European and international responsibilities thus defined can be observed in Spain, Poland and Romania. By the year 2000, Spanish and Romanian higher education institutions had the highest level according to those criteria, followed by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Hungary.

Another question aimed at establishing which actors played an important role in determining SOCRATES related policies and key decisions for the higher education institutions as a whole. Table 3.9 indicates that:

- the key managers (rectors, pro-rectors etc.) in most cases take the main decisions regarding funds for international activities,
- both the key managers and the staff of international offices play a key role with regard to decisions concerning the administrative and service support rendered and determining the public relations activities concerning the internationalisation of the institution,
- the staff of international offices often prepare the administrative agenda for cooperation and exchange, determine the use of resources provided by SOCRATES and monitor the SOCRATES-related activities,
- both staff of international offices and academics in charge are often important actors - sometimes together with key managers of the institutions and with deans - in taking the initiative for the development of joint curricula, establishing or discontinuing partnerships, and implementing ECTS, whereas

- committees at the central level, committees within departments, administrators in departments, and students are key actors in only a minority of cases.

Table 3.8
Formal Administrative Responsibilities for European and International and European Activities at the Central and Department Level of Higher Education Institutions in Europe 1995 and 2000 (percentages)

	1995	2000
Responsibility with the leadership of the institutions		
President/rector/vice-chancellor	61	54
Vice-president etc. in charge of a wider range of functions	20	20
Vice-president etc. especially appointed for internat. activities	9	14
Executive officer of department for internat. relations, etc	6	8
SOCRATES Coordinator	4	4
Total	100	100
(n)	(757)	(844)
Committee at the central level involved in SOCRATES		
Committee in charge of teaching, research etc. in general	18	17
Committee in charge of international/European policies and activities	24	31
Committee especially in charge of SOCRATES	13	19
No committee involved	45	32
Total	100	100
(n)	(699)	(835)
Main persons responsible in the faculties/departments		
Dean	24	22
Administrative staff	19	21
Academic appointed/elected for European/international activities	38	44
Academic informally in charge	16	10
Other	3	3
Total	100	100
(n)	(718)	(829)
Faculty/department committees involved in SOCRATES		
Committee in charge of teaching, research etc. in general	18	16
Committee in charge of international/European policies and activities	15	20
Committee especially in charge of SOCRATES	10	17
No committee involved	57	47
Total	100	100
(n)	(630)	(766)

Question 2.1d: What formal administrative responsibilities for European/international activities were established at your institution in 1995 and are established now?

The institutions in Central and Eastern Europe tend to reserve a much stronger policy and key decision role for the rectors, pro-rectors, and deans than Western European institutions which leave more room for manoeuvre to the staff of international offices and the academics in charge.

Table 3.9
Role of Various Actors in Socrates-Related Policies and Key Decisions (percentages*)

	Key manager	Interna-tional officer	Central commit-tee	Dean	Spec. Adminis-trator	Spec. Aca-demic staff	Decen-tral commit-tee	Students
Formulating EPS	59	69	27	16	12	22	5	4
Preparing the academic agenda for co-operation and exchange	28	63	21	20	16	43	7	4
Taking the initiative for the development of joint curricula	28	40	15	23	10	47	8	2
Preparing the admin. agenda for co-operation and exchange	15	77	17	8	20	24	5	2
Taking initiatives for establ. or discontinuing partnerships	37	59	17	25	14	46	8	4
Taking initiatives for the implementation of ECTS	39	58	24	31	14	34	9	3
Key decisions regarding the administrative/service support	61	55	18	18	11	10	3	2
Key decisions regarding funds for international activities	77	43	23	27	7	10	5	1
Determining the use of resources provided by SOCRATES	41	71	29	14	11	21	6	2
Monitoring SOCRATES-related activities	31	78	26	14	16	29	7	4
Determin. public relations of international activities	60	62	18	21	12	18	5	4
(n)	(862)	(862)	(862)	(862)	(862)	(862)	(862)	(862)

Question 2.4: Role of various actors in SOCRATES-related Policies and Key Decisions.

* Points 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 = "no role at all" to 5 = "very important role"

The larger the institution, the larger the number of various actors involved in key decisions. In small institutions, many key decisions are often left to the staff of international offices, whereas in large institutions the key managers and the academics in charge in the departments are often important actors.

3.6 Administrative Support and Services

Almost all the institutions involved in SOCRATES have an international office, either as a central unit (in about two-thirds) or as part of a larger unit. Even at the department level, 55 per cent have administrative persons and units exclusively in charge of international relations in at least one department, and a further 16 per cent have units serving international relations and other functions.

Since ERASMUS and LINGUA student mobility activities were placed under the umbrella of SOCRATES, the growing tasks of the centres of the higher education institutions led to greater institutionalisation of support and services for SOCRATES. When the survey was undertaken in 1999/2000, some 40 per cent had units exclusively in charge of SOCRATES and 30 per cent had persons specifically in charge of SOCRATES. SOCRATES offices are most frequently found in large institutions (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10
Those Responsible for Administrative/Service Activities of SOCRATES at the Central Level – by Number of Students Enrolled (percentages)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
International Office/Unit exclusively in charge of SOCRATES	18	34	40	45	52	62	39
Individual person(s) exclusively in charge of SOCRATES	49	27	18	27	19	22	28
Neither	32	34	39	27	27	15	30
Other	1	5	3	0	2	1	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(136)	(202)	(137)	(102)	(98)	(94)	(769)

Question 3.2: Who is responsible for the administrative/service activities of SOCRATES (and possibly other European programmes) at the central level?

On average, the institutions of higher education that participate in SOCRATES have four staff positions (full-time equivalent) for international activities at the central or department level. This is less than two per cent of all administrative staff. Two staff positions on average – half the staff in charge of international administration and services – are specifically in charge of SOCRATES.

The data of the previous survey show that, in 1993/94, higher education institutions involved in ERASMUS had on average 61/2 persons in charge of international administration and services, including language centres, etc. (Maiworm, Sosa and Teichler 1996, p. 74). The surveys are not comparable, however, since the previous survey included international functions and units which were not international offices, e.g. the administration of language centres. Yet, the new findings suggest that international offices have not substantially grown in size as a consequence of the administrative tasks related to SOCRATES or of further growth of internationalisation activities.

Table 3.11 shows that some 3 per cent of administrative staff at institutions with less than 5,000 students and 1 per cent in those with more than 20,000 students are in charge of international relations. There is an economy of scale leading to lower student:international officer ratios in large institutions.

Table 3.11
Number of Administrative Staff Employed at the Institution in the Academic Year 1998/99 - by Number of Students Enrolled (Mean)

	Number of students enrolled						Total
	Up to 500	501 - 2,000	2,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 - 20,000	More than 20,000	
Total administrative staff	13.3	38.0	83.3	221.1	448.8	1052.1	242.2
Administrative staff in charge of international relations	.9	1.7	3.0	4.7	6.1	11.0	3.9
Administrative staff specifically in charge of SOCRATES	.6	.8	1.3	2.5	2.6	5.7	1.9
(n)	(118)	(173)	(121)	(87)	(92)	(80)	(671)

Question 6.3: Please state the number of administrative staff at the central and department level in 1998/99 (please calculate in full-time equivalents)

Table 3.12
Role of Various Actors in Carrying Out Activities Linked to the Mobility of Outgoing Students 1998/99 (percentages*)

	Central: Special staff	Central: Admin. staff	Faculty: Special staff	Faculty: Admin. staff	Faculty: Acad. staff	Students
Selection of students	43	10	32	8	61	8
Academic matters (incl. approval of study programme)	35	10	30	8	69	5
Preparation for the period abroad	53	21	28	11	42	22
Information about ERASMUS/LINGUA and recognition matters	66	25	29	13	37	7
Matters concerning financial support	68	33	20	10	13	3
Information about the host institution	59	22	30	10	41	14
Work placement	36	16	20	8	28	8
(n)	(860)	(860)	(860)	(860)	(860)	(860)

Question 3.4: Who carries out the following activities related to student mobility within ERASMUS and/or LINGUA (Action C)

* Points 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 = "no role at all" to 5 = "very important role"

The core activities of administering student exchange, e.g. selection of students, establishment of the programmes and modes of recognition, supporting the students' preparation for the period abroad and their installation upon arrival etc., are often undertaken in cooperation with different persons and units. The representatives of higher education institutions point out that academics most often play an important role in selecting students and the study programme and in its recognition, both with regard to incoming and outgoing students (see Tables 12 and 13). In contrast, staff of international offices at the central level

play the major role in matters concerning information, funding, and services for preparation or upon arrival.

Table 3.13
Role of Various Actors in Supporting Incoming Students 1998/99 (percentages*)

	Central: Special staff	Central: Admin. staff	Faculty: Special staff	Faculty: Admin. staff	Faculty: Acad. staff	Students
Academic matters (incl. recognition of study achievements)	43	15	27	10	56	3
Accommodation services	50	38	14	13	8	8
Special orientation programme	46	17	22	7	24	14
Special courses beside regular course programme	36	12	17	6	28	2
Organising social events	39	17	15	6	11	46
Registration etc. at own institution	44	46	17	24	10	4
Matters concerning financial support	43	26	12	8	6	3
Other practical matters (e.g. insurance)	47	37	13	13	7	12
Information about own institution	62	27	25	13	32	12
Work placements	29	13	17	8	25	4
(n)	(841)	(841)	(841)	(841)	(841)	(841)

Question 3.4: Who carries out the following activities related to student mobility within ERASMUS and/or LINGUA (Action C)?

* Points 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 = "no role at all" to 5 = "very important role"

Table 3.14
Role of Various Actors in Activities Linked to the Mobility of Outgoing Students 1993/94 (percentages*)

	Central: Special staff	Central: Admin. staff	Faculty: Special staff	Faculty: Admin. staff	Faculty: Acad. staff	Students
Selection of students	18	3	17	3	64	2
Academic matters (incl. approval of study programme)	17	6	17	4	64	2
Preparation for the period abroad	30	6	18	5	43	11
Information about ERASMUS/LINGUA and recognition matters	44	12	18	5	38	3
Matters concerning financial support	54	17	12	4	17	5
Information about the host institution	36	10	17	5	38	7
Work placements	25	7	15	6	41	6

Question 3.4: Who carries out the following activities related to student mobility Within ERASMUS and/or LINGUA (Action C)?

* Points 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 = "no role at all" to 5 = "very important role"

In a previous study, institutions were asked a similar question about the ways of administering student exchanges in 1993/94 (Maiworm, Sosa and Teichler 1996, pp. 107-111). Although the question was stated differently, it seems possible to compare the results. The data presented in Tables 12 and 13 compared with those presented in Tables 14 and 15 suggest that, in 1999/2000, academic staff is involved in as many institutions as in 1993/94 in

more or less all matters regarding outgoing students and in all academic matters concerning incoming students. However, in 1999/2000, they cooperate or share the work with administrators at central or department level more frequently than before. As regards administrative and service matters regarding incoming students, academics were much less often involved in 1999/2000 than in 1993/94.

Table 3.15
Role of Various Actors in Supporting Incoming Students 1993/94 (percentages*)

	Central: Special staff	Central: Admin. staff	Faculty: Special staff	Faculty: Admin. staff	Faculty: Acad. staff	Students
Academic matters (incl. recognition of study achievements)	18	7	14	3	60	1
Accommodation services	43	26	11	8	15	7
Special orientation programme	34	9	12	3	32	5
Special courses besides regular course programme	27	5	14	4	39	2
Organising social events	27	8	10	3	15	31
Registration etc. at own institution	26	16	16	7	37	4
Matters concerning financial support	40	13	10	5	14	4
Other practical matters (e.g. insurance)	42	23	11	7	13	7
Information about own institution	40	13	15	5	30	5
Work placements	23	8	15	6	40	3

Question 3.4: Who carries out the following activities related to student mobility within ERASMUS and/or LINGUA (Action C)?

* Points 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 = "no role at all" to 5 = "very important role"

3.7 Assessment of SOCRATES and Other International Activities

In the SOCRATES-ERASMUS 2000 Higher Education Institutions Survey, the institutions were asked to asses changes in various international activities during the last five years. As Table 3.16 shows, a growth or improvement was felt in all areas, especially in student exchange, administrative support for incoming students, and recognition upon return of academic achievements acquired during the study abroad period. Progress is stated by about two-thirds or three- quarters of the institutions. Least progress is reported in respect to cooperation with the region and industry in SOCRATES matters, and teaching in foreign languages and cooperation with partner institutions in administrative matters only improved in about half.

The greatest progress regarding international activities in recent years was perceived by Finnish and Czech higher education institutions. Across countries, small non-university institutions of higher education perceived less progress as regarded their internationalisation activities.

A similar question was put six years earlier to higher education institutions in Europe. At that time, a similar degree of progress was perceived for the previous five years. One difference

was that a substantially higher increase or improvement of ties with the region, industry, etc. was reported at that time (by 56% of the institutions, cf. Maiworm, Sosa and Teichler 1996, p. 118) compared to the recent survey (by 30%).

Asked about problems encountered by the higher education institutions with regard to SOCRATES, the respondents pointed out four major areas of concern.

- First, funding of student and staff mobility: low level of grants for individual students (53% stated serious problems) and teachers (58%), as well as insufficient means to support all teachers who are willing to teach abroad (50%) and all students who are willing to study abroad (33%),
- second, lack of resources of the higher education institution for SOCRATES, as far as personnel (46%) and funds (41%) are concerned,
- third, lack of interest of academic staff with respect to teaching staff mobility and curriculum related domains of SOCRATES (41% each), and
- administrative problems of the SOCRATES programme, i.e. late timing of the award decision and delay in the transfer of funds (35% each).

Four other problems were stated by slightly more than 20 per cent of the institutions: reluctance of departments to introduce ECTS (26%), lack or low quality of accommodation (22%), lack of interest on the part of the students to study abroad, and last-minute renouncements by students to study abroad (21% each).

On average, across the various subjects, serious problems were most often mentioned by:

- British higher education institutions, which reported a great lack of interest of students to study abroad (63%), last-minute renouncements by students (40%), and a lack of interest on the part of key persons at the central level of the institutions (26%), and by
- Dutch higher education institutions, which stated a great lack of interest of staff in teaching periods abroad (78%), and a lack of students to study abroad (43%).

But most institutions in Central and Eastern Europe seem to face fewer problems. Although complaints about delays in the receipt of the SOCRATES budget were widespread, they seem to face significantly fewer problems as far as the interest of the staff, the students and the administrators is concerned (Table 3.17).

Asked about the impact of SOCRATES, most respondents agreed that it contributed to a growing interest for student mobility, greater European and international awareness, and cooperation in teaching and learning, as well as the improvement of international services. Most, however, are aware that the growing interest in cooperation and mobility cannot be attributed to SOCRATES alone.

Almost as many respondents agree and disagree with the statement that SOCRATES had contributed to better teaching and learning and to innovative teaching and learning. Only 17 per cent see a substantial contribution of SOCRATES to cooperation with the region, industry, etc.

As regards possible negative impacts, only 7 per cent see a decline of student achievement due to SOCRATES. 14 per cent are concerned that SOCRATES tends to weaken institutional cooperation with other parts of the world.

Table 3.17
Significant Problems Encountered with Regard to SOCRATES – by Country Group (percentages*)

	Country group		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
Lack of interest of students to study abroad	23	1	21
Insufficient number of grants to support all student applicants	33	38	33
Insufficient individual grants for students	53	51	53
Last minute renouncement by students to study abroad	23	8	21
Lack of interest of academic staff in teaching periods abroad	44	11	41
Insufficient financial resources to fund all applicants for teaching periods abroad	48	69	50
Insufficient individual grants for mobile teachers	57	64	58
Finding academic staff members to assist/guide/advise outgoing students	17	14	17
Finding academic staff members to assist/guide/advise incoming students	16	13	16
Reluctance of departments to introduce ECTS	27	23	26
Lack of interest in SOCRATES of key persons at the central level of the institution	9	6	9
Timing of decision to award the Institutional Contract	36	22	35
Delay in receipt of the institutional SOCRATES budget from the Commission	33	57	35
Lack of internal personnel resources to handle administration and service functions related to SOCRATES	47	38	46
Lack of financial means to cover own institutional costs related to SOCRATES	42	39	41
Lack of internal cooperation in the administrative procedures related to SOCRATES	17	14	17
Insufficient competencies of incoming students	11	3	10
Insufficient competencies of outgoing students	2	3	2
Insufficient competencies of incoming teaching staff	1	0	0
Lack of interest of the academic staff of your institution in the curriculum-related domains of SOCRATES	43	24	41
Lack or low quality of accommodation for foreign students	22	21	22
Finding suitable partner institutions for SOCRATES activities	11	2	10
Problems of communication with partner institutions on administrative matters	9	3	8
Problems of communication with partner institutions on academic matters	7	3	6
(n)	(781)	(88)	(869)

Question 4.2: Have you encountered significant problems with regard to SOCRATES in the following areas?

* Points 4 and 5 of a scale from 1 = "no problems at all" to 5 = "very serious"

The impacts of SOCRATES were viewed most positively by the larger Central and Eastern European countries involved (Romania, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland), followed by the Southern European countries (Spain, Greece, Portugal, and Italy), as is seen in Table 3.18. Cautious views were voiced by Dutch institutions where the contribution of SOCRATES to the European awareness in the cooperation of teaching and learning and innovative teaching methods was rated considerably more negatively than in other countries, and by Swedish institutions which often voiced concern that SOCRATES tended to weaken cooperation with other parts of the world.

3.8 Summary

Higher education institutions that participate in SOCRATES send and receive about 50 mobile students on average in this framework. About half are involved in curriculum-related projects (IP, CD, ODL). They have on average four staff members (full-time equivalent) for international relations at the central or department level, two of whom are in charge of SOCRATES; these figures do not suggest major growth since ERASMUS was put under the umbrella of SOCRATES. The institutions report that they cooperate on average with partners from nine countries.

The SOCRATES-supported institutions lay great emphasis on the Europeanisation and internationalisation of their policies and activities. Most want to strengthen this in general, to increase the international visibility of their institution, and to establish a coherent policy in that respect. They strongly advocate mobility and almost as frequently the Europeanisation and internationalisation of curricula. Most want to spread these activities across fields of study and across countries, while some opt for greater concentration.

Since ERASMUS support is channelled through institutional contracts between the Commission and the institutions in the framework of SOCRATES, there was a re-allocation and specific institutionalisation of the international and SOCRATES-related activities, although at a moderate pace. For example, the number of institutions that have a committee in charge of international or more especially SOCRATES-related activities at the central level grew from 37 per cent in 1993/94 to 50 per cent in 1999/2000. Staff in international offices often play an important role in the coordination of decision-making processes. According to the respondents, academics tend to be involved in all decisions regarding academic matters of exchange and cooperation, though the coordination of the processes may now often rest with the international offices.

The process of establishing specific units for SOCRATES continued. In 1999/2000, about 40 per cent of the SOCRATES-supported institutions had specific persons or units serving SOCRATES. They undertook various SOCRATES- related activities in cooperation with other persons and units. According to the respondents at the central level, the introduction of SOCRATES did not reduce the academics‘ participation in the preparation for the study abroad period or in academic matters related to incoming students. However, they undertake these activities today more frequently in cooperation with the international offices or other

actors, and they are less involved in administrative matters regarding the incoming students than in the past.

The SOCRATES funds are not greatly complemented by other funds. About 60 per cent of the funds for fellowships are granted by SOCRATES and about 40 per cent of the fellowships awarded through the institution come from other sources. About one-third of the expenditures for the international policy of the institution are SOCRATES funds, while two-thirds come from the institution itself or other sources.

Most of those responsible for SOCRATES at the central level of the institutions stated an extension or improvement of cooperation and mobility activities. The assessments were similar to those in a survey undertaken six years earlier. This suggests that continuous progress is perceived. The respondents, however, see less improvement concerning teaching in a foreign language and cooperation with the region, industry, etc.

Yet many institutions identify serious problems with regard to SOCRATES. Lack of funds for mobility activities are stated as serious problems by the majority of institutions and lack of personnel and other resources for international activities within the institution by almost half. About 40 per cent perceive a lack of interest on the part of academic staff, and about one-third complain about the administrative procedures of SOCRATES.

According to those responsible for SOCRATES at the central level of the institutions, SOCRATES contributes to mobility, European and international emphasis in teaching and learning, and better related services. However, they consider that it does not substantially contribute to the quality of teaching and learning or to major innovations in teaching and learning. Finally, 14 per cent were concerned that SOCRATES tended to weaken their institutional cooperation with other parts of the world.

Generally speaking, SOCRATES is viewed most favourably by respondents from Southern Europe and from Central and Eastern Europe. More sceptical voices were heard from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden.

According to those responsible for ERASMUS activities at the central level of the higher education institutions, cooperation and mobility continue to improve. The SOCRATES approach has led to some changes, but only in a minority of cases have there been substantial rearrangements of the tasks and responsibilities. Academics are less burdened with administrative matters, but are involved in academic matters as in the past, though more frequently in cooperation with other actors.

4. The ERASMUS Students' Experience

By Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler

4.1 Aim, Design and Process of the Survey

4.1.1 Aims and Development of ERASMUS

The ERASMUS programme was launched in 1987 after the ten-year pilot phase of Joint Study Programmes (JSP) had proven successful and the wish to develop and enlarge European educational activities was felt. ERASMUS soon became the most visible of the educational programmes established in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Student exchange was the key element, as can be seen in the acronym for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. It absorbed the major components of the budget.

ERASMUS supported student mobility in very specific ways (see Teichler and Maiworm 1997, pp. 3-4). It promoted regional mobility, it encouraged temporary study abroad, and it supported almost exclusively collective mobility. The collective approach was the basis for pursuing further goals: departments were expected to form networks in order to cooperate closely. “Organised study abroad“ was encouraged to facilitate mobility. Curricular integration was advocated as best practice, and an inclusive approach was made mandatory: financial support was granted under the condition that study achievements abroad were recognised upon return as equivalent to parts of the home country course programme. Finally, from the outset, ERASMUS was a partial funding scheme for the students which aimed to cover the additional costs for study abroad and an incentive funding scheme for the higher education institutions, i.e. it expected them to complement the European funds by their own resources.

In the year of the launch, some 3,000 students were awarded an ERASMUS mobility grant. This figure grew to about 28,000 in 1990/91 and to about 52,000 in 1992/93 when the number of eligible countries grew beyond 12. In 1999/2000, ERASMUS comprised some 100,000 mobile students in 29 eligible countries.

The conditions, processes and results of student mobility were analysed in the early 1990s. Representative surveys were undertaken of the 1988/89 ERASMUS students (F. Maiworm, W. Steube and U. Teichler. *Learning in Europe. The ERASMUS Experience*. 1991) and the 1990/91 ERASMUS students (F. Maiworm, W. Steube and U. Teichler. *Experience of ERASMUS Students 1990/91*. 1993). The students who participated in the first three years of ECTS pilot schemes were also surveyed (F. Maiworm and U. Teichler. *The First Three Years of ECTS. Experiences of ECTS Students 1989/90 – 1991/92*. 1995). Kassel: Wissenschaftlichens Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung der Universität Gesamthochschule Kassel 1995).

4.1.2 The Changing Setting

Conditions, processes and outcomes of student mobility may have changed from the early 1990s because of the growth of the programme and of the number of participating countries. There may be effects of consolidation and routine. The European Credit Transfer System, which was strongly advocated by the European Commission, became instrumental for about half the ERASMUS students. Student mobility within ERASMUS could be affected in various ways by a changing context of Europeanisation and internationalisation.

Last but not least, the organisational and educational setting of ERASMUS was bound to change when SOCRATES became the umbrella of the various educational programmes. Since the academic year 1997/98, it is no longer networks of cooperating departments. The institutions of higher education must apply for ERASMUS funds. They are expected to formulate European Policy Statements in which they put student mobility in a broader perspective and prepare and sign bilateral cooperation contracts with other institutions. First reactions to the changes show that institutional policies may have gained some weight and services may have been coordinated in a more consistent manner. But playing down the role of academics as coordinators could lessen their involvement in the programme. Finally, the role of teacher staff exchange and curricular innovation within ERASMUS under the umbrella of SOCRATES was expected to grow.

Some aspects of these changes became visible in further studies undertaken on ERASMUS students, notably a study on their social background (The European Commission. *Survey into the Socio-Economic Background of ERASMUS Students.* 2000) and a study on ECTS (S. Adam and V. Gemlich. *Report for the European Commission. ECTS Extension Feasibility Project.* S.l. 2000, mimeo.).

4.1.3 Aims and Content of the 1998/99 ERASMUS Student Survey

In order to examine the conditions, processes and outcomes of ERASMUS student mobility in the first phase of the SOCRATES programme, a representative survey of 1998/99 ERASMUS students was undertaken after some months in the subsequent academic year, i.e. at a time when students could provide information on recognition.

The questionnaire survey "Experiences of ERASMUS Students 1998/99" asked the students to provide information about their socio-biographical profile, their motivation and preparation for study abroad, their experiences during the ERASMUS-supported study period in another country, funding and accommodation, the extent to which their studies abroad were recognised and their opinion about the outcomes of studying in another European country.

A comparison of the responses with those of the earlier surveys helps to measure the change over time. We must bear in mind, however, that it cannot establish the exact changes incurred by SOCRATES, since some of these may have taken place before it was

established. But the shift towards strengthening the role of institutional management and of the services within the institution as a whole and reducing the formal responsibilities of the teachers may not yet have taken root in the academic year 1998/99, i.e. the second year of the new SOCRATES framework for higher education activities.

4.1.4 Survey Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to 1998/99 ERASMUS students with the help of a selected number of higher education institutions. This method was chosen after it had become clear that no addresses of mobile students were available at the Commission or the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels.

Altogether, about 4,000 questionnaires were sent to the 280 higher education institutions which had agreed to support the survey[1]. Depending on the number of mobile students in the academic year 1997/98 - the only year for which figures on ERASMUS student mobility were available -, each participating institution in the Member States of the European Union and in EFTA countries were provided with between 5 and 30 copies of the questionnaire. All institutions in CEE countries which were eligible to participate in ERASMUS since 1998/99 and for which no data on mobile students were available at the time of the survey received 20 copies. A second package was sent to all institutions at the end of April as a reminder.

As a rule, the targeted students should represent all 1998/99 ERASMUS students of the institution with regard to fields of study. Finally, about 3,400 questionnaires were distributed by the higher education institutions which supported the survey. By the end of August 2000, we had received 1,366 questionnaires, which corresponds to a return rate of 40 per cent.

The ERASMUS student questionnaire comprises 50 questions and more than 450 variables. In order to ease the completion and to avoid misunderstandings it was translated into all the official languages of the European Member States. Students from CEE Countries were provided a German, English, and French version to allow them to choose the most appropriate language for their answers.

In order to ensure the representativity of the statistical analysis, the data were adjusted as regards subject area and home country in accordance to the total 1998/99 ERASMUS student population.

[1] In order to support the special evaluation on engineering and technology, over 1,200 further questionnaires were mailed to the institutions to be distributed exclusively to students from these fields (ERASMUS subject area codes 6.0 – 6.9).

4.2 Biographical Profile and Motives

4.2.1 Gender

More than half the students who participated in the survey were women (60%). As statistics show, the number of women participating in ERASMUS was slightly higher than that of men since the launch of the programme.

The subsequent report does not discuss differences according to gender. Almost all the differences in the answers of the men and women – notably an above-average interest in the cultural domains - only reflect the greater representation of women in foreign languages and other humanities fields and their under-representation in engineering fields. By field, women's experiences of the ERASMUS programme are similar to men's.

4.2.2 Parents' Background

36 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students reported that their fathers had a higher education degree and 28 per cent of the mothers had a degree. Of 21 per cent of the ERASMUS students surveyed, both the father and the mother were graduates (see Table 4.1).

In 1990/91, the respective figures were 35 per cent, 20 per cent and 15 per cent (Maiworm and Teichler 1997, p. 40). There are no exactly corresponding data of parents' educational background of students in Europe in general, but the best available data (those compiled by EURYDICE) suggest that ERASMUS students are close to the average. The increase in the number of parents holding a higher education degree during the 1990s does not indicate a growing selectivity of the ERASMUS programme, because higher education expanded substantially during the period when the parent generation was at the typical age of enrolment: According to Eurydice, 48 per cent of the parents of students in the European Union were higher education graduates (including short tertiary programmes) in 1995.

As identical occupations do not necessarily have the same status in all European countries, the students were not asked to state their parents' occupations, but rather their income status.

- 37 per cent considered their parents' income to be above average (41% of the 1990/91 cohort),
- 48 per cent (44%) as average, and
- 15 per cent (13%) as below average.

The data do not indicate that ERASMUS has become more socially selective in the 1990s as a consequence of the drop in the coverage of the ERASMUS grant of the overall expenses for studying abroad.

4.2.3 Prior International Experiences and Motivation for Study Abroad

79 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students (slightly fewer than the 1990/91 cohort) had spent a period abroad of at least one month between the age of 15 and the ERASMUS-supported period. The average total duration of previous stays abroad was 6.4 months (6.5 months in 1990/91), with 2.3 month on average (1.8 months) in the ERASMUS host country.

Students were asked to state the reasons that influenced their decision to study abroad according to a list of 14 possible motives (see Table 4.2). The answers suggest that they had many: learning a culture, academic learning, improving their knowledge of a foreign language and professional enhancement. It is worth noting that a "strong reason" increased during the 1990s by 4 per cent on average across all categories with no change in the overall patterns: recent students thus expressed the high and manifold expectations they harboured to a greater extent than those of the early 1990s.

As Table 4.2 shows, students of agriculture, architecture, fine arts and mathematics are mostly interested in academic and educational matters, students of education underscore cultural reasons, and students of economics mainly hope for a career advancement. Students of humanities, languages, law, social sciences and natural sciences are close to the average, whereas students of geography/geology, medical fields and communication underscore "various reasons" less strongly than the average and are less interested in other matters.

4.3 The Study Period in the Course of Study

4.3.1 Age and Duration

The average age of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students was about 23 years when they went abroad. It varied by country from under 22 years to about 25 years on average. This reflects differences by country according to age at entry to higher education, but also to the stage in the course of study when they go abroad.

On average, ERASMUS students had been enrolled 3.0 years before they went abroad (the 1990/91 ERASMUS cohort reported 2.8 years). Students from the United Kingdom (after 2.0 years) and Ireland (after 2.2 years on average) went abroad at the earliest stage (because of the comparatively short length of initial degree programmes in these countries). But Italian and Spanish students went abroad with the help of ERASMUS after four years of prior study.

ERASMUS students in 1998/99 went abroad for an average of 7.0 months (the 1990/91 cohort for 6.9 months). Only 10 per cent spent 3 months or less in another European country. This figure is much lower than eight years earlier (20%). 43 per cent reported a stay of 4-6 months and 47 per cent a stay of 7 months and more. Short periods of study were most often stated by students from Central and Eastern Europe (5.0 months on average) and by those from the Netherlands and Greece (5.3 months each). The average duration differed to a lesser extent according to field of study.

4.3.2 Major Activities and Time Spent on Study

About three-quarters of the students studied full-time for all or part of the study period in another European country. Half the remaining students stated that they were part-time students. Other activities, often alongside study, included:

- work placement (11 per cent on average), most often chosen by students in medicine, agriculture and education,
- work on thesis, most frequently reported by students in engineering, agriculture and humanities, and
- laboratory work, often undertaken by students in natural sciences, engineering and medicine (see Table 4.3).

This was reflected in the answers to a question about the time ERASMUS students spent on various activities during the study period abroad. They spent 37.6 hours per week on study and related activities. The time spent on study by 1998/99 ERASMUS students was slightly shorter (0.3 hours) on average than that spent by 1990/91 students. There were no significant changes according to the type of activity.

The average number of weekly hours spent on study and related activities varied from 33 hours on average in language studies to 46 hours in architecture. Hours spent on courses vary more substantially according to the home country than according to the host country or field of study. While students from Italy only spent 11 hours per week in classes, those from Portugal spent 25 hours and students from Spain and Germany 23 hours.

Table 4.3
Major Activities During the Study Abroad Period – by Field of Study (percentages, multiple response possible)

	Field of study																Total
	Agr	Arc	Art	Bus	Edu	Eng	Geo	Hum	Lan	Law	Mat	Med	Nat	Soc	Com	Other	
Full-time study	65	70	89	85	79	59	93	82	86	87	81	46	52	79	67	69	77
Work placement	31	3	14	9	28	13	0	4	6	0	5	45	14	10	14	7	11
Work on thesis	14	9	2	5	3	32	7	11	5	3	6	4	9	6	8	12	8
Part-time study	17	18	6	10	12	10	4	15	11	10	15	11	17	12	30	17	12
Laboratory work	7	8	7	1	3	22	3	2	0	0	5	26	38	2	1	8	7
Other	0	12	9	6	13	5	1	12	5	6	4	6	5	9	10	9	7
Not ticked	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	1
Total	136	120	127	118	137	141	111	127	114	107	116	141	135	119	131	122	123
(n)	(44)	(49)	(39)	(257)	(58)	(114)	(23)	(70)	(243)	(95)	(59)	(50)	(66)	(118)	(25)	(56)	(1366)

Question 2.5: What were your major activities during the ERASMUS period abroad?

Table 4.4
Average Weekly Hours Spent on Study During Stay Abroad – by Field of Study (mean)

	Field of study																Total
	Agr	Arc	Art	Bus	Edu	Eng	Geo	Hum	Lan	Law	Mat	Med	Nat	Soc	Com	Other	
Courses and related activities	22.1	23.1	16.5	21.2	24.3	20.2	22.0	18.5	17.1	15.5	24.1	18.7	17.8	16.0	23.0	18.6	19.3
Practical projects, laboratory work etc.	2.8	6.5	11.4	1.9	2.8	4.4	2.6	.9	1.2	.8	5.6	10.0	6.7	2.1	4.6	3.6	3.2
Independent study	10.5	11.0	8.3	8.7	7.2	10.9	9.7	10.1	8.8	13.4	8.0	10.1	11.1	8.8	8.6	7.1	9.4
Work on thesis/ dissertation/ etc.	2.5	1.1	1.4	2.2	2.6	2.4	4.5	3.3	1.7	2.3	1.2	1.9	1.2	4.1	3.3	3.1	2.3
Field trips, excursions, etc.	2.1	1.1	3.4	.6	.7	.5	2.7	.7	.7	.7	.3	.2	1.0	1.2	1.8	.8	.9
Language training	1.5	1.3	1.7	2.2	1.3	2.2	1.6	1.5	3.4	1.8	1.1	1.4	1.8	2.0	3.4	1.0	2.1
Other study activities	.1	1.5	.1	.4	.1	.0	.1	.8	.2	.1	.2	.2	.8	.9	.0	.5	.4
Total hours	41.6	45.6	42.8	37.2	38.9	40.6	43.3	35.9	33.1	34.7	40.3	42.4	40.5	35.1	44.7	34.7	37.6
(n)	(32)	(40)	(30)	(195)	(41)	(84)	(18)	(51)	(196)	(73)	(48)	(36)	(51)	(93)	(22)	(46)	(1058)

Question 5.3: How many hours per week did you spend on average on the following types of study? Please estimate for the ERASMUS academic study period only (i.e. excluding work placement and holiday periods).

Independent study abroad is most frequent among ERASMUS students in law. Practical projects and laboratory work are most strongly emphasised by students in natural sciences, architecture and medicine (see Table 4.4).

4.4 Application for, Award and Funding of the Study Period Abroad

4.4.1 Timing of Application and Award

One of the major complaints about the ERASMUS programme is the timing of the decision regarding the financial award of the study period abroad. The 1990/91 ERASMUS students had reported that the period between the application and the receipt of the grants was 8.3 months on average, and students actually received the first funds only 1.8 months on average after their departure.

This issue was often taken up in debates and various rearrangements were made. According to the 1998/99 students from EU and EFTA countries, however, the period between the application and the receipt of the grants increased to 8.4 months on average (there were too few responses to this question by students from CEE countries to take them into account).

Table 4.5
Application, Notification and Receipt of ERASMUS Grant in Relation to Departure to the ERASMUS Host Country – by EU and EFTA Countries (mean)

	Country of home institution									Gesamt
	AT	BE	DE	ES	FR	IT	PT	UK	Other EU and EFTA	
Timing of application for ERASMUS support in relation to date of departure	-6.5	-6.6	-7.0	-6.9	-6.3	-6.7	-6.2	-6.4	-5.5	-6.4
Notification about the acceptance for the ERASMUS supported period in relation to date of departure	-3.9	-3.2	-4.4	-4.7	-3.5	-4.6	-3.7	-4.3	-3.8	-4.1
Notification of the receipt of the ERASMUS grant in relation to date of departure	-2.8	-2.2	-3.7	-4.5	-.9	-4.8	-2.9	-2.5	-3.1	-3.2
Information about the amount of the ERASMUS grant in relation to date of departure	-3.4	-.8	-1.1	-1.2	1.2	-2.7	-2.1	-.5	-2.2	-1.2
Time of receipt of the first funds in relation to date of departure	.6	1.7	1.2	2.3	4.1	3.3	.9	1.3	.2	2.0
(n)	(12)	(26)	(87)	(141)	(178)	(109)	(11)	(61)	(53)	(678)

Question 2.6: In relation to your departure to the ERASMUS host country, when:

Students wishing to be awarded an ERASMUS grant in 1998/99 typically

- had to apply 6.4 months prior to the beginning of the study period abroad,
- knew they were accepted 4.1 months prior to the period abroad,
- were officially notified that they had obtained a grant 3.2 months in advance,
- knew the amount of the grant 1.2 months before they went abroad, and
- received the first funds 2.0 months after they went abroad.

As Table 4.5 shows, the overall time span was longest for students from France (10.5 months) and Italy (10.0 months).

4.4.2 Costs and Funding of the Study Abroad Period

1998/98 ERASMUS students spent an average of 712 EURO a month during their study period in another European country. This does not only include the expenses for their stay, but also expenses at home while being abroad or part of the travel expenses to the host country and back to the home country. The average additional expenses during the study period abroad amounted to 306 EURO a month.

According to the students who provided information on this, the average monthly ERASMUS grant was 158 EURO. It only covered 22 per cent of the expenses during the study period abroad and only 52 per cent of the additional costs abroad, i.e. the initial target of the ERASMUS scheme. So, other sources – predominantly parental support – had to cover 148 EURO per month on average and about 1,036 EURO for the whole study period in another European country.

Table 4.6
The Role Played by ERASMUS in Funding Study Abroad 1990/91 and 1998/99
(means/percentages)

	1990/91	1998/99
Monthly expenses during study period at home (ECU/EURO)	363	406
Change in expenses at home (1990/91 = 100)	(100)	(112)
Monthly expenses during study period abroad (ECU/EURO)	581	712
Change in expenses while abroad (1990/91 = 100)	(100)	(123)
Additional monthly expenses while abroad (ECU/EURO)	218	306
Change in additional expenses while abroad (1990/91 = 100)	(100)	(140)
Monthly ERASMUS grant (ECU/EURO)	194	158
Change in ERASMUS grant (1990/91 = 100)	(100)	(81)
Additional monthly costs not covered by ERASMUS (ECU/EURO)	24	148
Change in additional costs not covered (1990/91 = 100)	(100)	(616)
Average duration of period abroad (months)	6.9	7.0
Total additional costs not covered by ERASMUS (ECU/EURO)	166	1,036

Question 3.2: How much money did your receive as an ERASMUS grant for your whole study period abroad in 1998/99?

Question 3.3: Please state the overall costs of your return trips.

Question 3.4: Apart from return travel and related expenses, how much did you spend on average per month in your own country and during your ERASMUS-supported period abroad?

In 1990/91, the additional expenses while abroad were 218 ECU. ERASMUS covered 194 ECU, i.e. 89 per cent. So, only 24 ECU per month and 166 ECU altogether were needed from other sources (see Table 4.6). The authors of the 1990/91 study argued that the ERASMUS fellowship could be seen as covering more than the additional costs abroad, if free rent at home was calculated as part of the costs at home (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, pp. 91-93).

Thus, the expenses of additional costs not covered by ERASMUS almost sextupled, even if inflation was taken into consideration (here counted as increase of costs at home).

The increased additional costs not covered by ERASMUS were not made up by home country grants and loans which increased from 108 ECU in 1990/91 to 128 EURO in 1998/99. However, the relative contribution of these sources to the expenses while abroad remains stable by about 18 per cent. In contrast, the proportion of expenses borne by the students or their relatives increased from about 44 per cent to about 53 per cent (see Table 4.7).

The flexibility of the individual countries in adjusting the ERASMUS grants to conditions in the home country, host country, social needs, etc. do not seem to lead to a similar financial burden for the individual students. We note for example that the additional monthly costs that are not covered by ERASMUS vary greatly according to home country: Whereas Spanish students report 347 EURO additional costs per month which are not covered by ERASMUS, the British and most CEE students received more ERASMUS funds on average than their additional costs abroad. But students going to the UK spent 242 EURO per month for additional costs not covered by ERASMUS, while students going to CEE countries lived more cheaply there on average than at home, but still received an ERASMUS grant that was close to the average ERASMUS grant. Also, students who lived at home while studying in the home country had 284 EURO additional costs abroad on average which were not covered by ERASMUS, while those who did not live at home had only 88 ECU additional expenses not covered by ERASMUS. Hence, the burden seems to be very high for students whose parents cannot rent the room which was used by their children when they studied at home.

4.5 Preparation and Advice

4.5.1 The Students' Preparatory Activities

The ERASMUS programme aims to ensure that the study period in another European country is administratively easier and supported academically by the home and host institutions and departments. Therefore, the provisions for preparation and the preparatory activities of the students were always a key issue. Also, the administrative and academic assistance and guidance for incoming students by the host institution were seen as a key factor for the success of "organised" study abroad.

Table 4.8
Receipt of Information Material/Information Package About the Host Institution and Satisfaction with the Information Provided – by Application of ECTS to the Study Programme (percentages)

	ECTS applied		Total
	Yes	No	
Information Received			
Yes	88	80	84
No	12	20	16
Total	100	100	100
Satisfied with Information Provided about*			
the institution	66	61	64
the department	50	36	43
registration	49	43	46
administrative matters (such as insurance, registration with civil authorities, etc.)	46	41	44
Language tuition facilities	46	38	42
Accommodation	52	47	50
teaching/learning methods	32	22	27
Course description	44	33	39
course level	32	23	28
Methods of assessment	34	25	30
(n)	(552)	(472)	(1024)

Question 4.2: Did you receive information material/an information package about your host institution? If so, were you satisfied with the information provided?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "Very satisfied" to 5 = "Very dissatisfied"

As regards the preparation:

- 71 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students (65% of the 1990/91 students) reported that they prepared themselves with regard to practical matters concerning living and studying in the host country,
- 69 per cent (74%) prepared themselves by improving their foreign language proficiency,

- 64 per cent (60%) as regards the culture and society of the host country, and
- 47 per cent (54%) reported academic preparation.

Students were also asked to state the ways they prepared themselves:

- 69 per cent (66%) cited self-study,
- 59 per cent (52%) made use of the written material provided,
- 37 per cent (40%) took part in preparatory meetings,
- 30 per cent (31%) attended optional courses, and
- 25 per cent (39%) participated in mandatory courses for preparation.

One question addressed the provision of written material on the host institution, because recognition through ECTS credit transfer was expected to be supported by an information package of the host institution to enable the students to choose in advance the courses they would follow abroad. 88 per cent of the ECTS students and 80 per cent of the other ERASMUS students reported that they were provided with information about the host institution.

Asked how satisfied they were with the information, they said that further improvement was desirable. On average, across 10 areas of information addressed in the respective questions, 45 per cent of the ECTS students and 37 per cent of the other ERASMUS students who were provided with information expressed satisfaction. Many students criticised the information on study as such (course description, teaching and assessment methods) (Table 4.8).

4.5.2 Preparatory Material

Students did not rate the material provided by Portuguese institutions of higher education and by French, Spanish and Greek universities favourably. The written material provided by Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish institutions of higher education obtained the best ratings.

Asked about assistance, guidance and advice provided by the home institution,

- 18 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students stated substantial assistance and guidance on the 12 themes addressed,
- 43 per cent little assistance and guidance, and
- 39 per cent none at all.

This pattern did not change significantly between 1990/91 and 1998/99 (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, pp. 38-40).

4.5.3 Preparatory Assistance by Home Institutions

Asked if they were satisfied with the assistance, guidance and advice provided by the home institution for the preparation of the study period abroad, ERASMUS students answered cautiously on average and were more often negative than positive. But they were satisfied with the information about the ERASMUS exchange and recognition matters, as is seen in Table 4.9. In respect to all other matters, negative ratings slightly outnumbered positive ratings.

Altogether, the ratings were somewhat more positive on the part of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students than on that of the 1990/91 students. This holds true both for programme and academics matters and for administrative and cultural matters, etc.

On average across the various themes, ERASMUS students from Central and Eastern Europe and from Finland and Portugal expressed the highest satisfaction with the assistance and guidance provided by the home institution. Least satisfied were students from Spain, Italy, Greece and Belgium. There was no substantial difference of ratings between the ECTS students and other ERASMUS students.

4.5.4 Overall Assessment of the Preparation

Altogether, about half the ERASMUS students believed they were well prepared for the study period abroad in terms of society and culture of the host country, language of the host country and practical matters concerning living and studying abroad. However, only one-third felt well prepared regarding academic matters and study at the host institutions, while a third did not. A higher proportion of ECTS students felt well prepared in academic matters, whereas other ERASMUS students felt slightly better prepared as regards the culture and society of the host country.

The overall assessment varied substantially according to home country. Students from Central and Eastern Europe felt best prepared, followed by those from Denmark, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands. The most negative ratings came from Italian, French and Portuguese students (see Table 4.10)

Table 4.10
Positive Assessment of Degree of Preparation for the ERASMUS Study Abroad Period – by Country of Home Institution (percentages*)

	Country of home institution										
	AT	BE	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	GR	IE	IT	
Practical matters in the host country	50	41	57	55	53	52	33	43	37	38	
Society and culture of the host country	57	54	67	68	58	57	42	47	62	40	
Academic matters/study at the host institution	39	34	31	35	36	33	28	33	29	26	
Language of the host country	52	59	62	70	40	49	46	51	65	30	
	NL	PT	SE	UK	NO	CZ	HU	PL	RO	Other	Total
Practical matters in the host country	53	42	56	47	68	66	51	60	49	66	47
Society and culture of the host country	51	45	69	58	76	70	58	63	60	94	55
Academic matters/study at the host institution	44	25	31	27	37	58	53	45	52	46	32
Language of the host country	67	39	70	66	76	71	47	70	33	63	52

Question 4.3: How well were you prepared for the ERASMUS study period abroad?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "Very well prepared" to 5 = "Not very well prepared"

4.5.5 Prior Study Arrangements And Recognition

The preparatory provisions by the home institutions and the assistance by the host institutions interact when efforts are made to settle matters of study (course programme, examinations and matters of recognition) before the study period abroad. Efforts were made in the context of ECTS to settle those issues in advance.

- 42 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students reported that the courses to be taken at the host institution were settled in advance,
- 27 per cent reported prior arrangements of the types of examination taken during and after the study period abroad, and

- 49 per cent noted that academic recognition arrangements were made prior to the study period abroad.

These prior arrangements were more frequent if ECTS was applied. The difference of an average of 6 per cent across the three categories is small, however, if one considers the extent to which those efforts are underscored as being typical of the ECTS scheme.

A comparison of the answers to this question and those to other questions suggests that the extent to which study matters abroad are settled in advance largely depends on the host institution and only to a limited extent on the home institution. Altogether, the differences according to host country are smaller than in respect to the various means of assistance and guidance during the study period abroad. Study matters are most often settled by students going to Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands and least often by those going to Central and Eastern Europe.

4.5.6 Assistance and Guidance by Host Institution for Incoming Students

Altogether, more ERASMUS students reported that they were provided more assistance, guidance and advice by the host institutions regarding the various matters than by the home institution regarding the preparatory phase.

- substantial support was stated by 33 per cent of the students across the 14 themes addressed,
- little assistance and guidance by 42 per cent, and
- none at all by 25 per cent on average.

The 1998/99 ERASMUS students reported somewhat more assistance and guidance than the 1990/91 students (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, pp. 42-44). This holds true regarding various practical matters as well as ERASMUS and recognition matters, language training and personal matters.

Asked if they were satisfied with the assistance, guidance and advice provided, the ERASMUS students also rated the assistance by the host institution far more positively than the assistance for preparation by the home institution. Again, the ratings by the 1998/99 ERASMUS students were slightly more positive than those by the 1990/91 students.

Substantial differences are visible as regards country. As Table 4.11 shows, assistance and guidance by Finnish and Swedish institutions were greatly appreciated, but ERASMUS students who spent their study period abroad in Greece, France and Italy were not very satisfied in this respect.

4.6 Activities and Problems During the Study Period Abroad

4.6.1 Broadening Education Experiences

Many ERASMUS students used the opportunity of studying in another European country to participate in courses that contrasted with those offered at the home institution. The 1998/99 students were slightly more active in this respect than the 1990/91 students (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, pp. 52-55). They mainly took:

- courses on topics which are not available at the home institution (69%),
- language courses in the host country language (55%),
- courses to broaden their academic and cultural background (52%), and
- courses involving teaching methods that are not used at the home institution (50%).

Students in communication science used these opportunities most frequently and those in medicine least frequently. As is seen in Table 4.12, study in Austria, Finland and Sweden was most often used to broaden experiences in the substance and modes of teaching and learning.

4.6.2 Integration in the Host Course Programme

Most ERASMUS students take the regular course programme abroad:

- 71 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students took all the courses together with the host country students; the respective share was 62 per cent in 1990/91 (see Table 4.13).
- 62 per cent of the 1998/99 students reported that all the courses they had taken abroad were part of the regular study programme at the host institution. Again, the proportion was higher among 1998/99 students than among 1990/91 students.

Table 4.13
Common Courses With Host Country Students – by Host Country (percentages)

	Host country																Total
	AT	BE	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	GR	IE	IT	NL	PT	SE	UK	NO	CEE	
All courses	84	53	76	64	86	47	73	33	76	84	43	62	51	80	51	23	71
Some courses	16	41	20	29	9	39	21	19	23	15	42	22	33	15	30	47	22
None	0	6	4	7	5	15	6	47	1	1	14	16	16	4	18	30	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(32)	(47)	(190)	(39)	(119)	(49)	(223)	(23)	(45)	(95)	(84)	(26)	(57)	(281)	(17)	(14)	(1340)

Question 5.5: Did you follow courses at the host institution with host country students?

Obviously, lack of knowledge of the host country language is the single most important factor for not joining the regular programme. Therefore, students going to Greece are least integrated into the regular programme, as are those who go to other small European countries (except Ireland).

4.6.3 Language Used for Study Abroad

The host country language was the sole language of instruction for 59 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students and was among the languages of instruction for an additional 27 per cent of ERASMUS students (see Table 4.14). A comparison with the respective figures of 65 per cent and 26 per cent for the 1990/91 ERASMUS students indicates a slight loss of the role of the host country language. Instead, a third language (often English) increased as the sole language of instruction from 4 per cent to 11 per cent of the ERASMUS students and as an additional language of instruction from 21 per cent to 24 per cent.

As students who were taught more than one language were asked to state the percentages, it was possible to establish the exact role the various languages played in the courses followed by ERASMUS students. As Table 4.15 shows, it remained more or less constant from 1990/91 to 1999/98 (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, p. 57). Despite the growing

weight of English as a lingua franca, the diversity of languages in teaching and learning within ERASMUS was preserved.

Table 4.14
Language of Instruction During Study Period Abroad – by Host Country (percentages)

	Host country																Total
	AT	BE	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	GR	IE	IT	NL	PT	SE	UK	NO	CEE	
Host	32	26	63	12	69	0	68	24	75	85	2	58	8	93	29	16	59
Home	6	11	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	13	5	8	0	0	9	2
Host+home	15	0	6	3	0	7	6	0	8	1	7	7	0	1	0	19	4
Home+other	8	0	1	3	0	1	1	15	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	6	1
Host+other	30	32	23	38	22	39	20	25	17	11	21	30	39	4	32	19	20
Host+home+other	6	4	4	8	8	4	2	0	0	2	3	0	3	3	0	0	3
Other	3	27	2	36	1	50	0	35	0	1	46	0	42	0	38	31	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(32)	(47)	(189)	(39)	(117)	(48)	(220)	(24)	(42)	(97)	(84)	(25)	(55)	(281)	(18)	(14)	(1330)

Question 5.7: What was the language of instruction of the courses you followed at the host institution? If you were taught in more than one language, please state percentages. (Sum of percentages should add up to 100 per cent)

Table 4.15
Percentage of Languages Used in the Courses Taken by ERASMUS Students 1990/91 and 1998/99 (means)

	1990/91	1998/99
English	41	44
French	22	18
German	15	15
Spanish	10	8
Italian	7	7
All other languages	5	8
Total	100	100

Question 5.7: What was the language of instruction of the courses you followed at the host institution? If you were taught in more than one language, please state percentages. (Sum of percentages should add up to 100 per cent)

4.6.4 Level of Courses Abroad

1998/99 ERASMUS students considered that, on average, 22 per cent of the courses taken abroad were more demanding than those at home, 47 per cent as equally demanding and 31 per cent as less demanding. These figures are almost identical to those of the 1990/91 cohort (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, p. 102). More demanding courses are reported most by those studying in Denmark and the Netherlands and less demanding courses by those in Greece and in CEE countries (see Table 4.16).

Table 4.16
Average Assessment of Academic Level of Courses at the Host institution as Compared to Study at home – by Host Country (mean)

	Host country																Total
	AT	BE	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	GR	IE	IT	NL	PT	SE	UK	NO	CEE	
more demanding	20.4	18.9	27.0	33.8	19.6	15.3	19.5	8.6	19.6	21.9	34.8	21.4	22.4	21.7	25.6	4.4	22.2
equally demanding	53.5	52.8	51.4	46.8	46.5	47.8	47.5	46.8	44.6	44.3	46.4	61.0	51.4	40.9	43.2	39.3	46.7
less demanding	26.1	28.3	21.6	19.3	34.0	36.8	33.0	44.6	35.9	33.8	18.8	17.6	26.2	37.5	31.2	56.3	31.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(32)	(45)	(175)	(36)	(107)	(44)	(213)	(24)	(44)	(90)	(73)	(24)	(52)	(268)	(16)	(14)	(1256)

Question 5.16: Approximately what percentage of the courses you followed while abroad was academically less or more demanding than those you would have followed at the home institution during the same period?

4.6.5 Cultural and Social Activities and Integration in the Host Country

Asked about various cultural and social experiences and activities to get to know the host country, about two-thirds of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students stated that they frequently

- listened to or read news about the host country,
- had conversations and discussed with host country students as well as
- with teaching staff and
- with other people of the host country, and
- travelled in the host country.

About three-quarters stated that they often visited museums or attended concerts, went to the theatre, cinema, etc., while about 60 per cent reported frequent leisure activities with host country nationals. Compared to the 1990/91 ERASMUS students, fewer 1998/99 students reported listening to and reading news and visits of museums, theatres etc., but they travelled abroad more often and had frequent contacts with teachers and/or other people in the host country (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, p. 57).

62 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students considered themselves well integrated in the academic life and 66 per cent in the social life of the host country. In 1990/91, the respective assessments were slightly less positive. The ratings by the 1998/99 ERASMUS students regarding academic life were most positive with respect to Sweden and least positive regarding Greece and Central and Eastern Europe. The highest integration in social life was felt by students who spent their ERASMUS-supported period in Finland.

4.6.6 Accommodation

During the study period abroad, about half the ERASMUS students are provided with university accommodation. This remained more or less unchanged from 1990/91 to 1998/99, although the proportion of ERASMUS students living in university accommodation prior to the study period abroad had declined from 24 per cent to 14 per cent, since university accommodation plays a small role in most of the new EU Member States. About one-third of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students shared an apartment or house with other students during their study abroad period. Living in a private home was an exception (6%); this was most frequent with students who spent their study period in Denmark (34%), Ireland (28%) and Portugal (12%).

The quality of accommodation at home, which was rated by 1990/91 ERASMUS students as 1.9 on average on a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 = "very bad", improved slightly to 1.7 according to the ratings of 1998/99 ERASMUS students. According to the students, the average quality of accommodation abroad also improved during this period from 2.6 to 2.4.

4.6.7 Problems Faced during the Study Period Abroad

ERASMUS students were asked to state whether they had faced serious problems during their study period abroad. They were provided with a list of 20 possible areas. About one-fifth (17% - 23%) stated serious problems regarding

- administrative matters,
- accommodation,
- recognition and credit transfer
- financial matters, and
- guidance concerning the academic programme at the host institution.

On average, it was mainly students going to France and Italy who encountered problems (see Table 4.17). Academic problems were most often stressed by students going to France, Spain and Italy and least often by those going to the United Kingdom. Language problems were often mentioned by students going to France, Italy, Norway, Germany and Finland. Administrative matters were a burden for students going to Greece, France, Austria, Italy and CEE countries.

4.7 Recognition

As in previous surveys, recognition of the studies abroad upon return was measured in the 1998/99 ERASMUS students survey in three ways:

- Degree of recognition: the extent to which studies at the host institution were recognised (granted credit or otherwise considered equivalent) by the home institution. The mean degree of recognition for 1998/99 ERASMUS students was 81 per cent.

- Degree of correspondence: the extent to which studies at the host institution corresponded to the typical workload at the home institution during a corresponding period. According to the students, the mean degree of correspondence was 80 per cent.

- The 1998/99 ERASMUS students expected on average a prolongation of 55 per cent due to the study period abroad. Thus, the mean non-prolongation was 45 per cent.

In comparing these findings with those reported by the 1990/91 ERASMUS student cohort we must bear in mind that ECTS, established as a scheme to increase recognition through calculation, award and documentation of credits, was a small pilot scheme in the early 1990s but was extended to about half the ERASMUS students in 1998/99. 40 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students stated that the ECTS scheme was applied to them.

Table 4.18
Degree of Recognition, Correspondence and Non-Prolongation 1990/91 and 1998/99 – by Type of Recognition (mean of percentages)

	Degree of recognition			Degree of correspondence			Degree of non-prolongation		
	ECTS	Other	Total	ECTS	Other	Total	ECTS	Other	Total
1990/91	95	74	(75)*	84	72	(73)*	77	54	(55)*
1998/99	87	74	81	81	80	80	53	37	45

* Based on two separate surveys; weighted according to ERASMUS overall statistics

Question 5.13: How far have the academic studies you undertook at the host institution been recognised (granted credit or otherwise considered equivalent) by the home institution?

Question 5.14: To what extent did the workload of your studies at the host institution correspond to the typical workload expected at your home institution during a corresponding period?

Question 5.15: The ERASMUS study period is likely to prolong the total duration of your studies by:

Table 4.18 shows, first, that ERASMUS students who did not study in the framework of ECTS were recognised three-quarters of their study achievement upon return both after the 1990/91 (see Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, p. 98) and the 1998/99 study period abroad. Credit transfer in the experimental phase leads to a record high of 95 per cent recognition in the first two years of the ECTS pilot programme (Maiworm and Teichler 1995, p. 97), but was still at 87 per cent in 1998/99. As ECTS had expanded so much, the mean degree for recognition increased from 75 per cent to 81 per cent.

One could add that 59 per cent of the courses recognised upon return were recognised as replacing mandatory courses at home. The ratio was slightly lower for ECTS (55%) than for other ERASMUS students.

Second, the degree of correspondence was 72 per cent in 1990/91 for the regular ERASMUS students and increased to 80 per cent in 1998/99. It was 84 per cent for ECTS students in 1990/91 and decreased slightly to 81 per cent. Thus, the overall degree of correspondence increased from 73 per cent to 80 per cent.

Third, ECTS students, both in 1990/91 and 1998/99, expected substantially less prolongation of studies due to the study period abroad than other ERASMUS students of the same cohorts. Altogether, however, fear substantially grew over the time by which study abroad was going to prolong the overall study period; this is both true for ECTS and other ERASMUS students. Thus, although ECTS was enlarged, the "degree of non-prolongation" dropped from 55 per cent to 45 per cent. Now, students expect a prolongation of the overall period of study of more than half the duration of the study abroad period.

Recognition of study abroad varies more strongly by home country than by host country. This does not come as a surprise because recognition is eventually determined by the home institutions and because recognition practices continue to vary.

Table 4.19
Degree of Recognition of the Academic Achievements Acquired Abroad and Expected Prolongation of the Overall Period of Study- by Country of Home Institution (mean of percentages)

	Country of home institution										
	AT	BE	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	GR	IE	IT	
Degree of recognition	91	90	67	82	80	85	90	84	73	86	
Ratio of expected prolongation and duration of the period abroad	66	11	81	39	48	82	24	49	58	61	

	NL	PT	SE	UK	NO	CZ	HU	PL	RO	Other	Total
Degree of recognition	93	96	94	63	93	62	93	85	75	90	82
Ratio of expected prolongation and duration of the period abroad	66	50	59	74	34	63	49	21	75	40	55

Question 5.13: How far have the academic studies you undertook at the host institution been recognised (granted credit or otherwise considered equivalent) by the home institution?

Question 5.15: The ERASMUS study period is likely to prolong the total duration of your studies by:

As far as the "degree of recognition" is concerned, the British (63%) and German institutions of higher education (67%), as well as those from some CEE countries, are least ready to grant recognition of study achievements abroad. In contrast, institutions from eight EU and EFTA countries grant 90 per cent or more recognition.

As regards prolongation, Finnish and German students expect that their overall study period will be prolonged by more than 80 per cent of the period abroad as a consequence of study abroad. This is substantially higher than in other EU and EFTA countries (see Table 4.19).

It varies less according to field of study than according to home country. The greatest prolongation is expected by students in law, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, and the least prolongation by students in communication sciences and in medicine.

4.8 Perceived Value of Study Abroad

4.8.1 Academic Progress

55 per cent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students rated their academic progress abroad as better than they would have expected during a corresponding period at home. 27 per cent perceived the same academic progress abroad as at home, and only 18 per cent believed that they learned less abroad than at home. The figures were almost identical to those of the 1990/91 survey (53, 27 and 20 per cent). 1998/99 ECTS students rated their academic progress abroad slightly more positively than other ERASMUS students (57% "better" compared to 53%). Even if we take into consideration that students may overestimate their own achievements, the high discrepancy between the perceived progress of study abroad and the substantial prolongation expected suggests that students see dimensions of academic value which are not appreciated in the assessments by the higher education institutions.

Academic progress abroad was rated highly by students from CEE countries, Portugal, Italy, Spain and France, while it was assessed more cautiously by those from Finland, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom and Austria. But it was rated highest by students who had spent their study period in Sweden and the Netherlands, and assessed most negatively by those who had spent their study period in Italy, Greece, Spain and France (see Table 4.20).

About one-third of the students who rated academic progress as relatively low quoted four major reasons: differences in the teaching, learning and examinations modes, lack of guidance and supervision, differences in the content of courses and language barriers. Only one-fifth thought that they themselves did not learn well and therefore showed little academic progress.

4.8.2 Foreign Language Proficiency

ERASMUS students rated their foreign language proficiency (reading, listening, speaking and writing) prior to the study period - both regarding the academic setting and outside the classroom - as neither good nor limited. Their ratings were slightly above 4 on a scale from 1 = "very good" to 7 = "extremely limited". After the study period, the average score had improved by more than 1.5 on average (see Table 4.21). The 1998/99 ERASMUS students rated their prior language proficiency slightly better than the 1990/91 students (0.2 scale point on average), but their rating of their language proficiency at the end of the study period abroad was similar (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, pp. 110-114). Hence, one could argue that only about half the ERASMUS students consider themselves well prepared for the study period abroad. At the end of the study period abroad, 90 per cent believe that they have reached an adequate level of language proficiency.

Table 4.21
Self-rating of Competency in Language of Instruction Before and After Study Abroad (mean*)

	Before	After
Reading in an academic setting	3.6	2.1
Listening in an academic setting	3.9	2.1
Speaking in an academic setting	4.4	2.5
Writing in an academic setting	4.2	2.7
Reading outside the classroom	3.5	2.0
Listening outside the classroom	3.8	2.0
Speaking outside the classroom	4.0	2.1
Writing outside the classroom	4.0	2.4

Question 5.8: How do you rate your competence in the (major) language of instruction at the host institution (only reply if different from the language of instruction at your home institution)?

* Scale from 1 = "Very good" to 7 = "Extremely limited"

4.8.3 Knowledge of the Host Country

Many ERASMUS students believed that their knowledge of the host country was quite limited prior to the study period abroad. They rated their prior knowledge across 13 themes as 3.5 on a scale from 1 = "extensive knowledge" to 5 "very minimal knowledge". They assessed their current knowledge as 2.3 on average. Again, the 1998/99 ERASMUS students felt slightly better informed prior to the study period abroad than the 1990/91 students, while no significant differences could be observed after the study period abroad (see Maiworm, Steube and Teichler 1993, pp. 114-116).

After the study period abroad, 1998/99 ERASMUS rated their knowledge highest on Spain and Italy, but lowest on Belgium and the Netherlands.

4.8.4 Overall Assessment

Generally speaking, ERASMUS students considered the study period abroad as worthwhile. There were no significant differences in this respect between the 1990/91 and 1998/99 students. The culture and foreign language outcomes were rated most positively. The opportunity to develop personal experience and to enhance career prospects were also rated positively. The ratings of academic matters were also positive on average, though more cautious.

Ratings varied only moderately according to home country. They were slightly more positive with Greek, Italian, French and Spanish students and slightly below average with Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Dutch ERASMUS students.

Altogether, 93 per cent of ERASMUS students said they were satisfied with the ERASMUS-supported study abroad period. Only 2 per cent said they were dissatisfied. These answers of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students do not differ significantly from those of the 1990/91 students. Only Danish and Finnish ERASMUS students were slightly more reserved than students from other European countries.

4.9 Summary

The comparison of the results of the survey "Experiences of ERASMUS Students 1998/99" with those of surveys undertaken earlier suggests a high degree of stability. ERASMUS students of the late 1990s are similar to those of the early 1990s in their socio-biographic profiles, their motives, their study experiences abroad and their assessment of the results of the study period abroad.

Four major changes are worth noting. Two are the immediate outcome of the European policy.

First, the extent to which the ERASMUS grant covered the additional expenses borne during the study period in another European country dropped substantially. The surveys suggest that the ERASMUS grants covered 89 per cent of additional costs abroad in 1990/91, but only 52 per cent in 1998/99. Thus, the overall expenses for the study period abroad not covered by the ERASMUS grant increased from less than 200 ECU to almost 1,000 EURO. As home country grants and loans did not increase enough to cover a larger share of the costs during the study period abroad, the students, their parents and relatives had to shoulder higher costs.

Second, the use of ECTS expanded substantially. ECTS increased from a pilot project comprising less than three per cent of ERASMUS students in 1990/91 to comprising 40 per cent of the ERASMUS students surveyed in 1998/99.

Two other changes related to those in the overall policy, but not as directly as the former ones. Third, information and advice for ERASMUS students, though remaining stable, was modified in some respects. Hence, the students' academic preparatory activities for the study period abroad seem to have declined. But students seem to arrange their study programme abroad more in advance. Also, the assistance and guidance of incoming students by the host institutions were extended and improved in some respects.

Fourth, there are changes concerning the recognition of study achievements abroad upon return. They cannot be interpreted easily. On the one hand, study achievements abroad which are not recognised under normal conditions seem to be cut in half by ECTS, and thus the spread of ECTS ensured that the "degree of recognition" increased from 75 per cent in 1990/91 to 81 per cent in 1998/96. On the other, students increasingly expect that the overall period of study will be prolonged as a consequence of the study period abroad. Even though the spread of ECTS has a counterbalancing effect, the expected prolongation increased from about 45 per cent in 1990/91 to 55 per cent in 1998/99. These two findings, seemingly contradictory at first glance, suggest that recognition increases in terms of certification of study achievements during and immediately after the study period abroad, but that a substantial proportion of the certified recognition remains artificial because students cannot forego a corresponding number of courses or other study activities at home and have a greater workload up to graduation than the formal recognition would suggest.

But some of the findings suggesting stability over time deserve attention. First, the information on the parents' background suggests that students' participation in ERASMUS did not become more socially selective as a consequence of the lower coverage of the additional expenses abroad by the ERASMUS grant.

Second, one could have hoped after the early experiences that some improvements could be achieved over time, but this was not the case. For example, one could have expected that the preparatory provision by the home institutions would have improved; according to the students, however, this was not true.

Similarly, differences according to countries, though smaller than initially predicted, remained a source of concern. In the early 1990s, for example, the European Commission used the results of the earlier students' survey for bilateral talks with the individual Member States about possible improvements. The findings of the late 1990s, however, suggest that differences between countries did not disappear in the 1990s. Ratings or more demanding expectations cumulate more clearly in respect to a few countries, notably the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and in part Finland, while findings related to the United Kingdom are less positive in the late 1990s than around 1990. But Italy, Greece, France and sometimes other Southern European countries are very often seen in an unfavourable light as far as ERASMUS student mobility is concerned.

Third, it is worth noting that the role of the various European languages in the teaching and learning of mobile students hardly changed between the early 1990s and the late 1990s. Amidst a growing role of English as lingua franca of international academic communication,

its more or less constant role as covering slightly more than 40 per cent of all the teaching and learning of the ERASMUS students can be viewed as a success of the policy to reinforce the use of a broad range of European languages.

Fourth, it is worth noting that ERASMUS students continue to assess the value of the study period abroad as highly as their predecessors did when the ERASMUS programme was launched and developed. Although the "novelty" of ERASMUS as a "success story" which had created a climate of enthusiasm and a pioneering spirit in the public debate was bound to give way to a feeling of normalisation and routine, each generation of new ERASMUS students seemed to return with the belief that the study period abroad was a culturally and linguistically valuable experience and led to substantial academic progress.

5. Employment and Work of Former ERASMUS Students

By Volker Jahr and Ulrich Teichler

5.1 Aims, Design and Methods of the Study

5.1.1 Expected Impacts Beyond Graduation

The promotion of student mobility has always been the core element of ERASMUS. It provided for large numbers of students to study for a few months or a whole academic year at a European partner institution or department of their home institution. The additional support, initially provided to the networks of cooperating departments and since 1997 to the institutions of higher education, aimed to ensure that the institutions and departments established supportive administrative and academic conditions and environments to facilitate the study abroad period and increase its academic value. Support was provided on the condition that students could count on the recognition of their achievements abroad upon return. If this period of study abroad, often supplemented by work experience, is successful, we expect it to have an impact not only on the remaining period of study, but also on the transition to work and early career.

5.1.2 The Previous ERASMUS Graduate Survey

A longitudinal study was undertaken of a sample of students who spent an ERASMUS-supported study period in another European country in the academic year 1988/89, i.e. the second year of the ERASMUS programme. They were surveyed, first, in 1989/90 in order to report on their study experience abroad (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler, 1991), then in 1992 (almost three years after return from the study period abroad) in order to inform about transition to work (U. Teichler and F. Maiworm. *Transition to Work. The Experience of Former ERASMUS Students*. 1994), and, again, in 1994 (almost five years after their return) in order to provide information on their early career. The study showed that the respondents perceived study abroad as a help for transition to work, but not necessarily as a boost for a high-flying career. Most considered their study experience abroad as useful for their work. Contacts with the host country were more likely if they had spent the study period in a large EU Member State. The academic value of study was appreciated to a lesser extent five years later than shortly after the study period abroad, but all other impacts were seen as similar at all stages of the survey. Also, former students believed that their course of study was prolonged slightly less during the academic year after their return as a consequence of the study period abroad than they expected. Altogether, former ERASMUS students rated the study period abroad as fairly valuable five years after the study period in comparison to the academic year after the study period (see F. Maiworm and U. Teichler. *Study Abroad and Early Career. Experiences of Former ERASMUS Students*. 1996).

5.1.3 Combining Two Surveys in 2000

In the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study, efforts were made to gather information on study after the ERASMUS-supported period, transition to work and the early career of a more recent cohort. Changes had occurred in employment and work of former ERASMUS students as a consequence of the expansion of the ERASMUS programme, its consolidation and the growing Europeanisation and Internationalisation of the labour market.

The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study made use of the Survey “Higher Education and Graduate Employment”, called CHEERS Project (Careers after Higher Education: A European Research Study), which was co-ordinated by the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work of the University of Kassel, which is also in charge of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study. In the CHEERS survey, supported by the Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme (TSER) of the European Commission, about 36,000 persons who had graduated in 1994/95 or in 1995/96 from institutions of 12 countries answered a written questionnaire in 1999. Questions addressed the socio-biographical background of the respondents, the course of study and study experience, the transition to work and early career, subsequent study and further education, current employment and work, retrospective assessment of study, links between study and career, and work orientation and job satisfaction.

In the framework of the SOCRATES Evaluation study, another questionnaire “Study in Another European Country and Subsequent Employment“ was mailed in spring 2000 to those respondents of the CHEERS graduate survey who had stated that they had spent a study period abroad in another European country. It was only sent to graduates from institutions of higher education of five countries: Finland, France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, because it was only in these countries that addresses of the respondents were available and a request for a repeated survey was compatible with the data protection decision. In the supplementary questionnaire, graduates were asked to provide information on:

- profile and costs of study abroad,
- study, academic matters, and problems abroad,
- recognition of study abroad, and
- current activities, employment, and work and perceived impact of study abroad.

Some questions were similar or identical to those put to the ERASMUS 1988/89 cohort so as to examine the change over time.

5.1.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Approach

This design of the study helped to forego a time-consuming search of addresses of former ERASMUS students, which certainly would have borne biased results due to incomplete recovery of addresses. Second, it allowed us to compare the study experiences and careers of former ERASMUS students with those of students having studied abroad with other financial arrangements and possibly other study conditions, and also with those of non-mobile students. Finally, the information on each graduate was very rich because answers to two questionnaires could be combined.

However, there were drawbacks. First, only five countries could be included. Second, as only a minority of the approximately 3,000 graduates of each country surveyed had been internationally mobile, the absolute number of former ERASMUS students traced that way was bound to be small. Third, the information in the supplementary questionnaire was collected between six months and one year later than the information in the initial questionnaire.

It should be noted that the former ERASMUS students surveyed studied in another European country at a time when ERASMUS was not yet under the umbrella of SOCRATES. Most studied abroad during the years 1992-94. This study, therefore, does not make it possible to examine the specific impact of the SOCRATES arrangements. It is useful, though, to see what has happened to former ERASMUS students who studied abroad about 4-5 years after the previously surveyed cohort of former ERASMUS students.

5.1.5 Number of Respondents and Returns

1,885 graduates from those five countries had stated in the CHEERS survey “Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe“ that they had studied abroad in Europe. Addresses were available for 1,671. But 77 questionnaires were returned because the graduates had moved and their address was unknown. 53 per cent responded, but only 789 answers could be analysed because some were incomplete and other students stated that they had not studied abroad (see Table 5.1). The analysis of the findings of the supplementary questionnaire are based on:

- 407 former ERASMUS students, and
- 382 former mobile students who did not benefit from ERASMUS support.

There were some minor problems in merging the answers of the supplementary questionnaire with those of the questionnaire “Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe“. They were mainly problems of identification. Thus, the answers to both data sets are only available for 728 persons. The complete data set comprises:

- 395 former ERASMUS students, and
- 333 former mobile students who did not benefit from ERASMUS support.

Table 5.1
Return Rate – "Study in Another European Country and Subsequent Employment"

Country	N target group	N sent out	N reached	N returned.	Return / target group	Return / net reached	N Valid
DE	444	363	357	249	68.6%	69.7%	238
UK	528*)	443*)	406*)	139*)	31.4%	34.2%	109
FR	449	432	409	235	54.4%	57.5%	232
ES	202	172	166	82	47.7%	49.4%	79
FI	262	261	256	137	52.5%	53.5%	131
Total	1,885	1,671	1,594	842	50.4%	52.8%	789

*) including graduates having spent their study period abroad solely in non-European countries

When analysing the answers to the questionnaire "Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe", two additional comparison groups can be taken into consideration:

- 1,639 former mobile students from the five countries whose financial means during the study period are not known (did not respond to the questionnaire or studied in other countries),
- 11,983 graduates from the five countries who had not been internationally mobile during the course of study.

Thus, the answers of 395 former ERASMUS students will be compared to tose of 13,955 other graduates. As the total number of former ERASMUS students who were surveyed is small, no tables will be provided on their distribution by country in the course of the analysis.

5.2 Socio-biographical and Educational Background

5.2.1 Parents' Educational Background

The graduate survey suggests that internationally mobile students come from a socially more selective background than non-mobile students. As Table 5.2 shows:

- 42 per cent of the mobile students' fathers had graduated from institutions of higher education, as compared to 27 per cent of those of non-mobile students,
- the respective figures for mothers were 30 per cent and 16 per cent.

Parents of former ERASMUS students were slightly more often higher education-trained than those of former mobile students who did not benefit from ERASMUS support. The respective quotas were 44 per cent, as compared to 37 per cent in the case of fathers and 31 per cent, as compared to 26 per cent in the case of mothers.

It is not possible to examine in the framework of this study the extent to which this social selectivity of ERASMUS students or students supported by other means is determined

culturally or financially. However, this clearly suggests that ERASMUS does not easily reach the average student as far as parental background is concerned.

Table 5.2
Graduates' Parental and Partner's Highest Level of Education (percentages)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Father's highest level of education						
Compulsory school or less	39	40	36	37	54	51
Completed (upper) secondary school	17	23	22	21	19	19
Higher education diploma/degree	44	37	42	42	27	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(391)	(329)	(1,606)	(2,326)	(11,609)	(13,935)
Mother's highest level of education						
Compulsory school or less	42	43	43	43	59	56
Completed (upper) secondary school	28	30	27	28	25	25
Higher education diploma/degree	31	26	30	30	16	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(393)	(326)	(1,611)	(2,330)	(11,662)	(13,992)
Partner's highest level of education						
Compulsory school or less	5	4	5	5	9	9
Completed (upper) secondary school	13	14	17	16	27	26
Higher education diploma/degree	82	82	77	79	63	66
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(250)	(235)	(1,069)	(1,554)	(7,999)	(9,553)

Question I5: Parental and partner's highest level of education

5.2.2 Partners

At the time of graduation, former ERASMUS students were more often single than non-mobile students. This difference somewhat diminished over time, but at the time of the survey, i.e. about four years after graduation, former ERASMUS students were still more often single (29 % as compared to 20 % of non-mobile graduates) and fewer had children (12% as compared to 21 % of non-mobile graduates).

82 per cent of the former ERASMUS students with a partner reported that their partner had graduated from higher education. The same quota was reported by former mobile students who did not benefit from ERASMUS support. The respective quota was substantially lower for non-mobile graduates (63%).

5.2.3 Schooling and Early International Experience

Former ERASMUS students rate their school achievement more favourably than non-mobile graduates. 33 per cent reported that they had “high grades”, as compared to 24 per cent of the non-mobile graduates. But former mobile students who did not benefit from ERASMUS support rate their school achievement more often as high (45%).

Previous studies have shown that a substantial proportion of former ERASMUS students had international experience prior to study. This survey shows that this is true for mobile students, irrespective of the source of support. 13 per cent of former mobile students had educational experience abroad, as compared to 3 per cent of non-mobile students, and 8 per cent worked abroad prior to study, as compared to also 3 per cent of the non-mobile students.

5.3 The Study Period Abroad and Its Impact on the Study Period as a Whole

5.3.1 Graduates’ International Experiences and Type of Financial Support – by Field of Study

Table 5.3
Graduates’ International Experiences and Type of Financial Support – by Field of Study (percentages)

	Kind of financial support			International experiences during course of study		
	SOCRATES/ ERASMUS supported time abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Total respondents to Suppl. Survey	Mobile Total	Non mobile	Total respondents to Grad. Survey (5 countries)
Humanities	46	54	100	31	69	100
	(90)	(106)	(196)	(626)	(1,365)	(1,991)
Social Sciences	57	43	100	18	82	100
	(111)	(85)	(196)	(671)	(3,004)	(3,675)
Law	74	26	100	14	86	100
	(32)	(11)	(43)	(139)	(808)	(947)
Natural Sciences	51	49	100	16	84	100
	(45)	(43)	(88)	(232)	(1,259)	(1,491)
Mathematics	66	34	100	9	91	100
	(19)	(10)	(29)	(82)	(779)	(861)
Engineering	56	44	100	13	87	100)
	(53)	(42)	(95)	(295)	(1,884)	(2,179)
Medical Sciences	46	54	100	12	88	100
	(15)	(18)	(33)	(133)	(926)	(1,059)
Other	63	37	100	9	91	100
	(30)	(18)	(48)	(189)	(1,958)	(2,147)
Total	54	46	100	16	84	100
(n)	(395)	(333)	(728)	(2367)	(11,983)	(14,350)

Question 1.1: Was your study abroad supported by the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme?
Question B2: Did you spend time abroad during your studies (in order to work or to study)?

According to the graduate survey in the five European countries included in this analysis, more than three out of ten students in humanities and almost two in the social sciences spent a period of study abroad. In all other fields, the quota ranged from 9 per cent to 16 per cent, as is seen in Table 5.3. Among those who were mobile in Europe and for whom the means of financial support is known, 54 per cent were supported on an ERASMUS grant. This quota was highest among students in Law (74%) and Mathematics (66%).

5.3.2 Duration and Funding of the Study Period Abroad

A substantial proportion of formerly mobile students spent more than a single study period abroad: As the survey shows, 24 per cent of former ERASMUS students and 28 per cent of students with no ERASMUS support studied abroad more than once. The duration of the single period abroad was about seven months for the former and slightly longer for the latter. The overall duration of all study periods abroad was about 10 months for former ERASMUS students and about 11 months for other formerly mobile students.

Almost half the study costs abroad were covered by students and their parents and relatives both in case of ERASMUS students (49%) and other mobile students (48%). The ERASMUS grant covered on average 32 per cent of the study costs during the study period in another European country. Naturally, the source of support for other mobile students was more varied (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4
Graduates' Sources of Financing of the Study Period Abroad (mean of the percentages of sources)

	International experiences during course of study		Total
	ERASMUS supported study period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	
ERASMUS grant	32.1	.0	17.1
Other EC grant/scholarship	.3	5.0	2.6
Home country grant/scholarship	9.4	13.3	11.3
Home country loan	4.2	5.5	4.8
Host country grant/scholarship	1.0	5.4	3.1
Support by employer	1.1	11.9	6.3
Other type of support abroad	.4	2.3	1.3
Other grants	1.1	2.8	1.9
Parents, relatives	34.6	27.3	31.1
Own money	13.9	20.3	17.0
Other	1.7	6.6	3.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(n)	(406)	(377)	(783)

Question 1.2: How did you finance your study abroad period (including travel and tuition fees if any)? Please estimate percentages (including possibly value of free rent if applicable, etc.).

5.3.3 The Study Period Abroad and Its Results

Former ERASMUS students report a higher extent of support from their home institution as regards the preparation for the study period abroad (information, counselling, preparatory courses etc.) than other mobile students, and they also rate the support more favourably. This does not hold true, however, for language training. Examples of the better conditions for ERASMUS students are provided in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5
Graduates' Satisfaction with Assistance Provided by Home Institution (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study		Total
	ERASMUS supported time abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	
Academic matters of study abroad	38	29	34
Administrative matters of study abroad	41	33	37
Information about host institution and country	39	35	37
Accommodation	31	28	30
Language training	36	40	38
(n)	(401)	(343)	(744)

Question 2.1: Were you satisfied with the assistance provided by your home institution?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale of answers from 1 = 'Very satisfied' to 5 = 'Very dissatisfied'

Given the substantial assistance and guidance for the ERASMUS students, one could expect that they might have faced fewer problems abroad than other mobile students. The results of the survey, however, do not confirm this. Differences are marginal regarding most issues addressed in the questionnaire. Only two findings seem to support the above expectation: Fewer former ERASMUS students reported problems regarding administrative matters and contrasts in teaching and learning methods between the home and host institutions. But more former ERASMUS students faced problems in obtaining recognition and credits transfer.

Former ERASMUS students more often took courses abroad which they considered less demanding than those at home than other formerly mobile students (33% as compared to 25%). The respective ratios for more demanding courses were 20 per cent and 25 per cent. This raises the question as to whether efforts to facilitate recognition of study achievements abroad could lead in some cases to a choice of less demanding courses, either by the students or upon recommendation of their teachers.

Table 5.6
Competences at Time of Graduation Perceived by Graduates (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Broad general knowledge	57	55	62	60	56	56
Cross-disciplinary thinking/knowledge	49	52	54	53	48	49
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	62	68	65	65	65	65
Field-specific knowledge of methods	41	46	47	46	48	47
Foreign language proficiency	69	71	65	66	22	29
Computer skills	36	34	35	35	31	32
Understanding complex social, organisational and technical systems	21	16	23	22	22	22
Planning, co-ordinating and organising	38	45	40	41	39	40
Applying rules and regulations	28	37	32	32	37	36
Economic reasoning	25	25	28	27	28	28
Documenting ideas and information	53	58	54	54	50	50
Problem-solving ability	61	62	62	62	57	58
Analytical competences	64	69	66	66	59	60
Learning abilities	84	84	85	85	80	81
Reflective thinking, assessing own work	56	55	58	57	54	55
Creativity	41	50	48	47	44	45
Working under pressure	59	57	59	59	51	53
Accuracy, attention to detail	61	65	59	60	60	60
Time management	48	49	48	48	47	48
Negotiating	17	19	22	21	21	21
Fitness for work	61	69	59	60	56	56
Manual skill	28	22	27	26	33	32
Working independently	80	80	74	76	71	72
Working in a team	57	55	58	57	58	58
Initiative	50	54	57	55	51	51
Adaptability	67	63	66	66	62	62
Assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence	48	47	53	51	48	49
Power of concentration	75	74	72	73	71	72
Getting personally involve	64	61	67	65	62	62
Loyalty, integrity	67	60	64	64	66	66
Critical thinking	62	69	65	65	62	63
Oral communication skill	58	57	61	60	53	54
Written communication skill	72	72	75	74	67	68
Tolerance, appreciating different points of view	65	60	63	63	62	62
Leadership	23	24	31	29	25	26
Taking responsibilities, decision	43	41	48	46	45	45
(n)	(393)	(329)	(1,625)	(2,347)	(11,861)	(14,208)

Question E1: Please, state if you had the following competences at the time of graduation in 1994 or 1995 and to what extent they are required in your current work. If you are not employed please answer only (A).
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

The ERASMUS programme obviously contributes to a higher level of recognition. Former ERASMUS students report that 71 per cent of their achievements abroad was recognised, whereas the respective figure for other formerly mobile persons was 64 per cent (only 3% were awarded ECTS; one has to bear in mind that most respondents received ERASMUS grants at a time when ECTS was still at a pilot stage). Also, former ERASMUS students believe that their overall study period abroad was prolonged to a lesser extent than that of other mobile persons (4.2 months on average, as compared to 4.9 months among all respondents who did not spend part of their period abroad for an internship), i.e. about 40 and 45 per cent of the actual length of the study period abroad. Also, the 1988/89 ERASMUS students estimated about five years later that study in another European country had prolonged the overall period of study by about 40 per cent of the study period abroad (2.9 months, as compared to about seven months of study abroad, see Maiworm and Teichler 1996, p. 14).

Graduates who had been internationally mobile rated their competences upon graduation as higher than those who had not. This is most pronounced, as one might expect, regarding foreign language proficiency. There are no substantial differences, though, between former ERASMUS and other formerly mobile students as regards their foreign language proficiency.

Those who had been internationally mobile also rated their competences at the time of graduation as higher in cross-disciplinary thinking, problem-solving and learning ability, analytical competencies, ability to work independently and under pressure, and in oral and written communication skills. In contrast, non-mobile students are better in applying rules and regulations and using manual skills (see Table 5.6).

5.4 Transition of Employment and Early Career

5.4.1 Subsequent Education and Transition to Employment

One third (34%) of the former ERAMUS students opted for subsequent study during the first few years after graduation. This could comprise a training phase required for entry to certain professions (e.g. medicine and teacher training), graduate study, etc. Among the 1988/89 cohort, half the former ERASMUS students had opted for subsequent education and training. But as Table 5.7 shows, the readiness to choose further education and training was higher among ERASMUS students than among other mobile students (29%) and even more so than among non-mobile students (21%).

The transition process and the early career of those who had been internationally mobile do not differ substantially from those who had not been mobile. In one respect, however, the formerly mobile students are more successful: they take only a little more than five months to find their first regular employment (both former ERASMUS students and other formerly mobile persons) as compared to a little more than seven months for those who had not studied abroad. This suggests that international study experience contributes to a smooth transition from higher education to employment.

Table 5.7
Graduates' Further Study (percentages)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Completed	30	24	21	23	17	18
Started, not (yet) finished	4	5	6	6	4	5
No	67	71	72	71	79	77
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(395)	(333)	(1,639)	(2,367)	(11,983)	(14,350)

Question B1: Please provide information about all higher education courses you have ever taken (include part-time, post graduate, and courses not completed)

5.4.2 Search for and Actual International Professional Mobility

The mobile students differ from other students most strikingly, as one might expect, in their interest in jobs with international components. Almost 70 per cent of the internationally mobile students considered employment abroad, as compared to 40 per cent of the non-mobile graduates. Some 30 per cent sought employment abroad, as compared to 10 per cent of the non-mobile students. Hence, more than four out of five of both these groups actually received an offer to work abroad (see Table 5.8). It is interesting to note, though, that

a higher proportion of the 1988/89 ERASMUS students sought and were offered employment abroad (39% and 28%, see Maiworm and Teichler 1996, p. 53).

Table 5.8
Employment Abroad since Graduation in the Mid-1990s (percentages; multiple reply posible)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Considered working abroad	69	70	66	67	40	45
Sought employment abroad	31	32	29	30	10	13
Actually received an offer to work abroad	25	21	23	23	8	10
Actually had regular employment abroad since graduation	20	22	23	22	5	8
Actually sent abroad by your employer on work assignments	22	24	24	23	10	12
None	21	19	21	21	54	48
Total	188	189	185	186	127	137
(n)	(386)	(314)	(1,522)	(2,222)	(10,875)	(13,097)

Question D15: Have you, since graduation (multiple reply possible)

More than 20 per cent of the former mobile students were employed abroad and were sent abroad by their employers until about four years after graduation. The respective figures for those not having studied abroad, as Table 5.7 shows, were 5 and 10 per cent.

5.4.3 Employers' Recruitment Criteria

Asked about their first employer's recruitment criteria, the mobile graduates cited experiences abroad and foreign language proficiency as the fourth and fifth most important in a list of eleven criteria (see Table 5.9). Only personality and social behaviour, field of study and main subject/specialisation were viewed as more important in the presumed employers' perspectives. These results confirm the perceptions of the ERASMUS 1988/89 cohort.

In contrast, the non-mobile graduates considered foreign language proficiency and experience abroad as the least important criteria of their employers in recruiting them. This shows that a substantial proportion of internationally mobile students successfully seeks employers and jobs that require experience and competences which are linked to their study abroad experience. Study abroad, obviously, is a step towards horizontal differentiation of job roles as far as the international dimension is concerned.

Table 5.9
Important Recruitment Criteria According to the Graduates' Perspective (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Field of study	73	77	72	73	70	71
Main subject/specialisation	55	59	59	59	59	59
Exam results	35	39	35	36	32	33
Practical/work experience acquired during course of study	45	57	49	50	43	44
Practical/work experience acquired prior to course of study	21	19	23	23	27	27
Reputation of the institution of higher education	24	23	26	25	20	21
Experience abroad	56	53	49	51	5	13
Foreign language proficiency	60	60	53	55	17	24
Computer skills	49	43	41	42	41	41
Recommendations/references from third persons	32	32	35	34	33	33
Personality	81	79	77	78	73	74
(n)	(282)	(241)	(1,220)	(1,743)	(8,361)	(10,104)

Question C8: How important, according to you, were the following aspects for your employer in recruiting you for your initial employment after graduation, if applicable?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'Very important' to 5 = 'Not at all important'.

5.5 Current Assignments and the Impact of Study Abroad

5.5.1 Current Status

Graduates who had been internationally mobile during the course of their study do not differ substantially from graduates who had not been internationally mobile with respect to their early career as far as employment conditions are concerned (unemployment, full-time employment, indeterminate contract, etc.). The formerly mobile students, however, changed employers more frequently than the non-mobile students (1.5 times as compared to 1.2 times on average) during the first four years after graduation. The formerly mobile students were employed to a greater extent in the private sector, both in industry and services. They were also more often employed in large organisations.

There are some indications that the position and status of former mobile students are somewhat higher than those of non-mobile students. Table 5.10 shows that they mainly work as lawyers, senior officials and managers, whereas non-mobile students more often work as technicians and associate professionals.

Formerly mobile students earn more some four years after graduation than formerly non-mobile students. The average annual gross income of the former was reported to be 32,000 EURO, as compared to 29,400 EURO for the latter.

Table 5.10
Current Occupation (percentages)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Lawyers, senior officials and managers	16	17	19	18	12	13
Professionals	66	68	65	65	67	66
Technicians and associate professionals	12	10	9	9	12	12
Clerks	4	3	5	4	6	6
Service workers and sales workers	1	1	2	2	2	2
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craft and related trades workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0	1	0	0	0	0
Elementary occupations	0	0	0	0	1	1
Armed forces	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(297)	(278)	(1,265)	(1,840)	(8,937)	(10,777)

Question C10: Please inform us on your current major activity.

In contrast to the “objective” findings as regards occupational status, formerly mobile students do not see themselves as being in a better positions. Their answers to the links between education and tasks and the match between their work and their level of education do not differ substantially from those who had not been mobile in the course of their studies.

5.5.2 International Dimension of Work Tasks

Graduates who had been internationally mobile in the course of their study estimated that about 30 per cent of work assignments had an international context. The corresponding figure for non-mobile students is 12 per cent. 42 per cent of the mobile students, as compared to 21 per cent of the non-mobile students, had been abroad on business/ professional journeys within the last 12 months. The former make much more use (45%) of their competences in foreign languages than the latter (16%). Graduates who had studied abroad considered international competences as being much more important for their work than those who had not worked abroad. But Table 5.11 shows that this is less strongly emphasized by former ERASMUS students than by those funded by other sources.

Table 5.11
Importance of International Competences for Graduates' Current Work (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Professional knowledge of other countries (e.g. economic, sociological, legal knowledge)	40	45	42	42	20	24
Knowledge/understanding of international differences in culture and society, modes of behaviour, life styles, etc.	52	58	53	54	32	36
Working with people from different cultural backgrounds	62	62	62	62	43	46
Communicating in foreign languages	60	69	58	60	30	35
(n)	(339)	(297)	(1424)	(2060)	(10115)	(12175)

Question E3: How important do you consider the following competences for doing your current work?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

Asked about the international contacts of the organisation, institution or company by which they are employed, 67 per cent of the respondents report continuous contacts with other countries, and 44 per cent report continuous contacts with their host country. Hence, former ERASMUS students (42%) report fewer contacts of their organisation with the host country than formerly mobile students with other sources of support. The respective figures for the 19988/89 ERASMUS cohort was higher than for the more recent graduates (71% and 49%, see Maiworm and Teichler 1996, p. 55).

To trace the professional use of competences acquired abroad, the formerly mobile graduates were asked to state the extent to which they use the host country language in their job, knowledge about the host country and knowledge about their field of study acquired abroad, and the frequency of travel. Table 5.12 suggests that over 40 per cent of former ERASMUS students have tasks which frequently involve visible international components.

A comparison with the results of the survey of 1988/89 ERASMUS cohort (Maiworm and Teichler 1996, p. 59f) suggests that professional use of competences acquired abroad has declined. The proportion of graduates frequently in charge of the international professional tasks of the categories in Table 5.12 was, on average, 6 per cent higher in the 1988/89 ERASMUS cohort than among the former ERASMUS students recently surveyed.

Moreover, the former ERASMUS-supported graduates make much less use of their experience abroad than students who did not benefit from ERASMUS support (with the exception of professional travel to foreign countries that are different from the host country). The difference is 6 per cent on average according to the categories in Table 5.12.

Corresponding to that, the latter feel more confident in using the international capabilities they acquired abroad in their current work (Table 5.13). In contrast, the respective figures for

the 1988/89 ERASMUS-supported students and the more recent ERASMUS graduates are almost identical.

Table 5.12
Visible International Components of Graduates' Professional Tasks (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study		Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	
Using the host language in conversation	42	50	46
Using the host language in writing/reading	40	49	44
Using firsthand professional knowledge	25	36	30
Using knowledge of the culture and society	32	39	35
Professional travel to host country	18	20	19
Professional travel to other foreign countries	34	27	31
Using knowledge of field of study	28	38	33
(n)	(395)	(368)	(763)

Question 4.4: To what extent do the responsibilities of your work involve the following?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'Continually' to 5 = 'Not at all'

Table 5.13
Graduates' Confidence in Using International Competences at Work (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study		Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	
Using the host language in conversation	72	77	74
Using the host language in writing/reading	70	72	71
Using firsthand professional knowledge	45	54	49
Using knowledge of the culture and society	59	57	58
(n)	(361)	(350)	(711)

Question 4.5: How confident do you feel, at present, with regard to the following?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'Very confident' to 5 = 'Very weak')

5.5.3 Overall Professional Impact of Study Abroad

Formerly mobile students were asked to assess the benefits of study for employment and work. As Table 5.14 shows:

- two-thirds of former ERASMUS students felt that the their period abroad was positive in obtaining a first job, and
- almost half felt a positive impact on the type of tasks in which they are involved.

As regards income level, however, study abroad does not seem to provide clear advantages. Only 22 per cent of former ERASMUS students noted a positive impact, compared to about

two-thirds who perceived neither a positive nor a negative impact and about one in eight who perceived a negative impact. It should be noted that the 1988/89 cohort had perceived slightly more frequently a positive impact of the study period abroad on employment and work (71%, 49% and 25% respectively, see Teichler and Maiworm 1994, pp. 64-68).

Table 5.14
Influence Perceived by Graduates of Study Abroad on Employment and Work (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study		Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	
Impact on obtaining first job	66	67	66
Impact on the type of tasks the work involves	44	53	48
Impact on income level	22	22	22
(n)	(402)	(366)	(768)

Question 4.1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment?

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'Very positive impact' to 5 = 'Very negative impact'

Table 5.15
Value of Having Studied Abroad Stated by Graduates (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study		Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	
Enhancement of knowledge	65	74	69
Relevance to occupation	55	61	58
Income/salary	20	21	21
Career prospects	58	53	55
Foreign language proficiency	86	87	86
New perspectives on home country	78	73	75
New ways of reflection	79	74	77
Knowledge of the host country	89	85	87
Personal development	96	90	93
(n)	(404)	(376)	(780)

Question 4.6: From your point of view today, to what extent do you consider it was worthwhile for you to have studied abroad with regard to the following

* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'Extremely worthwhile' to 5 = 'Not at all worthwhile'.)

In retrospect, the graduates who were internationally mobile during their course of study were asked to assess the value of their study abroad according to various cultural, foreign language, academic and career factors. Generally speaking, personal development, knowledge of the host country and learning a foreign language were rated most positively. Least worthwhile by far was income. We note more or less identical results as in the previous survey of the 1988/89 ERASMUS student cohort (Maiworm and Teichler 1996, p. 89f.). While

graduates who were not supported by ERASMUS put stronger emphasis on professionally or practically relevant aspects, the ERASMUS-supported students tended to value factors linked to personal development (Table 5.15).

Finally, answers to various questions show that graduates who had been mobile during their course of study retrospectively tend to rate their study as a whole (not only the period abroad) substantially more positively than the non-mobile graduates. This holds true regarding personal development, career prospects and finding a satisfying job (see Table 5.16), as well as preparation for present tasks and tasks in other spheres of life.

Table 5.16
Perceived Utility of Study in General (percentages*)

	International experiences during course of study					Total
	ERASMUS supported period abroad	Study abroad, not ERASMUS supported	Study abroad, support unknown	Mobile total	Non-mobile	
Finding a satisfying job after graduation	65	67	66	66	58	59
For your long-term career prospects	67	68	66	66	60	61
For the development of your personality	70	71	73	72	67	68
(n)	(394)	(331)	(1627)	(2352)	(11874)	(14226)

Question J1: To what extent did your studies help you ...?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = 'To a very high extent' to 5 = 'Not at all'.

5.6 Summary

ERASMUS seems to contribute to a smooth transition from higher education to employment. Many former ERASMUS students believe that study abroad was helpful in obtaining their first job. On average, they spent two months less on seeking a job than non-mobile students.

The most striking link between study abroad and subsequent career is the frequency of international job assignments. Former ERASMUS students perceive international experience and foreign language proficiency as relatively important criteria for their future employers. They also state a visible international dimension of their tasks or a substantial use of their international competences - often in the range of 40 to 50 per cent of the dimensions addressed in the questionnaire, as compared to around 20 per cent on average in the case of graduates who were not mobile.

As regards other substantive and status dimensions, former ERASMUS students retrospectively rate their professionally-relevant competences upon graduation as better in various respects than non-mobile students. They also rate their studies as a whole as more valuable for a career and a satisfying job than those who have not studied abroad.

Regarding the extent to which they use their competences on the job and the match between their position and their level of education, the answers of the former ERASMUS students do

not differ greatly from those who have not studied abroad. Very few former ERASMUS students believe that ERASMUS has helped them in having a higher income. It is not certain that studying abroad with the support of ERASMUS leads to better careers.

Available data show, however, that former ERASMUS students are over-represented in some high level occupations and earn about 10 per cent more than non-mobile persons. But this seems to be predominantly a consequence of the fact that the proportion of ERASMUS students in business studies is relatively high.

As for the interpretation of these findings, we could quote our conclusion in the previous ERASMUS survey on the 1988/89 cohort: “It might be disappointing, at first glance, for some advocates of study abroad to note that these graduates did not seem to reach higher positions and higher salaries during the early stages of their careers. ... One should bear in mind, though, that the additional costs of study abroad were covered by public funds. ERASMUS was clearly a public investment stimulating publicly desirable changes in the composition of competencies. ... the individual can expect to be rewarded for his or her non-monetary investment in study abroad, mainly in the risks and efforts involved, in terms of interesting work rather than a status advantage“ (Teichler and Maiworm 1997, p. 200).

Most graduates who were surveyed had studied abroad with ERASMUS support between 1992 and 1994. Their answers are similar in some respects to those of the 1988/89 ERASMUS graduates surveyed earlier. But a lower proportion of the more recent graduates stated visible international assignments or use of their international competences for their tasks and position. This is certainly linked to the fact that ERASMUS was still an ‘élite’ programme in 1988/89 and expanded to a “mass” programme. But it also suggests that jobs with a strong international component have not grown as fast as one might expect.

Finally, there is no evidence that the specific arrangements of the ERASMUS programmes concerning the components of “organised study abroad” and “integrated study abroad” (see Teichler and Maiworm 1997, p. 4) contribute to closer links between study and work or to better careers upon graduation. In many respects the answers of former ERASMUS students are similar to those who had studied abroad with the help of other resources, and in some respects they fare less well than the other formerly mobile students. This is probably due to the fact that ERASMUS does not rely solely on the high motivation and international orientation of students of the kind who tend to go abroad anyway. Rather, ERASMUS aims to contribute to a mobilisation of those students who are not necessarily inclined to do so and for whom support could be crucial to consider studying in another European country.

6. The Academics' View of Teaching Staff Mobility and ERASMUS

By Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler

6.1 Aims, Design and Procedures of the Survey

6.1.1 The Changing Role of Academics in SOCRATES

The launching of SOCRATES was expected to change the role of the departments and teachers within ERAMUS in five ways:

- The administrative responsibility for student mobility was transferred from the departments and networks to the centre of the higher education institutions.
- The leadership of the higher education institutions became more strongly involved in reflecting upon and determining the strategic options for European and international activities related to ERASMUS.
- The teaching staff mobility component of ERASMUS was enlarged.
- The ERASMUS support for various components of curricular innovation were widened and diversified.
- Both teaching staff mobility and curriculum innovation were expected to serve non-mobile students to a greater extent than in the past, when it was mainly mobile students who were taken into consideration.

Therefore, the academics' experiences and views are a key source for the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study.

6.1.2 Themes and Target Group of the Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire survey "Experiences of Academic Staff Members in the Context of ERASMUS" was undertaken. It aimed to contribute to the understanding of:

(a) the changing role of academics in the transition from the network-oriented former ERASMUS to the institution-coordinated ERASMUS under the umbrella of SOCRATES,

(b) conditions, activities and impacts of teaching staff mobility,

(c) the overall assessment of the ERASMUS programme by the academics.

The questionnaire addresses teaching staff mobility, since no other major source of information is available in the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study on this subject. But it also takes up the other two subjects which are addressed in the institutional survey and in studies on curriculum development and thematic networks.

Major themes of the questionnaire were:

- The socio-biographical and career profile of the teachers,
- Their ERASMUS-related functions and tasks at their home institution,
- Problems incurred in organising a study period abroad and problems experienced during the teaching abroad period,
- The teaching abroad activities and their conditions in the host institutions,
- The perceived impact of teaching staff mobility,
- The overall assessment of the SOCRATES programme and the internationalisation and Europeanisation of the higher education institutions.

The study aimed to gather information on the experiences and views of two groups of academics: those who are in charge of the coordination of ERASMUS in their institutions or departments, and those who are mobile for teaching purposes. It was obvious that the two groups overlap: hence, a third group could be formed with those who are both ERASMUS coordinators and ERASMUS-supported mobile teachers.

It must be borne in mind that a survey that addresses the academics who were recently involved in ERASMUS cannot measure the extent to which their interest declined as a consequence of the SOCRATES approach of strengthening the role of the centre of the higher education institution as far as ERASMUS and other activities of Europeanisation are concerned. We did not consider it feasible to trace addresses for a survey of academics who were no longer very active under the new conditions of ERASMUS.

6.1.3 Survey Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to academic staff members with the help of a selected number of higher education institutions. This method was chosen after it had become clear that no addresses of mobile teachers were available at the Commission or the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels.

Altogether, over 4,000 questionnaires were sent to the 280 higher education institutions which had agreed to support the survey[1]. They were asked by the evaluation team to distribute two-thirds of the questionnaires to mobile teachers and the remaining third to academic staff members who were more especially concerned with ERASMUS. However, the proportion of mobile teachers among the respondents is slightly lower than expected (57%). One possible reason could be that, in some cases, the total number of mobile teachers was lower than the available number of questionnaires. Each institution was given between 5 and 30 copies, and more questionnaires were distributed to the non-mobile staff

[1] In order to support the special evaluation on engineering and technology more than 1,200 further questionnaires were mailed to the institutions to be distributed exclusively to students from these fields (ERASMUS subject area codes 6.0 – 6.9).

members. Furthermore, the institutions were asked to distribute the questionnaires in a way that the subject areas participating in ERASMUS were adequately represented.

A second package was sent to all the institutions at the end of April.

According to the figures provided by the institutions, 2,900 questionnaires were distributed. Thus, about three-quarters of the total number of questionnaires were forwarded to the target group of the survey. Until end of August 2000 we received 1,666 questionnaires, which corresponds to a return rate of 57 per cent.

The ERASMUS academic staff questionnaire comprises 30 questions and more than 300 variables. It was translated into German, English and French. All staff members for whom none of these languages is the mother tongue received the three versions of the questionnaire in order to allow them to choose the most appropriate language.

A comparison of the mobile teachers participating in the survey with all teaching staff mobility grants available within the Institutional Contracts shows a slight over-representation of teachers from small countries but a very similiar pattern concerning the distribution by subject area. In order to ensure the representativity of the statistical analysis the data were adjusted as regards home country.

6.1.4 Change Over Time

Some of the questions had already been included in surveys 10 years ago:

- Coordinators of Inter-University Cooperation Programmes (ICP) of the academic year 1989/90 (Maiworm, Steube and Teichler, 1993),
- ERASMUS-supported mobile teachers in the academic year 1990/91 (R. Kreitz and U. Teichler. *ERASMUS Teaching Staff Mobility. The 1990/91 Teachers' View.* 1997), and
- ICP Local Directors of the academic year 1991/92 (Maiworm and Teichler, 1995).

Hence, it is possible to measure some changes in the experiences and assessment over time.

6.2 The Profile of the Academics

According to the survey, ERASMUS mobile teachers in 1998/99 were 47 years old on average, i.e. roughly the same as those in 1990/91 (46). The average age of the academics surveyed recently who have some coordination function for ERASMUS within their institution at the department level was 48, i.e. exactly the same as that of ICP local directors in 1991/92. Actually, the age spread had grown substantially in recent years: about two-thirds of the 1998/99 cohort were aged between 36 and 55, a little more than 20 per cent were older and a little more than 10 per cent were younger.

The respondents to the recent survey had been employed at their institution for about 15 years on average. In addition, they had been professionally active for more than 7 years, with almost two-thirds in other higher education or research institutions.

- 34 per cent were full professors,
- 46 per cent were in other senior ranks,
- 18 per cent were in academic ranks, and
- two per cent stated that they currently held an administrative position.

94 per cent of the respondents were employed full-time, and 89 per cent had a permanent contract. Again, these data only differ marginally from those of previous surveys.

31 per cent of the mobile teachers and 34 per cent of the coordinators of ERASMUS were women. This proportion is substantially higher than that of the mobile teachers in 1990/91 (18%) and of ICP local directors in 1991/92 (20%). Women involved in teaching abroad and in other ERASMUS-related functions were slightly younger on average than men active in ERASMUS and were less often full professors (27% as compared to 37%).

The respondents stated that they had good knowledge of two foreign languages on average:

- Almost 90 per cent spoke English (excluding those from institutions where English is the home language),
- Almost half spoke French, among whom the majority of Flemish-Belgian as well as the majority of Portuguese and Spanish respondents,
- A quarter spoke German, among whom the majority of Danish and Dutch respondents,
- About one-eighth spoke Italian and Spanish and among the latter the majority of Portuguese respondents,
- One in 14 spoke Swedish, among whom the majority of Finnish respondents for whom Swedish is a minority home language, and
- All others by less than 5 per cent.

Similar questions were not included in the previous surveys.

The respondents came from various fields of study: 8-15 per cent from languages and philological studies, engineering, social sciences, natural sciences, business studies, and

humanities. The international relations officers of the higher education institutions had been asked to distribute the questionnaires randomly; therefore, the composition of respondents according to age, field, gender etc. is likely to be representative. A comparison of the distribution of mobile teachers responding to the survey by home country, host country and subject area with the respective proportions of grants awarded shows great similarities. But a serious assessment of the representativity of the staff survey will only be possible when data on the overall staff mobility within ERASMUS become available.

6.3 Tasks and Functions within ERASMUS

Of all those with a coordination function for ERASMUS who were surveyed (70 per cent of the respondents),

- 11 per cent stated that they had primarily a function of coordination at the central level of the institution,
- 64 had a coordinating function in the department, and
- 25 had other coordinating functions.

About half had been in charge of these activities for five or more years. Another quarter had been involved for 3 to 4 years. Only about one quarter took over these functions within the last two years, i.e. since ERASMUS came under the umbrella of SOCRATES.

Table 6.1
Tasks Taken Over by Academics with Coordination Function in ERASMUS – by Type of Coordination Function (percentages, multiple reply possible)

	Type of coordination function			Total
	Central	Departmental	Other	
General programme administration	66	40	25	39
Establishment of partnerships with other institutions	90	77	55	73
Guidance/assistance/advice to incoming students from ERASMUS partner institutions abroad	84	85	66	80
Giving special lectures for foreign students	27	24	36	28
Selection of your students for participation in ERASMUS	85	90	68	84
Preparation of your students for a study period abroad	71	69	57	66
Organising teaching staff mobility	68	56	44	54
Curriculum development activities	31	28	29	28
Preparation of intensive programmes	32	18	21	20
Other	12	4	6	5
Total	567	491	405	477
(n)	(132)	(747)	(323)	(1202)

Question 2.2: What were your tasks in connection with the functions mentioned above?

Asked about their specific coordination tasks, over three-quarters stated that they were involved in:

- selecting own students for participation in ERASMUS, and
- advising incoming students;

Almost two-thirds reported that they participated in:

- preparing their own students for the period of study abroad, and
- establishing partnerships with other institutions.

Half the coordinators were involved in organising staff mobility. About one-third was responsible for general programme administration. About one quarter each gave special lectures for incoming students and was involved in curriculum development activities. Finally, 20 per cent participated in the preparation of intensive programmes. As Table 6.1 shows, the tasks vary according to the level and type of major functions for ERASMUS.

Coordinators who teach abroad (51 per cent) do not only have more frequent tasks of teaching foreign students and organising teaching staff mobility than coordinators without teaching tasks. They are also more often involved in curriculum development and intensive programmes.

Almost two-thirds of the academics involved in ERASMUS-related coordination functions received technical assistance from their institution and more than half said they received administrative or secretarial assistance. 12 per cent saw a reduction in their teaching load and 6 per cent received additional remuneration (see Table 6.2).

37 per cent of those with coordinator functions in ERASMUS since the launching of SOCRATES received travel funds from their home institution. The respective ratio for ICP local directors was only 12 per cent (Maiworm and Teichler 1995, p. 35). This suggests that about a quarter of the higher education institutions decided to make some travel funds available for ERASMUS coordinators after the Inter-University Cooperation Programmes (ICP) were discontinued. It often included money for travel to support student mobility.

The academics with coordinator functions in ERASMUS on average had spent five hours a week on this function within the previous two years, i.e. in the framework of SOCRATES. Of these, women spent slightly more time on that function than men. In addition, the academics in charge of ERASMUS coordination functions had already spent about five hours when they were in charge of these functions before the launching of SOCRATES (see Table 6.3). This suggests that the move towards SOCRATES has not contributed to a reduction in the work load regarding the coordination for those academics who continue with their coordination functions at the central or department level, or in respect to specific tasks and actions.

Table 6.2
Kind of Assistance Received from the Home Institution for ERASMUS-related work in the Academic Years 1997/98 and 1998/99 – by Type of Involvement in ERASMUS (percentages, multiple response possible)

	Type of involvement		Total
	Mobile teacher and coordinator	Coordinator only	
Technical support (e.g. telephone)	63	66	64
Administrative/secretarial assistance	56	57	56
Reduction of teaching load (compensation)	13	14	13
Additional funds for travel	41	33	37
Additional remuneration (compensation for working overtime, honorarium etc.)	5	8	6
Other	3	2	2
No assistance at all	11	14	12
Not ticked	4	2	3
Total	196	196	196
(n)	(586)	(555)	(1,140)

Question 2.3: What kind of assistance did you receive from your institution for your ERASMUS-related work?

In the survey of the ICP Local Directors 1991/92 (Maiworm and Teichler 1995), a work load of three hours a week on average was reported for local directors who were not in charge of the ICP as a whole, and a work load of about 5 hours for ICP coordinators. This suggests that academics in charge of ERASMUS functions have not experienced a reduction in work load as a consequence of the new administrative context of SOCRATES. One should bear in mind that the number of academics involved in those functions may have dropped – an assumption that cannot be examined with the help of this survey.

Table 6.3
Average Weekly Hours Spent by Academic Responsible for ERASMUS Coordination Functions – by Gender (mean)

	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Average hours per week 1997/98-1998/99	6,7	4,4	5,1
Average hours per week 1995/96-1996/97	6,7	4,5	5,1
Average hours per week 1987/88-1994/95	5,8	4,6	4,9
(n)	(321)	(701)	(1,022)

Question 2.4: Please estimate the average hours a week you usually spent on work related to ERASMUS during the time you had particular ERASMUS functions?

Only about a quarter of the academics with coordinator functions in ERASMUS was involved in the discussion and formulation of the European Policy Statement in their higher education institutions. While about half of these only made suggestions to those in charge of the EPS, each third were members of committees or coordinated the activities at the department or

central level. Seven per cent were members of a committee at the central level in charge of the EPS, 4 per cent of whom were key coordinators.(see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4
Involvement in the Discussion and/or Formulation of the European Policy Statement (EPS) of the Home Institution – by Type of Involvement in ERASMUS (percentages, multiple response possible)

	Type of involvement		Total
	Mobile teacher and coordinator	Coordinator only	
None	74	77	75
You made suggestions on an individual basis to the persons/committees in charge of preparing the EPS	13	12	12
You were a member of a special group/committee in charge of the EPS at faculty/departmental level	10	8	9
You were the coordinator for the EPS at faculty/departmental level	10	8	9
You were a member of a special group/committee in charge of the EPS at the central level of the institution	7	7	7
You were in charge of the overall coordination of the EPS for your institution	4	4	4
Other	1	1	1
Total	120	116	118
(n)	(561)	(540)	(1,100)

Question 2.5: Were you involved in the discussion and/or formulation of the European Policy Statement (EPS) of your institution requested by the European Commission in the application for the SOCRATES Institutional Contract?

6.4 Teaching Staff Mobility

6.4.1 Problems Concerning Teaching Abroad Periods

Teaching abroad for a short period cannot be organised easily. Many academics do not teach abroad because they are not interested or because they consider this too difficult. But those who do often state serious problems, notably:

- little financial support provided by the Commission (45%),
- heavy workload in the preparation for the teaching abroad period (35%),
- difficulties in interrupting teaching and research commitments at the home institution 33%), and
- finding replacement staff (28%).

Other academic, administrative and social problems are mentioned less frequently as being serious.

Since the list of problems was identical to that presented to academics who were mobile in 1990/91, the average frequency of problems stated remained constant. Hence, the percentage quoted for each item varied at most by 6 per cent (see Kreitz and Teichler 1997, pp. 28-30). This suggests that the conditions for a temporary teaching period in another European country under the auspices of ERASMUS have not improved between the early and the late 1990s. This is all the more surprising, because some problems are more serious if the period of teaching is not very short. However, as stated below, the teaching periods abroad were much shorter on average in the late 1990s than in the early 1990s.

As Table 6.5 shows, most mobile teachers from Central and Eastern Europe state less frequent serious problems in realising teaching staff mobility. As long as the problems rest predominantly with the home institution and country, the teachers from CEE countries cite less serious problems than their Western European counterparts. Obviously, the motivation for participation is so high in CEE countries that obstacles are more easily overcome.

Table 6.5
Difficulties Encountered When Organising a Teaching Period Abroad - by Selected Countries and Country Groups (percentages*)

	Country of home institution						Total
	FR	IT	SE	UK	Other EU and EFTA	CEE	
Difficulties to interrupt teaching or research commitments at the home institution	21	29	50	45	35	23	33
Difficulties to interrupt administrative commitments at the home institution	13	14	18	28	15	11	16
Problems with regard to interruption of career advancements	13	5	14	6	7	0	7
Finding replacement staff	23	17	38	29	32	15	28
Administrative matters regarding leave of absence	5	10	10	13	11	1	10
Academic problems with host institution prior to the visit	6	5	9	5	8	7	7
Administrative problems with host institution prior to the visit	2	0	5	8	6	5	5
Linguistic problems	17	9	14	19	8	4	10
Social/family difficulties	9	11	29	13	10	0	10
Little financial support provided by the SOCRATES programme	33	46	59	49	46	36	45
Heavy work-load for the preparation of a teaching period abroad	22	28	30	44	39	19	35
(n)	(80)	(76)	(20)	(99)	(519)	(78)	(873)

Question 3.1: To what extent do academic staff members from your institution face the following problems when organising a teaching abroad period?
* Points 1 and 2 on a Scale from 1 = "Very serious problems" to 5 = "No problems at all"

Regarding the Western European countries, Italian and French teachers see the least obstacles to teaching staff mobility. In contrast, Swedish and British teachers very often state serious problems. While British teachers stated difficulties in interrupting administrative commitments at the home institution and heavy workload for preparation of teaching abroad, teachers from Sweden most frequently mentioned difficulties in interrupting teaching or research commitments. This could reflect both a lower appreciation of teaching abroad and a stronger commitment to regular teaching and other services than in other European countries. Swedish mobile teachers refer to social and family issues far more frequently than teachers of any other European country.

The same question was posed to academics with ERASMUS coordination functions who did not teach abroad. They considered that the problems were far more serious than those who did teach abroad.

Support for teaching mobility is frequently mentioned as a problem; therefore, the mobile teachers were asked to provide information about the sources for funding their teaching period abroad. A comparison between the information provided by the teachers who were mobile in 1998/99 and those who were mobile in 1990/91 suggests that the coverage by the ERASMUS grant has dropped. In the early 1990s, the ERASMUS grant covered about 70 per cent of the costs incurred, but only about 61 per cent in the late 1990s. Most of the gap, however, was covered by the home institutions. Thus, the contribution from the mobile teachers themselves remained constant at 19 per cent on average (see Table 6.6)

Table 6.6
Coverage of Additional Costs for the ERASMUS-supported Teaching Period Abroad – by Country Group (mean of percentages)

	Academic Year	
	1990/91	1998/99
ERASMUS grant	69.8	60.5
Special support from home institution (excluding salary)	3.6	11.0
Support from host institution	6,9	7.2
Your own money	19.1	19.5
Other	0.6	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0
(n)	(626)	(695)

Question 3.6: How did you cover the additional costs (i.e. any addition to the costs you would have had if you had not gone abroad) for your ERASMUS-supported teaching period abroad ?

6.4.2 Duration

Mobile teachers supported by ERASMUS funds in 1998/99 spent on average just over 8 days in the host country. Actually, almost 60 per cent spent at most one week abroad. In 1990/91, in contrast, the average period abroad was 24 days, and only 24 per cent stayed in another European country for at most one week (Kreitz and Teichler 1997, pp. 22-23). In the late 1990s, teachers from Central and Eastern Europe spent a longer teaching period abroad on average than their Western European colleagues (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7
Duration of Teaching Period Abroad – by Country Group (percentages and mean)

	Country group		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
Up to 5 days	25	9	24
6 - 7 days	36	31	35
8 - 10 days	20	19	20
11 days and longer	19	41	21
Total	100	100	100
(n)	(784)	(74)	(858)
Average duration of teaching period abroad	8.0	11.0	8.3

Question 3.3: Description of your ERASMUS-supported teaching periods abroad in the academic years 1995/96, 1996/97, 1997/98 and 1998/99.

6.4.3 Language of Instruction

Unlike students involved in student exchanges, mobile teachers are not expected to learn the language of the respective host country prior to or during their stay abroad. But as mobile teachers are most welcome if they speak the mother tongue of the home country students, teachers with language competences are more likely to teach abroad. 28 per cent of the mobile teachers in 1998/99 reported that they taught exclusively in the host country language; in addition, almost 20 per cent taught partly in the host country language and partly in another language.

Altogether, 58 per cent of the lessons taught by mobile teaching staff in the framework of ERASMUS were taught in English, 17 per cent in French, and 10 per cent in German (see Table 6.8). The 1990/91 teachers had been asked to state the language(s) they used but were not asked to state the respective proportions if they made use of more than one language; 61 per cent mentioned English, 27 per cent French, 13 per cent German and 31 per cent other languages. Though not directly comparable, the data suggest a moderate increase in English as the language of instruction

6.4.4 Integration in the Regular Course Programme

The extent to which teacher mobility is integrated into the regular study programme at the host institution was addressed in the questionnaire. First, the respondents were asked to define the role of the teaching staff at the home institution and possibly at the host institution. The answers indicate that:

- About one quarter of the respondents was mobile in the framework of a regular reciprocal exchange of staff,
- about one third was mobile in a framework where teaching mobility became a regular phenomenon in one direction, and
- more than one third was mobile in a setting where teaching mobility has remained occasional.

The Central and Eastern European institutions of higher education have established about twice as many reciprocal exchanges as the Western European institutions (36% of CEE teachers as compared to 21% of Western European teachers were mobile in this framework).

Second, the mobile teachers were asked to state whether their courses were part of the regular programme at the host institution, were compulsory, and whether students were awarded credits. Half the mobile teachers stated that all the courses they taught were part of the regular course programme at the host institution. One third reported that some courses were part of the regular programme, and one sixth that none of their courses were incorporated into the regular programme.

According to the 1998/99 mobile teachers, all their courses were compulsory for the students at the host institution in 37 per cent of the cases, some courses were compulsory in 36 per cent of the cases, while the courses were not compulsory in 27 per cent of the cases. Similarly, host students obtained credits for all courses in 36 per cent of the cases, for some courses in 29 per cent of the cases, while no credits were awarded in 35 per cent of the cases.

A comparison with the answers to the same question put to the 1990/91 teachers (Kreitz and Teichler 1997, pp. 39-40) shows that the integration of the mobile teachers' courses into the host programme has not improved over time. The proportion of mobile teachers who experienced no integration at all remained constant (see Table 6.9). The increase in the statement "some courses" suggests that a greater number of mobile teachers offers an open lecture or a short course which is not part of the regular programme in addition to a regular and compulsory course, even though the teaching period abroad was shorter.

The integration of courses into the programme of the host institution varies by country. As Table 6.10 shows, within the Member States of the European Union it is highest in Ireland (67%), Finland (65%), Sweden (64%) and Italy (61%), but lowest in Greece.

Table 6.9
Integration of Courses Taught Abroad in the Regular Course Programme of the Host Institution – by Country Group (percentages*)

	Academic year	
	1990/91	1998/99
Courses were part of the regular course programme		
All courses	64	49
Some courses	21	35
None	15	16
Total	100	100
(n)	(413)	(837)
Courses were compulsory for students of the host institution		
All courses	54	37
Some courses	19	36
None	27	27
Total	100	100
(n)	(333)	(693)
Host institution students obtained credits		
All courses	50	36
Some courses	14	29
None	36	35
Total	100	100
(n)	(306)	(658)

Question 3.3: How and to what extent were the courses you taught at the host institution integrated into the regular course programme?

The mobile teachers estimated that about 20 per cent of their students were in their first or second year of study. About half were in their third and fourth year, while about 30 per cent were in later years of study. The corresponding figures in the 1990/91 survey on mobile teachers were 23 per cent, 43 per cent and 34 per cent respectively (Kreitz and Teichler 1997, pp. 35-37). The course provisions for students in their fifth or later years seem to have lost weight, while those for third and fourth year students seem to have increased.

6.4.5 Other Activities

The mobile teachers were asked to state whether they were involved - in addition to teaching - in other activities related to SOCRATES during their stay at the host institution. As Table 6.11 shows, about three quarters had additional tasks related to student mobility and study programmes. The most frequent were the following.

- Almost half were involved in advising their home students studying at the host institution where the respondents taught, and
- More than a third each was active in preparing the students of the host institution for their stay abroad as well as in curricular and recognition issues,

As one might expect, those additional activities were more often taken on by mobile teachers who were regularly in charge of ERASMUS at the home institution than by those who did not have any of those functions (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.11
Activities Related to SOCRATES Besides Teaching – by Type of Involvement in ERASMUS (percentages, multiple response possible)

	Type of involvement		Total
	Mobile teacher and coordinator	Mobile teacher only	
None	17	39	25
Assessment/examination of foreign students	19	12	16
Preparation of foreign students for a study period at your home institution	45	23	37
Selection and admission of foreign students	14	5	11
Curriculum, recognition issues, etc.	42	22	35
Assistance/guidance advice of students from your home institution	54	33	46
Other	14	12	14
Not ticked	20	42	28
Total	225	188	212
(n)	(586)	(321)	(907)

Question 3.7:Besides teaching, were you involved in other activities related to SOCRATES during your stay at the host institution?

One should bear in mind that the survey of the 1998/99 mobile teachers is likely to include a large number of teachers who are active in various roles related to ERASMUS. We assume that a representative sampling would have led to a smaller number of teachers taking on other ERASMUS-related activities abroad besides teaching. So, in the 1990/91 survey, only 56 per cent said they were involved abroad in activities other than teaching. Only 44 per cent had had regular ERASMUS-related functions at home (as compared to 64% of the 1998/99 survey, see Kreitz and Teichler 1997, p. 45). In evaluating this effect statistically, we notice

that involvement in other activities – altogether and in respect to the various kinds of activities – remained more or less constant between 1990/91 and 1998/91.

6.4.6 Problems

Mobile teachers seldom come across any serious problems during their teaching period abroad. 7 per cent stated serious problems concerning the teaching work load at the host institutions and the lack of contacts with the staff at the host institution and outside the institution. Only 6 per cent felt major problems as regards accommodation or lack of communication outside the host institution and 5 per cent in respect to the academic level of students. All other administrative and academic issues addressed in the questionnaire were not seen as causing serious problems.

A similar question was posed to the 1990/91 mobile teachers. As far as the subjects are concerned, we note that the frequency of serious problems observed remained more or less the same.

The frequency of serious problems stated varies substantially according to the field of study. Mobile teachers of architecture stated problems almost four times as often as teachers in other fields. In addition, teachers of agriculture, business studies, and fine arts reported problems more often than the mobile teachers in other fields (Table 6.12)

6.5 Perceived Impacts of Teaching Staff Mobility

The mobile teachers were also asked to asses the impact of teaching staff mobility on the mobile teachers themselves, on the mobile and non-mobile students, and on the departments. The ratings turned out to be most favourable as regards the impacts on the mobile teachers themselves. Most mobile teachers believed that the teaching period abroad contributed to the improvement of their international and intercultural understanding, helped them to become familiar with other teaching methods, and was valuable for improving their research contacts.

Table 6.13
Impacts of Teaching Staff Mobility – by Country Group (mean*)

	Region		Total
	EU and EFTA	CEE	
On mobile teachers			
Enhancement of international/cultural understanding	1.9	1.6	1.9
Becoming familiar with other teaching methods than those generally used at home institution	2.3	1.8	2.2
Improvement of research contacts	2.3	1.8	2.3
Improvement of career prospects	3.3	2.3	3.2
(n)	(1,343)	(122)	(1,465)
On SOCRATES-supported students while abroad			
Guidance/advice during the study period abroad	2.4	1.9	2.3
Better academic conditions at the partner institution	2.8	2.0	2.7
Better administrative conditions at the partner institution	3.0	2.2	3.0
(n)	(1,312)	(111)	(1,423)
On non-mobile students at the host department			
Becoming familiar with teaching methods not used at the host institution	2.8	2.5	2.7
Learning subject matters not regularly taught at the host institution	2.6	2.3	2.5
Better international/-cultural/European understanding	2.2	1.7	2.1
(n)	(1,239)	(115)	(1,354)
On the home department in general			
Improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in general	2.9	2.1	2.8
Improvement of the international/intercultural/European dimension of curricula	2.4	1.8	2.3
Greater use of foreign language literature by staff	3.0	2.0	2.9
Greater use of foreign language literature by students	3.0	2.2	2.9
(n)	(1,291)	(120)	(1,411)

Question 4.4: How do you rate the impact of SOCRATES teaching staff mobility you experienced at your department or got to know regarding the partner departments?
* Scale from 1 = "Very strong" to 5 = "No/very limited"

But most mobile teachers did not believe that teaching abroad had a substantial impact on their career prospects (Table 6.13). For mobile teachers from Central and Eastern Europe, it is expected that it will have an impact on their career.

As regards the mobile students, the academics stated that teaching staff exchange contributes substantially to the guidance and advice of the students while abroad. They perceived a lesser impact on the academic and administrative study conditions at the host institution. Again, the mobile teachers from Central and Eastern Europe perceived much more positive impacts in respect to all the three dimensions addressed in the questionnaire.

Most mobile teachers also believed that the non-mobile students at the host institution developed a better international/intercultural/European understanding by being taught by mobile teachers. Also, about half the teachers believed that the non-mobile host students became familiar with subjects that were not taught at their home because of teaching staff mobility. They perceived a weaker impact as regards the students' experiences of teaching methods.

6.6 Overall Assessment of the SOCRATES-ERASMUS Programme

A major issue of the overall assessment of ERASMUS is the quality of learning. Therefore, the academics surveyed were asked to state how students from other European countries performed in comparison to the home country students. Generally speaking, they stated that there was not much difference between the students from the various European countries and their home students.

The views differ to a surprisingly small extent according to country. Students from Denmark, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden are rated slightly better than average and Italian, Portuguese and Spanish students slightly worse than average. But the ratings by Irish, Italian, Norwegian, British, and most Central and Eastern European teachers of their host students' performance was slightly better than average (see Table 6.14).

Finally, the academics were asked to assess the changes they have observed at their institutions and departments as regards international and European activities in the past five years. Most perceived a substantial extension and improvement in almost all matters related to student mobility and international research cooperation. Positive assessments also dominate, although to a lesser extent, with regard to language training, teaching staff mobility, and curricular issues. Better ties with the region are not very visible.

On average, across the various subjects, the Romanian, Czech, and Greek respondents stated the greatest improvements over the years. In contrast, the ratings of the Belgian, German, Irish, and British respondents were somewhat more reserved. Differences according to field of study were marginal.

Table 6.15
Changes in the Institution and Department During the Last Five Years – by Country Group (percentages*)

	Institutional survey			Academic' survey		
	More/ better	Same	Worse/ less	More/ better	Same	Worse/ less
International cooperation in research	63	36	2	68	30	2
International student exchange	91	7	2	83	12	5
Academic support for outgoing students	-	-	-	69	28	4
Academic support for incoming students	78	21	1	70	28	2
Administrative support for outgoing students	-	-	-	73	24	3
Administrative support for incoming students	85	14	1	72	24	4
Foreign language provision for your students	61	36	3	49	46	5
Language training for incoming students	67	31	2	56	41	3
Recognition of academic achievements acquired abroad by your own students	80	20	0	65	32	3
Visits/teaching assignments by foreign scholars	71	27	2	55	39	6
Courses taught in foreign languages	49	48	3	41	54	5
Co-operation with partner institutions on student academic and recognition matters	-	-	-	64	32	4
Co-operation with partner institutions on curricular issues	73	25	2	50	45	5
Co-operation with partner institutions on administrative matters	56	41	3	37	57	6
Financial support of your university to SOCRATES-related activities	-	-	-	45	38	17
Ties/links with region, industry etc. regarding SOCRATES	30	66	4	24	69	7

Question 4.1: If you compare your institution and department today to 5 years ago, do you note any changes?
* Points 1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "Considerably more/better now" to 5 = "Considerably less/worse now"

Almost the same question was posed in the institutional questionnaire. A comparison of the responses shows that those who answer from the institution's point of view rate the changes of the international and European environment more positively than the academics themselves (see Table 6.15). Positive ratings by academics are almost 10 per cent lower on average. Academics only find improvements in international research cooperation more considerable, i.e. the only subject which lies outside the domain of ERASMUS.

6.7 Summary

The survey on academics in charge of ERASMUS-related coordination functions - at the central level of the institution, in their department, or in respect to specific issues - shows that most of those who were active at the time of the survey had been involved for many years. Their weekly workload has not diminished since the launching of SOCRATES. In order to continue the close cooperation with the partner institutions after the discontinuation of the ERASMUS support for networks of departments, a quarter of the academics involved in ERASMUS coordination functions is now provided by their home institution. The survey, however, could not establish if academics had fewer administrative tasks since the launch,

as those responsible at the institutional level claim. Nor can it see how far the academics are ready to engage in ERASMUS, since SOCRATES underscores the responsibility of the higher education institution as a whole.

The number of mobile teachers supported by ERASMUS has increased from less than 1,500 in the early 1990s to about 7,000 in the late 1990s. During this period, the average duration of the stay abroad for teaching purposes was reduced from 24 to about 8 days.

Although a short stay abroad may cause fewer problems regarding the regular tasks at home, the 1998/99 mobile teachers stated serious problems in organising a teaching period abroad as frequently as those who were mobile eight years earlier. Since Central and Eastern European mobile teachers state substantially fewer problems than Western European mobile teachers and non-mobile persons with ERASMUS-related coordination functions state greater problems as regards teaching staff mobility, we could conclude that the general climate of support for teaching staff mobility is not very favourable in most Western European higher education institutions.

The conditions for teaching in another country have hardly changed. The integration of the courses - in terms of being part of the regular programme, being compulsory and securing the award of credits - did not change at all. The mobile staff take on other ERASMUS-related tasks as frequently as in the past. And the mobile teachers state problems experienced during their teaching period abroad as frequently in the late 1990s as they did in the early 1990s. There are no indications that the role of teaching staff exchanges has changed from serving primarily the mobile students to playing a greater role for the non-mobile students and curricular innovation.

In the early 1990s, the ERASMUS grant covered 70 per cent of the expenditures for the teaching period abroad. Recently, this share fell to 61 per cent, but the home institutions almost made up for that drop.

Mobile teachers rate the impacts of teaching staff exchange positively. They appreciate their better intercultural understanding and the opportunity to become familiar with other teaching methods. They underscore the role of teaching staff exchange to provide guidance and advice for the home institution's students during their stay abroad. And they believe that teaching abroad is valuable for the non-mobile students in contributing to intercultural understanding and in providing the opportunity to learn subjects that are not taught at home.

Most academics involved in the coordination of ERASMUS-related activities or in teaching staff exchange harbour a very positive view of European mobility and cooperation. On average, they consider the incoming ERASMUS students' achievements as high as those of home students. And most observe considerable developments and improvements of European and international activities at their home institution and departments, notably with respect to all matters related to ERASMUS student exchange.

There are no indications that academics play a more important role in ERASMUS, nor that the conditions and activities of teaching staff mobility have improved over time. There are no

indications that teaching staff exchanges will become more important for the non-mobile students and curricular innovation. Yet, it is viewed positively as one of the many elements that contribute to a greater role of European and international aspects.

7. Curriculum Development Activities and Thematic Network Projects

By Anne Klemperer and Marijk van der Wende

7.1 Introduction

Curriculum development is an area of growing importance in the internationalisation of higher education. Previous research undertaken by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of OECD has shown that international cooperation in this area has an impact on both the formal aspects of the curriculum (i.e. content and objectives) and its operational aspects (e.g. teaching and learning processes, grouping of students, evaluation methods, etc.). In the context of SOCRATES, particular emphasis is placed on the European, cultural and linguistic dimensions of the curriculum, on recognition of curriculum elements and of (joint) qualifications, and on their impact on non-mobile students. In the Thematic Networks, the emphasis is on innovation in teaching and learning processes and on quality improvement.

7.1.1 Aim and Focus

This part of the evaluation aims to analyse all curriculum development activities funded within the ERASMUS component of the SOCRATES I programme, i.e. the development of curricula at initial or intermediate level (CDI); of new degree programmes at advanced level (CDA), of European modules (EM), of integrated language courses (ILC), of intensive programmes (IP), and of Thematic Networks.

Particular stress is placed on:

- The major results of curriculum development activities within ERASMUS in content, objectives, teaching and learning processes, and qualification structures, with specific attention being given to new areas such as open and distance learning and continuing education.
- The implementation of the European dimension and of specific cultural and linguistic elements in curricula and their integration and institutionalisation, e.g. the emergence of European programmes and qualifications that are distinct from or integrated in the existing curriculum frameworks.
- The relationship between CD activities and other elements of the ERASMUS programme (e.g. student and staff mobility) and their synergy and meaning for the European dimension in curricula for non-mobile students.
- The relationship between the expansion of ECTS and the activities in the area of curricular development.

- The major experiences and results of cooperation in the framework of Thematic Networks, with specific attention being given to the various areas of innovation, the different disciplines, and the quality dimension.
- The dissemination of products and experiences resulting from CD activities and Thematic Networks both within and beyond the institutions involved.

7.1.2 Methodology

The issues have been investigated by document analysis of a sample of projects representing the various subject areas and countries. Criteria for the sampling of CD cases were:

- Spread over subject areas: for each subject area, one example of every type of CD activity (CDI, CDA, EM, ILC, IP) was selected from the projects undertaken in the period 1996-1998.
- Geographical distribution of cases (esp. for coordinatorship).
- Distribution of cases with respect to the size of the cooperation network
- Specific dimensions: relationship of this type of activities with ECTS, TSM and ODL.

For Thematic Network Projects, all projects approved in the first year (1996-1997) were taken, as these projects have, in principle, gone through the full project period of three years.

The total sample consisted of 64 CD Projects and 17 Thematic Networks. Documents on these projects, including project applications, interim and final reports, were obtained from the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office.

Of the 64 CD projects selected, some could not be analysed because there were no interim or final reports, or because the projects were not carried out or had started in later years. The total number of projects used for the analysis of the results and problems encountered was therefore 53. 16 cases could be used for the Thematic Network Projects (TNPs). Of these, two documents included only information on the first year of the projects. All other documents comprised information on both the first and second years of the projects. Unfortunately, documents on the third year were not available when the researchers needed them for analysis (March 2000).

7.1.3 The Evaluation Seminar

A seminar was held on June 16-17, 2000 in The Hague, the Netherlands, to go further in the analysis and discuss the preliminary findings of the document study with a number of project co-ordinators. Ten project co-ordinators (or in some cases representatives of the co-ordinators) attended. Each type of project (CDI, CDA, EM,

ILC, IP and TNP) was represented by at least one person. A range of disciplines and geographical locations were also represented. The findings of the document analysis were discussed with these representatives. This allowed for a sharpening and specification of the conclusions. Furthermore, other overarching issues were discussed, including the potential of ERASMUS within the SOCRATES I programme for curricular innovation, major obstacles and outcomes, the relationship of curriculum development with other elements of the ERASMUS programme, the way system-related obstacles to cooperation are overcome, and the trend towards European standardisation and convergence in curriculum structures. The participants' comments were integrated into the text of this chapter and explicitly added where appropriate.

7.2 Curriculum Development Activities

7.2.1 Type of Activities

Curriculum development includes the following activities funded under the institutional contract:

- activities designed to build on the diversity of European expertise and comprising the joint development of:
  - curricula at initial or intermediate level (CDI);
  - new degree programmes at advanced level (CDA) in areas of European demand for highly qualified human resources;
  - European modules (EM) focusing on other countries, addressing aspects of European integration or involving a comparative approach to a given discipline;
  - integrated language courses (ILC) designed to extend the possibilities of learning other European languages to a wider population of university students, in particular those who are not majoring in languages.
- Intensive programmes (IP), bringing together students and staff from several countries to gain new perspectives on a specific theme and to compare and test teaching approaches in an international classroom environment.

7.2.2 Description of the Projects

Number of Partners

In the sample, there was an average of 8 partners per project. For the total of the projects the figure was 12.5 (see chapter 4.7). IPs and CDIs have the highest average number of participants. The ILCs, which have the lowest average number of participants, usually serve specific purposes (language training in certain fields) and

therefore may aim to bring together very specific institutions which share these interests. This may explain the relatively smaller networks of institutions involved. The largest group of partners for a single project was found in an IP programme (45 partners). This was followed by 31 partners (an EM programme) and 26 partners (a CDI programme). The smallest groups (2 to 4 partners) were found in all four different kinds of programmes.

Number of Students

The range of (anticipated) number of student participants was very wide, as is shown in Table 7.1. It is important to mention here that, in most cases, these figures are based on estimates of the number of students who would participate, rather than on actual participation rates.

Table 7.1
Estimated Number of Students Involved in CD Projects

Estimated number of students	As percentage of projects
Not specified	14.9
< 30	20.5
30 – 100	31.2
100 – 300	11.2
> 300	22.2

In the category of 30 or fewer students, all four types of funding programmes were included, but CDA projects accounted for the majority (almost 60% of CDA projects estimated that there would be 30 or fewer students participating). In the category of around 300 or more students, all four types of projects were again represented, but EM projects had the highest average number of participants. The largest number of (anticipated) students was 3,500 for an EM project.

The differences between the types of funding programmes in terms of the estimated number of student participants is clearly related to the structure of the programmes being developed and the ease or difficulty in combining these with existing study programmes. CDAs, for example, are intended to be full study programmes and are therefore not necessarily intended to be combined with other existing programmes (although they may be in some cases). This may explain why participation is generally lower. Other types of courses, particularly the EMs and IPs, are intended to be part of other existing courses and this makes it easier for them to attract higher numbers of students.

Number of Teachers

The range of (anticipated) numbers of teachers was also quite broad. Overall, 34 per cent of the projects did not specify the exact number of teachers involved. Of those that did, the smallest number involved was 3 (for an ILC project) and the largest was 150 (for an EM). As Table 7.2 shows, the average number of teachers involved ranged from 9 (for ILC projects) to 29 (for CDI and EM projects).

Table 7.2
Average Number of Teachers Involved in the Various Types of CD Projects

Type of CD project	Average number
CDI	29
CDA	26
EM	29
ILC	9
IP	17

Duration of the Project

The duration of the project varied according to the type of programme. ILCs and EMs were generally the shortest (50% and 54% one- and two-year projects, respectively). The longest were IPs and CDAs (73% and 71% of which were three-year grants), and CDIs were somewhere in between with 67 per cent of three-year projects. These differences are linked to the structure of the programmes. While ILCs and EMs are generally shorter projects that are meant to be integrated into the curriculum, CDAs and CDIs are more complex and involve the creation of more curricula (and thus many lasted for several years). The explanation for the relatively large numbers of IPs is that these are, in principle, all one-year projects, but many are on-going (or multiple-year grants) in the sense that the same course is repeated year after year.

Time Expenditure

Interestingly, although the information was requested by the Commission, nearly two-thirds (60%) of the applications did not specify the length (in man months per year). Of the remaining third which did, the averages ranged from just over 15 to 30 (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3
Average Length - by Type of CD Project

Type of CD project	Man months per year
CDI	30
CDA	15.5
EM	27
ILC	17
IP	16

It seems that the more labour-intensive programmes were the EMs and the CDIs. It is important to stress, however, that these findings are based on information provided by only a limited number of projects, so this should be interpreted with caution.

Working Language

As could be expected, the main working language of the projects was English (59% of the project documents). 19 per cent indicated that English and one other language would be used, while other combinations of languages made up only 9 per cent of the projects. Another 13 per cent did not mention which language(s) would be used.

Some differences could be detected among the different kinds of programmes. ILC programmes were the least likely to use English as the working language (only 38%). This is almost certainly because they focus on language training in various European languages and the partners are therefore more likely to be proficient in other languages. In addition, a number of these programmes aimed at the promotion of minority languages within Europe and were therefore much more likely to promote the use of other languages.

Interestingly, all the CDAs and a high percentage of the EMs (77%) reported English as the working language. This may be related to the fact that more intensive working together (as opposed to more bilateral work between sub-groups of partners) may have been required by these programmes.

7.3 Objectives and Means

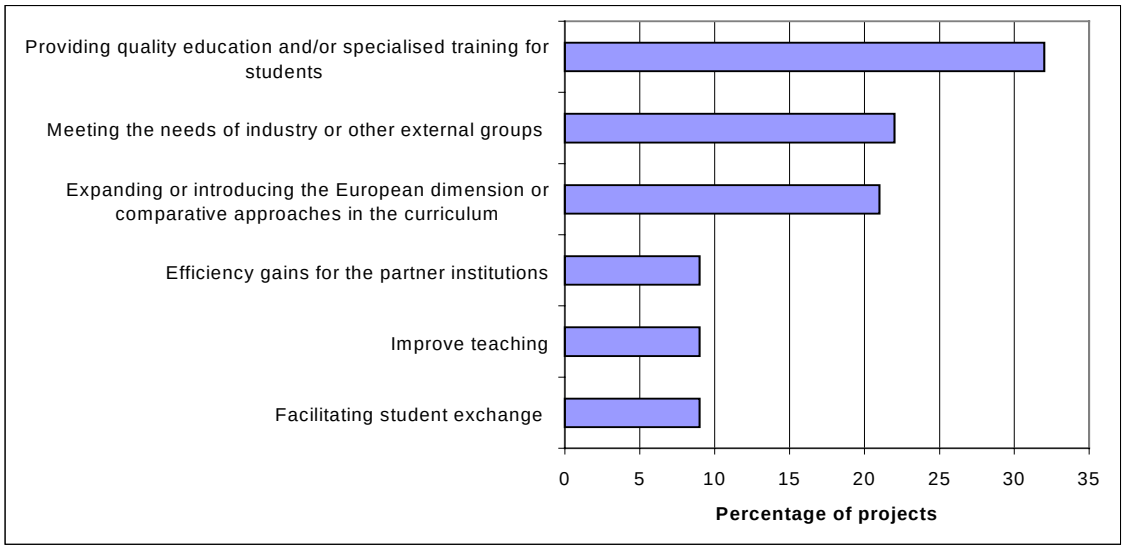
7.3.1 Objectives

A wide variety of objectives were stated for the projects. The main common categories are shown in Figure 7.1.

Efficiency gains for the partner institutions mean enabling institutions to offer specialised courses for which they do not have the expertise available (or for which they have too few students to support such a course on their own), or improving teaching. The goal of facilitating student exchange (through better aligned curricula or language training) or preparing students to study or work abroad was more common for ILCs than for the other types of programmes.

Less frequent objectives (5% to 8% of projects) included supporting the development of particular subject areas, informing policy-making and contributing to societal debates, and linking professional and academic work. Individual projects mentioned a variety of other goals, such as: introducing ODL tools, strengthening the position of minority languages, encouraging teachers to formulate joint research lines, and supporting an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving.

Figure 7.1
Objectives for Curriculum Development Mentioned (multiple reply possible)



7.3.2 Means to Reach the Objectives

Nearly all the projects mentioned the development of courses, modules, teaching materials and/or joint degrees as the main way of reaching these objectives. Two other means were frequently mentioned: working together to identify common elements, comparing educational programmes or material, and reflecting on European differences and ways of life, etc. (mentioned by 38% of projects), and exchanging ideas and pooling expertise (around 20% of projects).

Some other means were mentioned less frequently (5 to 7% of projects): promoting interdisciplinary perspectives, fostering or enabling mobility, and developing cooperation with industry or other external groups. A number of other means were mentioned by individual projects, including: benchmarking, professionalising the field, enhancing the IT dimension of courses, including recent research findings in teaching, and initiating research.

7.4 Content and Methods

European Dimension

It is interesting to analyse how many projects include a European/comparative approach to studies and how many focus on aspects of European culture and history. Across all the different categories of CD activities funded under SOCRATES, 42 per cent of the projects included a European/comparative approach to the studies. 24 per cent of the documents specified the inclusion of material related to European culture, and 14 per cent mentioned the inclusion of aspects of European history. This is

perhaps lower than would be expected. But one must keep in mind that the projects covered a broad range of subject areas and that some (humanities, for example) lend themselves much more naturally to the inclusion of these aspects.

Teaching Language

Concerning the “European dimension” of the projects, it is also interesting to examine what language(s) the programmes were taught in. It is rather surprising that almost half (44%) the documents did not specify this. 28 per cent of the projects said that the coursework would be in the languages of the countries where the courses would be taught. 14 per cent said that English would be the teaching language, while 9 per cent said that a combination of English and various languages of the countries involved would be used, and an additional 6 per cent specified English and one other language.

Interdisciplinary

A high percentage of projects (66%) reported having an interdisciplinary focus. This may be related to the fact that much cutting-edge research is now being carried out in interdisciplinary areas and that the labour market expresses the need for fewer single-subject specialists and for more people who are capable of working in interdisciplinary fields.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The programmes created often bring together people from many different backgrounds, disciplines, and academic traditions, and people with many different approaches to education. It would therefore seem logical to assume that international educational projects spend a great deal of time comparing different approaches or coming up with common didactical approaches, and that considerable thought must be given to how students are tested. However, only slightly more than half (53%) the projects mention a focus on particular teaching and learning methods.

This is interesting if one considers the relatively high number of projects (66%) which have an interdisciplinary focus, as didactic approaches also vary considerably across disciplines. Even fewer documents (23%) explicitly mention testing or evaluation of the students. This percentage is low, but one must bear in mind that most projects aim only to create one part of a degree programme which will be integrated into an existing programme. One could expect that more attention would be paid to this issue in the courses which are offered in one geographical location (IPs, for example), or in projects which create joint degree programmes.

7.5 Links with Other SOCRATES Activities

It is interesting to see to what degree the CD funding programmes have links with the other ERASMUS activities funded under the SOCRATES I Programme, especially those which fall within the Institutional Contract. Here, we shall examine to what degree CD projects include teaching and student mobility, and whether the use of ECTS is explicitly mentioned. It is important to stress that the percentages refer to projects which explicitly mention the inclusion of mobility or the use of ECTS, and that, in some cases, the project may include some mobility or the use of ECTS, but this was not specifically mentioned in the documents. In our analysis, we cannot distinguish between projects that do not include mobility and ones which did not specifically mention the inclusion.

7.5.1 Teaching and Student Mobility

With mobility, there were great differences between the kinds of funding, as is seen in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5
Links with Staff and Student Mobility – by Type of CD Project

Type of CD project	Percentage of projects including student mobility	Percentage of projects including staff mobility
CDI	24	39
CDA	86	50
EM	54	38
ILC	13	13
IP	100	100

Most mobility was found in the IP programmes, where all the projects which were surveyed included some elements of both teaching and student mobility. This is not surprising, as one of the aims of the IP funding programme is to create international classroom environments. These short intensive courses (a week or two of teaching), generally focused on face-to-face teaching in a single location, although several also enabled non-mobile students to participate through the use of video conferencing (see below, section 7.6.1).

The projects with the next greatest mobility were the CDAs. These (as well as many EM projects) often focused on producing curricula which could be taught in many different locations. Sometimes, simultaneous presentation of the material was envisaged (via ODL techniques), but more often materials were to be integrated into existing degree programmes. CDA documents often mentioned the need for particular parts of the courses to be taught by experts from the different European countries. This was sometimes envisaged using distance techniques and sometimes it involved

the mobility of teachers. Concerning student mobility, some programmes were structured in such a way that students moved from one institution to another in the course of the degree, and sometimes short, intensive courses were included in which students and teachers from different countries would get together. As the CDAs are generally larger than the EMs and ILCs (in terms of how much curriculum is being developed), many of these projects included elements of both traditional (face-to-face) teaching and either ODL or mobility (sometimes both).

Differences between the CDIs and CDAs in terms of student mobility can be explained by the fact that lower-level (intermediate) educational programmes tend to be much more rigidly structured than advanced studies. It can therefore be expected that it is easier to include larger elements of student mobility in more advanced programmes. In addition, this difference seems to be linked to the general trend that student mobility is more frequent in the advanced phase of the study programme.

ILC projects lay the least emphasis on mobility. Many aim to prepare students at their home institution for a mobility period. Another reason may be related to the very limited budgets and the use of ODL to replace the need for physical exchange. EMs are often designed to enlarge the course offerings available to international students and therefore lay greater emphasis on student mobility. This can be contrasted with the larger CDA and CDI projects, some of which aim to design more integrated degree programmes, with elements of student mobility built into the programmes.

7.5.2 ECTS

There were also some differences between the various programmes in their use of ECTS (see Table 7.6).

Table 7.6
Use of ECTS – by Type of CD Project (percentages)

Type of CD project	Percentage of projects using ECTS
CDI	33
CDA	50
EM	54
ILC	13
IP	42

The programmes which most often mentioned the use of ECTS were the EMs and the CDAs. For the EMs, this can be explained by the fact that one of their common aims was to develop courses that would be appropriate for international students (as well as regular students). The use of ECTS is obviously more important for mobile students.

The contrast between CDAs and CDIs may again be linked to the fact that much more student mobility (86% of projects) was envisaged for CDAs than for CDIs (only 24%)

(see above, section 7.5.1). The relatively high number of IP projects which mentioned using ECTS can also be explained by the importance of student mobility. The very limited use of ECTS in ILC projects is clearly related to the lack of emphasis on student mobility. Although these courses often aim to prepare students for study abroad, it was not always clear if credits would be awarded. One could speculate that it is unlikely that ECTS credits would be assigned if recognition of the courses by the home institutions was not sought and/or guaranteed. The issue of the recognition of coursework will be addressed in more detail at a later stage (see below, section 7.8).

7.5.3 References to CD Projects in the European Policy Statements

The European Policy Statements (EPS) in the applications for the Institutional Contract were examined to see if mention was made of curriculum development activities. The number of cases in which reference was made to this varied according to the types of programmes. The lowest rate was for the ILC and EM projects (both around 38% of the documents) and the highest was for the IPs (83%).

In between these two extremes were the CDI and CDA projects, where 58 per cent and 64 per cent, respectively, of the EPSs mentioned curriculum development activities. One could conclude that the various programmes had different impacts on policy formation at the institutional level. These differences can probably be explained by the difference in average budget of the types of programmes (ILCs and EMs have smaller budgets and are therefore likely to have less impact). Another possible explanation is that the CDIs, CDAs and IPs create a greater amount of core curriculum, or whole courses or programmes that need to gain recognition, and the institutions are therefore more involved and possibly more aware of them.

7.6 Specific Aspects

7.6.1 Open and Distance Learning

If the programmes are viewed as a whole, the majority (more than two-thirds) of the projects intend to apply open and distance learning (ODL) techniques on a partial basis. Only for CDIs is this percentage lower (around 54%). There are, however, differences between the various programmes in the emphasis on ODL (see Table 7.7).

The projects which use ODL techniques the most are the CDAs. Here, distance technology is often used to make it possible to follow the courses on a part-time basis, in particular for non-traditional students and people working in the field. These courses are at advanced level and are often very relevant for people working in the field, so many aim to reach this audience in addition to traditional students.

Table 7.7
Use of ODL – by Type of CD Project (percentages)

Type of CD activity	Partial use of ODL as percentage of projects	Majority or whole programme via ODL as percentage of projects
CDI	47	7
CDA	50	36
EM	38	23
ILC	38	33
IP	42	33

IP projects also intend to make fairly widespread use of ODL technologies. In the case of ILCs, distance technology is used extensively in place of student and teacher mobility. Many of these courses aim to prepare students to study abroad, and ODL technology can be an efficient and inexpensive means of teaching students the vocabulary that is specific to particular areas of study or needs. EMs are less likely to use this technology.

It is interesting that many CDIs partially use ODL techniques in the courses, but very few intend to offer the majority of the programme or the whole programme via ODL. The fact that fewer CDIs than CDAs make use of these technologies may reflect the standardised structure of lower-level (intermediate) curricula and may be evidence that it is somewhat more difficult to introduce new teaching methods and techniques at that level. It may also indicate that there is much less demand for part-time studies and that there is greater emphasis on face-to-face teaching at that level.

7.6.2 Continuing Education

Just as with ODL, there are differences between the projects with regard to whether or not they mention the use of the study materials for continuing education purposes (see Table 7.8).

Table 7.8
Usefulness of SOCRATES Courses for Continuing Education – by Type of CD Project (percentages)

Type of CD project	Percentage of projects
CDI	8
CDA	43
EM	31
ILC	13
IP	17

The projects which mention the (possible) use of the coursework for continuing education most often are the CDAs. As mentioned above (see section 7.6.1), this is probably linked to their advanced level and their relevance for people working in the

field. Given the specialised nature of the studies, it is perhaps rather surprising that a fairly low percentage of IP and ILC projects mention this.

The low percentage of CDI project documents which specifically mention the usefulness of such courses for continuing educational purposes can perhaps be expected if one considers that part-time study at the lower levels is not very common and that the relevance of these studies for continuing education is perceived to be much weaker than studies at more advanced levels. Two cases (one CDI and one EM) mentioned that the courses being developed would also be suitable for students in vocational education programmes.

7.6.3 Quality Assessment

84 per cent of the projects mentioned some form of quality assessment. A variety of methods were used to evaluate the projects, including assessment by students, project partners and teachers, through external organisations, or within existing institutional/national evaluation systems. Table 7.9 shows how frequently these methods were used.

Table 7.9
Types of Quality Assessment Systems Used (percentages of types of evaluation)

Quality assessment by	Percentage (multiple reply possible)
Students	42
Project partners	28
Teachers	25
External organisations	19
Institutional/national systems	14

7.7 Goal Achievement

It is not easy to judge the final achievement of projects' goals only on the basis of the written documentation because interim reports do not hold much specific information. They often just repeat the content of the original application. Secondly, many projects lasted for three years, but at the time of this analysis, the final reports from the last two years were not yet available from the Technical Assistance Office. The available reports were very informative, however, on the problems encountered and also provided some insight into changes that were made in the project objectives and plans during the first years of implementation. Additional information was obtained from the project co-ordinators during the evaluation seminar.

7.7.1 Problems Encountered

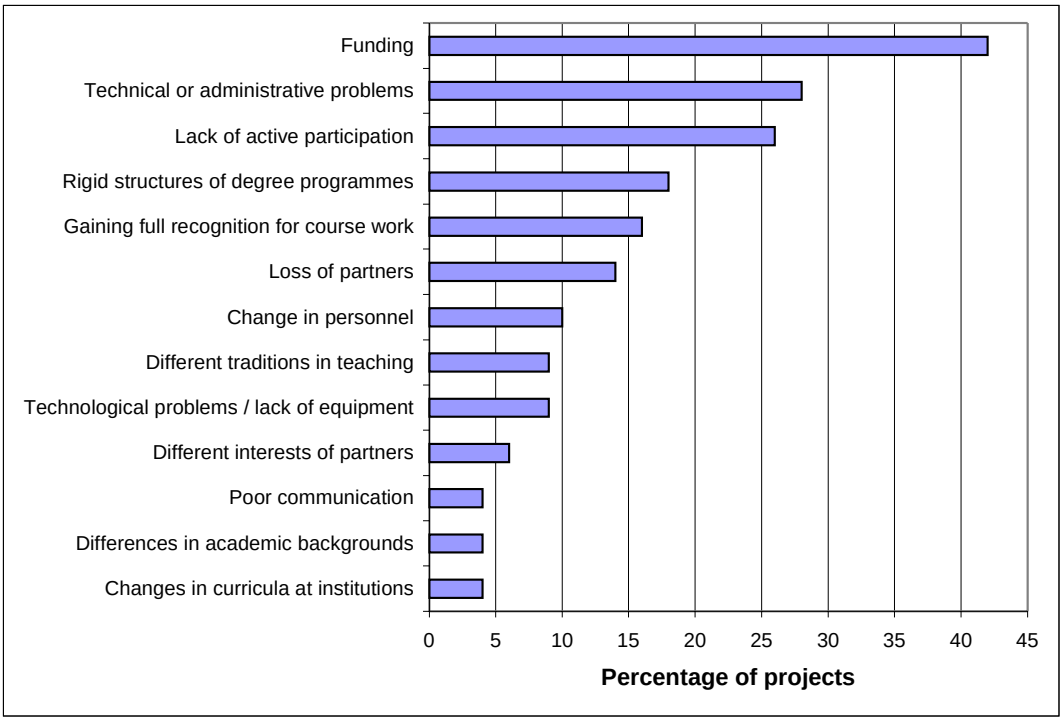
A number of problems which were encountered were reported in the interim and final reports which were analysed. The problem which was the most frequently cited (see Figure 7.2) was that of the *lack of funding*, or the low level of the grants received. This was reported in almost half (43%) the project documents. Problems directly related to the low level of funding were also reported, such as lack of equipment (e.g. for offering the courses via ODL), the loss of partners due to lack of funds, a lack of interest in the project by (some of) the partners and a lack of time for project activities.

According to project coordinators, however, the problem of *lack of active participation* by all the partners was generally more significant than the lack of financial resources. Problems associated with “sleeping” partners were frequently mentioned. According to the document analysis lack of (active) participation was reported in more than a quarter of the projects. Other problems associated with partners included a loss of partners (reported in 14% of the documents) and a change in personnel, i.e. teachers or coordinators (reported in about 10% of the documents). Less-frequently mentioned problems relating to partners included: poor communication (4%), different needs and teaching traditions (9%) and differences in academic backgrounds (4%). Problems related to differences in the interests of the partners were also reported (6%), including diverging interests, not having enough time for project activities, and partners pursuing their own interests rather than the aims of the project.

The project co-ordinators mentioned several causes for “sleeping” partners. One important factor is the lack of institutional and/or national recognition of curriculum development work and the lack of rewards for this kind of undertaking. This is related to the more general problem of lack of recognition for teaching (as opposed to research) activities at many institutions. The project co-ordinators also mentioned that there was sometimes a lack of correspondence or overlap of project activities with the regular activities of those involved in the project. Other factors mentioned were problems linked to the timing of the activities and the differences in the needs and expectations of the partners.

In addition to financial problems and difficulties related to the partners, a third set of problems involving *technical or administrative matters* can be distinguished. 28% of all projects reported administrative problems encountered at the institutions themselves, as well as problems associated with the administration of the funds by the Commission. 16% reported difficulties in obtaining (full) recognition of the coursework and 18% reported problems associated with rigid programme or degree structures. A small number (4%) encountered problems due to changes in the programme curricula at the institutions.

Figure 7.2
Problems Mentioned (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)



The fourth set of problems was linked to the products. 9 per cent of the projects reported problems linked to a lack of equipment or technological problems. One case reported a lack of uniformity in the teaching material collected and another reported problems due to differing copyright laws in the various countries.

7.7.2 Adjustment of Project Objectives

In addition to these main barriers, the interim and final reports often indicated changes that had been made to the original plan. Due to the limited funding and other difficulties encountered, plans were often scaled-down or revised.

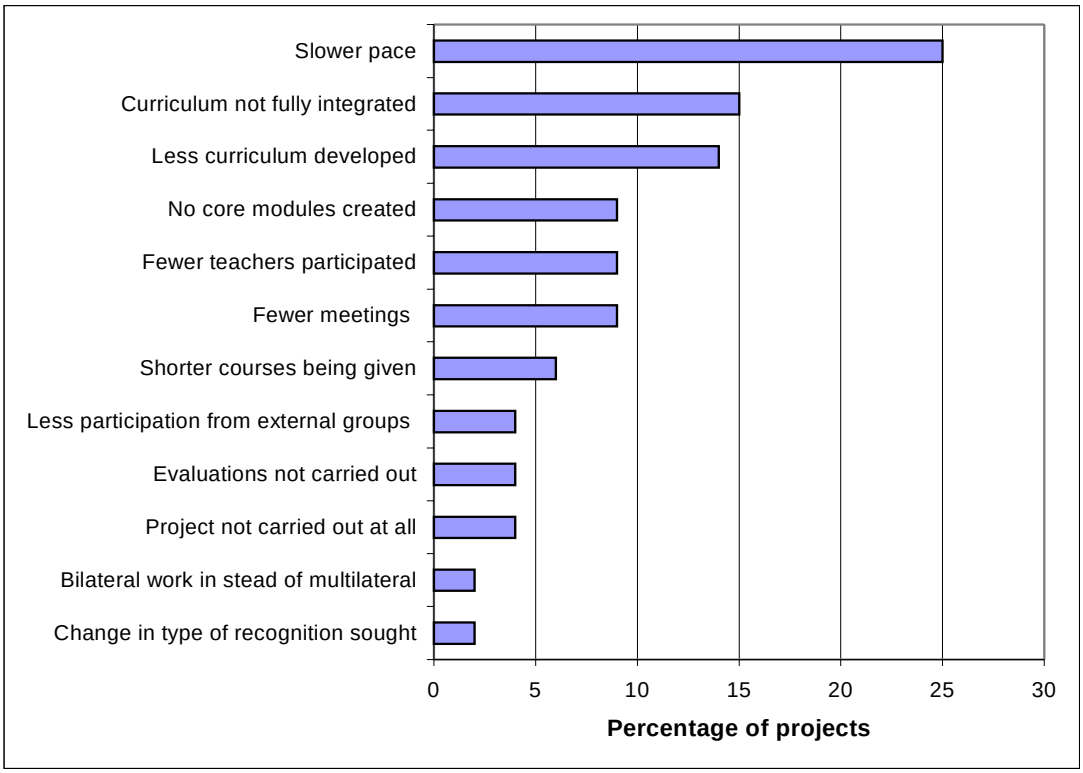
Common changes included a slower pace and smaller proportions of curriculum being developed than originally envisaged. Several project documents reported that curriculum had been developed but had not been (fully) integrated into the study programmes at all the partner institutions. At the evaluation seminar, the project coordinators explained why it was difficult to integrate new courses or curricula into existing programmes. Sometimes it was difficult to obtain recognition for a type of degree that did not exist in all the partner countries (e.g. a Master's degree). Other problems were experienced in integrating courses with content and/or teaching languages that were different from the normal study programmes at the institutions and in dealing with the accreditation procedures that exist in the various countries and

at the institutions. It was generally agreed that international accreditation systems which have been developed in some fields (and are being developed in others) could help to deal with the problem of courses/curricula being approved and integrated. In addition, the current trend towards more outcome-based (as opposed to input-based) accreditation systems may help to make programme content more flexible. Many of the seminar participants were optimistic that changes to national systems following the Bologna Declaration may help to address integration problems.

Another difficulty that was raised by the seminar participants concerns integrating interdisciplinary courses/curricula into institutional frameworks (which are in many cases largely discipline-based). Since most (66%) projects had an interdisciplinary focus (see below, section 7.4.3), this concern ought to be taken seriously.

As can be seen in Figure 7.3, the document analysis revealed a number of other common changes from the plans, e.g. fewer meetings had taken place than had been scheduled, fewer teachers had participated, or evaluations had not been carried out. Other (less frequently mentioned) changes included: lower participation of external groups, no creation of core modules, a shorter course being given, a change in the type of recognition sought, or bilateral work replacing work involving the whole group. In two cases, the project was not carried out at all.

Figure 7.3
Changed Objectives or Activities (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)

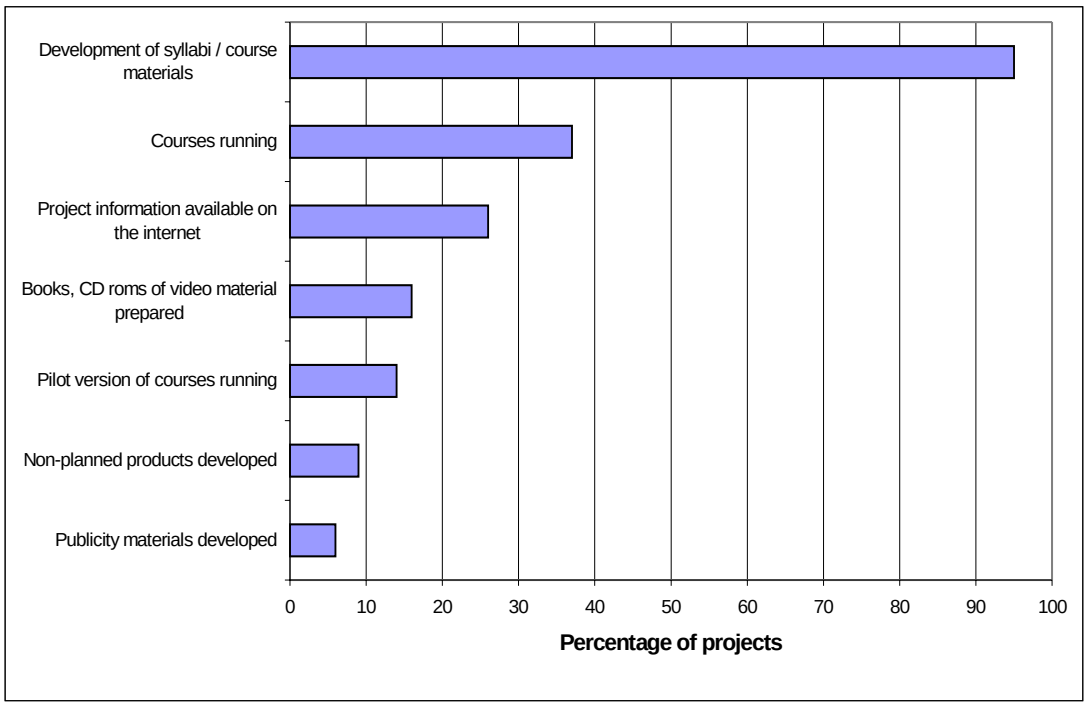


7.7.3 Results

On the positive side, nearly all the projects reported the development of syllabi and/or teaching materials. By the end of the first year, more than a third of the projects mentioned had already run the courses which were being developed, and another 15 per cent reported having run pilot versions of the courses. It is important to bear in mind here that many of the projects lasted for three years and that this analysis did not include the final reports from the last two years. The number reporting having run courses would probably have been much higher if these reports had been included.

26 per cent of the projects reported having made project information available on Internet, while 16 per cent had prepared books, CDs, or video materials (see Figure 7.4). In addition, several project reports indicated that some products were not part of the original plan. Examples include books or CDs (9% of projects reported this), or the creation of publicity materials (reported by 6% of projects). Some cases reported (unplanned) outcomes varying from additional seminars or excursions (in 3 cases), using innovative teaching methods in the courses (reported in 2 cases), publishing course material on Internet (1 case), offering the whole course by ODL (1 case), and integrating the material into courses which were part of the regular curriculum (in addition to producing a separate course, which was reported by one project). In one case, involvement in the project resulted in the cross-appointment of a teacher at a foreign institution.

Figure 7.4
Results Obtained After First Year (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)



The seminar participants stressed that there were also less easily quantified but important outcomes of the projects. The most important concerns continuing interaction which results from the networks which have been created. Several examples were given of how the projects sometimes led to other types of collaboration among the partners. One example was also given in which former students continued to make use of resources available from the network years after their formal association with the project. In addition, it was mentioned that project participants sometimes developed a more international way of thinking or approaching problems which may affect many areas of their professional life and development.

It was very difficult to judge the success of projects in terms of how many students and teachers actually participated in the courses. With the exception of the IP documents (most of which included some information on participation), very few interim or final reports included information on the actual number of participants. In some cases, this was due to the structure of the project - second and third-year final reports were not received for the three-year projects, and some of these projects did not run courses or pilots in the first year. In some cases, general statements were given (such as, fewer, or a greater number of students than expected actually participated), instead of exact numbers of participants.

7.8 Institutionalisation

Due to the different types of projects involved in this study and the great variety of curriculum innovations within these different projects, a variety of types of courses with different levels of integration into existing degree programmes were created. It is rather difficult to classify these because of the lack of standardisation in the vocabulary which is used to describe parts of the curriculum. For example, some documents describe the development of modules, while others refer to programmes or courses, and sometimes different words are used to refer to similar things. In addition, some descriptions are very general and do not allow one to make an assessment of what type of structure has been or should be created. Furthermore, conceptions change as projects develop over time, and therefore the structures which are created may not have much to do with the original idea. Nevertheless, a general description of the types of curriculum structures which were envisaged or created is given here.

It is obvious from the set-up of the different programmes that some were intended to create new types of degree programmes and some were not. In principle, ILCs, EMs, and IPs are intended to create parts of degree programmes (courses which will be integrated into existing degrees), while CDIs and CDAs can create new types of degrees that may or may not fit into the existing degree structures. However, not all CDIs and CDAs aimed to create a complete degree programme. 42 per cent of CDIs and 65 per cent of CDAs aimed to do this. The differences between these can be

explained by the relative inflexibility of most intermediate degree programmes in comparison with advanced degree programmes.

Of the projects that aimed to create new complete degree programmes, less than a third aimed to (eventually) create degrees that were different from the existing national degrees. Most were at advanced level. Only one CDI aimed to create a new type of "joint" degree which would run parallel to the existing system. The other examples of new types of qualifications were all at advanced level and included various types of Master's degrees. In most cases, the documents specified that the degrees would initially be recognised within the national system and that eventually some kind of international recognition would be sought. Most of the documents were not very specific about what kind of new degrees they wished to create or how these degrees would be accredited or recognised. Terms such as "international Master's" or "European Master's" were used. Generally speaking, there were many problems linked to the integration of these kinds of programmes (see below, section 7.7.2).

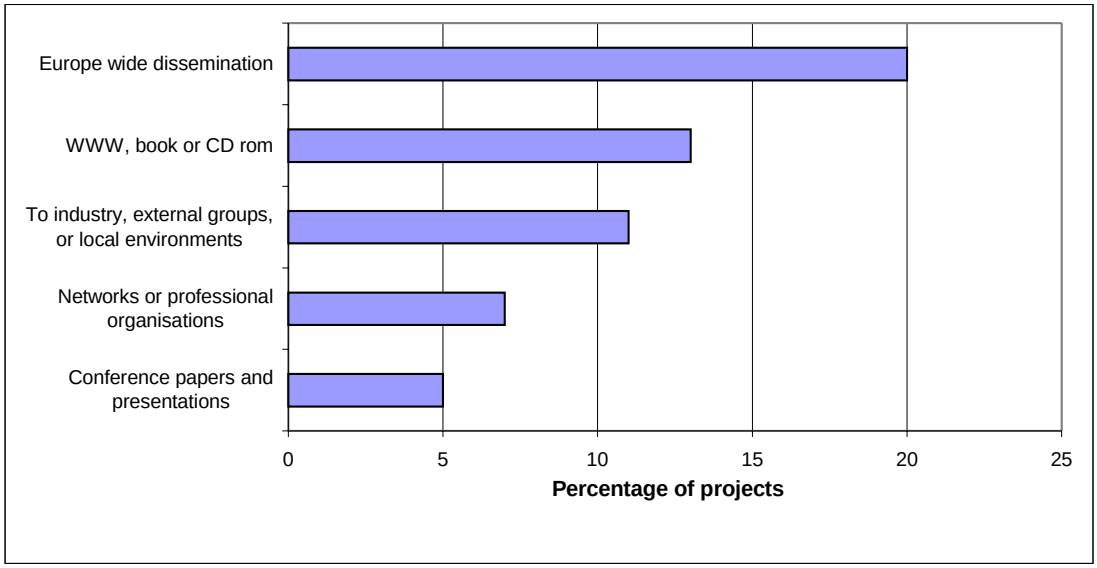
Many of the CDI and CDA documents were not very specific about the structure of the courses that would be created. A fairly common structure for the CDA projects, however, (mentioned in about one-third of the CDA documents) was the creation of a core curriculum and some specialised (optional) modules. Of both CDI and CDA projects, approximately three-quarters mentioned the development of joint curricula. Only 8 per cent did not seem to include an element of jointly developed curriculum, and in 15 per cent of the projects it could not be determined whether this was one of the aims.

As mentioned earlier, IPs, EMs and ILCs generally created parts of degrees (individual courses or modules) which were meant to be integrated into existing degree programmes. These can therefore be analysed together. Given the goals of these projects, it is not surprising that most documents (64%) state that some part of a study programme has been created. In some documents (25%), it was not clear how the courses were structured or if recognition would be sought. It is interesting to note that some documents (11%) mentioned that some kind of entire programme (complete with certification) was being created.

7.9 Dissemination

It is interesting to analyse the scope of the projects, i.e. to see if the groups intended the findings to be widely disseminated, and if so, to what type of audiences. Some 75% of the projects mentioned some kind of dissemination or distribution of information beyond the institutions involved. Some 25 per cent did not specify wider dissemination or only mentioned the partner institutions.

Figure 7.5
Dissemination of Project Results (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)



Whereas 19 per cent of the projects intend to disseminate their results Europe-wide (9% specifically mentioned Eastern European countries), 18 per cent want to make them more internationally available. Of the latter, 13 per cent mentioned that material would be made available on the Web, in book or in CD form, while another 5 per cent specifically mentioned international dissemination through conference papers and presentations. 7 per cent mentioned dissemination within particular networks or professional associations and 11 per cent to industry, other external groups, or to the local environment. Only one project specifically mentioned distribution of materials in the partners' home countries.

7.10 Thematic Network Projects

7.10.1 Introduction

Thematic Network Project funding under SOCRATES I was for projects which fell outside the Institutional Contract. The purpose of these projects was to examine the European dimension within a given discipline or to address other cross-disciplinary or administrative issues of common interest for co-operation in higher education. It was intended that this co-operation should have a lasting and widespread impact across a range of universities within or between specific disciplinary areas. This type of funding was (and continues to be) regarded as a key instrument for the enhancement of academic quality through European co-operation.

The research questions and methodological approach pertaining to the evaluation of TNPs were introduced in sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. Based on the analysis of the projects which were approved in the first round (1996-1997) and which, in principle, went through the full project period of three years, the following information was gathered.

7.10.2 General Description of the Projects

Size and scope of the networks

The TNPs have two types of partners: higher education institutions and a large number of other organisations, e.g. associations of universities, European associations, disciplinary groups, businesses, research centres, etc.

The number of project partners involved in TNPs is clearly growing. The following figures relate to higher education institutions as partners only, but still give a good idea of the growth. For the selected sample, the average number of HE partners was 84. For the totality of projects approved in the first and the second year together it was 117 and after the third year it was 130 (see P. Ruffio. *The SOCRATES Thematic Networks. A tool for collective mobilisation and reflection on the future of higher education*, 1998, P. Ruffio. *Chaning the University: the supporting role of the Erasmus Thematic Networks (a three-year perspective).* 2000). From the sample, the smallest networks consisted of less than 50 partners and the largest counted 298 partners. Of approximately 50 per cent of all the TNPs approved between 1996 and 1999 there were between 75 and 150 partners. The total number of higher education institutions participating in TNPs has also increased over the years from 3,971 in 1997 to 5,555 in 1999. 10 per cent of this participation came from recently associated countries and 5 per cent from non-eligible countries (e.g. the USA) (Ruffio, 2000).

Structure of the TNPs

There were large differences between the number of sub-projects involved in each project. In the sample, the largest number was 21 and the smallest was 3. The average number was close to 7. In general, TNPs are organised according to the principle of decentralisation, with a division of labour between a coordinating group (or steering committee), a structure giving technical support (in some cases a secretariat), and working groups and groups of experts or contributors who may be involved on an *ad hoc* basis. The sharing of tasks seems to be the only solution given the complexity of the TNPs, which is expressed in the number of partners and sub-projects. Taking into account the fact that a large number of countries participate (18 per TNP on average in the sample), and that related system, cultural and linguistic differences need to be addressed, one can imagine the enormous requirements for the coordination and management of these networks (see 10.7.6).

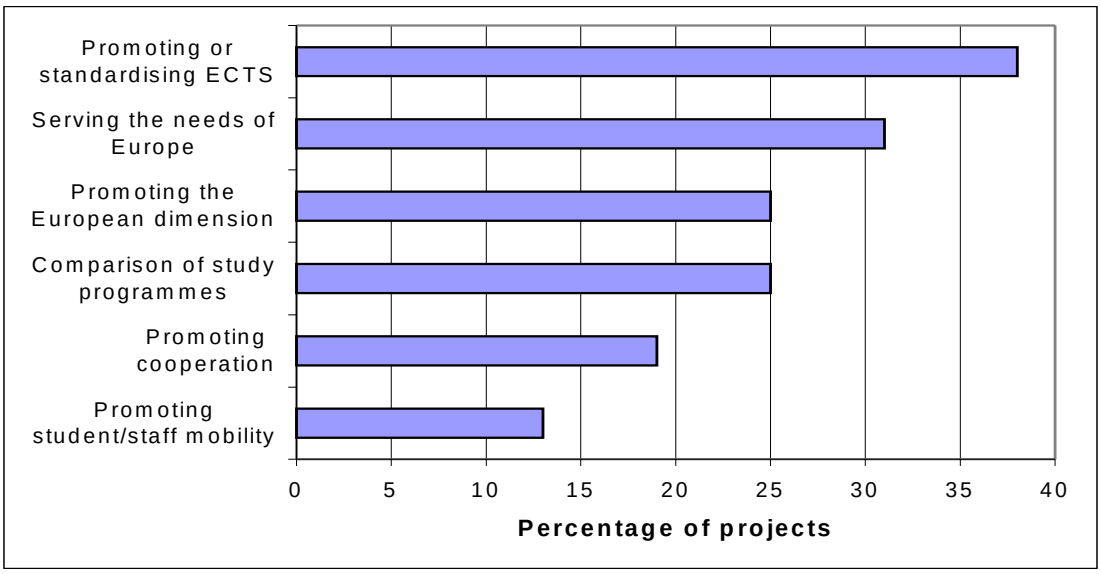
Working Language

It seems that English was the main working language of the networks. 45 per cent of the projects mentioned that it would be the main or only working language of the group as a whole. Some 37 per cent did not specify the language that was going to be used. 19 per cent (2 projects) mentioned that English and other languages (French and German) were going to be used, and these groups emphasised the importance of the multilingual aspect of the network. There were a number of projects which considered the domination of English a problem (see 7.10.6).

7.10.3 Objectives and Means

TNPs aim to define and develop a European dimension within a given academic discipline or other issues of common interest (including administrative issues) through cooperation between university faculties or departments, and academic or professional associations. This overreaching objective has been worked out in terms of project objectives in various ways. In the sample, the most common objectives of the TNPs were (see Figure 7.6): promoting or standardising ECTS, serving the needs of Europe, the comparison of programmes, promoting the European dimension, cooperation, and student and/or staff mobility. These objectives of the first round of projects seem to focus on two main areas. First, a practical area which involves the mapping of the current situation and promoting and developing tools to stimulate inter-institutional cooperation and to overcome obstacles in this area. Second, a more analytical area focusing on the changing social and economic demands, their meaning for the role of higher education and reflection on the European dimension. This first area is relatively dominant in the sample and shows overlap with activities which are eligible under the Institutional Contract. This is probably related to the fact that this was the first round of projects which emerged after a period when one was used to ICPs dealing with many practical issues.

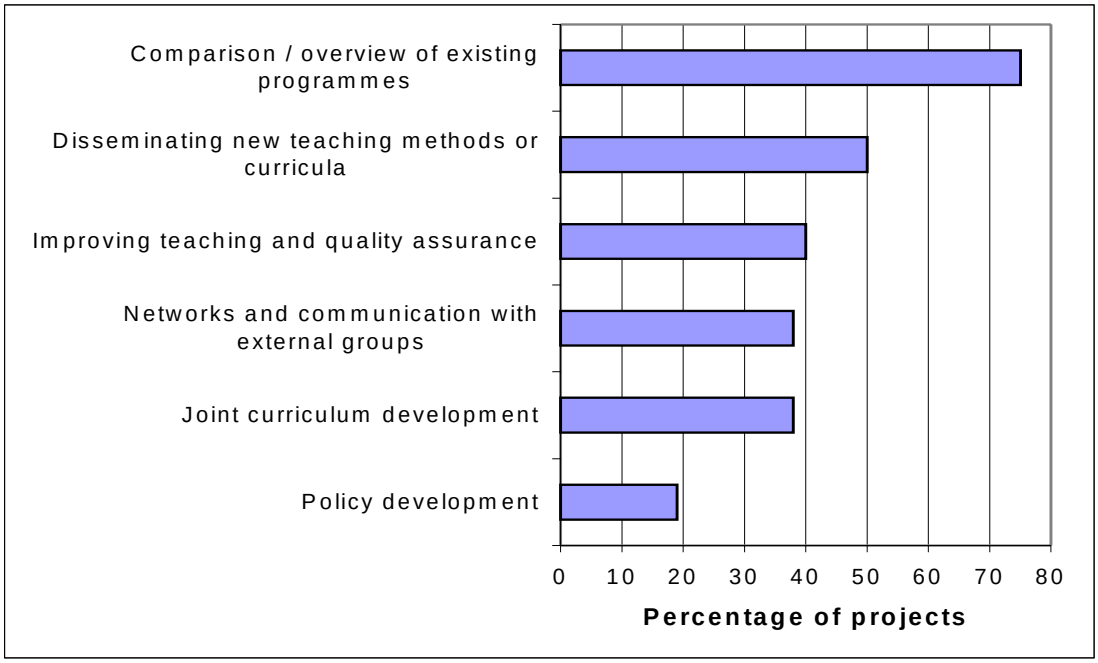
Figure 7.6
Objectives of Thematic Network Projects (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)



The TNPs demonstrate a wide variety of activities, which can be seen as a means to reach the objectives stated above. Figure 7.7 shows that, in terms of concrete activities, the comparison and mapping of existing study programmes and structures in the various countries are major activities in the TNPs. At the same time, the overview also highlights the more innovative functions of TNPs: dissemination of new teaching methods, improving quality, joint curriculum development, etc. The activities listed here coincide to a large extent with the categories enumerated in previous evaluations, where it was also concluded that the comparison of educational programmes and systems was one of the main activities of TNPs (Ruffio, 2000):

- Comparative analysis of education systems and policies,
- Analysing the context and needs of society and the labour market,
- Production of teaching material,
- Implementation of new learning programmes,
- Developing tools to stimulate inter-university cooperation,
- Developing tools to promote information exchanges,
- Institutional cooperation and organisation.

Figure 7.7
Means to Reach the Objectives of Thematic Network Projects (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)



7.10.4 Links with Other ERASMUS Activities

Since TNPs fall outside the Institutional Contract, but their participation is institution-based, it is interesting to examine to what extent and in which areas links with other ERASMUS activities exist and in what ways the IC activities and the TNPs are complementary. Most links were found with student mobility and ECTS. Obviously, TNPs do not promote these activities as such, but it was specifically mentioned that studies on student mobility (56%) and the introduction and use of ECTS (63%) were part of the project. As many projects focused on studying different aspects of the internationalisation of particular fields, it is logical that these issues and the way to overcome obstacles in these areas would be included in the studies. Some TNPs included sub-projects which focused on curriculum development, but, generally speaking, it was not one of their most important aims. In addition, some projects included the development of European Master's programmes. Some projects which were not directly involved in any curriculum development type of activities did, however, promote this kind of work by reporting on these kinds of activities as part of the curriculum surveys they carried out. Only two projects specifically mentioned teaching staff mobility.

It was evident from the seminar that there was a lack of information about other activities in ERASMUS than those in which the coordinator was directly involved and thus on possibilities for linking projects. It was said that TNPs could play a more important role in disseminating this type of information.

7.10.5 Content and Methods

European Dimension and Interdisciplinary

All the projects which were surveyed focused on the European dimension. This is not particularly surprising, since this was one of the main aims of this type of project. Somewhat more surprising was the fact that fewer of the projects (5 projects or 31%) had a truly interdisciplinary focus, even though interdisciplinarity was also specifically mentioned as one of the aims of the thematic network programme. One reason for this was the disciplinary Evaluation Conferences which were organised prior to the launch of SOCRATES and which formed a basis for various TNPs. Furthermore, this may also reflect the continuing importance of the disciplines in the university structure and cooperation networks. However, more interdisciplinary projects were approved for the next few years.

Teaching and Learning and Student Evaluation Aspects

15 out of the 16 projects (94%) focused on some aspect of teaching and learning. How this was incorporated into the projects varied, but common aspects were sub-projects that examined and compared different teaching methods, or the inclusion of ODL technologies. Similarly to the CD projects, very few TNPs mention any project work which involves the evaluation of students (here, only one project mentioned this). This can be partially explained by the fact that most TNPs are not involved in creating joint curricula and are therefore not working on the assessment of students. But one could argue that, since the focus was on teaching and learning methods, greater interest on how these contribute to student achievement could be expected.

Open and Distance Learning

Half the projects surveyed (8) focused on some aspects of ODL. This ranged from studies on the extent to which ODL is being used in teaching programmes in the countries to extensive work on developing coursework or ODL techniques which could later be applied in teaching programmes. Seven other projects (44%) included some aspects of ODL, but, here, this was not one of the main areas of concern. Only one project did not mention the use of ODL at all.

Continuing Education

In contrast, a focus on continuing education was much less common. More than half the projects (9 projects or 56%) did not mention whether or not continuing education would be included in the activities, so one can assume that this did not play an important role in the work of these networks. Four projects (25%), however, said they laid emphasis on continuing education, either by studying it, promoting it, or developing it. In 3 of the projects (19%) there was some mention of continuing education, but, here, it did not play a major role in the network. One TNP has devoted itself entirely to the issue of continuing education. Its activities include a study on continuing education at university level in the various Member States.

Quality Assessment

TNPs used a variety of quality assessment methods. In 44 per cent of the cases (7 projects), some combination of internal and external sources were used. In six cases (38%), the projects mainly relied on internal forms of assessment, while in two (13%) external sources were mainly used. Only one project did not specify the form of quality assessment which would be used. In previous evaluations, it was stated that in later years of the projects evaluation had become a priority and that TNPs were being encouraged to instate internal quality assurance procedures. But this is still at an embryonic stage (Ruffio, 2000).

In comparison with the curriculum development projects, a much higher percentage of the projects included some kind of external assessment (for curriculum development projects, less than a quarter reported including external forms of assessment, see above, section 7.6.3). This is probably linked to the much larger size of the TNPs and the fact that many of them are well-connected with professional societies and other external organisations.

All projects made some reference to quality improvement and assurance in higher education. In terms of quality, about a third focused on the development or implementation of quality assessment, about a third hoped to achieve quality through comparisons and learning from other systems, and roughly a third developed benchmarking-type activities. Previous evaluations reported that many projects were interested in the problems of evaluation and quality in higher education, but that only a few had already embarked on concrete actions. There are some notable exceptions such as the networks in management studies, veterinary studies and dentistry (Ruffio, 1998). Linked to quality is the issue of accreditation, which will probably become more important in the near future. This was confirmed at the expert seminar, where accreditation was seen as an important aspect of the Bologna process (see 7.10.7).

7.10.6 Goal Achievement

Without having access to the final report from the last year of the projects, it is difficult to assess whether the goals of the project have been reached. This analysis is based on an evaluation of the project documents (applications and final reports) from the first two years of the projects. The analysis will therefore only discuss the problems encountered, the products produced, and changes to the original plan within the first two years.

Problems Encountered

The documents provided a good overview of the problems which were encountered during the first two years. Many were directly or indirectly related to the large size of the networks (e.g. the heavy administrative burden of coordinating the networks, communication and language problems, and the "silent partners"). Others can be considered as start-up problems, which have partly been overcome.

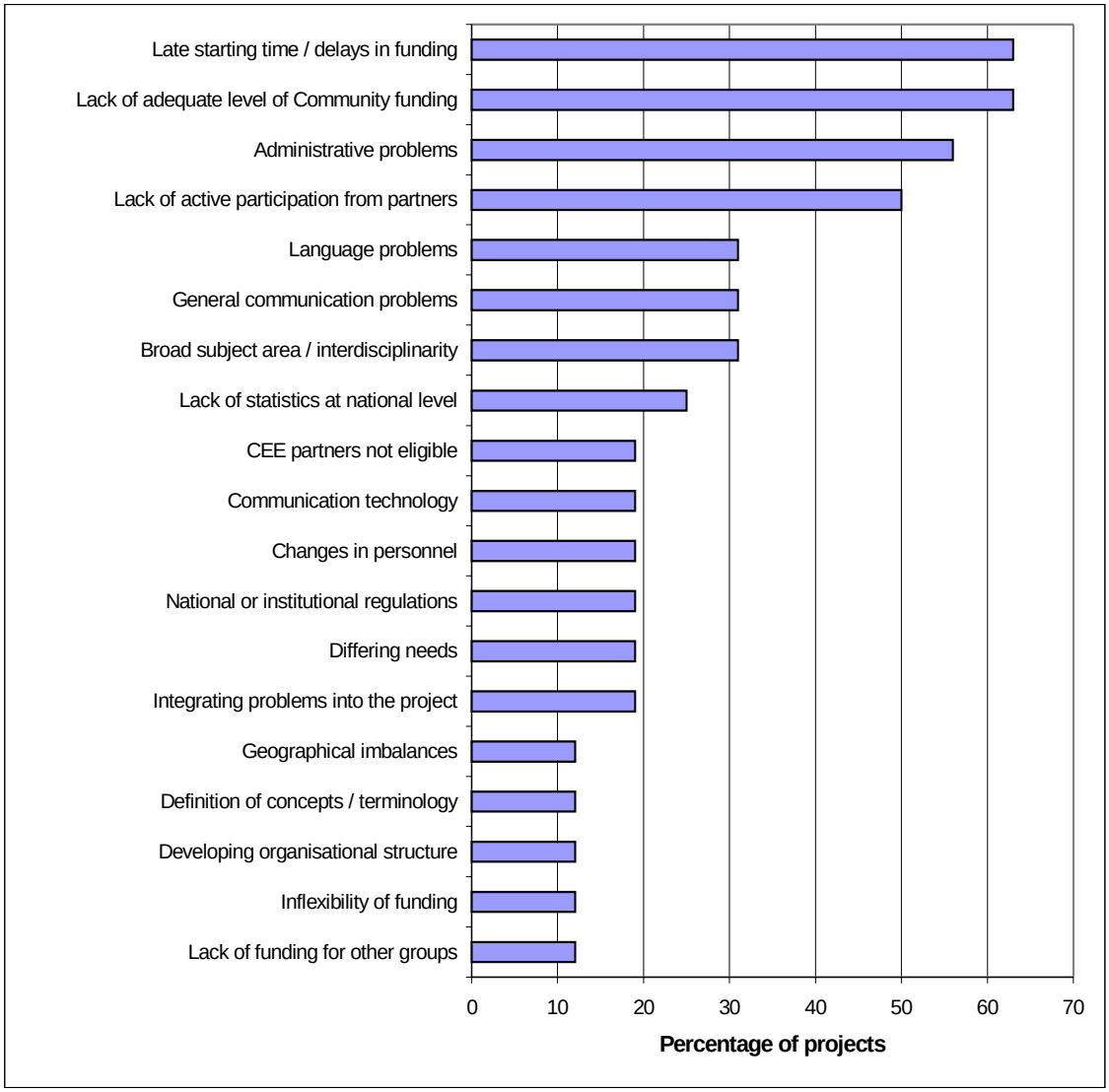
The problems that were most frequently encountered were the late beginning of the project due to delays in receiving the funding and the lack of an adequate level of Community funding. Many issues were linked to the lack of adequate funding, e.g. the fact that Eastern European partners or other groups or partners (from non-EU countries) were not eligible. The inflexibility of the funding - the fact that some of the expenditures were not eligible to be covered by the grants - was also mentioned. Furthermore, various administrative problems were often reported, including the heavy administrative burden of coordinating such large and complex networks.

A problem which occurred in half the networks concerns the lack of active participation of some of the partners (the "silent or sleeping partners"). Problems were reported related to linguistic barriers and to general communication. Some projects complained of problems related to the broad subject area or interdisciplinary nature of some of the projects. Some documents mentioned that the large size of the networks created administrative problems because faculties or departments were not used to dealing with interdisciplinary subject material or projects. In other cases, these problems were more closely related to difficulties encountered within the networks themselves (e.g. difficulties to define concepts across disciplines). The problems described above overlap with those found in previous evaluations. They are said to be still valid (Ruffio 1998, 2000, p 45) (see also 7.10.7).

Adjustment of Project Objectives

The most common adjustments were the general scaling down of plans (38%) and replacing physical meetings by electronic forms of communication (19%). Both were due to lack of adequate funding. In two cases (13%), plans were broadened or expanded to include new subprojects and one project decided to develop a joint curriculum. In two cases (13%), the development of joint (core) curriculum was replaced by the development of a broader “body of knowledge”. One project reported unplanned, but very fruitful, collaboration with one of the other thematic network projects.

Figure 7.8
Problems Encountered in Thematic Network Projects (percentage of projects, multiple reply possible)



Results

In the evaluation of the first three years of TNPs (Ruffio, 2000), a detailed overview of TNP products was given. The summary presented below (table 7.10) shows the important role of TNPs in the comparative surveys on educational programmes and systems in the Member States and their contribution to the development of a European dimension in the various fields (e.g. development of teaching materials, courses and modules).

Table 7.10
Products of Thematic Network Projects (period 1996-1999, source: Ruffio, 2000)

Higher education in Europe, surveys and analysis:	
Comparison and analysis at European level	50
Monographs	9
Pedagogical issues, new pedagogical tools: surveys and analysis	34
Policy notes	9
Scientific articles	35
Socio-economic context analysis and surveys	9
International or European conferences	92
Teaching material and packages:	
Teaching material (printed)	13
Teaching packages (using ICT)	14
Acquisition of new knowledge (pilot projects)	7
Course design and organisation:	
Courses	2
Short courses/modules	50
Tools for educational purposes:	
Cooperation material	21
Quality assessment and recognition procedures	8
Creation of associations / networks	8

It can be stated that nearly all the projects reported the use of the Internet both for communication between the partners and for dissemination to the larger community. In comparison with the curriculum development projects, one can thus conclude that there was greater emphasis on information technology, both for communicating, and for disseminating results. This is not surprising considering the size of most of these networks and the way they rely heavily on information technology to replace the need for physical mobility.

More than half the documents also reported that the network had enabled them to establish contacts with external organisations, and in a third or more of the networks the number of partners had increased during the first two years.

7.10.7 Impact of Thematic Network Projects

It is recognised in this evaluation as well as in previous evaluations that the character of many of the TNPs is fairly dependent on the *individual* involvement of academics and that the involvement of institutions is very varied and even seems to be problematic in certain cases. At the same time, their future depends on the actual impact they will have on universities and the way in which their proposals will be adopted and implemented by the institutions. Because their activities are still too individual and cannot be easily linked to institutional strategies, there is a considerable risk that the products and recommendations of TNPs will not be used. Other factors that may play a role in this respect are the fact that most (65%) TNP products consists of the classical type of academic publications and conferences, and very few may develop innovation (e.g. teaching and course materials). Moreover, the dissemination of innovation in education, and particularly in higher education, is generally a tough process. It can be expected that the initiative to integrate TNPs in the Institutional Contract under SOCRATES 2 will improve this situation. However, more effective dissemination strategies and, in particular, stronger links with curriculum development activities would enhance the innovative potential of TNPs.

Besides, there seems to be another strategic potential of TNPs which could be used more substantially at the European level. It is the contribution that TNPs could make in the context of the Bologna process by shedding light on the implications of the Bologna Declaration (including related issues such as European cooperation in the area of quality assurance) for the various disciplines. The Bologna process, which is now developing at the level of ministries and higher education institutions, would greatly benefit from such disciplinary perspectives, since the implementation of the Bologna recommendations will need to be specified for the various disciplines. TNPs could be particularly useful because of their links with relevant organisations in the disciplinary or professional fields. Involvement in this process would provide opportunities for TNPs to increase and widen their role in the development of a European dimension in higher education. Various networks which have put the "Bologna issues" on their agenda are already aware of this opportunity.

7.11 Summary and Conclusions

7.11.1 Summary of Findings

Samples of 53 curriculum development projects and 16 Thematic Network Projects were researched in this study by means of document analysis, mainly project applications and interim reports. Many projects are still ongoing, or final reports were not yet available. Hence, the results of this evaluation should be seen as preliminary results.

Curriculum development projects aim at providing quality education and specialised training, at meeting the needs of industry or other social groups, and at introducing a European dimension in higher education. In many projects (66%), an interdisciplinary approach is chosen to reach these objectives. Intensive Programmes, European Modules and CDA projects have close links with student and staff mobility activities. These three categories of projects also make the greatest use of ECTS. Intensive programmes and CDI and CDA projects seem to be best embedded in the institutional strategies. CDA projects, Intensive Programmes and Integrated Language Courses use ODL techniques the most. CDA projects seem to contain the most elements that are useful for continuing education. The major problems encountered in curriculum development projects are related to limited funding, technical and administrative problems and a lack of active participation of project partners. Common changes in the implementation of the projects include a slower pace, less integration of the newly developed curriculum parts in the existing curriculum and a more limited quantity of curriculum that was developed. Projects resulted most frequently in the development of course materials and syllabi and, obviously, in the actual running of courses. Because final reports were in many cases not yet available, it is difficult to assess to what degree the developed curricula were institutionalised and can thus be expected to lead to sustainable change.

Thematic Network Projects are aimed at mapping of the current situation and promoting and developing tools to stimulate inter-institutional cooperation and to overcome obstacles in this area. They also focus on the changing social and economic demands and their meaning for the role of higher education and reflect on the European dimension by comparing existing study programmes and structures in the various countries. Besides, more innovative activities are being undertaken, such as the dissemination of new teaching methods, the improvement of quality, and joint curriculum development. The closest links between Thematic Network Projects and other ERASMUS activities were found in the area of student mobility and the use of ECTS. The Thematic Network Projects lay great emphasis on the European dimension in teaching and learning activities, but less on interdisciplinary approaches and on evaluation and quality assurance. Half the projects include elements of ODL, but only a few include continuing education. The most common problems were related to a late start and the delays in project funding, the lack of an adequate level of Community

funding, administrative problems, and a lack of active participation of some "silent" partners. The most common adjustments - related to limited funding - were the general scaling down of the initial project plans and the replacement of physical forms of communication by electronic ones.

7.11.2 Innovation and Quality

Whether SOCRATES activities have actually led to an improvement in the quality of education is a very interesting question, but one which is difficult to assess. Information on this could unfortunately not be obtained from the document analysis. According to the participants of the seminar, however, there is some evidence that the overall quality of educational programmes has improved through participation in the different curriculum development projects. This is sometimes mentioned in reports produced by national and institutional quality assessment exercises that have evaluated the contents and methods of programmes which were part of these projects. Furthermore, the fact that 66% of all the curriculum development projects had some kind of interdisciplinary focus shows that innovative programmes have been developed by bringing together people from different disciplines.

CDA projects seem to be particularly innovative. In addition to their interdisciplinary character, they make relatively frequent use of new technologies, include elements of continuing education, use different languages of instruction, and often lead to new degrees and qualifications. At the same time, they seem to have met many problems in institutionalising the innovations, especially the introduction and acceptance of new degrees. In this area, national system characteristics can create great barriers. It is expected that the Bologna Declaration and the introduction of accreditation systems in Europe will help in this respect.

Probably the largest contribution to promoting innovation in the thematic networks was the information on innovative teaching methods (and sometimes programme contents) which has been distributed to many institutions within the networks. Many Thematic Network Projects identified “best practice” in teaching and have been active in publishing this information. Furthermore, some TNPs have carried out studies on quality assessment practices and distributed this information to the partner institutions.

Despite these indications on the innovative impact of the various curriculum development activities, no insights into the major substance of the educational innovation achieved through these projects could be obtained by this study. In order to be able to assess the real innovative impact of curriculum development activities, different methods of investigation should be considered. More especially, examples of good practice should be examined in more detail, e.g. by carrying out case studies which describe project results that could also be disseminated more widely.

7.11.3 Products and Problems

Nearly all the CD projects and all the TNPs produced a variety of products. In the case of CD projects, they more often took the form of concrete teaching materials, courses and modules than in the case of TNPs, which produce more traditional publications, overviews, analyses of systems and practices, etc. The participants of the evaluation seminar pointed out that sometimes the most valuable outcomes of the projects were not easily quantifiable, e.g. long-lasting relationships between partners, or people gaining a broader, European perspective on their areas of study.

But many problems were also encountered. One of the greatest problems was the difficulty of integrating the courses or curricula into the existing study programmes. Institutional, national, and disciplinary barriers were mentioned by the project leaders as contributing factors. Although financial problems were very frequently cited, the coordinators of both CD and TNP projects who attended the evaluation seminar explained that inactive or less active partners were a great problem. In particular, they laid stress on the relationship between “sleeping” partners and the lack of recognition (at the institutional and/or national levels) of the type of work carried out in these projects.

7.11.4 Interaction between Different Projects

Some project documents detailed the interaction between the different projects. For example, some CDA projects include an Intensive Programme as part of the overall programme. Many of the different projects mentioned the use of ECTS or work on promoting or standardising ECTS. Several documents relating to TNPs mentioned that work was being carried out on creating European Master’s programmes, or on promoting or contributing to other work being carried out in the framework of various curriculum development projects.

At the same time, there seems to be a general lack of information about projects other than the ones that people are directly involved in, and many project coordinators seem not to be aware of the possibilities to launch joint activities in the new (current) SOCRATES framework. It would seem that TNPs could play an important role in distributing information to a large number of institutions and keeping up to date with the curriculum development activities in a particular discipline.

The potential of curriculum development activities for the non-mobile students is widely recognised. In this context, stronger links with teaching staff mobility should be considered, in particular, flexible options for short time mobility.

7.11.5 Sustainability and Interaction with External Organisations

Curriculum development and thematic network projects are funded for limited amounts of time. This leaves open the question of how the work will be sustained or continued beyond the end of the grant period. One could imagine different ways in which projects could obtain funding from other sources. Some have been successful in attracting funding from external partners, or in charging for services or products produced in the framework of the project. Many curriculum development projects have explored ways to market and sell their products (textbooks, CDs) and some are considering ways in which tuition fees may be charged.

These approaches to commercialising products can, however, lead to complications and negative consequences. Obtaining significant external support will probably be much more difficult in some disciplines or areas of study than in others. There may be barriers to trying to commercialise products, such as different copyright laws. Similarly, legislation in some countries prevents tuition fees from being charged. Commercialising products may also require considerable time and investment, and some project coordinators fear that the efforts devoted to these activities may detract from or overshadow the co-operative work.

The embedding of the various activities in the institutional strategies seem to vary between CD projects and Thematic Network Projects. The latter are generally larger, but represent less institutional involvement (often only one person). Integration of TNPs into the institutional contract (as will be the case in SOCRATES II) can be expected to strengthen the institutional embedding of these projects. It is hoped that this will also lead to greater synergy between these projects and certain curriculum development activities where some overlap can be observed at present.

Chapter 4 has shown that about a third of the institutions participates in curriculum development activities funded under the ERASMUS component of SOCRATES. As stated before, these activities are seen as important for the development of a European dimension in the study programmes of the non-mobile students. Research at the national level suggested that the curriculum development and teaching staff mobility actions that focus on non-mobile students should be strengthened (see chapter 15.7.4). We would like to recommend that curriculum development activities be further enhanced in the future, with options for flexible links with teaching staff mobility and emphasis on integration into the overall institutional strategies.

8. ERASMUS – Observations and Recommendations

By Ulrich Teichler

8.1 Introduction

Student mobility has been the most visible component of the ERASMUS programme from the outset, and more than half the ERASMUS funds were allocated to student mobility grants. Students had become a well-established component of the European educational programmes with "mass participation" before SOCRATES was launched. SOCRATES changed the organisational and educational framework of student mobility and called for a further development of the components of ERASMUS.

A study on the experiences of ERASMUS students and of those supporting student mobility academically and administratively, the teachers and coordinators, had been carried out in the early 1990s. The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study

- tries to establish how far the conditions, processes and outcomes of student mobility and teaching staff have changed. For this purpose, questionnaire surveys were sent to sample ERASMUS students, former mobile students who had graduated some years ago, and teachers, many of whom had taught abroad or were assigned coordination tasks for ERASMUS.
- Beyond that, the various curricular innovation activities – in the framework of Curriculum Development, Intensive Programmes and the Thematic Network - were examined with the help of an analysis of their self-reports.
- Finally, attention was paid to the question of how the role of the centre of higher education institutions had changed in managing and shaping the European activities as a consequence of the SOCRATES approach which discontinued support for networks of cooperating departments and encouraged the centres of higher education to become strategic actors and take over administrative responsibility for the activities which received support. A questionnaire was sent to rectors of higher education institutions in Europe who had been awarded a SOCRATES grant. The analysis also drew on the previous EUROSTRAT studies on the European policies of the higher education institutions.

8.2 Student Mobility

8.2.1 Changing Conditions

One could assume that the students‘ experience within ERASMUS could change as a consequence of the following factors:

(a) quantitative expansion, e.g. increase in the number of ERASMUS students,

(b) changes in the management of the support scheme and in the level of support, e.g. processes of application and awards, as well as level of funding per student,

(c) changes in the general environment, e.g. greater Europeanisation and internationalisation in higher education and in the world of work,

(d) a consolidation process as regards conditions and provisions for student mobility within the higher education institutions,

(e) a shift from the network of departments approach of the former ERASMUS to institutional responsibility for ERASMUS under SOCRATES, which could cause changes in the academic and administrative conditions for mobile students,

(f) specific measures aimed to improve the conditions and provisions of student mobility, e.g. extension of ECTS.

Comparing the surveys of the early 1990s and those conducted in 1999/2000 provides an opportunity to examine the changes over time. However, there is no clear distinction between changes already in place until 1996/97 and those when the SOCRATES approach began affecting student mobility. One should also bear in mind that the change in the students‘ experiences and the respective outcomes could be measured exactly. Yet the relative importance of the factors mentioned above for the development of ERASMUS student mobility remains open to - possibly controversial - interpretation.

The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study provides evidence that the development of ERASMUS student mobility from the early 1990s to the late 1990s is characterised by continuity and stability rather than by change. However, there are four elements of change.

8.2.2 Growing Number of ERASMUS Students

First, we observe a substantial growth in the overall number of students studying in another European country with an ERASMUS grant. The real number increased from about 28,000 in the academic year 1990/91, to about 80,000 in the academic year 1995/96 and to about 86,000 in the academic year 1997/98. More recent data were not available when this analysis was undertaken; in combining the available data on “expected” number of students

with data on the trend of the take-up rate (proportion of students cited in the successful applications who actually go abroad), we could estimate that the real number of ERASMUS-supported students grew to about 92,000 in 1998/99 and to about 98,000 in 1999/2000. Thus, the total number of ERASMUS students increased from about 230,000 in the five-year period 1990/91 to 1994/95 to about 460,000 during the five-year-period 1995/96 to 1999/2000, i.e. it doubled.

The number of eligible countries rose from 12 in 1990/91 to 18 in 1995/96 to 29 in 1999/2000. 10 Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus became eligible since the launching of SOCRATES.

8.2.3 Drop in Cost Coverage of the ERASMUS Grant

A second major change was the reduction of the amount of ERASMUS grants per student. According to the statistics of the European Commission, ERASMUS students in 1990/91 received on average 1,220 ECU and the 1993/94 cohort 1,089 ECU. The 1997/98 ERASMUS students received 959 EURO on average. This decline of 21 per cent in the support for additional costs of study abroad over a period of seven years took place when the ERASMUS students‘ additional expenses for the study period abroad increased by about 40 per cent.

According to the ERASMUS student surveys undertaken by the authors of this evaluation study, the share of the additional expenses for studying abroad (cost of the stay abroad, travel, continuous costs at home while studying abroad) covered by the ERASMUS grant was 89 per cent in 1990/91; it dropped to 52 per cent on average in 1998/99. The total amount of the additional expenses not covered by ERASMUS increased during that period from 166 ECU to 1,036 EURO on average. Hence, the coverage by home country grants and loans did not increase; the additional burden had to be borne by the students, their parents and their relatives.

The available figures suggest that the students and their parents and relatives took on the additional expenses with no major consequences for the ERASMUS programme. The pattern of parental background remained unchanged and complaints of students about serious financial problems during the study period abroad did not grow. Yet, one must bear in mind that serious financial problems quoted by about one fifth of the students remained one of their main problems, and that the additional costs could have been a deterrent for the rising number of students who initially wished to participate in ERASMUS but did not go abroad.

8.2.4 Changes in Administrative and Academic Support

Third, the ERASMUS students of the late 1990s embarked to a lesser extent on academic preparation for the study period. They report, however, that the host institution provided both more substantive academic and administrative advice and assistance. It is widely assumed that the SOCRATES move away from the networks of academics towards institutional responsibility could hamper academic support and increase administrative and service support. The findings only partly support this interpretation. The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study may have been undertaken too early: The near future will show whether this hypothesis will be validated or not.

8.2.5 Recognition – Increase or Decrease?

Fourth, according to ERASMUS students, about three-quarters of their achievement abroad are recognised on their return, if they did not participate in ECTS. This remained unchanged from the beginning of the ERASMUS programme until the late 1990s. ECTS students of the late 1990s reported an average credit transfer of about 85 per cent. As ECTS expanded from a small pilot programme in the early 1990s to comprising about half the ERASMUS students in the late 1990s, the overall degree of recognition grew to slightly over 80 per cent.

However, if the ultimate yardstick of recognition is that the overall study period up to the award of the degree will not be prolonged by the study period abroad, developments are less promising. Despite the development of ECTS, the expected prolongation of studies grew from about 45 per cent on average to 55 per cent.

The discrepancy of trends might be seen as an indication that the greater formal recognition is artificial. There seems to be an increase in the achievements which are “recognised“ but do not seem to “count“ for the overall study requirement.

8.2.6 Continuity

It is interesting to note that few major changes have occurred. Some of the non-changes deserve specific attention. In addition to the stability in the socio-economic composition of ERASMUS students, we can observe:

(a) The long time-span between application and information about award decision and the late timing of the provision of financial support to the students remained with 8.3 months on average constant in the 1990s. Measures to reduce this were counterbalanced by factors that contributed to the complexity and slowness and they seem to have neutralised each other.

(b) The teachers' ratings of the academic quality and achievements of ERASMUS students remained on an equal level to that of their home students. Thus, the changes in support for the preparation of the study period abroad and for academic and administrative concerns of incoming students who might be affected by the SOCRATES approach do not seem to have led to significant changes as regards quality.

(c) Accommodation is no longer a serious issue, as was feared at the beginning of ERASMUS. The quantitative growth of ERASMUS has not led to greater problems. Recent ERASMUS students even rate the quality of accommodation abroad slightly more positively than those of the early 1990s.

(d) The pattern of language use has not changed. Whereas it is widely believed that the internationalisation of higher education reinforces the drift towards English as the *lingua franca*, the use of the various host country languages did not decline and the number of students who were taught abroad in English did not increase.

(e) Finally, the overwhelming majority of ERASMUS students continues to consider ERASMUS as a very valuable experience in terms of cultural experience and personality development. Academic progress also tends to be viewed positively. Generally speaking, the students are very satisfied with their ERASMUS experience.

8.2.7 Impact on Employment and Work

In examining the impact of ERASMUS on subsequent employment and work we note that more mobile students than non-mobile students eventually

- take on job assignments with international components,
- are more often employed abroad and
- are more often assigned work abroad, if employed by a home country employer.
- Former mobile students also assess their professionally-relevant competences somewhat more highly than the non-mobile students, and
- they also experience a smoother transition to employment.

However, few former mobile students believe that they have a more successful career than their fellow students who were not mobile, and few have a higher income. But the contribution of ERASMUS is impressive when it comes to European and international assignments of graduates. In most respects, the findings of a survey of 1994-95 graduates who had studied abroad with ERASMUS support around 1992-94 confirmed those of a longitudinal study of the 1988/89 cohort. In most respects, the change over time was marginal.

But caution is called for. First, as the recent survey shows, former ERASMUS students are not better prepared for employment and work in general or for international assignments than

European graduates who studied abroad with other means of funding. Second, the number of former ERASMUS students who do not end up with significant European or international job assignments is by no means small and seems to grow slightly over time.

8.3 Teaching Staff Mobility

8.3.1 Expected Growth of Size and Function

Whereas the stability of ERASMUS student mobility, as far as processes and outcomes are concerned, could be considered a success, teaching staff mobility was expected to improve and serve a greater number of functions:

(a) The conditions for organising a teaching period abroad were considered as deplorable by most mobile teachers in the early 1990s. Improvement was clearly on the agenda.

(b) With the launching of SOCRATES, direct support for networks of departments was discontinued and there were fewer travel funds to support student mobility. Therefore, teaching staff mobility could be expected to take over part of the functions traditionally served by coordinators‘ travel.

(c) Concurrently, ERASMUS was also expected to serve the non-mobile students.

(d) Finally, teaching staff mobility could also play a role in the recent efforts to make ERASMUS beneficial for curricular innovation.

8.3.2 Changes in the Quantitative-Structural Patterns

The number of mobile teachers supported by ERASMUS increased substantially. To our knowledge, exact data on their number are not extracted regularly from the reports of the teachers or the higher education institutions but it was calculated to be about 1,400 in 1990/91 and 7,000 in the late 1990s.

The average duration of the stay abroad dropped substantially. Representative surveys suggest an average drop from 24 to just over 8 days.

The share of the mobile teachers‘ expenses which were borne by the ERASMUS grant dropped by an average of almost 10 per cent, from about 70 per cent to slightly more than 60 per cent. Unlike with student mobility, the additional costs were not borne by the mobile persons, but primarily by the home institutions.

8.3.3 Continuity of Activities

In almost all other respects, the comparison of the teaching staff surveys of the early 1990s and the recent one undertaken in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study did not indicate any major change:

(a) The conditions for organising a teaching period abroad continue to be considered deplorable by the mobile teachers and their colleagues who act as coordinators. This is all the more surprising, because one could have expected that the various difficulties could have been overcome, since the teaching period abroad has become so short.

(b) Teaching abroad is as integrated in the host country curriculum as it was in the early 1990s (in terms of being part of the regular programmes, being compulsory and being credited). If teacher training had become a more targeted means of serving the non-mobile students, one could have expected a higher degree of integration.

(c) When abroad, mobile teachers are just as involved in other tasks as their predecessors in the early 1990s. They seem to play a similar role in advising home and host students and in curricular matters to the one they played in the past. The contribution of teaching staff mobility to student mobility did not decline as a consequence of greater presumed emphasis of ERASMUS in the framework of SOCRATES on non-mobile students and curricular innovation.

(d) Finally, mobile teachers continue to believe that teaching staff exchange is very valuable for themselves, for the home and host mobile students, and for the curricula in general.

8.3.4 (Not) Serving the Intended Functional Change?

All indications suggest that the role of teacher mobility has not changed as much in recent years as was hoped for. All qualitative information neither suggests any improvement in terms of emphasis on non-mobile students or curricular innovation nor any drop in the role it plays for student mobility. Yet, there is a need for innovative ideas to improve teaching staff mobility.

8.4 Curricular Innovation and the Role of Thematic Networks

8.4.1 Examining the Potentials of Curricular Innovation

Curricular innovation is an area of growing importance in SOCRATES. Whereas student mobility puts great emphasis on “experiential learning“, curricular innovation addresses the core of the teaching function. While student mobility directly serves a minority, curricular innovation can be beneficial for the majority, with the growing emphasis of ERASMUS on non-mobile students. Finally, student mobility is valuable for those involved, but curricular innovation, if successful, can serve many institutions and departments.

Student mobility within ERASMUS was viewed from the outset as qualitatively better if embedded in curricular innovation, and it was widely assumed that greater student mobility, in turn, would stimulate curricular innovation. In the framework of SOCRATES, many sub-programmes were set up to serve curricular innovation in higher education. In the framework of ERASMUS, applications under the category of Curriculum Development (CD) had to be specified according to curricula at initial or intermediate level (CDI), new degree programmes at advanced level (CDA), European modules (EM) focusing on other countries, and integrated language courses (ILC). Intensive Programmes (IP) were also supported. The majority of “Thematic Networks“, a new area of activity in SOCRATES whereby many experts cooperate to analyse and improve the situation of major areas of higher education, also addressed curricular issues. Outside ERASMUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING, ADULT EDUCATION and also the areas of COMENIUS, addressing teacher training offers higher education institutions the possibility of obtaining financial support for curricular innovation.

In the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study, applications and reports of 53 Curriculum Development projects and 16 Thematic Network projects were analysed. The analysis focuses on issues of implementation, links with other activities and the perceived outcomes and their quality.

8.4.2 Activities

Since ERASMUS was modified under SOCRATES, every year 13 per cent of the higher education institutions that receive grants through an “Institutional Contract“ were provided funds for the coordination of Curriculum Development projects and 13 per cent for the coordination of Intensive Programmes. On average, 250 CD projects and 300 Intensive Programmes were granted annual support.

Curriculum Development projects, most of which ask for support over a period of three years, comprise partners from 5 countries on average. They are awarded some 17,000 EURO – a sum which the coordination institutions must share with the partners. According to estimates, about 30 per cent of the higher education institutions awarded support in the framework of

Institutional Contracts participate in CD projects. On average, Intensive Programmes received 11,000 EURO a year which had to be shared among 15 partners from 7 countries on average.

Thematic Networks which are based, on average, on more than 100 partners, i.e. higher education institutions and other organisations such as associations, etc., focused on two main areas. First, a practical area which involves the mapping of the current situation and promoting and developing tools to stimulate inter-institutional cooperation and to overcome obstacles in this area. Second, a more analytical area focusing on the changing social and economic demands, their meaning for the role of higher education and reflection on the European dimension. During the three-year period under observation many individual projects were carried out which were mainly concerned with comparative analysis of education systems and policies, analysing the context and needs of society and the labour market, production of teaching material, implementation of new learning programmes, developing tools to stimulate inter-university cooperation, developing tools to promote information exchanges and institutional cooperation and organisation.

The closest links between Thematic Network Projects and other ERASMUS activities were found in the area of student mobility and the use of ECTS. In addition, a substantial proportion of TNPs included sub-projects which focus on curriculum development, e.g. the development of European Master's programmes.

8.4.3 The Role of Curricular Innovation

In explaining the relevance of various SOCRATES-supported activities for the policy of the higher education institutions as a whole, most institutions underscore in their European Policy Statements that they continue to consider student and teacher mobility as being the key areas. But over 40 per cent also lay great stress on ECTS, over a third on curricular innovation, and over a quarter on intensive programmes.

It is obvious that many institutions consider that curricular innovation should be at the heart of systematic efforts of Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education. But some caution was expressed regarding curricular innovation when reflecting institutional policies. This was because most curricular innovation activities affected individual fields of study and were thus of little importance for the institution as a whole.

8.4.4 Results and Problems

Curriculum development projects seem to greatly serve the interdisciplinary concept. Those which aim at developing new degree programmes at advanced level seem to be the most ambitious. Various projects take on board popular approaches to teaching and learning, e.g.

the use of information and communication technology, open and distance learning, and competence-based learning. A more thorough evaluation by curriculum experts would be needed to analyse the achievements and limitations of the outcomes of curricular innovation activities supported by SOCRATES.

Thematic networks often provide fruitful overviews on the substantive approaches to fields of study and modes of teaching and learning. But it is less certain whether many succeed in developing new concepts that are valuable for curricular innovation.

The funds provided for Curriculum Development, Intensive Programmes and Thematic Network seem to be sufficient to reinforce a certain degree of stability and structure for those who are willing to take an active part in curricular innovation. The great professional autonomy of academics in setting priorities in the use of their work time is obviously fertile ground for relatively small amounts of financial support to “go a long way“.

Yet, a certain number of participants remain inactive. Interest is often divided between those who only participate in the development of blueprints for curricular innovation and those who try to change things. There are often barriers to the implementation of curricular innovation.

Those who are involved in curricular innovation often express dissatisfaction because they do not see the meaning of their activities beyond being an “island“ of innovation for those who participate. They want feedback regarding quality, would appreciate some dissemination, and would like to know where similar or contrasting innovation is visible, etc. These comments do not so much call for evaluation as an instrument of “control“, as for activities to differentiate between successful and less successful experiments, help those who had embarked on innovative activities to improve and disseminate good practice.

It is still too early to assess how successful Thematic Networks can be in helping to sort out and disseminate innovation in higher education with a European dimension. Various comments suggest that the expectations were substantially higher when support for Thematic Networks began than they are now. An analysis of the experiences might be timely following the final reports of the first “wave“ of projects.

8.5 The SOCRATES Approach of Discontinuing Academic Networks and Increasing Institutional Responsibility

As the CRE-EUROSTRAT study suggests, the SOCRATES approach has led many higher education institutions to take stock of their European and international activities. This resulted in greater transparency and a growing awareness of the institutions’ strengths and weaknesses concerning their European commitments.

SOCRATES also triggered off the creation or extension of consultation processes within higher education institutions to discuss European and international matters. Similarly, the

decision-making process on matters of internationalisation and Europeanisation was linked more closely to that of key issues of the institutions, and was often streamlined.

Furthermore, there are also indications that the support for services and administrative processes was improved and subsequently professionalised.

Finally, the findings of the EUROSTRAT project show that many higher education institutions consider European and international issues more strategically than in the past. Most did not feel the need to formulate a European policy in order to be eligible for SOCRATES support or enumerate operational targets or embellish trivial operations by exaggerated proclamations. Rather, moves towards policies seem to be emerging.

The surveys undertaken in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study suggest, however, that the changes were moderate. On the basis of the institutional survey and the teaching staff survey, we observe

(a) Few reassignments of responsibilities between the central and department level and between the various actors,

(b) Some reduction of the administration and service functions of academics, but still almost as many educational tasks and a continued involvement of the academics in decision-making.

(c) Marginal growth of staff positions for the administration of international activities.

The CRE-EUROSTRAT study also indicates limited moves towards strategic action on the part of higher education institutions:

(d) Most institutions focused so much on SOCRATES in their European Policy Statement that one can wonder whether they have developed a European policy.

(e) As regards student mobility, most institutions are in favour of spreading it across all departments.

(f) As regards curricular innovation, most institutions simply supported the projects proposed by the academics and waited for the Commission to decide which projects would receive sufficient funds for their implementation.

(g) The specifications and rules set by the Commission for support were often viewed as limiting the room for manoeuvre concerning original strategic contributions to innovation.

In the institutional survey, concern was expressed about the academics' interest in being involved in ERASMUS. It is too early to assess whether the motivation of academics greatly declined when the support for networks of cooperating departments was discontinued. But the concern does not seem to be unfounded.

8.6 The Administration of SOCRATES as Perceived in the Higher Education System

Already before the launch of SOCRATES criticisms of ERASMUS primarily addressed the framework of the support programmes and various elements of programme administration. This has not changed in recent years. The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study did not provide any evidence that the level of dissatisfaction in these respects had dropped in recent years. Widespread critique continues to be voiced as regards

(a) Not enough funds per beneficiary and activity,

(b) A too heavy administrative load required by the conditions of application and reporting and the complexity of activities induced by the conditions for support,

(c) Late timing of award decisions and provision of funds, and

(d) Climate of mistrust induced by the rules regarding provision and use of funds.

The findings of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study regarding these issues will be developed in Chapter 16 of this report.

8.7 Perception of Perennial Improvements

Despite the various problems, most institutional actors and academics involved are convinced that the ERASMUS activities are part of a constant process of growth and improvement of European and international thrusts and activities. In response to a question on how they assess the changes of the last five years, they state increases and improvements in almost all respects - among them the ERASMUS-supported activities and the conditions and provisions for increasing their efficiency and quality. In 2000, the number of institutions that stated that they had observed growth and improvement in the last five years was close to the number of institutions which answered a similar question in 1994. This suggests that the mobilisation effect of ERASMUS has not levelled off despite the many signs that the enthusiasm of the early phase of ERASMUS has led to a climate of consolidation.

Most students, teachers and administrators involved seem to be highly motivated and seem to consider ERASMUS-supported activities both as stimulating and satisfying for themselves and as academically valuable. This general mood is so positive that many of the problems are considered irrelevant when viewed in the light of the development of Europeanisation and internationalisation.

8.8 Recommendations

For various reasons, one could not recommend drastic changes. The major decisions for SOCRATES II have already been taken. The satisfaction of the actors and beneficiaries is generally very high. However, there could be flexibility in choosing different directions of activities and different interpretations where the European dimension should be strengthened. The programme will only be acceptable in the political arena if it serves large numbers of students, teachers and institutions and a limited number of more ambitious and more costly pilot innovation projects.

This does not mean that the evaluation study can only recommend to continue as envisaged.

First, it seems advisable to consider measures to preserve the interest of academics in serving temporary study abroad. Without returning to the “old“ ERASMUS approach of supporting networks of cooperation departments, the role of academic cooperation could be strengthened by providing different institutional support for student mobility according to the quality of the concepts of academic support of student mobility and by earmarking the majority of funds for institutional support for this purpose.

Second, teaching staff mobility could be more valuable if the award of funds is based on the quality of envisaged mobility in terms of serving academic support for mobile students, being integrated into the regular host institution programme and serving projects of curricular innovation.

Third, institutional strategies are more likely to be reinforced if the higher education institutions could see that the creativity of the strategy and the consistency between concepts and envisaged activities are strongly rewarded. They could also broaden their scope if the SOCRATES programme were less specific in the categories of programmes and lists of activities which are eligible for support.

Fourth, an in-depth study of the results of curricular innovation activities in higher education in the domain of SOCRATES support should be undertaken in the near future. It should not merely be seen as an assessment activity that aims to provide a basis for future changes in the SOCRATES support scheme, but should be of immediate help for the existing projects to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, improve their chances of implementation and disseminate the results.

Fifth, this evaluation of ERASMUS must reiterate that a reform of the ways the SOCRATES programme is managed is urgent, although futile efforts of the past may discourage recommendations of this kind. Yet, it would be a great shame if the critiques were not seen as a stimulus to speed up the award processes, to set clearer award priorities for interesting and consistent innovative proposals, to encourage interesting policies by reducing the many prescriptive elements of SOCRATES concerning activities that are eligible for support, and to change the reporting system from less emphasis on administrative and financial compliance to information that can be valuable for substantive evaluation and be usefully disseminated.

9. COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION: The Methodology and The Overall Issues

By Jean Gordon, Stéphanie Caillé and David Parkes

9.1 Introduction and Methodology

9.1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the second part of the SOCRATES 2000 evaluation study. It presents firstly (in 10.1) a description of the methodology that was implemented to evaluate COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Adult Education (AE). The second section (10.2) of this chapter presents the major overall issues which underpin the analysis of the above actions. Some are transversal to more than one action, others are specific to an action or target population.

This part of the evaluation study covers the following chapters and actions of SOCRATES I:

- Chapter II: COMENIUS (see Chapter 10 of this report)
- Chapter III: The Horizontal Actions:
- LINGUA (see Chapter 11 of this report)
- OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (see Chapter 12 of this report)
- ADULT EDUCATION (see Chapter 13 of this report)

Each of the specific chapters follows a similar structure with a short presentation of the action, the overall budget and the evaluation criteria for the action under consideration. It is followed by an analysis of each of the actions (and sub-actions) with a brief presentation supported by selected quantitative data, and an analysis of the data collected to evaluate the implementation of the action under SOCRATES I. Each chapter ends with a summary of the issues for all the actions covered. Chapter 14 summarises issues drawn from the four actions and presents interim conclusions and recommendations.

The above actions of SOCRATES I cover an interesting range of objectives and eligible partners, some of which are shared and transversal, while others are highly specific. SOCRATES was the first European Community action programme to cover education at all ages and, as such, has contributed to the developing concept and practice of lifelong learning within a broad European dimension context. The programme operated at all levels of the education systems, addressing education institutions from pre-school to higher education and adult education; adults and young learners; teachers and administrators, etc. The approach adopted for the evaluation took into account both the relative importance of the actions in terms of their "share" of the funding, the number of projects and grants, as well as the educational and political significance of different actions in the framework of SOCRATES II and their social importance for lifelong learning in coming years.

This is the first external evaluation of COMENIUS, ODL and Adult Education for a full funding period (1995-1999). LINGUA was evaluated at the end of the programme which preceded SOCRATES but in a more financial audit perspective. An interim evaluation of SOCRATES I was made by GMV Conseil for the years 1995-1996. Adult Education projects funded in the period 1995 to 1997 was also the subject of a specific evaluation coordinated by the Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung and carried out as a project entitled MOPED Monitoring of Projects: Evaluation as Dialogue. A large amount of very interesting and useful data was collected, often for the first time. The analysis sought to integrate as effectively as possible the different types of data, but each level of analysis suggests new or different avenues which could also benefit from further exploration. It is hoped that this evaluation will initiate an on-going process over the coming years of regular assessment in order to establish a bank of information, analysis and data about those SOCRATES actions which will make it possible to examine longer term effects and outcomes.

The evaluation proposal took as its starting point that evaluating funded activity is an integral part of the experimental and developmental process, aiming essentially to:

- examine and assess whether or not the activity was worth doing,
- analyse the use made of public funds,
- evaluate the contributions made to future developments and the impact on the systems in which the work was carried out,
- examine the feasibility, desirability and conditions of continuity.

The activities funded share some common characteristics in that they are:

- innovative and experimental,
- working in actively transnational partnerships,
- taking a predominantly bottom-up perspective,
- working towards the feasibility of multiplier effects and actions,
- evaluated and auto-evaluated in a perspective of the broader impact and mainstream potential.

As a reminder, the key questions to be addressed are:

1. The impact of the programme analysed for each action with regard to the overall objectives set down in the decision establishing SOCRATES and the specific objectives for each Action.
2. Use of Community funds and the effectiveness of their use to reach the objectives.
3. Implementation and whether or not the structures and mechanisms established were appropriate and efficient to allow for maximum effect and penetration.
4. Transfer and dissemination: outcomes and processes were examined for their impact and with a view to the types, range and target audiences of dissemination in order to create a multiplier effect and transferability.

9.1.2 The Major Themes and Questions

The objectives of the SOCRATES I programme were presented in Article 3 of the Council Decision as follows:

a) to develop the European dimension in education at all levels so as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each Member State;

b) to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement of the knowledge of the languages of the European Union, and in particular those which are least widely used and least taught, leading to greater understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the European Union, and to promote the intercultural dimension of education;

c) to promote wide-ranging and intensive cooperation between institutions in the Member States at all levels of education, enhancing their intellectual and teaching potential;

d) to encourage the mobility of teachers, so as to promote a European dimension in studies and to contribute to the qualitative improvement of their skills;

e) to encourage mobility of students, enabling them to complete part of their studies in another Member State, so as to contribute to the consolidation of the European dimension in education;

f) to encourage contacts among pupils in the European Union, and to promote the European dimension in their education;

g) to encourage the academic recognition of diplomas, periods of study and other qualifications, with the aim of facilitating the development of an open area for cooperation in education;

h) to encourage open and distance education in the context of the activities of this programme;

i) to foster exchanges of information and experience so that the diversity and specificity of the educational systems in the Member States become a source of enrichment and of mutual stimulation."

Within the brief of this part of the evaluation the overall objectives underpin the questioning for the actions analysed. Each action addresses some or all of these objectives.

9.1.3 Transversal Issues

In addition, the evaluation took into consideration three transversal issues in the analysis of COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education. They are:

Sustainability - including questions such as

- the immediate and the broader target groups,
- what remains at the end of a funded period of cooperation,
- the tools, experiences, curricula, etc. that can be transferred to different audiences or used in further common work,

- the direct or indirect effect on the professional development of staff involved, etc.

Equal opportunities is a major thrust of EU policy and the emphasis is on integrating it at all levels in all actions. The Preamble to the Decision of February 1995 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing SOCRATES I specified that the Programme should ensure:

- equal opportunities for boys and girls, men and women;
- that children and adolescents with disabilities are able to participate as fully as possible in the SOCRATES programme;
- that the Community and the Member States should promote access, particularly for the less-privileged, to the initiatives organised as part of the SOCRATES programmes, thus actively combating exclusion.

The evaluation methodology aimed to address the issue of equal opportunities on a broad basis (gender, race, disability, disadvantage, etc.) and in particular to investigate mechanisms established to enable participation, i.e. the extent to which a first major education programme enhanced and increased the participation of groups which did not commonly benefit from activities allowing them to work transnationally or to participate in exchanges of varying types. The global evaluation worked in cooperation with the *European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* responsible for the specific evaluation examining the participation of pupils, students and adults with physical, motor, sensory or mental disabilities in SOCRATES.

The role and use of information and communication technologies: The EU programmes place themselves firmly in the context of a "learning society" and there has been strong encouragement, not just through SOCRATES but through all the programmes concerned with education, training and employment to develop learning materials and approaches using the full range of possibilities offered by the new Information and Communication Technologies, whether on-site or in an ODL framework. This issue links to the two above in so far as it is important to ask if, and how, the use can enhance participation of, for example, under-privileged children and whether the products that remain at the end of the funding period will be of lasting use.

9.1.4 The Methodology of the Evaluation

In this section, we summarise the main approaches and tools used for COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education.

For each action and overall, the analysis sought to examine quantitative and qualitative factors at European, national, institutional and individual levels.

The investigations and analyses for COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education included the following types of activity:

- analysis of key documentation and reports,
- database analysis,
- surveys of actors and beneficiaries,
- postal surveys,
- thematic workshops,
- analysis and synthesis.

9.1.4.1 Analysis of Key Documentation and Reports

In order to obtain an overview of the state of activities carried out, key documents and reports were collected and analysed. They provided a global overview and background information on the debates at European and national levels about major strengths and weaknesses, developing issues, etc.. The analysis of the documentation contributed to constructing appropriate survey tools.

9.1.4.2 Database Analysis

The quantitative analysis was carried out using two types of data:

- the database developed by the SOCRATES -YOUTH Technical Assistance Office;
- data supplied by the SOCRATES National Agencies following a request from the evaluation team and to a format provided.

The data held by the Technical Assistance Office refer to the *centralised actions*, i.e. those for which the application procedures and administration are dealt with by the Technical Assistance Office and the Commission. These actions provide funding for projects, Transnational Cooperation Projects, developed and implemented by partnerships of institutions usually in three or more countries responding to specific objectives and funding lines for each action. The data entered into the database are taken from applications made for funding support and therefore describe the intentions of the project partnerships. No information has been entered into the database from the final reports sent in by projects at the end of a funding period. They are:

- COMENIUS 2 and 3.1;
- LINGUA A and D;
- Open and Distance Learning
- Adult Education

The data provide a quantitative description of each of the above actions:

- Number of projects (new and renewed) by year and for the whole period;
- Global budgets requested and approved;
- The countries and institutions forming the partnerships;

- Target groups, sectors and institutions;
- Thematic areas investigated.

Data about the *decentralised actions* are compiled and submitted by the SOCRATES National Agencies in each participating country. They are:

- COMENIUS 1 and 3.2
- LINGUA B, C and E

The specific evaluation about COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E partnerships carried out by Deloitte and Touche collected and analysed data for those two actions. This global evaluation refers to their analysis.

COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B provide grants for teachers and other education staff to participate in training courses in another participating country. LINGUA C provides grants for recently qualified future teachers to spend from 3 to 8 months as an assistant in an educational institution in another participating country. Information about participation in these actions was requested from the National Agencies covering:

- applications, grants approved and grants taken up (by year and gender);
- country of destination
- home institution (COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B)
- average grant and duration of the course/assistantship
- applications from schools for LINGUA C assistants.

It did not prove possible to obtain the necessary data from all the National Agencies by the time the final version of the tables were produced (20.10.2000). The tables therefore present incomplete quantitative data.

9.1.4.3 Surveys of Actors and Beneficiaries

Three types of surveys were carried out:

- Postal surveys using questionnaires addressed to project coordinators of Transnational Cooperation Projects for Actions COMENIUS 2 and 3.1, LINGUA A and D, OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION; teachers (for actions COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B as well as LINGUA C assistants.
- Interviews and questionnaires investigating the national perspective and of project coordinators.
- Interviews with project coordinators (see above Transnational Cooperation Projects).

(1) Postal surveys of project coordinators, teachers and LINGUA C assistants[1]

The postal surveys were designed and carried out targeting the following groups:

(a) Samples of project coordinators for COMENIUS 2 and 3.1; LINGUA A and D, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education. The sample covered over 40% of the total number of projects funded for each of the actions for the period 1995-1999. The questionnaires designed were specific to each action but included some common elements to allow for comparison. The survey aimed to collect qualitative information about:

- the coordinating institution,
- the partnerships,
- the administrative and financial procedures,
- the projects,
- the outcomes and results,
- dissemination and impact
- follow-up activity.

The data obtained contributed to the mapping of the institutions and populations concerned by the projects and therefore their potential impact. These are all centralised actions and so the sample was constructed from information available from the Technical Assistance Office (Compendia of Projects and database).

The questionnaires were posted at the end of February and a reminder sent at the beginning of April.

Table 9.1
Return Rate of Questionnaires – by Action

Action	Total number of projects funded 1995-1999	Number of questionnaires sent	In per cent of total number of projects funded	Number of questionnaires returned	Percentages of responses
COMENIUS 2	350	150	43	73	49
COMENIUS 3.1	355	169	48	72	43
LINGUA A	73	46	63	21	46
LINGUA D	86	38	44	19	50
ODL	166	74	45	33	45
AE	182	88	48	48	55
All Actions	1,212	565	47	266	47

(b) Samples of teachers who had received grants to participate in European training courses funded under COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B. As no specific evaluation was commissioned to examine the impact of European training grants for teachers, the global evaluation team was asked to include a sample of teachers in the postal surveys. Questionnaires were

[1] It should be noted that in the analysis of the questionnaires, percentages are used, in some instances, to give an idea of size, participation, opinion, etc. They indicate proportions of the sample. The TAO database provides the quantitative data but it refers to project intentions only. The questionnaires were filled in by coordinators who have either completed a project or are in the process of doing so. The latter information is therefore more oriented to outcomes.

developed for each of these actions with specific and common questions. They were sent to 1000 beneficiaries for each action and posted during the second half of March. As they are decentralised, some of the names and addresses were collected from the SOCLINK database and others, where necessary, directly from the National Agencies. Altogether 433 beneficaries of COMENIUS 3.2 (42%) and 323 of LINGUA B (31%) completed and returned the questionnaire

The survey, which aimed to better understand the implementation and impact of these two actions, was designed to collect qualitative information about:

- the profile of the beneficiaries,
- the administrative and financial aspects,
- the courses followed,
- the follow-up,
- the teachers' assessment of the outcomes and impact.

(c) A sample of Lingua C assistants which was composed of all the beneficiaries of grants for the academic year 1998-1999 (636 individuals) for whom addresses were available received a questionnaire designed to investigate the experience of LINGUA C assistants. 100 questionnaires were all sent to the Italian National Agency for distribution. The first mailing was completed by mid-March. A reminder was sent to all the individuals for whom an address was available and who had not responded by mid-May. A total of 325 questionnaires had been returned by mid-June, giving a response rate of 44 per cent (see Table 9.1).

The questionnaire shared some common areas of investigation with the Erasmus student questionnaires as well as other areas specific to this action. The questionnaires aimed to collect data about:

- the profile of the beneficiaries
- the preparation and documentation prior to the assistantship
- the administrative and financial aspects,
- the experience of the assistantship (education institution, tasks, etc.)
- the assistant's assessment of the experience.

(2) Interviews and questionnaires investigating the national perspective

The interviews and questionnaires exploring the national perspective to the investigation are fully described in Chapter 15 of this report: *The Implementation of SOCRATES at the National Level.* They were designed to include questions specific to the COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education actions which were addressed to key actors in each country. The aim was to contribute a national point of view on the design, implementation, management and impact of the actions in each country. The interviews were carried out in March and April 2000. The questionnaires were posted at the end of February and a reminder sent by fax and e-mail at the end of March.

(3) Interviews with project coordinators

Interviews were also conducted with 41 project coordinators in March and April. The sample of projects covered all the centralised actions in 12 of the participating countries. An interview guideline was developed by the evaluation team and aimed to assess the contribution of the SOCRATES programme to the implementation of the projects and the achievement of its objectives. These interviews were not conducted as project evaluations, i.e. they did not seek to analyse whether or not the project had achieved its objectives, in what way and to what effect, but were part of the programme evaluation.

9.1.4.4 Thematic Workshops

National and transnational workshops were organised in conjunction with the *European Forum on Education Management* and its national associations. The aim of the workshops was to bring together groups of people who were involved in the implementation of the actions of the SOCRATES programme (COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education) in different countries in order to discuss a range of issues concerning the impact of the programme on education systems.

National Workshops were organised in Ireland and the Netherlands. The Dutch workshop, organised by the Dutch Forum on Educational Management, took place on 31 March 2000 and brought together some 15 participants who were head teachers of schools, teacher coordinators for internationalisation, the Dutch SOCRATES National Agency, and representatives of the Association of European Teachers, the Dutch Association of School Managers and the European Secondary Heads Association.

The Workshop in Ireland was organised by the Society for Management in Education in Ireland and took place on 24 June 2000. It brought together 15 participants who were representatives of higher education institutions involved in the actions of SOCRATES under consideration, school inspectors, organisations developing SOCRATES projects such as schools (both secondary and primary and also special needs education), non-profit associations, the vocational education and training and the adult education sectors.

A Transnational Workshop for 56 participants was organised by the EIESP in France (Marly-le-Roi) on 29/30 May 2000. It brought together actors in the SOCRATES programme from 13 of the eligible countries and focused on the COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education actions. The 56 participants included:

- ministry staff from eligible countries involved in the implementation of SOCRATES in their country and regional officers,
- SOCRATES National Agency staff,
- project coordinators of one or several projects or from several programmes,
- schools, further education and adult education institutions, universities, associations, local authorities, the SOCRATES-Youth Technical Assistance Office and the Directorate General Education and Culture

- members of the SOCRATES global evaluation team
- representatives of the specific evaluations

The workshop included the French national workshop in the form of a case-study group of host institutions of LINGUA C assistants in France and French-speaking Belgium. It was organised in conjunction with the *European Forum on Education Administration* and the *Association Française des Administrateurs d'Education.* The *European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education* and the *European Forum for Vocational Education and Training* were also present.

The aim of the workshop was to make a qualitative contribution to the overall evaluation by bringing together a group of people who had been involved in the implementation of the actions of the SOCRATES programme in different countries in order to discuss a range of issues concerning the impact of the programme on education systems. The workshop provided qualitative analysis of the dissemination and transfer of SOCRATES outcomes and results and the thematic working group guidelines were based on the first stages of the analysis of the interviews and postal surveys.

9.2 The Overall Issues – COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education

The section is divided into the following sub-headings:

- Policy and Strategy
- Key elements in providing an identity
- Outcomes and Dissemination
- Evaluation
- Sustainability

It presents overall issues common to all or some of the actions under consideration. It takes into account the full range of evaluation activities and sets the scene for the following chapters, which present the analysis for each action. This exploration of issues draws considerably on the debates of the Transnational Evaluation Workshop, with supporting material from the surveys.

9.2.1 Policy and Strategy

9.2.1.1 Introduction

This section, which examines the overall issues, is drawn from the responses, developed in the body of the text, of the actors participating in the evaluation, whether by interview, questionnaire return or workshop for the actions analysed in this section of the report (COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education)[2]. At the outset, it should be clearly stated that, whatever the difficulties articulated, the general run of responses to SOCRATES components under consideration is positive.

Although the main emphasis of the SOCRATES 1 global evaluation is to concentrate on issues that are integral to and related to the implementation of the SOCRATES Programme, there is a broader and deeper context which helps define SOCRATES and the evaluation. The principal aspects of that context worth keeping in mind (and constantly referred to by the actors) are:

- The Programme is a "tool" of other, wider policies, aims and values of the Commission and the Member States with which it must be compatible. SOCRATES does not stand alone.

- The question is frequently put as to whether SOCRATES is more than the sum of its parts, although some parts (such as ERASMUS and LINGUA) existed before the whole?

- Does it matter whether the whole is greater than the sum of the parts? Do we even need to know? It is implied by many actors, in the evaluation, that *the European Dimension*

[2] N.B. In this section, all references to SOCRATES refer to COMENIUS, LINGUA, Open and Distance Learning and Adult Education.

may be like apple pie and motherhood, i.e. the term projects a metaphor and a "feel", but we have little idea of what it really is. Thus, we can ask the question, do we need the recipe for apple pie or do we just like it?

Policy

The Commission has, presumably, a set of policy aims in establishing its education programmes to which the varying educational objectives of the eligible countries have contributed. However, differing emphases from Member States have perhaps led the Commission to concentrate on implementation and mechanisms, making things happen, rather than defining very specific policy objectives.

This leaves the question: *should there be an overarching policy objective?* In the same way that the PETRA programme used ‘exchange’ as a means to an end, that of raising the quality of vocational education and training in Member States, does SOCRATES need an overarching policy objective?

But for many actors in the Programme it has become futile to attempt to fully understand or look for the cohesive elements in those policy aims. SOCRATES may succeed in policy terms just because it possible for different constituencies and levels to reinterpret policy in their own terms, thus: Brussels, Member States, schools, departments, individual teachers. Accommodating differentiation and diversity becomes a virtue with explicit means but implicit ends.

If "policy" issues are shifted for definition to more local levels then the umbrella Programme is seen by some participants to work best (concept/funding/structure/regulations) as an adjunct or a supplement in supporting a local institutional strategy. The institution may be a school or locality or region or Member State, but essentially ‘the institution’ needs to have its own policy and strategy to which the SOCRATES package (from whatever component) acts as a resource supplement (possibly no more than 10%). From this point of view, the "additionality" of European programmes is recognised as essential to their success. It is not the programme itself that will fundamentally change the system, but it may support a change strategy.

The dilemma remains, from the experience of the actors, as to whether policy and strategy initiatives originate from SOCRATES as a concept/programme or from ‘the local institution’. *In metaphorical terms, are a thousand flowers blooming with the seeds sewn from Brussels or are the seeds sewn locally, supplemented by a dose of fertiliser from Brussels?* Either way, the human and financial resource is seen as "added-value" from Brussels but dominant locally. The general view is that success depends on the presence and clarity of local policy and the strength of commitment to a strategy of implementation.

Strategies for Change and Managing Change

In implementing SOCRATES at all levels, the question is continually raised as to why we want change and if so of what kind?. Is it to be proactive towards or to respond to:

- the social and economic context?
- globalisation?
- the labour market(s)?
- new technology?
- mobility of the workforce?
- European integration?
- other?

A major discussion item for the evaluation actors is how far a SOCRATES project approach is, in any way, a special example of managing change. Managing change has the same generic features *(unfreeze, change, refreeze - policy, strategy, implementation, sustainability)* whether it is for the European Dimension or curriculum development, a schools merger or a marketing unit. The problems of implementation, therefore, are very much those of general management, done well or badly.

The local context may define not only policy and strategy but the mechanisms for change with different foci for the change agent which may be appropriately: teacher, school manager, school or schools, region or Member State, at transnational level. In some examples provided, the change "agent" is the actual experience of mobility for pupils, in others, it is the teachers. In the latter cases, the focus may be on teacher mobility through European training courses or dissemination of teaching courses, materials, etc. Another strand of thought emphasises the important role of institutional management.

An example of a simple well managed local implementation strategy is given by one interviewee for teacher training. Three individual teachers (of French, German and Spanish) separately undertook European teacher training courses but, on return to the home institution, formed a task group to bring about change in the approach to language teaching.

9.2.2 Key Elements in Providing an Identity for SOCRATES

The European Dimension

Broadly, the European Dimension is perceived by the actors as a ‘good thing’, but it can be and is defined differently by different participants and constituencies within the SOCRATES Programme. One might sum up the broad view of those present in the following way: *the definition of the European dimension and discussion about it should not be at too abstract a level***.** Most interviewees feel that they know what it is in practice and in context but would hesitate to apply an umbrella label. *Everyone can give examples but in the end the European*

Dimension is best defined by series of small steps taken within specific projects. The very fact of working with people from other countries is considered to provide added-value.

The following points are cited as examples of the European dimension. There is no notable divergence in the responses given during workshops, interviews and in replying to the postal survey of project coordinators.

- A point of view expressed which supports the idea of small, concrete steps, is that, in the end, when coordinators receive funds from the Commission, they do not have an abstract notion of a European dimension. The latter would be quite secondary to carrying out the planned activity.

- Being able to communicate in a second language, frequently English. This raises a series of issues about how far the aims of SOCRATES are being achieved in terms of the less widely spoken/taught languages. For some LINGUA E exchanges, in order to be able to envisage partnerships with countries whose languages are not taught in the partner institutions, English (or French) may be used as a vehicle of communication and therefore is seen to support a practical application of the European dimension. (A first small step …)

- It is suggested that if one accepts the importance of English as a vehicle for the European dimension, then learning a second foreign language becomes even more important.

- However, Europe is not only about learning a second language, there is also the intercultural dimension and learning about other countries. Actors consider it very important for pupils and students to develop a strong notion of living in a multicultural society. In this way, the notion of 'Europe' almost takes on a moral value.

- Linked is the issue of the multiculturality of contemporary Europe. At one level, SOCRATES actions set out to raise awareness in education in the participating countries of other European languages and cultures. At another, they raise, directly or indirectly, the issue of the minority and immigrant cultures in Society

- For some people, the most important aspect is the fact that SOCRATES provides the structure and support which allow them to work with people from other countries. This process may be the most significant aspect of the European dimension. For others, the end-product remains essential and some actors feel that, for pupils and students, the existence of an end-product is the only way to identify that something worthwhile has taken place and that other pupils elsewhere are working on the same project. (This is very important in COMENIUS I partnerships where pupils do not travel).

An issue here is whether the step by step mechanisms set up to achieve the implicit aims and objectives contained in the SOCRATES programme run the risk of the mechanism becoming an end in itself? That is, it becomes a pleasant activity independent of predetermined goals.

The European dimension[3]

Key actors in several countries mentioned the importance of COMENIUS projects and partnerships in introducing or encouraging the development of a "European dimension" in schools, as for example in France and Belgium. In Greece, interviewees considered it important to introduce a European dimension early in order to cultivate the idea of European citizenship. This idea was echoed in the Romanian interviews; they felt that one aspect of the impact on pupils/students was that they were being educated in "*a spirit of European values*". For Austrian actors, COMENIUS enabled them to establish a European dimension in a broad range of schools so that it would not be limited to an élite. This was backed up by the fact that it was estimated that 13% of all school were involved in SOCRATES. Finnish colleagues also considered COMENIUS a good way to promote a European dimension. In the Czech Republic, the understanding of and positive attitudes towards a European dimension were assisted by a successful project, "*How to teach the European dimension*". An Irish interviewee nevertheless pointed out that, despite the high level of motivation of pupils gained through linking up with pupils in other countries, there was a gap between the perception of mainstream work and the European dimension. The interviewee went on to say "*it's teaching whatever subject one is teaching from a perspective that is not only national but is European as well*". This also reflects the national curriculum reforms in Norway in 1997 which prioritised internationalisation in education and, in this case, COMENIUS was a way of developing teaching and learning modules to support such a priority.

Mobility

Two major sets of issues arise:

The first set raised is one which has grown in importance as European education and training programmes become increasingly established as permanent fixtures. What is the critical mass of participation necessary to achieve SOCRATES policy objectives? Is it feasible to reach such a critical mass via programmes such as SOCRATES? If so, who should be the main target group: teachers or pupils/students?

Secondly, there has never been substantial research or longitudinal studies on the types of mobility undertaken with COMENIUS and LINGUA support from the point of view of the effect it has on the participant. It is suggested that investigation could be undertaken (perhaps in collaboration with the Leonardo da Vinci programme) to enlighten the organisers of mobility on its effects and effectiveness depending on the age of the participants, their roles and functions, the circumstances (both of the individual and the mobility).

[3] We have included inserts on a range of themes and preoccupations drawn from the interviews with, and questionnaire returns from, key actors in the participating countries. They are intended to be illustrative and provide interesting examples. They do not reflect official statements and are not intended as examples of national policies, nor are the lists of countries exclusive.

The case is frequently made that there should be continuing support or even increased support for the types of mobility already organised. As already discussed, for schools (including the post-compulsory technical and vocational schools/colleges beneficiaries, for example, of LINGUA E), mobility is seen as an interesting way of improving understanding of interculturality and the European dimension. The process of learning to communicate is an important aspect of exchanges and staying with a host family is seen as giving pupils a good opportunity to learn about the culture and country. Effectiveness in the short term may be observed in the classroom. A broader research perspective would be useful.

Indicative of the lack of hard evidence is the opposite point of view presented which suggests that school trips do not broaden horizons. In the case of LINGUA E exchanges, which allow for a two week stay in the partner country, it may be too short for students to learn anything of the other culture. The illuminative experience of the moment, however positive, has to be balanced against the longer term effect.

There is a further issue as to whether programmes should concentrate on teacher or pupil mobility as a priority. It is suggested that teacher mobility may be more cost-effective in terms of the impact it creates. Advantages for teachers are seen as the opportunity to compare educational systems. Mobility through a partnership is felt to be motivating for participants and stimulates pupils' imagination. Whether or not the impact will be broader than on the number of individuals mobile remains to be seen. Again, actors would like to see more research to back up or invalidate that hypothesis while recognising the difficulty of applying research methodology (with definable limits) to the scale of the European context.

A perceived advantage of mobility for pupils is that they may go to countries that they otherwise would not visit, hence an aspect, however brief, of opening up to new cultures. This, in turn, begs the question of language learning as exchanges between, for example, Norway and Crete may be facilitated if one accepts English as one of the vehicles of communication. One group suggested that the use of English for communication purposes was not necessarily a bad thing if it allowed for intercultural exchange*. This leads to a certain uneasiness between implementing the European dimension objective at the same time as encouraging and supporting the learning of the less widely used and lesser taught languages. The broad aims are generally acceptable to all, but the difficulty lies in the practical applications.*

Teacher Training

The educational aims addressed by the teacher training actions are preferably defined (by the actors) in terms of the *professional development* of the teacher rather than *training* as such. The type of training courses provided are seen more as awareness-raising or providing information. It was felt that one important advantage provided by LINGUA A and COMENIUS 3.1 projects was the comparative approach which enabled partnerships to explore the questions: *how do they do it and why do they do it differently? And what can we learn*? It would also be useful to define what we understand by the term 'training' in the context of SOCRATES.

For teachers' professional development, the idea of a European dimension is defined differently from the institutional context. It is defined by comparative method, more a question of assonances and dissonances within the European domain or the areas of convergence and divergence (what is different and how can we learn from it?). It is pointed out that this approach, developing through SOCRATES, is based on the philosophy of widening the concept of professional development by providing a range of cultures and people. From a content point of view, the European Dimension is seen as part of overall professional development and culture, i.e. to a certain extent it becomes part of the whole value system. As such, it is both an outcome and a methodology.

Some actors felt it important to moderate this point by pointing out that "European" is not "international" or 'global', therefore the European Dimension is either only partial or regional.

At whatever level, the added-value is the provision of a new learning environment for teachers, including language and management skills, as well as an opportunity to familiarise themselves with different pedagogic methodologies. Under LINGUA B, the training grants target language teachers. Some actors suggest that, in their experience, in order to strengthen the process of developing a European dimension in a school and to contribute to the embedding of European projects in the school's curriculum, it may be important to consider how to also offer this opportunity to the non-language specialists. Not being able to communicate in a second language is increasingly felt to be a source of exclusion.

The actors highlighted the importance of the North-South dialogue and also the developing East-West one. The opportunity provided by SOCRATES of examining teacher professional development in a context that allows the perspective of one's own geographical location in parallel to those of the partners.

The issue of the target group for courses is frequently raised. Courses offered under SOCRATES I tend to mainly target teachers. The importance of bringing in people who hold other functions within the school community was often highlighted. There is also a debate about the age-groups that should be a priority for funding, with some participants regretting that grants do not focus sufficiently on young teachers starting out in their career, especially in language teaching. One suggestion is that all young teachers should have the opportunity of following a European training course with a grant. SOCRATES I provided for in-service training provision but not for pre-service. While there is a clear need to distinguish between the two, there is a debate on whether or not the main target should be in-service or initial teacher training. It is thought that SOCRATES II will provide greater opportunity for developing a continuum in teachers' professional development from initial, through induction to in-service training.

A major issue is whether or not the actions of SOCRATES under consideration can ever address a large enough number of teachers to make an impact on education systems. The actors point out that if SOCRATES funding is seen as resources for change, then in order for the change to be effective, up to 10 times that funding support will be required from the home institution (region, state, etc.). The benefit depends on the implementation strategy adopted

locally, which needs to be consistent and long term. Formulating strategy will need to include a reflection on the types of obstacles to be overcome if larger numbers of teachers are to benefit from SOCRATES. Obstacles mentioned in questionnaires and interviews are: non replacement of teachers, general financial issues, the need for recognition in career or qualification terms, the need for recognition by financial reward or time allowance.

The need for recognition is one of the most frequent issues raised. Given the range of approaches to teachers' professional development in the different countries, there is not one type of recognition or acknowledgement that would be appropriate everywhere. In line with other current initiatives linked to vocational/professional qualifications, a suggestion is to examine the feasibility of a portfolio of competences. This would have the advantage of avoiding the trap of judging the training just on the reputation of the organising institution or on the "quality" of the input. It would focus on the teacher. Another strand of thought suggests developing approaches to "accompanied self-evaluation", i.e. where, for example, a teacher training in the home country could meet with the teachers after they had participated in courses to analyse with them how the course would have an influence on their professional practice.

It can be very difficult for a teacher to follow-up his/her European activity in the school if there is no institutional support. One suggestion is to encourage more than one teacher from a school to follow European training courses in order to have several people interested in developing a European input in a school's projects.

The LINGUA C Case-study

What has come to be called the " LINGUA assistant" has been a clear success as a specific action contributing to the European dimension. Both the discussion of LINGUA C in the international workshop and the interviews carried out at national level agree that during SOCRATES I this was a very successful pilot action which should now be further developed in terms of numbers of assistants supported and schools involved. The only real criticism is that there are not enough assistants, not enough budget! The problem is seen as how to move from a successful pilot arrangement affecting the initiated few, to a larger, broader-based action for which substantial marketing will be necessary in order to explain the differences between the traditional language assistant and the LINGUA assistant. LINGUA makes schools enthusiastic, but very few are involved – just over 600 in 1999.

The following are among the points raised on the presence of LINGUA assistants in schools:

- The presence of an assistant in an educational institution is not always the result of having a European project or even a broader-based school project.
- For many actors the main aim of having an assistant LINGUA C is to allow the school to develop an approach to education that includes a notion of European citizenship.

Finally, some questions remain:

- Is it possible to envisage the development and sustainability of this type of action without having access to at least a minimum of complementary resources, such as a number of extra hours allotted to the school?

- Is it possible to abolish the partitions between the different actions of the SOCRATES programme (e.g. the National Agencies, Brussels, the different actions such as Lingua, COMENIUS, and ARION) in order to be able to take a more coherent approach?

9.2.3 Outcomes and Dissemination

General Comments

Dissemination is frequently held to be a weak aspect of the programme. The fundamental question asked by the actors is: do we need it? Followed by further interrogation:

- Is it the process or the product which interests us? the medium or the message?
- Is the process a product in itself?
- Who are we disseminating to? For OECD, it is senior policy makers. Where is the SOCRATES audience?

There is concern about the general lack of dissemination strategies at EU, national and regional levels. More significantly, the existence of any motivation to structure dissemination is raised. Only when a local or regional area sets up a unit or a resource centre is there any real attempt at ensuring that the benefits of project are widely disseminated and stand a chance of building an impact on schools. It is suggested that Brussels could and should do more to provide resources and guidance to Member States to set up the necessary structures.

There is general dissatisfaction with the lack of useful recognition by national authorities and the Commission. Projects want to have feedback after sending in reports. They want recognition that what they are doing meets with the approval of others. This may be in terms of professional recognition, of their home institution, the local situation, etc. but equally of those responsible for the programme. There is a need for promoters to feel that they are indeed contributing to the programme's objectives but, equally, that the outcomes of their projects have been assessed by professionals, not just by administrators.

The Commission too often appears to be only interested in how the money is spent. Participants in projects accept that they have to be accountable for public funds spent, but the Commission should also be accountable for decisions made. Recognition that an activity has taken place, that something has "happened", also contributes to the credibility of a project which may otherwise just be seen as a minor incident in the life of the institution.

Which Outcomes?

A debate which is common to the different strands concerns whether one is aiming at a process or a product. In general, there is a high level of agreement that dissemination will be

targeting several audiences which lay between the general public and fellow practitioners. Depending on the exact project or activity, dissemination may be about any, some, or all of the following:

- practice,
- method,
- materials,
- processes,
- curricula.

A much raised issue is that the process is frequently very much more important than the (hypothetical) product. The effect on individual pupils and teachers of taking part in a transnational project is in itself highly beneficial, even when the end-product is incomplete or not of high quality. The educational process does not fit into predictable outcomes. The dissemination model used needs to differentiate between process and product. It is suggested that dissemination within the school or among schools should probably concentrate on the process aspects.

Dissemination Strategies

It is felt that the Commission is more interested in the product than the process, although it is not always easy to bring a project to a neat, definable conclusion as desired by any bureaucracy (whether European or national). Given the quality of some of the end-products, whether due to lack of time, resources or design, etc., it is not always advisable to encourage the dissemination of every outcome. At the same time, a range of products has been produced and piloted under SOCRATES funding and it is regretted that the means of accessing them or at least obtaining information more easily is not more systematic.

Outcomes are dependent on the foci (a mix of location and component). While a thousand flowers bloom, the product for dissemination and the means of dissemination will vary according to project. Dissemination of successful *processes* is often seen to take place at the local level. Where there is a *product*, participants considered that it should be assessed and appropriately disseminated at either regional or national level. Outcomes of *transnational* projects are seen to be the responsibility of the Commission. Products require targeting. Different approaches are required at micro and macro levels: a half page; a text; a model, a workshop etc..

The debate is a combination of appropriate audiences for dissemination, but also the resources and the support structures for doing it. There may be a high level of confusion as to real and potential audiences for dissemination.

Having examined issues of "to whom" and "how", "with what", the issue of impact on curricula and systems remains. In terms of the projects and partnerships coordinated by schools or designed with schools as target groups, a major question is how well have the products of all this transnational activity been embedded in the curriculum ? Does it remain

an interesting but disposable quantity, organised outside school time by volunteers? *Or is there a real impact on the curriculum, bringing about sustainable change? Perhaps this is the most important performance indicator of all.*

Obstacles to be overcome

Resources and procedures are a major concern. The point is strongly made that 1% of the agricultural budget would cover the SOCRATES and Leonardo programmes. But the view is also expressed that the existing SOCRATES budget is quite adequate for transnational monitoring and dissemination, but that the Commission approach is regrettably *ad hoc*. This leads to the paradox of excessive bureaucracy on the one hand and lack of clarity and structure on the other.

Concrete obstacles facing project partners are frequently presented. Over the last few years, an increasing number of projects have used web sites as a vehicle for disseminating information about their initiatives, but at the end of the funding period there is the question of how to sustain the site, ensure that it continues to evolve and therefore of how to fund it.

Dissemination should be a vehicle for sustainability and indeed for conceptual and practical clarity as, for example, in defining the European dimension. It was felt that generally, and in particular at Commission level, there was a lack of focus.

9.2.4 Evaluation

About evaluation, the actors classically ask the questions: *Why? What? How*? But also: *When?* In other words, why is this evaluation being carried out now, why not last year or next year? And what are the implications and consequences of that timing? This section draws on the discussions of the Transnational Workshop in which participants were invited to concentrate on *evaluation* defined as a form of quality assessment which allows us to measure and assess (quantitatively and qualitatively) the outcomes and products (tangible and intangible) which derive from the objectives. This is therefore the focus of the section.

A question frequently raised concerns the need to develop criteria for evaluating products and outcomes. Though discussions were positive in tone and outcome, the question posed was clearly: *is evaluation taken seriously?* Does the Commission fail in this area to ensure that continuous monitoring and evaluation are carried out through the lifetime of a project? These are questions raised; but not fully resolved.

In the responses, differentiation is made between Programme and project evaluation on the one hand and between summative (as in the final report process) and formative and ongoing project evaluation.

For some participants, the fact that the section on evaluation usually appears at the end of the application form, when the applicant is already exhausted because he has had to answer

a long list of questions, is indicative of a priority level. It is suggested that the Commission has a responsibility when it comes to evaluation and part of that responsibility could be developing an evaluation guide.

There are two main concerns to be considered in relation to evaluation. One is to describe and identify what is happening within a given project and to suggest how the work can be done better or more effectively. It is pointed out that this is done in most cases at an informal level by everyone/all projects and the discussion focuses on the issue of how to achieve a more systematic approach. The assumption is that a more systematic approach would improve the contribution of evaluation to the work of the project. The claim is that, if done well, evaluation is not a distraction but a positive component of the work and an added-value component. The second concern with evaluation is with assessing/judging the quality of the products produced by a project. This is more of a problem or concern for SOCRATES as a Programme.

Another concern addressed is that of the different "levels" of evaluation. This is raised in a number of ways and includes the people involved in the work/course, the learners/pupils, the school, the teachers, the partnership. It also includes "levels" (as in audience) and whether this includes all the potential levels of e.g. institution, local associations/government, national associations/government and European associations/government.

Actors felt that this range of approaches could usefully contribute to a "*collective memory*" of the SOCRATES programme. Evaluation of a project should also serve to advise future projects, in part to avoid reinventing the wheel.

9.2.5 Sustainability and Impact

Most projects, whether implemented within the SOCRATES context or others, have difficulty in sustaining the hoped for outcomes, whether because of shortages in time and resources or a shortfall in political will. Actors wonder how far the SOCRATES components are embedded in the central activities of schools, universities, etc. In order to survive, concerning the inevitable ending of the programmes and central funding, the same question can, of course, be asked of regions or even Member-States.

This comes back to attaining a ‘critical mass’ (or not) and ’mainstreaming’ (or not) of outcomes. Is SOCRATES, in the end, about funding an activity which is complementary or supplementary to mainstream activities in the education systems? Or is it about contributing to fundamental change? In the latter case, ‘mainstreaming’ of the best or the most appropriate outcomes is important. The two approaches are obviously not seen to be in opposition but the first may be the easier to implement in the short term. The second requires greater political will, a more organised strategy and a high level of coordination and cooperation among actors at the different levels. It is felt that it is not the Programme itself that will fundamentally change the system, but it may support a change strategy.

A lack of institutional memory in the Commission's structures, due to staff movements, is a suggested cause of what is perceived as a repeated reinventing the wheel. For the moment, the quality and quantity of curricular change remain unmeasured.

There seem to be pockets of very positive outcomes with a definable impact. An example was discussed of a case where a SOCRATES project in Norway led directly to a major overhaul of a specific curriculum area. Much however still depends on the efforts of individuals who overcome heavy bureaucratic problems and even, sometimes, opposition from within the school community. Actors express the view that major curriculum development has not taken place yet as a result of SOCRATES.

The iterative process between "out there" and "down here" can be assisted by local recognition. This may be in terms of financial reward and time allowances for the school (see above the section on LINGUA C). It may also be in terms of enhancing the teacher's curriculum vitae or recognition in career terms (see above the section on teacher training). For the individual teacher undertaking a European training course, it may be in terms of course and certification credits or modular contributions towards a postgraduate qualification. It is very clear that it is not just money which will help maintain motivation. The Commission could help by encouraging ‘recognition’, given that Member States have widely varying practices.

The overall response emerging from the actors is one of adaptation and evolution over a period. It is felt that obstacles can be best overcome locally with a bottom-up approach. Progress and the dissemination of improvement are a long term business, but that institutional embedding has to be managed locally. However, local embedding is undoubtedly helped by the existence of the "big idea" out there.

10. COMENIUS

By Jean Gordon and Stéphanie Caillé

10.1 Introduction

The COMENIUS action marks a cross-roads in European involvement in education in the EU Member States and associated EFTA/EEA countries. It was established as part of SOCRATES by the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council in February 1995 and presents the first real incursion of the European Commission into funding activities in schools (except for earlier transition from school to work programmes, PETRA, and a pilot project schools' partnerships[1]). The funded activities are firmly rooted in the education sector and thus make a significant contribution to issues hitherto considered to be the sole responsibility and prerogative of national governments, while remaining within the defined framework of subsidiarity e.g. COMENIUS supports curriculum development but it cannot influence whether or not the outcomes will be integrated into national programmes.

COMENIUS was well summarised on the web page of DG XXII in 1999 in the following way: it "seeks to enrich and complement the education systems of the participating countries, helping those learning and teaching in schools to enhance their sense of belonging to a broader and outward-looking European community - a community characterised by diverse tradition, culture and regional identity, but rooted nevertheless in a common history of European development."

The COMENIUS chapter within SOCRATES I was divided into 3 main actions[2]:

- Action 1: School partnerships/European Education Projects (EEPs)
- Action 2: Education of the children of migrant workers, occupational travellers, travellers and Gypsies; intercultural education
- Action 3: In-service training for educational staff
  - Action 3.1: European In-service Training Projects
  - Action 3.2: Grants for individual participants in European in-service training courses and activities

This chapter begins with a brief presentation of the objectives and target populations of COMENIUS. The following section presents the criteria against which the evaluation has been carried out. The next section contains an analysis of each COMENIUS action which

[1] The Pilot Action for Multilateral Schools Partnerships ran from 1992 to 1995 (three school years). It funded 40 partnerships bringing together a total of 160 schools in the then 12 EU Member-States. Each partnership was funded for three years and brought together schools from three countries.

[2] Though the *Guidelines for Applicants* could undergo some modification from one year to the next, we have used the 1998 version for all general descriptions, as this year came half way through the programme once it was well underway but not yet into the transition period to SOCRATES II.

draws on the data collection activities undertaken and the quantitative data available. The description of each action is based on information provided in the *Guidelines for Applicants* and includes the purpose of the action, the target audience, the main activity, whether it was a centralised or decentralised procedure, and the "size" of the activity. The final section of the chapter is a summary of the main conclusions for all the COMENIUS actions.

10.1.1 The objectives of COMENIUS

The objective of the COMENIUS action within SOCRATES is to promote cooperation in the field of school education at all levels (i.e. pre-primary, primary, and secondary). To this end, it provides support for:

- European Education projects within multilateral school partnerships;
- Activities in the field of intercultural education;
- Transnational in-service training for teachers and other education staff.

10.1.2 The target audiences for COMENIUS

The target audience is very broad. It covers all types of schools (from pre-primary to upper secondary, including technical and vocational) but also institutions responsible for in-service teacher training, school managers and administrators, inspectors and all education staff involved in activities to improve the quality of provision and the associations of teachers and parents.

It is also impressively extensive with "69 million young people enrolled in 320,000 schools (35 million at secondary and 24 million at primary school levels); 10 million children attending pre-primary classes and over 4 million teachers in the school sector as a whole" (1999 DG XXII web page on COMENIUS). The implications of these few figures for future SOCRATES activity are an ample demonstration of the importance of evaluating this first COMENIUS programme within the dual perspective of sustainability and transferability of outcomes.

10.1.3 COMENIUS: Selected quantitative data

The COMENIUS action includes two centralised actions, COMENIUS 2 and 3.1 for which data are available from the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels. Data concerning the applications and project grants awarded are presented below in tables 10.1 and 10.2. For the four years for which data are available for the centralised actions, the demand for support for COMENIUS 2 dropped considerably between 1995 and 1996 and then started to increase slowly (see Table 10.1). The demand was satisfied in the first year for over 70 per cent of the applicants. This proportion decreased to just over a half the following year but has averaged 68 per cent for the whole period.

For COMENIUS 3.1, the demand in the first year was lower than for COMENIUS 2 , as it had a lower overall budget and just over 70 per cent of the demand could be satisfied. This figure rose the following year before decreasing in the next two years. It has averaged just over 70 per cent for the whole period.

Table 10.2 presents the COMENIUS budget from 1995 to 1999. As can be seen, COMENIUS 1 had by far the largest budget share of the overall action. For the five- year period, two-thirds of the budget was spent on schools partnerships. This share was much smaller during the first year of the programme but within a smaller overall budget. From 1996 to 1999 COMENIUS 2 had a variable share of the budget from 12 per cent in 1999, its lowest point, to 18 per cent in 1996 and 1997. Over the five-year period, this action spent about one fifth of the total budget. The budget share for in-service teacher training was the smallest, an overall 14 per cent with most of the budget being spent on the Transnational Cooperation Projects and about half of that amount on grants to teachers for European training courses.

The following table summarises the numbers of projects and/or beneficiaries for each action and the average grants allotted.

Table 10.3
COMENIUS Projects, Beneficiaries and Average Grants per Action (1995-1999)

COMENIUS	Total number of projects (Actions 1, 2 and 3.1)	Average annual grant per project (Euro)	Number of beneficiaries (Action 3.2)	Average grant per trainee (Euro)
Action 1 (EEPs):	3700*	3000 (Coord. school) 2000 (Partner schools)	-	
Action 2:	350	46,540	-	
Action 3:				
Action 3.1	355	21,054	-	
Action 3.2		-	5,256**	1,315***

Sources: SOCRATES budget 1995-99 (ecu/euro) EUR 15; Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels; Data provided by the SOCRATES National Agencies.

* Source: Evaluation of European School Partnerships under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E, Deloitte and Touche Brussels, July 2000

** Figure estimated by the Commission.

*** Figure based on the survey responses.

As it can be seen from Table 10.3, the actions supported under COMENIUS varied considerably in terms of the number of projects supported and the annual grants. The schools partnerships in Action 1, which accounted for 68 per cent of the total budget, were very numerous but received small annual grants which were divided among the coordinator and the partners in a specified manner (€3000 for the partnership coordinator and €2000 to each partners). Actions 2 and 3.1 supported fewer projects but with higher grants. They were development projects which brought together a group of partners and the budget was shared according to the responsibilities and tasks of each, as defined by their work plan.

10.1.4 The evaluation criteria for COMENIUS

The overall evaluation criteria implemented were presented in Chapter 9. This section aims to specify the criteria for COMENIUS. The evaluation of the COMENIUS section within the SOCRATES I programme was designed to examine the relevance of the programme and how far it suited the expectations, interests and needs of the target populations, as well as the extent to which the actions were appropriate to covering the full scope of the objectives targeted. It focused on whether objectives have been met and whether the actions undertaken met the expectations of users.

Overall, the following criteria were examined:

(1) *The scope of institutions* involved in the different actions in order to estimate the impact of the programme in terms of size, penetration into education systems and breadth of coverage. Equal opportunities criteria have been taken into consideration where possible, including the notion of disadvantage and the participation of rural areas. The characteristics of the partnerships and how they worked in practice have been included. The data are taken from the postal surveys, the project interviews and the Technical Assistance Office data base. For COMENIUS 1, the data were drawn from the specific analysis carried out by Deloitte and Touche[3].

(2) "*Making a difference"*; that is the impact of the funded activity on the partner organisations and their environment and more broadly on the education systems in which they work. The evaluation sought to highlight the types and variety of impact on the different actors and where possible to draw out the elements of good practice which have created the impact. It focused on issues concerning both the content of the impact and dissemination of information about the funded activity. It also examined, through the postal surveys, interviews and workshops, the issue of quality assessment of outcomes and products with a view to making a broader impact on the systems involved.

(3) *Improved European awareness*: The approach to evaluating how the European dimension has been taken into consideration focused essentially on the qualitative data collected through interviews and the national and transnational workshops.

(4) *The integration of children of migrants, occupational travellers, travellers and Gypsies*. This issue raises important questions of equal opportunities in the classroom, the play ground and the local community, as well as more broadly within a European dimension. The surveys sought to examine how the project partnerships contributed to making a difference.

(5) *The overall management of the COMENIUS programme*: This issue was addressed through the interviews carried out at EU level and with the national government bodies and the COMENIUS agencies in each of the countries covered, as well as through the postal surveys and project interviews. It examines levels of satisfaction of beneficiaries of the

[3] See Deloitte and Touche, Evaluation of European School Partnerships under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA Action E, July 2000

programme and the extent to which it provided a support structure for their development work or alternatively hindered progress due to the administrative and financial procedures.

(6) *Dissemination*: The evaluation sought to investigate:

- the levels, types and audiences for dissemination;
- whether or not budgets were adequate to build in a sufficient level of dissemination;
- the contribution of national agencies and regional or local education structures and bodies to dissemination of results and outcomes;

(7) *Transferability and Sustainability*:

- Has the COMENIUS structure been able to take into account the potential for multiplier effects and how?
- Are the project funding periods long enough to reach a stage in development in which it becomes possible to examine multiplier effects and transferability?
- Do funded activities produce an outcome or result which is transferable? Do the mechanisms exist to assess this factor?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to take this aspect into account?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to build sustainability?
- Is it feasible? If so, under what conditions?

10.2 COMENIUS: Action by Action

This section is organised by action. Each of the actions supported under COMENIUS is presented in order to establish the context of the analysis. This is followed by the analysis of the data collected for this evaluation. For each action the specific data used are listed

10.2.1 COMENIUS 1

COMENIUS 1, *School Partnerships/European Education Projects (EEPs),* supported partnerships among schools to enable them to carry out an EEP. The purpose was to promote cooperation and the improvement and knowledge of cultures and languages in Europe and thus enhance the quality of the learning experience through greater emphasis on interdisciplinarity. It encouraged contacts among pupils and the mobility of teachers, thus promoting the European dimension of their education. The partnerships generally consisted of groups of schools from at least three of the participating countries which implemented together a project on one of the broad thematic areas listed in the *Guidelines for Applicants*. These included areas such as heritage and culture, raising awareness of European citizenship issues, local and regional identities and many more. Some EEPs focused on joint development of teaching and learning materials. There was a language aspect to the EEPs which were to be designed to provide some opportunity for the pupils and staff involved to develop their competence in one or more other European languages.

EEPs were funded for up to three years, subject to annual review, with an annual grant of up to €3000 per annum for the coordinating school and €2000 to each partner school. The partners could apply for a small grant of up to €1000 for a preparatory visit in order to lay the foundations of an EEP. In addition, COMENIUS 1 provided grants for short periods of two to four weeks for teacher and head teacher mobility within an existing EEP or for an in-company placement or short study visit.

It was a decentralised action and applications for support were made to the National Agencies.

Data Used for the Analysis

The analysis of COMENIUS 1 is based on the data collected by the specific evaluation carried out by Deloitte and Touche (see: *Evaluation of European School Partnership under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA Action E, July 2000*).

The Deloitte and Touche evaluation included in its data collection a postal questionnaire to 500 COMENIUS EEPs. Two-thirds of the sample were partners and one-third coordinators. They covered the period from 1995 to 1999. 157 usable responses were returned. In addition, in-depth interviews were carried out using interview guidelines with 11 EEPs (2 schools were visited for each).

Some reference is also made to data collected by the global evaluation team through the workshops, as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and

implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries.

The Analysis

The analysis of COMENIUS 1 summarises selected main points of information from the Deloitte and Touche evaluation report, including the conclusions. Readers are directed to their report for more detailed information.

The Schools Involved

According to the data collected by Deloitte and Touche from the Commission and the National Agencies, the total number of European Education Projects which received support from COMENIUS 1 was estimated at over 3700 for the period from 1995 to 1999. They note a gradual increase in the number of schools involved from about 1500 in 1995 to about 9000 by 1998. These figures for participation include both the new schools and the renewals for each year. The average partnership comprises three to four schools.

Among the schools participating, the data supplied by the Commission show that about one-third were lower secondary schools (35%), about one-third were primary schools (34%) and the rest were split between pre-primary (about 4%) and upper secondary (about 17%) and vocational schools (8%). Deloitte and Touche estimate that, overall, about 60 per cent are secondary schools. As vocational schools were frequently included with general secondary, it is difficult to assess their real participation. It would appear that vocational and technical schools are more inclined to apply for support through the Leonardo programme.

Regional promotion and management of the schools' projects[4]

In some of the participating countries the role of regional officers or "relay" staff has become increasingly important in ensuring a broad spread of beneficiaries. This was the case in France where the regional international relations officers of the Ministry of Education played an essential role in promoting the actions for schools in their area and providing technical assistance and guidance. Their direct knowledge of local schools allowed them to target information in order to attract participation from, for example, schools in rural or disadvantaged areas. The Austrian regions also worked with COMENIUS promoters in the regional school authorities who had contributed to the high level of participation of schools. The regional approach in Spain contributed substantially to dissemination and information. One French interviewee commented on the fact that the regional level is best for making use of outcomes and products.

[4] We have included inserts on a range of themes and preoccupations drawn from the interviews with, and questionnaire returns from, key actors in the participating countries. They are intended to be illustrative and provide interesting examples. They do not reflect official statements and are not intended as examples of national policies nor are the lists of countries exclusive.

The Partnerships

In the answers to the survey carried out by Deloitte and Touche, almost half of the participating schools claimed to have had some prior experience in bilateral or transnational cooperation, while the other half entered the COMENIUS partnership with no previous experience. For the first group it is likely that prior experience was under LINGUA, PETRA and the Youth for Europe programme or other bilateral or voluntary forms of collaboration. Some schools had participated in the earlier pilot initiative on Multilateral School Partnerships.

Almost three-quarters of the partners were identified through personal contacts and few used the database set up for searching for partners (Partbase). It is interesting to note that a third of the respondents to the Deloitte and Touche questionnaire found their partners through the Contact Seminars which were organised by the National Agencies. Their participation at these events was funded through the budgets for preparatory visits.

Budgets

It would appear from the data collected by Deloitte and Touche that, on average, partners received the exact grant specified in the *Guidelines*, i.e. €3000 per annum for the coordinating school and €2000 for each partner. However National Agencies had the flexibility to increase the level of the grant in order to meet special needs of projects involving either peripheral regions or concerning pupils with special needs. This flexibility was referred to in several cases in the national interviews carried out by the global evaluation team. In about half the partnerships investigated by Deloitte and Touche the schools attempted to secure additional sources of funding in order to be able to implement their project. Given the heavy work load of managing the COMENIUS grants and the need to find extra funding, Deloitte and Touche conclude that the funding aspects of the projects provided a major challenge.

The Projects

The content and organisation of the partnerships are described in detail in the Deloitte and Touche report. In summary, the five most popular themes selected by projects were:

- heritage and culture,
- raising awareness of European citizenship issues
- local and regional identities
- protection of the environment and related issues
- communication and the media

They are all very broad areas enabling school to establish and implement projects of a great variety.

In the surveys of key actors in the participating countries, some respondents considered that COMENIUS had a considerable impact as regards the introduction and use of new technologies, including in the field of continuing teacher training. This idea was voiced in the Czech Republic where it was felt that COMENIUS had had a positive effect on all the system, as it had encouraged developing the use of Information and Communication Technologies in schools. All schools now have access to Internet. In Greece too the Ministry of Education helped many schools to acquire PCs and faxes. An interviewee in the UK pointed out that ICT skills (such as e-mail, video-conferencing) improved because of the need to use them for project work.

Participation of schools in COMENIUS[5]

In Finland where the participation of schools in SOCRATES is considered to be a success (about 15% of all schools are involved), due to COMENIUS, primary schools have also entered the arena of international cooperation. Norwegian interviewees commented on the major success of COMENIUS in the lower and upper secondary sectors. This has also been the case in Ireland where there have been high levels of success in primary schools and in some regions of France in which the regional officers were able to promote the programme to small rural schools though the overall participation in France is not considered to be very high, unlike Austria where an overall participation rate of 13% is estimated. As one of the UK interviewees pointed out, reaching a high proportion of schools in a system in which there are 36,000 is a major issue.

Primary schools may be hindered in their participation by their legal status. In France, as they are not legal entities, they cannot receive funds. This has meant that the regional authorities have had to find alternative ways of managing the grants for COMENIUS partnerships. There were similar difficulties in Spain, as schools cannot open accounts to receive grants. Another factor, raised by German and Dutch interviewees, was the reluctance of some teachers to increase an already over-loaded timetable by taking on a European project. The Dutch colleague was interested in the issue of replacing teachers for participation in European projects, a measure which exists in Greece, where teachers have a reduced teaching load for European project work. A further issue raised in Italy was that teachers who do not speak English would probably not participate in schools' projects which the interviewee feared could exacerbate a North-South divide.

An interesting comment in Ireland linked the longer-term outcomes to the involvement of the inspectorate. A positive attitude to a schools project is more likely to ensure a longer lasting contribution to the quality of education. The inspectorate is essential to mainstreaming results. The issue of impact was also discussed in Portugal: the contacts work well, teachers and students are developing a better idea of Europe but will need continued support to have a longer term effects.

[5] See footnote 4.

Summary of Points

The following points are taken from the Deloitte and Touche evaluation report. They present their conclusions on the objectives reached for the COMENIUS 1 schools partnerships and the areas for which further attention is required.

They conclude that, overall, most of the objectives set for Comenius Action 1 were reached and in particular that European co-operation was promoted across thousands of schools establishing contacts among pupils in different countries, both directly and indirectly. Though mobility of pupils was not an objective, it took place to a considerable (and unexpected) extent. They highlight the fact that the European dimension in education was materialised in different ways, ranging from new forms of co-operation to knowledge about Europe and the European Union and its institutions and that the mobility of teachers was encouraged through the projects supported, thus contributing to the improvement of pedagogical skills and methodologies. In general, they considered that the transnational projects led to the improvement of the knowledge of the cultures and languages of the European countries and contributed to enhancing the skills necessary for the learning society, through increased emphasis on interdisciplinary project work and improving the quality of the learning experience. In addition, the decision to participate was in many cases a whole school decision with the backing of the subject departments and the senior management. They consider that COMENIUS 1 contributed to the raising of performance and achievement levels.

But they highlight some areas which they feel require further attention. The first of these is the integration of the project outcomes into the curriculum. Though they found that, in many cases, the educational activities of EEPs were integrated to a certain extent into the regular activities of the school, this objective has only been partially reached. Similarly, the possible multiplier effect was not as high as might have been hoped, as few schools and partnerships made a substantial effort to disseminate findings and results. They suggest that dissemination and evaluation are linked and that there is not sufficient evaluation and self-evaluation of the activities.

The second point they raise is equality of opportunities which they assess as having been achieved to a certain extent. They find, however, little evidence that it had been promoted and achieved systematically at all levels within schools. At “programme level”, they suggest that equality of opportunities would also imply more effort to involve vocational, technical and rural schools.

The third issue they raise for further consideration is that of the integration of children with special needs and capacities which they consider was not fully achieved. They did not find sufficient evidence that they had every opportunity to be fully involved in all activities related to transnational partnerships. They suggest that efforts may also have to be made to include more special schools in the future.

European Evaluation of European Educational Projects (EEPEE)[6]

The *EEPEE* project organised by partners in the Netherlands, Belgium and France and funded under COMENIUS Complementary measures, aimed at creating a European culture of evaluation of educational projects and the development of a common European tool for the (self)-evaluation of EEPs in the classroom. A seminar was organised in 1998, bringing together specialists in the field of evaluation and people with experience of COMENIUS 1 projects to begin drafting a tool for self-evaluation of EEPs. Representatives of over 20 SOCRATES countries participated in the seminar. The tool was then tested by a pilot group and the outcomes integrated into a final draft of the tools. Further funding has allowed the group to continue working on the tools for self-evaluation in schools: *Model Instruments for a Common Evaluation (MICE)* which were presented and discussed at an international conference in January 2000. The tools are available on the Internet for all interested schools.

10.2.2 COMENIUS 2

Action 2, the *Education of the children of migrant workers, occupational travellers, travellers and Gypsies; intercultural education,* supported transnational projects designed to improve the quality of education available to these groups and to promote an intercultural dimension in schooling in order to prepare pupils to live in a society which is increasingly characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity and so to strengthen mutual understanding and combat racism and xenophobia. Specific thematic priorities were defined in the *Guidelines to Applicants.*

This is a project-based action which normally involved at least two institutions and/or organisations from at least three participating countries. Projects were encouraged to establish close ties with schools and networks of schools in order to test their initiatives.

COMENIUS 2 was a centralised action but applications were submitted by the coordinating partner to the National Agency in their country who then consulted the National Agency in the other countries involved. Once they had given approval, the project was forwarded to the Commission for final approval. In some cases, in which the project involved a large number of participating countries, applications were sent to the SOCRATES YOUTH Technical Assistance Office.

Projects could be supported for up to three years, subject to annual review, with an annual grant of about €30,000 which had to represent not more than 50 per cent of the total costs of the project. The partners could apply for a small grant of up to €1,000 for a preparatory visit in order to lay the foundations of transnational projects.

[6] More information can be found on the project web site: www.Alden-Biesen.be/Europe/evaluation/index/html.

The two tables below show firstly the number of transnational cooperation projects established and renewed and the support requested and received (Table 10.4) and secondly the renewal of project funding for each year (Table 10.5).

Over the period 1995-1999, a total of 350 projects received grants. From that number 174 (about 50%) were renewed for at least a second year. The average grant for the years 1996-1998 was about €46,000 per annum.

Table 10.4
Number of Transnational Cooperation Projects Established and Renewed with the Support Requested and Awarded (in EURO) 1995-1999

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Number of transnational cooperation project						
New	160	42	52	60	36	350
Renewed		73	46	49	63	174
Total	160	115	98	109	99	
Support requested (mean)		117,599	121,530	115,336		
Support awarded (mean)		46,803	47,689	45,127		
Ratio of support requested and awarded		45.6	40.8	42.3		

Source: database of the SOCRATES technical Assistance Office in Brussels

There was a much higher number of projects approved the first year of funding (1995), when the budget for COMENIUS 2 represented 39 per cent of the total COMENIUS budget (see Table 10.4). In subsequent years it represented between 12 and 18 per cent and therefore a smaller number of projects. The total number of projects supported each year (new and renewals) varied from 100 to 160. The ratio of support awarded to support requested did not alter considerably over the period.

Table 10.5
Project Funding Renewals 1995-1999 (percentages)

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
One years	54	45	31	32	100	50
Two years	32	26	27	68	0	34
Three years	14	29	42	0	0	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(160)	(42)	(52)	(60)	(36)	(350)

Source: database of the SOCRATES technical Assistance Office

Of the projects which started in 1995, 1996 or 1997 (and which therefore could have received funding for the full three-year period possible by the end of SOCRATES I) there has been a steady increase in the proportion which received three years of funding (see above Table 10.5): 14 per cent of the 1995 selection, 29 per cent from 1996 and 42 per cent from

1997. This tendency to renew funding appears to be confirmed by the 1998 selection for which 68 per cent went on to a second year.

Data Used for the Analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The data used for the analysis of COMENIUS 2 are mainly drawn from:

- The postal survey sent to project coordinators in which they were asked to provide information on the coordinator, the composition of the partnership and the participants (including whether any pupils/students had special needs), the target groups, thematic areas developed, the objectives and main activities of the project. Most of the sections contained closed questions but there were also some open questions on outcomes and impact.
- The Technical Assistance database provided a range of information drawn from project applications which included national and institutional composition of partnerships, the thematic areas, targets groups, etc. It also provided the quantitative data for the centralised actions.
- Interviews with project coordinators. The interview guide contained questions on why the coordinator had chosen to seek funding from SOCRATES, the contribution of the programme to achieving results, issues of dissemination, impact and follow-up and finally suggestions for improvement.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries.

The Analysis

Why SOCRATES?

Several of the project coordinators interviewed chose to develop a project under COMENIUS 2 mainly because they needed funding to take forward an idea which may have been relatively new in some of the participating countries. They stressed that the objectives of COMENIUS 2 corresponded to their needs in so far as it was the best programme to support activity targeting children in disadvantaged areas or to focus on issues of racism and violence in schools, etc. One interviewee emphasised that COMENIUS 2 gave them the possibility of strengthening and supporting their network. It was also suggested that a SOCRATES grant could be a way of legitimating an idea which a group was attempting to introduce in their institution and thus facilitate acceptation of new ideas and activities. For the interviewees, the transnational project set in motion new developments and the transnational

partnership provided examples of how similar issues were dealt with elsewhere. SOCRATES, a transnational source of funding, was a way of broadening mentalities and taking people beyond their frontiers.

Partnerships and Coordination

Data drawn from the database show that nearly 60 per cent of the total number of projects were coordinated by institutions from six countries: Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK with a fairly even spread among them. The same group of countries also formed over 50 per cent of the participating institutions. These figures must be interpreted with care as, with the exception of the Netherlands, they are the group of countries with the largest potential number of participating institutions. In addition, some projects brought together several partners from the same country.

The average number of partners in COMENIUS 2 partnerships was 10, making this the action with the highest average. Higher education and non-profit institutions each provided almost 20 per cent of the participating organisations. Primary and secondary schools together matched this figure (secondary schools 11% and primary schools 9%). Nine per cent were local public authorities. This balance could also be affected by the composition of large partnerships. The sample of coordinators surveyed by the postal questionnaires reflected the significant presence in the partnerships of higher education institutions and schools.

For almost all the projects surveyed by questionnaire, there was a North-South mix of partners who worked in English, Spanish, French or German (in order of frequency). Over three-quarters of the national partners and 60 per cent of the transnational partners already knew each other before the beginning of the project. Respondents stated that new partners were contacted mainly through colleagues or at conferences.

The coordinating institutions in the questionnaire sample tended to be either non-profit associations, higher education institutions or local public authorities, most of them situated in urban zones. Schools, however, represented about 25 per cent of the partner institutions and the higher education institutions another 25 per cent. The project coordinators, where gender balance was fairly equal, were mainly either teachers or directors of non-profit associations and it was their first COMENIUS project.

The questionnaire respondents reported that there was a high level of appreciation of working in national and transnational partnerships, as partners considered that they were able to fix clear objectives and establish effective communication. Most of the difficulties mentioned in the questionnaires referred to over-loaded timetables and the demands of the financial procedures. However, about a third of the partners left before the end of the project despite the fact that about half the partnerships had signed a formal contract. The reasons evoked tended to be either too much work, changes in staff, lack of motivation or financial problems, but also in some cases a feeling that the project's objectives no longer corresponded to their needs.

For the project coordinators interviewed, the partnership provided an exchange of expertise and good practice with an opportunity to learn how partners deal with common problems. They found the different perspectives stimulating and one interviewee pointed out that organisations which belonged to multicultural or international networks tended to prioritise transnational working. But another interviewee referred to the management difficulties which can arise in transnational partnerships and the mixed results due to the fact that some partners established better working relations than others.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Most of the project coordinators surveyed by the postal questionnaire found out about the programme in a relatively formal way either through their Ministry of Education or National Agency and then obtained information mostly through the National Agency or from the Commission. They considered that the documentation was quite clear but there were more mixed comments about the application forms. The coordinators interviewed considered the application procedures to have been fairly straightforward for the more experienced among them but the less experienced found them complex and time-consuming. Both the interviews and the questionnaires reflected a desire for forms to be available in more of the official languages. Some interviewees suggested that it would be useful to be able to obtain more advice and comment on the content issues of the application to avoid refusals and misunderstandings. In contrast to the criticisms of complexity, another point of view suggested the procedures may be seen as a form of quality check, as coordinators were obliged to think carefully about their intended activity and produce a clear work plan.

On average, coordinators reported that they had waited 7 months for approval but the budget allotted was usually lower than expected. According to the Technical Assistance Office database figures (see above Table 10.4), grants awarded for the years 1996, 1997 and 1998 were between 40 and 45 per cent of the grants requested. Projects received about € 46,000 per annum under COMENIUS 2 to fund activities of partnerships with the highest average number of partners (10).

The long wait for approval meant that projects started later than expected and there may have been a delay of a year between the initial contacts with partners to develop the project and starting work. As some interviewees pointed out, starting before receiving approval would have implied taking a financial risk ,while waiting meant that time was then lost in "re-energising" the partnership. Revised budgets led to partners having to revise their work plans and some reported having to contribute a larger amount of matched-funding to compensate. For 70 per cent of the projects surveyed their budget was reduced for each year of the project.

In general, the coordinators who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied with all the different SOCRATES administrative services: the Technical Assistance Office, the National Agencies and the Commission but deplored the delays in receiving grants and the complexity of financial monitoring. It was suggested that the amount of the grant did not justify the level

of control. Interviewees felt the renewal procedures were unnecessarily repetitive and regretted that refusals were not better explained to promoters.

For the financial monitoring and final reports, some coordinators interviewed found it very difficult to justify expenditure in the way requested and criticised the length of time they waited for the second payment to arrive. No feedback was received about their final reports.

Thematic Areas and Target Populations

Over half of the projects surveyed developed their COMENIUS 2 project following another similar activity, though only about 20 per cent had a previous project. Most of them wanted to have an opportunity to work with other European partners.

According to the data provided by the Technical Assistance Office from the application forms, the main action lines developed in these COMENIUS 2 projects, over the complete funding period from 1995-1999, were intercultural education (44%) and second the children of migrants (22%). All the countries followed this pattern with the exception of two groups. In Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden and Iceland most of the projects were developed under the second action line, whereas in Spain they focused on children of Gypsies and in Romania on children of travellers.

These two action lines developed quantitatively during the early years of the programme, until 1997. Since then, the number of projects working with children of migrants has continually decreased. From 1997 to 1999 about 65% of the projects examined issues of intercultural education.

Projects aimed to develop teaching methods (63%), pedagogical approaches (approximately 60%) and to exchange information and experience (67%). Half the approved projects intended targeting secondary and primary school children, teachers, parents and families. In terms of thematic areas to be developed, two-thirds of the projects targeted intercultural education. Half of them were to examine the quality of teaching and/or teacher training, while about a quarter designated each of the following thematic areas: access to education, exclusion, language teaching, parent involvement, racism and xenophobia.

In the sample surveyed, over 90 per cent indicated intercultural education as a thematic area of the project. Three-quarters were also preoccupied by the issue of increasing achievement at school and 70 per cent with combating racism. 70 per cent worked with children of migrants. Almost 2 coordinators out of 5 stated that they worked with special needs beneficiaries, most of whom have learning difficulties. However, there were also some projects targeting beneficiaries with disabilities or behavioural problems.

Most of the projects surveyed planned use less than 5 per cent to carry out an evaluation, usually through informal discussion or peer group assessment in order to evaluate both the processes and the products. However, of the projects interviewed, only one had been evaluated by their Ministry of Education.

Building an impact

Interviewees suggested that impacts varied considerably and felt that the local effect may, in the end, be the most important.

In terms of the impact of the project, the coordinators surveyed summarised it as follows:

- *The European dimension*: was defined by the fact that they belonged to a network which led to European teams working together on exchange of expertise, good practice and methods which brought into play their different approaches and education systems. They felt that raising awareness of cultural differences, launching discussions on racism in education or democracy, encouraging mutual understanding and increasing people's understanding of minority groups enhanced the perception of a European dimension. Some of the coordinators pointed out that a first European project in a small organisation could have very substantial repercussions on the life of the institution. The discussion on the European dimension led coordinators to comment on the need to enlarge "Europe" to include the minority cultures in society.

- *The intercultural dimension:* Due to their project, coordinators felt better prepared in this area. It enabled contacts with teachers and pupils and a better understanding of other cultures. They felt better equipped in terms of skills and tools to identify useful approaches and methods and that the comparative methodology had also increased their understanding of their own situation. Working with the parents and families had also contributed.

- *Benefits for the institutions:* Without European funding they could not have had access to such a range of activities and products. Their links with organisations in other countries had made their own institution more open to the outside world and had allowed them to establish a network. They were able to formalise the approaches and tools they used, which could lead to a better level of recognition for their institution with decision-makers. One interviewee pointed out that recognition by Europe could lead to better political acceptance of their suggestions. They felt their profile had improved as well as the quality of teaching and the target group was more involved in the life of the institution. Some interviewees referred to the improved working relations among the different departments in an institution. The European project started to change mentalities and one project working on issues of violence and racism found that it had led to a calmer atmosphere in the school and a greater ability to deal with problems.

- *Benefits for staff:* On the one hand they had developed project management skills but also a better capacity to manage conflict and search for consensus. On the other, coordinators cited a range of professional competencies such as quality of teaching, linguistic skills, use of Information and Communication Technologies, etc. which had improved. They felt that staff had a better level of knowledge and understanding of the problems of exclusion, of minorities and other cultures. Contacts with colleagues abroad had developed and they had benefited from the exchanges of information, expertise and experience. In some cases, staff felt more motivated in their jobs. The final point

mentioned was a better link between the different levels of education, such as primary and secondary.

- *Benefits for pupils/students:* They had access to new materials and learning methods and staff noted more dynamism and greater motivation with different types of relations established between the staff and the pupils. Pupils' understanding of exclusion, of other cultures and minorities in their country had also improved. In certain projects they benefited from better relations between the school and the community. In projects which had organised exchanges, pupils had established relations with other young people. They had also benefited from learning to manage project work and share their knowledge with all the other pupils in the school.

The other factor of impact mentioned was the need to examine the potential use of products and methods outside Europe.

Dissemination of Outcomes

Most of the projects intended to disseminate their results though in many cases not all the partners were involved and nearly half of the coordinators surveyed had not received any help from the SOCRATES programme.

Their main target audience was the education system in their country but also local organisations which they addressed mainly through publications and conferences or training sessions and articles. Dissemination used 10 to 15 per cent of their overall budget, though a third of the coordinators surveyed estimated that in order to carry out a full programme of dissemination they would have needed a larger budget, more staff and have completed the concrete products. Financial contributions from other sources such as the national Ministry of Education were very important.

Interviewees felt there had been a change in the Commission's attitude, moving away from media-oriented dissemination towards targeting specific groups likely to create a multiplier effect and expert groups. This change was welcomed, as it was felt that there had been too much focus on producing attractive materials without the necessary budget. It was, however, suggested that the COMENIUS programme could examine the issues of dealing with commercial publishers.

Future Work

Though two-thirds of the projects hoped to continue their work after the end of the funding period and most would like to join an appropriate network or work in other European projects, less than half would accept to coordinate a project again. The administrative work load was too heavy.

The SOCRATES Contribution

The SOCRATES support gave projects the opportunity to make their work better known and they felt it had increased its impact as they could look beyond national situations and policies, familiarising themselves with other working methods. The grant was often cited as an essential contribution of the programme and it legitimated the work undertaken, giving it some financial stability. The programme was seen by one coordinator as having a benchmarking role. There was only one example of a project coordinator interviewed who felt that SOCRATES had contributed so little that it was not worth applying for renewal.

However, though they were conscious of being part of a broader development within the programme, none of the interviewees had participated in organised links between or among projects set up by the Commission or the National Agencies. Coordinators interviewed expressed the hope that, as this action of COMENIUS is centralised, there is no duplication of work done. Out of the sample, 80 per cent were not working with any other EU or nationally-funded projects at the same time.

There was a debate among interviewees who voiced different opinions on whether or not the very time-consuming procedures actually hindered the work. The rigid regulations made one coordinator state that "*they were always afraid of doing something wrong*". As in other actions, there was an impression that the Commission was more interested in justifying finances than the content.

There were mixed feelings about whether or not they were contributing to the COMENIUS objectives. For some interviewees, these were not foremost in their minds, while for others the very fact that their individual project objectives were linked to teacher development or integration meant that they were directly contributing. They also pointed out that their outcomes may also be of interest outside Europe.

Coordinators' Suggestions for Improving the Programme:

Concerning the procedures, coordinators interviewed suggest that selection criteria should be clearer, budgets fixed, deadlines respected by the Commission and, in general, procedures simplified. Establishing a mentoring system between an experienced and an inexperienced coordinator was suggested. They would like to be able to receive documentation and forms in more than two Community languages.

The long delays in approval and the types of procedures that exist make it very difficult for organisations directly representing the target groups to develop projects.

It was also suggested that some flexibility over the length of a development project should perhaps be envisaged as in some cases more than 3 years may be necessary to complete the work undertaken to a satisfactory level.

Coordinators would like meetings to be organised by the Commission bringing together similar projects and they felt that an Internet site containing all the projects could help their visibility. They would also appreciate visits from the Technical Assistance Office or their National Agency, as human contacts are important; forms and reports cannot transmit all information. They also expressed interest in the use made by the Commission of the submitted reports and whether or not they were analysed for patterns and trends.

10.2.3 COMENIUS 3.1

COMENIUS 3.1 supported institutions and organisations in the development of *European In-Service Training Projects.* The aim of the projects was to enhance the professional development of educational staff and, in order to strengthen the European dimension in the in-service training of teachers and other staff, promote European cooperation among institutions, encourage the participation of staff in transnational in-service training and promote the use of open and distance learning and Information and Communication Technologies.

The projects brought together partnerships of at least one institution from at least three countries to implement an agreed work plan. The projects had to involve the teaching and training staff from the participating institutions and organisations and also staff from appropriate potential beneficiary schools. COMENIUS 3.1 was a centralised action but applications were submitted by the coordinating partner to the National Agency in their country which then consulted the National Agency in the other countries involved. Once they had given approval, the project was forwarded to the Commission for final approval. In some cases in which the project involved a large number of participating countries applications were sent to the SOCRATES-YOUTH Technical Assistance Office.

Projects could be supported for up to three years, subject to annual review, with an annual grant of about €25,000 which had to represent not more than 50% of the total costs of the project. The partners could apply for a small grant of up to €1000 for a preparatory visit in order to lay the foundations of transnational project.

The two tables that follow show firstly the number of transnational cooperation projects with renewals and mean support requested and awarded (Table 10.6) and secondly projects renewals (Table 10.7).

The total number of projects which received grants for the period 1995-1999 was 355, of which 180 (50%) were renewed for at least a second year. The average grant for the period 1996-1998 varied from almost €18,000 to over €24,000.

Table 10.6
Number of Transnational Cooperation Projects Established and Renewed and the Support Requested and Awarded – by Year

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Number of transnational cooperation project						
New	47	81	87	53	87	355
Renewed		34	76	79	68	180
Total	47	115	163	132	155	
Support requested (mean)		59,978	55,419	54,616		
Support awarded (mean)		23,754	17,952	21,456		
Ratio of support awarded and requested		43.5	35.1	41.6		

Source: database of the SOCRATES technical Assistance Office in Brussels

The number of new projects approved each year fluctuated, rising from 47 in 1995 to over 80 for the next two years and then dropping again to 53. The last year of funding the number rose again to over 80 (see above Table 10.6). The total number of projects supported each year (new and renewals) varied from 115 to 160. The ratio of support awarded to support requested has varied from just 35 per cent in 1997 to over 43 per cent the first year.

Table 10.7
Project funding renewals 1995-1999 (percentages)

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
One years	28	30	40	28	100	49
Two years	30	35	26	72	0	29
Three years	42	35	34	0	0	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(47)	(81)	(87)	(53)	(87)	(355)

Source: database of the SOCRATES technical Assistance Office

Over the five-year period the percentage of renewals fluctuated. Thus, whereas over 40 per cent of the 1995 projects received a grant for three years, only a third of the 1996 and 1997 projects were funded for the same period. However, three-quarters of the 1998 projects received a second year of funding (see Table 10.7). It will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

Data Used for the Analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The data used for the analysis of COMENIUS 3.1 are mainly drawn from:

- The postal survey sent to project coordinators in which they were asked to provide information on the coordinator, the composition of the partnership and the participants (including whether any pupils/students targeted had special needs), the target groups,

thematic areas developed, the objectives and main activities of the project. Respondents were also asked whether or not the course had been run and would be used again. Most of the sections contained closed questions but there were also some open questions on outcomes and impact.

- The Technical Assistance database provided a range of information drawn from project applications which included national and institutional composition of partnerships, the thematic areas, targets groups, etc. It also provided the quantitative data for the centralised actions.
- Interviews with project coordinators. The interview guide contained questions on why the coordinator had chosen to seek funding from SOCRATES, the contribution of the programme to achieving results, issues of dissemination, impact and follow-up and, finally, suggestions for improvement.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries. Reference is also made to the evaluation of COMENIUS courses carried out for 1996 and 1997: *Report on the Evaluation of the Action 3.2 In-service Training Courses organised within the framework of Action 3 Comenius in 1996 and 1997* (drafted by Yves Beernaert for the SOCRATES and Youth for European Technical Assistance Office).

The Analysis

Why SOCRATES?

In the interviews carried out with COMENIUS 3.1 coordinators, they stated that their institutions had requested support from COMENIUS 3.1 as they needed funding to develop an existing idea and the SOCRATES programme, and in particular COMENIUS, corresponded best to their needs. It allowed them to integrate intercultural themes or, for example, special needs education with teacher training. Some coordinators also expressed the opinion that, as SOCRATES was the education programme and they worked in higher education institutions or for government-funded bodies, it was the "natural" direction to which to turn. SOCRATES was recognised as the programme which targeted European citizenship.

Interviewees felt it would provide them with experience of a transnational partnership, international cooperation and joint development work. The need to match local funding cannot be separated from the desire to open up to the European arena. Having a SOCRATES project was also a way of legitimating their work.

Partnerships and Coordination

Data drawn from the Technical Assistance Office database shows that all the EU Member-States and Norway and Iceland coordinated projects. Luxembourg and Iceland coordinated one each and Denmark, Portugal and Norway coordinated less than 10 projects each. Out of

the total of 355, nearly 60 per cent were coordinated by institutions from five countries: Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the UK. The UK coordinated almost one-fifth of the total number of projects, though this is partially due to 45 per cent of the 1995 projects having been coordinated from the UK. Almost the same group of countries also formed about 50 per cent of the participating institutions (Spain, France, the UK, and Italy). These figures must be interpreted with care as they are the group of countries with the largest potential number of participating institutions and in addition some projects brought together several partners from some of the countries.

Respondents to the postal survey stated that well over half the partners already knew each other before the project and new partners were contacted mainly through other colleagues or at conferences. The Technical Assistance Office database figures show the average number of partners in COMENIUS 3.1 partnerships as 6, with the higher education institutions providing over 40 per cent of the participating organisations. The other large groups were formed by adult or continuing education providers (11%), local or regional public authorities (18%) and non-profit associations (9%). Given the role of higher education in teacher training, this breakdown is not surprising. As is the case for the participating countries, the balance of institutions could be affected by the composition of large partnerships. Likewise, the sample of coordinators surveyed by the postal questionnaires reflected the significant presence in the partnerships of higher education institutions, but also of the others mentioned above.

There was a good North-South mix among partners and in the most recent years some projects included partners from Central and Eastern Europe.

The main languages used for both oral and written communication were English and French, but also to a lesser extent Spanish and German.

In general, the coordinators who responded to the survey appreciated the experience of working in national and transnational partnerships and felt that they had been able to establish clear objectives and no particular communication problems were encountered. Difficulties raised included overloaded timetables and the demands of the administrative procedures. In the interviews, other difficulties, such as the different frameworks in which the systems work (holidays, hours, etc.), were also mentioned. However, in most cases, all the partners remained in the partnership until the end of the project. If partners did leave, the reasons were lack of motivation, difficulties with their national regulations, changes in work plans, too heavy a work load, financial problems and problems specific to their institution. Just over half the partnerships had signed formal contracts.

Some of the coordinators interviewed had previously been part of the EU-funded Réseaux d'Institutions de Formation (RIF) partnerships before working with COMENIUS support and so were positively inclined towards working in a transnational group. They emphasised the impact of a good partnership on the outcomes.

Administrative and Financial Procedures:

The coordinators surveyed had found out about the programme mainly through their National Agency or their Ministry of Education from which they then obtained further information, though the Technical Assistance Office also provided this information.

Though few of the coordinators surveyed and interviewed expressed difficulties with the application (obtaining information, understanding the documentation, filling in the form), the level of satisfaction over the selection procedures expressed by the interviewees was not high. Completing very detailed applications was considered by some coordinators to be a useful exercise in so far as it ensured that they constructed their projects carefully and thought through processes in advance. They did, however, regret the lack of flexibility to introduce modifications later. One area in which coordinators (especially those applying for funding for the first time) would like more information concerns how to construct a budget within the regulatory framework. As in COMENIUS 2, experienced coordinators dealt more easily with the regulations.

In general, the procedures were seen as the main "disadvantage" of the programme and one interviewee felt that "*they were treated as children in Brussels*".

The coordinators reported that they waited at least 6 months for approval, which they felt was too long, and that the budget allotted was smaller than requested. According to the Technical Assistance Office database statistics, in 1996, 1997 and 1998 COMENIUS 3.1 coordinators received between 35 and 43 per cent of the budget requested. The average budget for this period varied between €18,000 and €24,000 per annum. According to survey and interview responses, reduced budgets meant that coordinators had to look for other sources of funding or ask partners to contribute more. They reduced activities, work plans, staff costs and the number of meetings. In most cases, they reported that their budget request was reduced at each renewal.

Though coordinators were fairly happy with the administrative services in the Technical Assistance Office, the National Agencies and the Commission, they deplored the long delays in receiving funds and the heavy work load created by the financial controls. There was much criticism by the interviewees of the fact that requests for renewal (theoretically based on the results of the first year of activity) had to be submitted just four months after first approval.

The fact that grants arrived late raised the issue about whether or not institutions use their own funds to carry out the work. Though this may well be the case for higher education institutions and Ministry-funded bodies, some coordinators interviewed said that their partners were not all able to start project work until funds arrived. Given the tight schedules and late approval, this led to situations which were very difficult to manage.

Final payment depends on proving eligibility of expenditure and so some coordinators were surprised not to receive the full 20 per cent of the second payment and were very critical of the fact that the work had been fully carried out before they discovered that they would not

receive the expected grant. This led to conflicts in the home institution which had to integrate an unexpected loss in funding. Though coordinators accepted that public funding had to be justified, they felt that too much time was spent on these activities in comparison with the amount of the grants. As one interviewee questioned "*is it really worth checking every phone bill or the price of photocopies?*".

A specific issue raised was that no more than 20 per cent of the total budget could be claimed for personnel costs. One project explained that they were able to fund no more than 90 hours of senior staff time a year for all the partnership. This clearly did not cover the time invested. Several interviewees therefore stressed the importance of voluntary time in order to complete project activities and reach objectives.

Thematic Areas and Target Populations

For three-quarters of the projects surveyed, the partnership had been established to respond to an identified need and was based on previous work. They wanted to work in a transnational partnership.

According to the Technical Assistance Office database on applications, the main action lines covered were raising achievement through updating and improving skills of education staff (57% of the projects funded), evaluation and dissemination of the European dimension (for 53%). A third each of the projects also selected the action lines of knowledge and skills and new technologies. Less than 15 per cent said they would be working on special needs education.

The main thematic area developed in the projects was the European dimension and the second most important was improving school achievement. With a few exceptions, all the countries followed this pattern. However, in Finland, Ireland, Italy and Portugal it was the second thematic area which was the most important. In Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway the second priority was children with special needs.

In over 50 per cent of the projects schools were the target group but also in-service training institutions in over 40 per cent and initial teacher training institutions in 30 per cent. A third of the projects were also targeting vocational schools and about one-fifth special needs education. Not surprisingly, over 80 per cent of the projects targeted teachers. Teacher trainers and head teachers were also common target groups (40% each).

In the answers to the questionnaire, the end-users targeted by the project were for the most part either teacher trainers, head teachers or teachers. These projects did not, however, tend to target either nursery teachers or decision-makers. In projects in which pupils were directly involved, they tended to fall into the 11-18 age group. In most countries, it was mainly pupils of secondary or primary schools who formed the target population for COMENIUS 3.1 projects. In certain countries such as Ireland and Belgium, adult or continuing education institutes and vocational schools ware also well represented in the target group.

Over half the coordinators surveyed had addressed issues of special education for pupils and students with learning difficulties or a physical disability. According to the database, the coordinators in France and Norway appeared to be the most interested in educational institutions for pupils with special needs. Less than 15 per cent addressed gender issues.

The vast majority of the respondents to the postal survey had an evaluation plan which was carried out through informal discussion and self-evaluation procedures established by the partnership for regular monitoring of processes and products and represented less than 5 per cent of the total budget. Interviewees regretted the lack of feedback from Brussels on their reports. Another interviewee emphasised that, as COMENIUS 3.1 is oriented towards the production of training modules, the programme should consider how to provide a higher level of support in order to allow partnerships to evaluate what they have done and whether or not to request further support. Coordinators interviewed felt that first time coordinators in SOCRATES frequently had an impression of "*under achieving*".

Building an Impact

Overall the interviewees felt that their projects were part of moving forward by small steps. They made a direct impact on the home institution in so far as people learned to work differently, in teams and with colleagues from other countries. They developed project management skills that would be useful for future work. They considered the impact on the broader system to be more indirect in so far as they were working towards changing attitudes. Interviewees indicated the possibility of an impact at the local level in the schools involved in the project (as the target population) and underlined the importance of the involvement of the national inspectorate in introducing an important factor when envisaging the potential impact on the broader education system.

In terms of the impact of the project, the coordinators surveyed saw it as follows:

- *The European dimension:* was enhanced through the cooperation and more permanent relations established with partners and other countries, including through the use of Information and Communication Technologies. They learned to work in a network. Coordinators felt that exchanging information and ideas, as well as developing work together, provided a solid contribution, as did the fact that some became aware of the need to be able to communicate in English. The project provided an opportunity to compare practice and attitudes in different countries and made them feel part of a larger community of interests and ideas. For some, the fact that partnerships could be extended to include institutions from the Central and Eastern European countries made an important contribution to the European dimension. Increasing understanding of how the Commission worked was also mentioned.
- *Benefits for the institution:* The institutions had the opportunity to develop innovatory products which could be used locally. It reinforced an international orientation in their work and consolidated the position of the institution in its area of work. Organising international meetings and working with a network broadened perspectives. The competences of teaching staff improved and therefore the quality of the training offer, as

did their competences with Information and Communication Technologies. The institution developed its capacity to analyse the situation in other countries and improved its image and credibility. Teams were felt to have developed more professional ways of working.

- *Benefits for staff:* included improving their project management skills, linguistic competences and capacity to use Information and Communication Technologies. They also learned to manage a budget. The project provided opportunities to learn about other cultures, work in networks, examine education issues from other perspectives and their contacts with colleagues abroad increased motivation and enthusiasm. Staff in projects tried to transfer benefits to staff who were not directly involved. In some cases, they felt that relations between teachers and pupils improved.
- *Benefits for pupils/students:* Though this was felt to be very difficult to assess, coordinators drew attention to the fact that pupils learned new ways of working, made contact with pupils in other institutions, developed their language skills and even improved their school results.

Dissemination of Outcomes:

Over two-thirds of the projects led to training courses and over half of them intended running the course again. They also felt that the course could be used by other training organisers.

The projects stated that they had a dissemination plan which would be carried out with most of their partners. However, for over half the coordinators surveyed, they were receiving support from neither their National Agencies, the Technical Assistance Office, nor the Commission.

Respondents reported that they mainly aimed to inform other similar organisations, whether in their own or other countries, by training sessions, Internet, reports, articles or conferences. Dissemination represented 5 to 10 per cent of their total budget. Most of them estimated that in order to carry out a full programme of dissemination they would have needed a larger budget, more time and experience but also, in some cases, a finished product.

The interviews covered a range of situations concerning dissemination from projects which had been able to obtain a supplementary budget for dissemination to others who were obliged to cut back on their dissemination plans and/or contribute a lot of voluntary time or resources of the home institution, where that possibility existed. Having to pay money back to the Commission or not having all expenditure approved further reduced funds for dissemination. Interviewees suggested that the demands of the programme in terms of dissemination were not very realistic, given the amount of budget which could be integrated, as most of the money available had to go to developing the training modules. They also felt that there was a certain confusion between reporting and disseminating and that if dissemination were really a priority then guidelines or mechanisms to assist and facilitate the process would have to be considered.

Future Work

Though three-quarters of the projects hoped to continue their work after the end of the funding period and would like to be involved in future European projects, one out of five respondents would definitely not undertake the coordination of a new project. Responsibilities were too great and the level of involvement and the amount of administrative work too much and too complex. The coordinator also had to assume a certain financial risk. As one respondent wrote*: "I was struck by the following contradiction. In this type of project everything depends on the enthusiasm of participants, their involvement, even a "militant" approach in favour of opening up to Europe but everything in this type of project is held back by bureaucracy, fussy formalism and Brussels even suspects people of cheating. This leads to a tension and at the end of the three years the second aspect has exhausted the first."*

The SOCRATES Contribution:

For coordinators of COMENIUS 3.1 projects who were interviewed, the SOCRATES programme contributed funding to develop a response to an identified need. In so doing, it may have contributed to promoting ideas which were new to some countries or education systems and could legitimate the work undertaken. It provided a framework for groups of institutions to work together, sometimes providing a first experience of transnational exchange and comparison of systems which coordinators welcomed and recognised as an important contribution to developing a more international perspective in their institutions. Some also commented that they now understood better their own approach to teacher training, which was perhaps the main aim of a comparative experience.

Interviewees had mixed feelings about whether or not their projects had contributed to the objectives of the SOCRATES programme. They felt that the notion of the "European dimension" remained very broad and therefore open to interpretation and also speculated on possible contradictions between different objectives in so far as high quality cooperation may not lead to high quality materials being produced.

In the questionnaire, coordinators were asked if they had any links with other EU or nationally-funded projects of a similar type currently underway. Less than 10 per cent were in this case.

Coordinators Suggestions for Improving the Programme

Coordinators suggested that projects need to have a broader vision of the activity taking place and to be able to share the good and the bad experiences. They would therefore appreciate more thematic coordination meetings. In order to increase communication between the projects and Brussels they would like to see more visits to projects in the field.

Concerning the administrative and financial procedures, their main suggestions were to simplify procedures and shorten periods of waiting for approval. They felt it would be useful to consider establishing a process of recourse for projects who do not received the final

payment. Finally, budgets should be more flexible with the possibility of viring amounts between budget headings and delays in payment shorter.

Coordinators would also like to see proof that some attention was paid to the content of their projects when they sent in reports. They support the establishment of mechanisms for making outcomes more visible. The issue of recognition for work undertaken is important at all levels.

Evaluation of COMENIUS 3.1/3.2[7]

Austrian interviewees emphasised the importance of implementing Europeanisation in teacher training and the fact that COMENIUS action 3 was a means of doing this. Though there had been a high level of participation in both actions and all the teacher training institutes were involved, they felt that COMENIUS courses lacked some sort of *Quality Seal*. An interviewee in Germany reflected that, although international contacts were always positive, it remained clear that COMENIUS 3.2 had not brought about any systemic effects. Similar issues were raised in the Netherlands concerning LINGUA B courses and the criteria which should be used to establish the guide to "good" courses.

Some countries pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of not being able to select the participants for a course. One French interviewee recognised that this procedure ensured a broad participation of countries among the 20 participants, but could also mean that they did not target the right people.

10.2.4 COMENIUS 3.2

European In-service Training Courses and Activities provided an opportunity to test the content, quality and feasibility of the in-service training modules and materials developed under COMENIUS 3.1 by providing grants for education staff teachers who wished to follow a European In-service Training Course in another participating country. The grants were available to teachers (in all types of schools), head teachers, careers advisors, curriculum advisors, inspectors, classroom support staff and counsellors. The Guidelines stated that priority would be given to applicants with a good working knowledge of the language of instruction of the course.

The grants were intended to help cover the cost of travel to and from the course, fees, accommodation and subsistence and did not normally exceed €1500. It was a decentralised action; applications were made to the National Agency which then selected the approved applicants.

[7] See footnote 4.

It is estimated that from 1995 to 1999, about 5250 education staff from the EU and EFTA/EEA countries (and also from the Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus in the most recent years) benefited from grants to participate in in-service training courses abroad. It is worth noting that the Commission estimates that there are over 4 million teachers in the EU Member States.

The two tables which follow present first (Table 10.8) the applications and grants approved and awarded for COMENIUS 3.2 by academic year, then in table 10.9 the number of COMENIUS 3.2 grants awarded by home and host country for the whole period (1995-2000). The data for these tables were provided by the National Agencies following a first request made in May 2000 and reiterated in September 2000. Unfortunately, due to lack of time, new staff or the fact that data were not held centrally, some National Agencies were not able to provide the data necessary and therefore the tables are incomplete.

Table 10.8 shows that with the exception of grants awarded in Italy, the action started in the academic year 1996-97. The data available (which is incomplete) shows a total number of 15,676 applications over the full period. Out of the total number of requests for funding (and excluding the incomplete data for France, Austria and the UK) 26 per cent of the applications were approved and 23 per cent awarded. This difference between applications approved and grants actually awarded was common in all years and in most countries. Germany, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic were the countries where the ratio of grants awarded to applications was the highest: 66 per cent, 78 per cent and 74 per cent respectively.

The countries in which the number of grants approved was the lowest in comparison with applications were Latvia and Romania. A comparison of these two countries with others of comparable population size, such as Norway and Lithuania for Latvia or Poland and the United Kingdom for Romania, suggests that the demand rate for courses in both Latvia and Romania was very high. However, Romania was also the country where the take up rate (grants awarded over grants approved) was the lowest 69 per cent in comparison with an average rate of 89 per cent. In most Central and Eastern European countries the take up rate was 100 per cent.

Given that the data for Table 10.9 are not complete, it is not possible to analyse fully the relationship between host and home countries. However, it would appear that the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy were major receiving countries, while the Central and Eastern European countries, which only joined the programme from 1997 on, have not yet organised courses.

It should also be noted that some teachers followed European training courses in their home country. Thus 20 per cent of the Norwegians, 19 per cent of the British participants, 17 per cent of the Greek participants and 14 per cent of the Italians did not go abroad for the course. None of the German, Portuguese, Irish and Icelandic participants followed courses in their own country and only 2 per cent of the Dutch trainees. As far as the Italian and British trainees are concerned, this phenomenon could be explained by the high number of courses organised in those two countries..

Data Used for the Analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The analysis of COMENIUS 3.2 is based on data collected by:

- The postal survey sent to a sample of teachers who had received a European training grant. Respondents were to provide information about themselves and their post, obtaining information and the application procedure and grant. There were questions concerning whether or not the participant had any special needs. They provided information on the content of the course, the languages used, their assessment and follow-up. Most sections contained closed questions. There were some open questions on impact and evaluation.
- The analysis of statistics collected from the National Agencies and the European Commission.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops, as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries. Reference is also made to the evaluation of COMENIUS courses carried out for 1996 and 1997: *Report on the Evaluation of the Action 3.2 In-service Training Courses organised within the framework of Action 3 COMENIUS in 1996 and 1*997 (drafted by Yves Beernaert for the SOCRATES and You the for European Technical Assistance Office).

The Analysis

The Beneficiaries

According to the questionnaire returns, the typical profile of a beneficiary of a COMENIUS 3.2 grant was a woman teacher between the ages of 40 and 50 who had been teaching for at least 15 years in a secondary school.

Three-quarters of the beneficiaries were women and teachers, while about 15 per cent were head teachers. The exceptions were the Netherlands and the UK where more men than women received grants. It should be noted that in the UK over 40 per cent of the respondents were head teachers. The sample which participated in the earlier evaluation, mentioned above, seems to be more mixed, including inspectors, librarians and counsellors as well.

The majority of the beneficiaries received the grant in order to follow a course that targeted either the secondary education age-groups of pupils (11-14 and 15-18) or primary age children. Though the balance among the three groups varied from country to country, overall, it was relatively even with two-thirds targeting secondary teaching and one-third primary schools.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Most of the respondents had learned about the existence of COMENIUS courses and grants through their National Agency but in Germany, Portugal and France promotion of the action was carried out by the Ministry of Education. The National Agencies provided all the concrete information.

On the whole, respondents were satisfied with the way applications had taken place, as they were able to obtain the forms easily, found the documentation clear and did not have any difficulties in finding a suitable course. Though the time between sending in the application and receiving approval varied from just under 2 months to over 5 months, none of the respondents criticised this situation. In all the countries except Italy, respondents received a grant on their first application. In Italy, one-quarter was not approved on their first application. The aim of prioritising applicants who had not previously benefited from a European grant appears to have been implemented in most countries. Germany and the Netherlands were the only countries where some of the respondents had already benefited from a previous European grant.

According to the *Guide for Applicants*, the average grant should not have exceeded €1500. For the sample, the average amount was about €1315 and in most countries the beneficiaries received 80 per cent before the course and 20 per cent after, except in the UK and Italy where most people received the full amount after the course. In most cases, the amount received corresponded to the amount requested, except for about one-third of the Portuguese beneficiaries who received less. Respondents estimated that the grant covered just over 90 per cent of their costs, though in some cases, as for example in Germany, they considered that the amount was not sufficient to cover subsistence and other costs. Few people received additional funding from another source except for the British beneficiaries who received a contribution from the local authorities and the Danish beneficiaries from their schools.

The Courses

The average length of a course was six days. For the respondents of the survey, the countries which organised the highest number of courses were the UK, followed by Spain. France, Germany, Belgium and Italy provided about the same number. English was the language most used for teaching and for general communication among participants. In general, French was the second most common language but there were also examples of German, Spanish and Italian as course languages. The predominant use of English (and at the time, of UK participants) was already noted in the 1996/1997 evaluation when respondents had complained that in a group made up of participants from up to 19 countries, it was not realistic to expect a high level of English and organisers should take into consideration communication difficulties. To this end it was suggested that course materials in more than one language would be appreciated.

In most cases, the training course targeted pupils in secondary education either the 11-14 or the 15-18 age group, but one-third of the Portuguese beneficiaries had attended courses targeting special needs education. The quality of the materials supplied was highly appreciated.

Follow up

In general, there was little follow up by the organiser after the course. However about two-thirds of the participants were able to organise a follow-up activity in their home institution which mainly targeted the teaching and other education staff, but also pupils. In most cases, they aimed to put into practice what they had learned during the course in order to share the new knowledge with colleagues. They were less certain about the possibility of using the new materials and approaches in the classroom. Participation in a COMENIUS 3.2/3.2 course did not necessarily encourage them to develop a COMENIUS 1 project after this first European experience. An exception to this was provided by the Portuguese participants who almost all reported that they had disseminated the new materials and practice to their colleagues.

Evaluation of the Courses

The respondents felt that the courses had provided them with the opportunity to exchange ideas with other teachers or other education staff and to establish contacts. They also mentioned the exchange of expertise that took place and that they had seen as useful examples of good practice which they wished to use in their home institution. These comments confirm the evaluation carried out by the Technical Assistance Office of COMENIUS 3 for 1996 and 1997.

However, they had mixed responses to the impact of the course on their approach to teaching. Very few felt it had a profound effect but they were unanimous in finding the course useful. Almost all would like to follow another COMENIUS course.

The Participants saw the impact of the course as follows

The European dimension: They appreciated the fact they had met colleagues from other countries and had been able to develop partnerships between institutions. They established links for new partnerships, organised meetings with and visits to colleagues abroad. They also reported that the course enabled them to develop new activities linked to the European dimension such as twinnings and setting up regular communication with classes in other countries. This experience also allowed education staff to exchange experiences and points of view and raised their awareness of the diversity of education systems, but also of the common aspects. It improved their knowledge of partner countries. Respondents felt that meeting colleagues from other systems had also led them to consider the issues of pupils in difficulty in a new way because they could share their analysis with other colleagues. Most of the respondents considered that the course had facilitated setting up other COMENIUS or even LEONARDO projects and had strengthened the school's network.

Benefits for the institution: The main one was an opening up to Europe, accompanied by more motivation for international exchanges, new projects, etc. Secondly, participants mentioned that the image of the school was improved and they felt also the quality of teaching as a course abroad enabled them to introduce new materials and methods. It also helped them to establish COMENIUS partnerships. The fact that the European training courses had helped institutions to deal with pupils with special needs was emphasised. Some participants noted that thanks to the course they were better able to assess their own work.

Benefits to students/pupils: The main benefit for them was the increase in the number and quality of exchanges. The fact that COMENIUS 3.2 courses tended to lead to more European work in turn developed the pupils' motivation and their capacity to work in a team on projects. They benefited from any improvement in the quality of teaching and the introduction of new methods, materials, etc.

Beneficiaries' Suggestions for Improving the Programme

Respondents suggested that in order to improve the way COMENIUS 3.2 worked it would be useful to check the organisation of courses and the competences of the organisers, including the training content. They would like to see more education staff obtaining grants and felt that it would be useful to shorten the time it took for the grant to arrive.

10.3 Summary of Points of the COMENIUS Actions

(1) The Delitte and Touche evaluation of the COMENIUS 1 Action concludes that, overall, most of the objectives were reached; European co-operation was promoted across an estimated 3700 partnerships which established contacts and exchange among pupils in different countries, both directly and indirectly. The European dimension in education was materialised in a range of ways, from new forms of co-operation to knowledge about Europe and the European Union and its institutions, and teacher mobility was encouraged.

(2) The integration of the project outcomes into the curriculum and the possible multiplier effects were two areas that were highlighted for further development. In addition, they suggested that there was not sufficient evaluation and self-evaluation of the activities. They further raised the issues of equality of opportunities which they assessed as having been achieved to a certain extent but not promoted systematically at all levels within schools. They recommended more effort to involve vocational, technical and rural schools and to integrate children with special needs.

(3) The role of regional advisors or "relay" staff in some of the participating countries has become increasingly important in ensuring a broad spread of beneficiaries. Their direct knowledge of local schools allowed them to target information in order to attract participation from schools in rural or disadvantaged areas.

(4) COMENIUS 2 projects were seen as a means of legitimating a new idea and giving it a better level of acceptance in the home institutions. Over the period of SOCRATES I, the number of projects which received funding for a second or third year increased steadily. The projects were developed by higher education institutions, non-profit associations and schools. Despite a North-South mix in partnerships, only four languages were the main working languages: English, Spanish, French and German. Coordinators regretted that the application forms were not available in more of the official languages. They would also have liked to be able to obtain more comments on their ideas and suggestions before submitting applications so as to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to refusals.

(5) Concerning COMENIUS 3.1, higher education institutions and other government funded bodies in the field of education seeking funding, prioritised SOCRATES as the programme which targeted education and European citizenship. In supporting the development of a project, SOCRATES could contribute to promoting ideas that are new for some countries or education systems and thus legitimate the innovative work undertaken. Higher education institutions constituted 40 per cent of the total number of partners involved and public authorities another 20 per cent which reflected the structure of teacher training in the participating countries. However five countries (Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the UK) coordinated almost 60 per cent of the projects. The main languages used were English and French, followed by Spanish and German. The higher education institutions did not seem to establish a link between COMENIUS work and the ERASMUS contracts in their institution.

(6) For the Transnational Cooperation Projects funded under both COMENIUS 2 and 3.1, coordinators considered that they had waited too long for approval after their application. However, starting the project earlier would have implied a financial risk. Revised budgets led to reduced work plans and often reduced dissemination budgets. Renewal procedures were felt to be unnecessarily repetitive. They deplored the delays in receiving grants and the complexity of financial monitoring. They regretted that they had received no feedback on final reports and would have been interested in finding out whether or not reports were analysed for development trends. The types of suggestions made by project coordinators to improve the procedures tended to reflect what had been decided for SOCRATES II. It would appear that solutions are under way but will need to be carefully monitored in the coming period.

(7) The absence of a fixed budget, the fact that the final 20 per cent might be reduced, not paid or that coordinators might even be requested to return funds led to conflicts in the home institution. In addition to reduced budgets, this aspect also contributed to lowering dissemination budgets. Coordinators estimated that projects could only be carried out if staff put in a lot of voluntary time.

(8) For COMENIUS 2 partnerships, there was a very high level of interest in developing teaching methods and pedagogical approaches for intercultural education and for children of migrants. The quality of teaching and teacher training as well as access to education, parent involvement, language teaching and fighting racism and xenophobia were all important themes that were developed. Projects targeted schools, teachers and families in priority, aiming to improve achievement. Almost 2 coordinators out of 5 stated that they worked with

special needs beneficiaries, most of whom had learning difficulties. Coordinators felt the need to enlarge the concept of "Europe" to include the range of cultures present in multicultural societies.

(9) The move from media-oriented dissemination towards targeting specific groups likely to create a multiplier effect for COMENIUS 2 projects was welcomed by coordinators, as budgets were not sufficient for the emphasis to be on the production of attractive materials. In terms of immediate impact it was felt that a project could have very substantial repercussions on the life of a small organisation. In addition, the grant gave stability to a development idea for the funded period.

(10) COMENIUS 3.1 funded projects were working on raising achievement and updating and improving skills of education staff, including through developing teacher training modules and courses. The development of approaches to the European dimension was an important action line. More than half the coordinators surveyed addressed issues of special needs education. About two-thirds of the projects surveyed led to a training course. Coordinators would have liked to receive more field visits to allow them to demonstrate their work more concretely. They would have liked to receive feedback from reports with an assessment of the content. They suggested the need for mechanisms to make outcomes more visible and promote a higher level of recognition of work accomplished.

(11) The assessment of COMENIUS 3.1 and 3.2 are partially linked. The projects surveyed and interviewed had not undergone national or European quality assessment prior to running the course. Given that more courses will be available during this year, it seems increasingly urgent to reflect on appropriate and user-friendly criteria for assessing the quality of courses and the means to do it. It will be important to reflect on the following issues: How does the Commission know it is obtaining value for money? What criteria can the National Agencies use to select courses for applicants? How do they judge the suitability and validity of a course?

(12) The predominance of women as beneficiaries of COMENIUS 3.2 grants reflected the gender structure of many education systems. The age of the "typical" COMENIUS beneficiary (40-50) raised the issue of whether or not the action should target the younger teachers with the aim of building a longer term impact. A second point concerned the range of staff targeted. Currently, three-quarters of the beneficiaries are teachers, though the action targets, theoretically, several categories of education staff. An issue for SOCRATES II will be to examine how to promote effectively the participation of non-teaching staff.

(13) There was an issue about communication and languages used during the courses. English was by far the most common language, which suggests that course organisers need to pay careful attention to integrating all participants, whatever their language competence, as well as to the issue of producing the materials in more than one language.

(14) One of the major issues discussed at the transnational workshop was that of mechanisms for acknowledging teachers' participation in European training courses . In

some countries, for example, courses can contribute to a further teaching qualification. There was a general agreement on the importance of reflecting on how to develop mechanisms for recognition and to assess their impact on national systems (in other than quantitative terms).

(15) At present, COMENIUS 3.2 grants concern a very small number of education staff in the participating countries. The issue of whether or not the action should be aiming at attaining a critical mass is linked to issues of follow-up after courses and the dissemination of what individual teachers have learned. In order to reach far higher numbers of education staff either the budget would have to be substantially increased or the grants lowered. This question was raised during some of the interviews with national key actors. There is clearly an on-going debate between reducing the percentage of costs covered in order to give grants to more teachers or covering most costs in order to make sure that personal financial considerations do not prevent teachers from participating. It is an acute problem in countries where teachers' salaries are low in comparison with the cost of participating in a training course abroad, e.g. for the Central and Eastern European countries. From this point of view, the issues of numbers and impact cannot be separated from issues of equal opportunities and access. The issue is the same for COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B.

(16) The potential impact of COMENIUS must also be assessed for the broader impact on the beneficiary's home institution. Whether or not teachers have the possibility of disseminating information about the course and what they have learned after their return varies considerably according to country. Given that numbers are unlikely to increase substantially in the short term, it may be useful for participating countries to reflect on whether and how more benefits could be drawn from the experiences of the beneficiaries.

11. LINGUA

By Jean Gordon and Stéphanie Caillé

11.1 Introduction

LINGUA was the largest of the horizontal Measures supported under Chapter III of the SOCRATES I programme. As such, it addressed a very broad potential audience at all levels and in all sectors of education. Emphasis was placed on school education, initial and in-service training for language teachers and the development of curricula and tools for language teaching and learning, as well as instruments for assessing language learning. It was designed to improve the quality and quantity of the teaching and learning of languages throughout the participating countries (*Guidelines for Applicants 1998*[1]).

The LINGUA action adopted in March 1995 as part of SOCRATES followed the first LINGUA programme. Certain elements of the previous programme were integrated into SOCRATES, others into LEONARDO, thus making LINGUA the only completely horizontal activity. The school-based actions and those targeting the training of language teachers complement the actions concerned with language learning in the work-place supported by LEONARDO.

The LINGUA section within SOCRATES I was divided into 5 actions:

- LINGUA A: European Cooperation Programmes for language teacher training (ECP)
- LINGUA B: In-service training in the field of foreign language teaching
- LINGUA C: Assistantships for future language teachers
- LINGUA D: Development of instruments for language learning and teaching and the assessment of linguistic competence
- LINGUA E: Joint Educational Projects for language learning (JEP)

This chapter begins with a brief presentation of the objectives, as well as the target populations and languages of LINGUA and the LINGUA budget from 1995 to 1999. The following section briefly presents the criteria against which the evaluation was carried out. The next section is an analysis by each LINGUA sub-action drawn from the data collection activities undertaken and the quantitative data available. The description of each sub-action is based on information provided in the Guidelines for Applicants and includes the purpose of the action, the target audience, the main activity, whether it was a centralised or decentralised procedure, and some quantitative data about the activity. The final section of the chapter is a summary of the main conclusions for all the LINGUA actions.

[1] Though the Guidelines for Applicants could undergo some modification from one year to the next, we have used the 1998 version for all general descriptions, as this year came half way through the programme once it was well underway but not yet into the transition period to SOCRATES II.

11.1.1 The Objectives of LINGUA

Overall the programme aimed to improve the knowledge of foreign languages for a larger group of people to contribute to strengthening the European dimension in education and intercultural understanding.

It was posited on the premise that Europe needed a concerted strategy in this area. LINGUA contributed to the implementation of one of the objectives set out in the Commission's 1995 White Paper, *Teaching and Learning: towards the learning society*, which was that one role of the education programmes should be to assist citizens of the EU Member-States in becoming proficient in at least three European languages.

In a Commission document, the basic purpose of LINGUA was summarised as: "to help create the conditions in which language teaching and learning can flourish and to help encourage European citizens to take advantage of the possibilities available to learn and speak the languages of the EU as foreign languages."

11.1.2 Target Languages

All the official languages of the European Union (Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish) were target languages and also Irish, Letzeburgesch, Icelandic and Norwegian (Guidelines for Applicants 1998).

In all LINGUA actions special priority was to be given to the less widely used and less taught languages (LWULT) of the European Union. The definition of LWULT can vary from one area of the EU to another. Thus, Danish is often quoted as an example of a language which is a LWULT across the EU as a whole, but quite widely available on the curriculum in certain regions of Germany. In general, the LWULT are: Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Greek, Irish, Letzeburgesch, Portuguese and Swedish.

As the SOCRATES programme has been opened up to the Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus since 1997, the eligible languages now also include the official languages of Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Poland, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Bulgaria.

The 1998 Guidelines also specified that LINGUA sought to "take into account the specific foreign language learning needs (verbal or non-verbal) of disadvantaged persons".

11.1.3 The Target Audience

The Target Audience was Teachers and Learners of Foreign Languages:

- staff involved in the teaching of languages in all types of educational institutions,
- pupils in schools including vocational education and training schools and colleges,

- students in higher education or teacher training establishments studying to become foreign language teachers,
- staff undergoing in-service training as language teachers,
- centres of research on language teaching,
- curriculum development bodies and research centres,
- bodies concerned with assessment and qualifications,
- etc.

11.1.4 LINGUA: Selected Quantitative Data

Table 11.1 shows the number of applications for LINGUA support and the grants awarded. It includes data on two centralised actions, LINGUA A and D for which the data were provided by the database of the Technical Assistance Office.

For the four years for which data are available, the number of applications for LINGUA A support rose from 31 in 1995 to 50 in 1997 and then dropped slightly the following year (see Table 11.1). The number of projects approved did not follow the same pattern, as the percentage of approvals fell over the first three years from 58 per cent to 34 per cent before increasing again in 1998 to 45 per cent. For LINGUA D, the average approval rate was 24 per cent and did not fluctuate much over the four years. The number of projects approved was highest the first year (34) but in the following years, it varied from 14 to 19 new projects per year.

Table 11.2 shows the LINGUA budget from 1995 to 1999. The largest share of the total LINGUA budget was spent on LINGUA E, the schools' projects. At just over 40% of the total it was lower than the comparable figure for COMENIUS 1 which spent two-thirds of the total COMENIUS budget. LINGUA E funded pupil exchanges, including a period of mobility. LINGUA B provided grants for over 34,000 teachers to follow European training courses of about two weeks each and took up a quarter of the total budget. The actions developing learning and teaching materials, methods and training modules (A and D) shared a quarter of the budget. The smallest action was LINGUA C, which funded assistantships for recently qualified language teachers, and spent just under 10% of the total budget.

Table 11.3 shows the number of projects or partnership grants and individual grants for each of the actions and their average amount. As can be seen, the actions supported under LINGUA varied considerably in terms of the number of projects supported and the annual grants. The schools partnerships, which accounted for 40 per cent of the total budget, were numerous but received small-scale annual grants. The data gathered by the Deloitte and Touche evaluation found an average grant of €330 per participant, as LINGUA E grants funded pupil mobility as part of the bilateral projects. Actions A and D supported far fewer projects but with higher grants because the partnerships were carrying out project developing teaching and learning modules, materials and methods.

Annual grants for Action A projects were about twice those of Action D projects. In both actions group of partners in at least three Member States worked together and the budget was shared according to the responsibilities of each as defined by their work plan.

Table 11.3
LINGUA Projects, Beneficiaries and Average Grants per Action (1995-1999)

LINGUA	Number of projects (total)	Average annual grant per project (Euro)	Number of beneficiaries (total)	Average annual grant per trainee (Euro)
Action A	73	87,551		
Action B			34,600*	1,200***
Action C			2,800*	3,900***
Action D	86	99,606		
Action E	1500 schools per year**	330 per year per participant**		

Source: SOCRATES budget 1995-99 (ECU/EURO) EUR 15; Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels; Data provided by the SOCRATES National Agencies.

* Figure estimated by the Commission.

** Source: See *Evaluation of European School Partnerships under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E*, Deloitte & Touche Brussels, July 2000.

*** Source: the postal surveys of LINGUA B and C beneficiaries.

11.1.5 The Evaluation Criteria for LINGUA

The overall evaluation criteria that were implemented were presented in Chapter 9. This section aims to specify the criteria for LINGUA. The evaluation of the LINGUA section within the SOCRATES I programme was designed to examine the relevance of the programme and how far it suited the expectations, interests and needs of the target populations, as well as the extent to which the actions were appropriate to cover the full scope of the objectives targeted. It focused on whether objectives had been met and whether the actions undertaken met the users' expectations.

Overall, the following criteria were examined

(1) *The scope of institutions* involved in the different actions in order to estimate the impact of the programme in terms of size, penetration into education systems and breadth of coverage. Equal opportunities criteria have been taken into consideration where possible, including the notion of disadvantage, the participation of rural areas and of technical and vocational schools. The role and characteristics of the partnerships and how they worked in practice were included. The data are taken from the postal surveys, the project interviews and the Technical Assistance Office database. For this global evaluation the data concerning these aspects of LINGUA E were drawn from the analysis carried out by Deloitte and Touche.

(2) *"Making a difference":* that is the impact of the funded activity on the partner organisations and their environment and more broadly on the education systems in which they work. The evaluation sought to highlight the types and variety of impacts on the different

actors. It focused on issues concerning both content and dissemination of information about the funded activity. Through the postal surveys, interviews and workshops, it also examined the issue of quality assessment of outcomes and products with a view to transfer into the systems involved.

(3) *The role and share of the lesser widely used and lesser taught languages (LWULT)* in all the LINGUA actions. Questions about this aspect of the impact of LINGUA include:

- the extent to which the prioritising of the LWULT has been feasible and effective;
- where possible, the balance achieved among the different languages;
- the extent to which LINGUA can contribute to the production of learning tools and modules/courses;

(4) *The impact on language teachers and future language teachers*. The external evaluators were asked to examine with particular attention the impact of the programme on training and continuing training of language teachers. Evidence was gathered through postal surveys, but also from interviews with actors at national level. The analysis sought to examine:

- the profile of teachers participating in teacher training activities supported by LINGUA (LINGUA B and C);
- the range of languages for which the activities have been organised;
- the broader impact on the home institution for LINGUA B beneficiaries;
- the balance between process and content concerning European training courses, i.e. whether it is it the experience that counts most or what is learned;
- involvement of higher education institutions, curriculum developers, researchers, assessment specialists, etc.;
- the perception of an improved capacity by teachers to communicate in their chosen language areas and to enhance the learning process for pupils,
- the impact on host schools for LINGUA C
- the efficiency in terms of the impact on the systems and the individual costs.

(5) *Methods and tools for language learning and teaching:* The focus was on the projects funded under Action D and examined the implementation and potential sustainability of the activity mainly through postal surveys and project questionnaires. The evaluation asked how to develop appropriate quality assessment criteria with a perspective of embedding outcomes in the curricula.

(6) *The overall management of the LINGUA programme:* This issue was addressed through the interviews carried out at EU level and with the national government bodies and the LINGUA agencies in each of the countries covered, as well as through the postal surveys and project interviews. It examines the beneficiaries' levels of satisfaction with the programme and the extent to which it has provided a support structure for their development work or alternatively hindered progress due to the administrative and financial procedures.

(7) *Dissemination:* The evaluation sought to investigate:

- the levels, types and audiences for dissemination;
- whether or not budgets had been sufficient to build in a sufficient level of dissemination;
- the contribution of national agencies and regional or local education structures and bodies to dissemination of results and outcomes;

(8) Transferability and Sustainability

- Has the LINGUA structure been able to take into account the potential for multiplier effects and how?
- Are the project funding periods long enough to reach a stage in development in which it becomes possible to examine multiplier effects and transferability?
- Do funded activities produce an outcome or result which is transferable? Are there mechanisms to assess this factor?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to take this aspect into account?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to build sustainability?
- Is it feasible? If so, under what conditions?

11.2 LINGUA Action by Action

This section is organised by action. Each of the actions supported under LINGUA are first described to establish the context of the analysis. The description includes selected quantitative data. It is followed by the analysis of the data collected for this global evaluation. For each action, the specific data used are listed. At the end of each section there is a summary of the main points.

In a Commission document, the range of actions are summarised as follows: "LINGUA action D helps to ensure that there is an adequate supply of learning and teaching materials for all EU languages; A, B and C encourage improvements in the training of language teachers, and actions C and E encourage young people in particular to learn a foreign language and to use it in real situations."

11.2.1 LINGUA A

Presentation

LINGUA A was the *European Cooperation Programme for language teacher training (ECP).* The main purpose was to "link together institutions of initial and/or in-service training of language teachers in different participating countries for the purpose of enhancing the professional skills of future or current foreign language teachers and trainers by extending their linguistic knowledge and/or confidence in the use of target language, increasing their

communicative competence, extending their understanding of the cultural environment of the language and refining their technical and/or methodological expertise" (*Guidelines for Applicants 1998*). An ECP was based on cooperation between initial and/or in-service training institutions in at least three different participating countries. Though funding was granted annually under SOCRATES I, the *Guidelines to Applicants* stated that these projects could be projected to span a period of up to 3 years.

It was a centralised action under which the applications for support were submitted to the SOCRATES YOUTH Technical Assistance Office in Brussels which assisted the Commission in the operational implementation of the programme.

The activity was project-based. The coordinating (main) partner submitted a proposal on behalf of the group of partners requesting a grant in order to carry out a plan of work in an area of joint development of common curricula or the production of training materials, schemes or modules. Some projects ran a training course based on the modules developed, for which teachers from the participating countries could apply for a grant under LINGUA B. Depending on the year, specific topics of interest for transnational cooperation were specified or not in the *Guidelines*, e.g. early language learning, plurilingual education, etc. The partners could apply for a small grant of up to €1,000 for a preparatory visit in order to lay the foundations of their ECP. The European grant generally constituted no more than 50 per cent maximum of the total project costs.

For LINGUA A, 1995 was a transition year from the first LINGUA programme and the actions started fully in 1996. For the projects funded for three years, the first wave was only completed in 1999, which meant that the possibilities for evaluating final outcomes and products were limited. It should also be noted that in some cases projects which had their first year of funding in 1998 or 1999 may still be continuing their activity under SOCRATES II. The year 2000 is a transfer year from the first to the second phase of the programme.

The two tables that follow, Table 11.4 and 11.5, show firstly the number of transnational cooperation projects established and renewed and the mean support requested and awarded and then project funding renewals year by year.

Table 11.4
Number of Transnational Cooperation Projects Established and Renewed with the Support Requested and Awarded 1996-1999

	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Number of transnational cooperation projects					
New	31	18	19	5	73
Renewed		20	21	28	49
Total	31	38	40	33	
Support requested (mean)	237,293	213,662	200,605		
Support awarded (mean)	95,367	84,265	83,022		
Ratio of support requested and awarded	41,8	41,3	42,6		

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels

From 1995 to 1999, a total of 73 projects received funding with an average annual grant of about €90,000 (for the years 1996-1998).

Over the five-year period, out of the total of 73 new projects approved, 67 per cent received funding for at least a second year (see above Table 11.4). There was a much higher number of projects approved the first year of funding, 1996, than in subsequent years, but the total number funded every year (whether they were in their first, second or third year of funding), totals 30 to 40. The ratio of support awarded to support requested (42%) did not change considerably over the period.

Only a quarter of the 1996 projects received three years of funding, while the respective proportion increased to two-thirds for the 1997 projects and four out of five of the 1998 projects were renewed for the second year (see below Table 11.5).

Table 11.5
Project funding renewals 1995-1999

	Year of selection				Total
	1996	1997	1998	1999	
One year	35.5	22.2	21.1	100	32.9
Two years	38.7	11.1	78.9	0	39.7
Three years	25.8	66.7	0	0	27.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(31)	(18)	(19)	(5)	(73)

Source: database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office

Data Used for Analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The data used for this analysis are mainly drawn from:

- The postal survey sent to project coordinators. They were asked to provide information about the coordinating partner, the composition of the partnership, target groups, target languages and the thematic areas on which the project worked, its objectives and main activities. There were also questions concerning links to other projects, the partnership process, the participants (including whether any pupils/students had special needs) administrative and financial procedures, evaluation, results and dissemination. Most of the sections contained closed questions, but there were open questions on outcomes and impact.
- The database analysis. The Technical Assistance database provided a range of information drawn from project applications which included the national and institutional composition of partnerships, thematic areas, target groups, etc. It also provided the quantitative data for the centralised actions.
- Interviews with project coordinators. The interview guide contained questions on why the coordinator had chosen to seek funding from SOCRATES, the contribution of the programme to achieving results, issues of dissemination, impact and follow-up and finally suggestions for improvement.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops, as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries

The Analysis

Why SOCRATES?

In the interviews carried out with LINGUA project coordinators, they gave the following reasons for choosing LINGUA A. Some were already working within the framework of the programme. LINGUA suited their developmental needs and it was the only appropriate source of funding. The ways in which the coordinators learned about the programme varied considerably: about half obtained information from colleagues and another third form their National Agency.

Partnerships and Coordination

Data about the LINGUA A partnerships taken from the Technical Assistance Office database show that, despite a small overall number of projects, (73) over the four funding years (LINGUA A started in 1996), there have been coordinators in all the EU Member-States except Greece. The countries in which there were the highest number of project coordinators are Germany (19%), Italy (12%), the Netherlands (11%) and the UK (23%). Together, they are home to the coordinating institutions in over 40 per cent of the total number of projects. The size of the different countries must be taken into consideration in interpreting these figures. This is also the case for the percentages of participating institutions by country. As is to be expected, the countries with the highest population (Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the UK) are the most frequent partners, with the UK representing a substantially higher percentage of partners than the other four (18% as compared to 10 to 12 %). The figures can also be affected by some projects having several partners from one country.

The analysis of the questionnaires sent to project coordinators indicates that in the majority of cases the partners knew each other before launching the project. Otherwise, contact was made through other colleagues or at conferences.

The Technical Assistance Office database figures show that higher education institutions represented almost 60 per cent of the participating institutions, as against 13 per cent for adult or continuing education providers and 10 per cent for regional public authorities. Given the small total number of projects, it is difficult to make any statements about the participation of different types of institutions according to country, as this is very dependent on the structure of the education system and teacher training. As some countries had very small numbers of projects, the percentages may not be indicative. The average number of partners in a project was about eight.

It is interesting to note that in most cases the partnerships coordinated by the questionnaire respondents demonstrated a North-South mix with, in recent years, some partners from the

Central and Eastern European countries. The working languages were, in order of importance, English, French, German and Spanish.

In general, the experience of working in a partnership both at national and transnational level was appreciated by the coordinators in the questionnaire sample. They considered that their partnerships had managed to agree on clear objectives and set up a system of communication. Most of the difficulties mentioned tended to be linked to over-loaded timetables for project staff and administrative issues. Despite the fact that 70 per cent of the partnerships had signed a formal partnership agreement, 35 per cent of the partners in the projects represented in the sample surveyed left before the end of the project's funded period. The main reasons given were project staff transferring to another post or leaving the partner institution. It should be noted that partners expressed mixed feelings about the use of a formal contract and certain wondered whether it did not engender extra financial costs.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Moving on to the administrative and financial procedures, the questionnaire sought to assess the types of difficulties coordinators had had in obtaining and filling in application forms. Though the respondents did not report any problems in obtaining the form, they tended to find it unclear and quite difficult to fill in. This was substantiated by the interviews in which respondents insisted on the amount of work to complete an application, the lack of information, the fact that help was not always obtainable from the National Agency, that budgets were difficult to construct, etc. Some coordinators felt the guidelines were good, but verbal responses from Brussels poor, others quite the contrary.

Likewise, coordinators complained that selection criteria were not transparent and that they had had to wait a very long time to obtain a reply about their application, on average eight months. Though most respondents to the questionnaire obtained a grant at the first application, three-quarters received less than they had applied for. Figures are available for 1996, 1997 and 1998. They show that the mean ratio of support awarded to that requested, over the three years for LINGUA A projects, was 42-43 per cent. Requests for grants averaged from €200,000 to €240,000, while the average grants awarded were situated between €83,000 and €95,000. The outcomes reported in the questionnaire were that partnerships had to readjust their budgets by reducing their work plan or specific aspects of the project such as the dissemination phase. In a few extreme cases, coordinators said that the project had stopped.

One comment made in an interview about procedures was *that "Brussels works to very tight deadlines for the financial reporting requested of the partnerships but approvals and payments are nearly always late".* For the majority of the questionnaire respondents, their payments had arrived late. Another interviewee said that *"Getting money from Brussels demands five times as much work as getting money from the (national) government"*. The fact that the coordinators carried the full financial responsibility for the project was criticised and, for some of them, led to their decision not to coordinate another project. However, on the whole, the type of help they received concerning the financial monitoring from their

National Agencies, the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and the Commission was judged to be adequate. An interviewee commented that, in terms of support, the language experts in Brussels were very good. The problem lay with the rules and reporting.

The final aspect of the administrative procedures which was severely criticised concerned funding renewal. As funding was granted annually and approval arrived late, projects reported that they usually had to fill in a request for renewal which included a description of outcomes of the first year, just after starting work on the project. Linked to this was the frequent complaint that work plans could not be amended without great difficulties once they had been submitted.

Thematic Areas and Target Populations

According to the data provided by the Technical Assistance Office from the application forms, the main thematic areas which projects intended to develop concerned the main priority area of the action, i.e. initial or continuing training modules or materials for teaching staff (about 90% of the projects). Within this framework, the most common priorities for projects were the less widely used and lesser taught languages (71%), information technologies (68%) and open and distance learning (48%). Between one-quarter and one-third of the projects stated that they would be working on early language learning, creating a network, and on teacher mobility. Almost half the projects stated in their application that there would be a link with LINGUA B, particularly in those coordinated from Belgium, Finland, Ireland and Sweden where all the projects announced a link with Action B. Whereas in 1996 only a quarter of the LINGUA A projects announced a link with LINGUA B, this proportion rose to three-quarters the following year and then remained at about 60 per cent for the last two years.

In the LINGUA A projects surveyed by questionnaire, the most common thematic areas were as follows. 70 per cent of the respondents were involved in developing courses or modules for continuing teacher training, while 40 per cent were involved in initial teacher training. The use of computers and Internet in teaching languages were thematic areas in which 40 per cent of the respondents stated that they were involved. (Multiple responses were possible, as respondents were asked to tick from a list of ten thematic areas.) In the questionnaire responses, themes such as the transfer from school to work, bilingualism, validation and recognition of competences were virtually inexistent.

One-third of the coordinators had developed the project in order to work with European partners, while for half of them this project followed from other development work underway and responded to the identification of a need. Very few of the respondents said that they were working with pupils with special needs and over two-thirds of the projects surveyed were not concerned with issues of gender. The data provided by the Technical Assistance Office support this aspect of the questionnaire returns in so far as special needs education was not a priority area for many projects (3%).

According to questionnaire responses, LINGUA A projects targeted teacher trainers and language teachers working with all age groups of pupils/students from 11 to over 18.

According to the database information, the groups targeted by LINGUA A projects evolved over the period of SOCRATES I. Until 1998, primary school pupils were frequently the target group of a projects, whereas the number of projects targeting secondary school pupils has increased considerably since 1997. The situation in Spain is different from the general evolution, as primary schools are twice as concerned by LINGUA A projects as secondary schools. In general, adult learners were rarely targeted. The same applies to universities, vocational education and training institutions, pre-primary groups or initial teacher training.

Though most common target languages in the questionnaire responses were English, French, German, Spanish and Italian, a broad variety of languages were targeted overall. Questionnaire returns suggest that about 40 per cent of the projects targeted at least one of the less widely used and lesser taught languages. Portuguese, Dutch, Finnish, Danish and Greek were all target languages in some projects, as were also (though not very often) Norwegian and Hungarian. This picture is confirmed by the database tables which show that most projects targeted English (78%), French (67%) and German (60%). Spanish was targeted by half the projects and Italian by 40 per cent. For the less widely used and lesser taught languages, these percentages are: Danish (14%), Dutch (22%), Finnish (16%), Greek (11%), Irish (8%), Portuguese (32%) and Swedish (11%). Some of the languages of the EEA/EFTA countries and the Central and Eastern European countries appear in a few project applications as target languages. One quarter of the projects were generic, i.e. they were developing approaches or materials that could be used with a range of languages.

A large majority of the questionnaire respondents had planned an evaluation of their work, usually through informal or peer group discussion, but sometimes carried out externally, at the end of the project. It represented between 5 and 10 per cent of the total budget. Among the interviewees, none of the projects had participated in a national or European evaluation.

Building an Impact

In over three-quarters of the projects for which the coordinator filled in a questionnaire, a training course was developed. Half of them delivered it once and will use it again. This latter point is consistent with the Commission stipulation that institutions developing training courses under LINGUA A should be prepared to integrate them into their teaching programme.

Though interviewees gave a list of products (finished or not) resulting from the project, they recognised that their impact may vary according to the partner country, depending on context and structures.

The coordinators reported the impact of the project as follows:

- *The European dimension:* It was defined very broadly in terms of exchange of expertise among partners, working together on a concrete project, an experience of intercultural work, establishing a consensus around common working methods. The European dimension was frequently referred to as belonging to a group or a model (seen as different from those of North America or South-east Asia). However, one of the

interviewees pointed out that the courses developed with LINGUA funding could also be used in African countries.

- *Benefits for the institution:* Coordinating a European project was felt to be beneficial for the profile of the institution, both in the home country and transnationally. It allowed institutions to establish networks and exchange with other partners which was seen as positive and led to improvements in language teaching programmes. A European project was also a way of bringing in extra funding to the institutions. LINGUA was a way of rapidly introducing internationalisation into an institution.
- *Benefits to staff:* Staff learned to manage projects and work with networks. Being in regular contact with colleagues in other countries improved their language skills and made them more aware of cultural differences and different ways of working. Improving IT skills and becoming familiar with EU procedures were also cited.
- *Benefits to students/pupils:* Pupils and students were seen to benefit from informal links with other institutions abroad and from developing the use of Information and Communication Technologies in teaching languages. Their linguistic skills also benefited.

Dissemination of Outcomes

Dissemination of results and outcomes was undertaken by three-quarters of the respondents, in most cases with support from the National Agencies or from the Technical Assistance Office. It accounts for 10 to 15 per cent of the total project budget. Target audiences were mainly similar organisations in the partner countries. Though the methods of dissemination covered a broad range, such as seminars, Internet, articles, conferences, etc., the most common approach reported was running the developed course. However, most of the coordinators considered that in order to carry out a full dissemination plan correctly, they would have needed more time and staff, a larger budget and finished products.

Future Work and Coordinators Suggestions for Improving the Programme

Though most of the projects would like to continue the work after the end of the funding period and reported in their questionnaire responses that they would like to be part of future European projects, few wished to undertake the coordination tasks again. Some of the requirements, such as travelling with APEX air tickets, were felt to discourage future participation because of the effect on family life. Late payments of the grants meant that institutions had to be able to self-fund the project work and could find themselves paying interest to the bank on loans. Project coordinators would like to see mutual deadlines respected both by the coordinators and by Brussels with simpler procedures.

The SOCRATES Contribution

One-third of the projects surveyed had followed on from another EU-funded project, usually LINGUA and half of them were linked either to another LINGUA project or to another nationally or regionally-funded initiative.

Overall, LINGUA was seen as an enabling programme, as it provided a budget without which the work could not have been carried out. SOCRATES also provided a context for research

and development that was broader than the national arena and may have helped institutions to internationalise rapidly. Some projects have produced courses which they feel could also be of relevance outside Europe. One interviewee felt that working in a transnational partnership had made them think more carefully about how to train teachers.

11.2.2 LINGUA B

In-service training in the field of foreign language teaching provided grants for teachers who wished to follow immersion courses of 2 to 4 weeks in another participating country in order to improve their effectiveness in teaching a foreign language (or through the medium of a foreign language). The grants were available to qualified teachers of foreign languages with at least 3 years' teaching experience, staff undergoing re-training as foreign language teachers, teachers of other subjects and disciplines who teach them through the medium of a foreign language, inspectors and teacher trainers.

The courses for which these grants were given could be either those developed by LINGUA A ECPs or other courses which fulfilled the criteria in the *Guidelines*. The grants were intended to help cover the cost of travel to and from the course, fees and accommodation and subsistence. This was a decentralised action; applications were made to the National Agency which then selected the approved applicants.

It was estimated by the Commission that from 1995 to 1999, about 34,600 teachers from the EU and EFTA/EEA countries benefited from grants to participate in in-service training courses abroad. The Commission estimated the overall number of foreign language teachers in the EU Member States at just over 300,000 in 1998 (*Analysis of the Development of LINGUA Actions B, C and E (SOC/COM/98/017*). Based on this estimation, it was assumed that approximately 10% of the total number of language teachers in the EU would received a LINGUA B grant over the period 1996-1999. Given that LINGUA B grants were also available to language teachers from the participating EFTA/EEA - and in recent years from the Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus - the percentage impact achieved was certainly smaller.

The two tables which follow show firstly the number of applications and grants approved and awarded for LINGUA B by academic year (Table 11.6) and secondly the number of grants awarded by home and host country for the period 1995-2000 (Table 11.7). The data for these tables were provided by the National Agencies following a first request made in May 2000 and reiterated in September 2000. Unfortunately, due to lack of time, new staff or the fact that data were not held centrally, some National Agencies were not able to provide the data necessary and the tables are therefore incomplete.

The data available in Table 11.6 shows a total of almost 34,000 applications for grants for the whole period. Excluding incomplete data from the UK and Italy, 59 per cent of the applications were approved. There is not sufficient complete data to estimate the overall rate of approval and rate of grants awarded for all countries for the full period. In Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Belgium (French and Dutch-peaking) and Slovenia, the percentage of applications approved was high, ranging from 71 to 93 per cent. On the other hand, in Italy and Hungary the rate was much lower, between 25-30 per cent. However in both those countries the number of applications was high in comparison with other countries of a similar population size.

From the data available, it would appear that in countries which participated from the beginning of the programme, the demand stabilised while in the countries which have joined the programme more recently, such as Lithuania and Romania, the demand rose each year. The UK was the country in which the highest numbers of beneficiaries followed courses with LINGUA B grants. France hosted the second highest number followed by Germany and Spain. Ireland and Italy also hosted a substantial proportion of beneficiaries. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have not yet become host countries. It can be seen that in some cases teachers followed courses in their home country, the case for 7 per cent of the Italian beneficiaries.

Data Used for the Analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The analysis of LINGUA B is based on data collected by:

- The postal survey sent to a sample of teachers who had received a European training grant. The questionnaire requested information about the beneficiaries, their home institution and whether or not they had special needs. They were also asked about the grant application process, the course purpose, organisation and content, including the target language and languages used. They were asked to assess the course and their experience. Most of the questions were closed. Some, on the European dimension and the impact, were open ended.
- The analysis of statistics collected from the National Agencies.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops as well as interviews with key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries. Reference is also made to a Commission document: *Analysis of the Development of LINGUA Actions B, C and E (SOC/COM/98/017)*

The Analysis

The Beneficiaries

Over two-thirds of the beneficiaries who filled in a questionnaire were women. This no doubt reflects quite accurately the role of women in the European education systems and particularly in language teaching. The only exception to this pattern was Norway with a strong male representation. Over 60 per cent of the beneficiaries surveyed taught in secondary schools and a quarter in primary schools. A further 7 per cent taught in adult or continuing education institutions. The survey included specific questions on beneficiaries with special needs with a view to estimating their share in the total number of grants. Only five of the returned questionnaires concerned people with a physical disability.

A typical LINGUA B teacher was a woman, between 40 and 50 years old, who had been teaching for at least 15 years in a secondary school to pupils aged 11 to 18. There were some variations among countries, particularly in the age range and teaching experience. Thus, there were primary school teachers from France, Denmark and Finland and teachers from adult or continuing education institutions notably from the Netherlands.

Target Languages

LINGUA B aimed to prioritise the less widely used and lesser taught languages (LWULT) but the most common target languages of courses were firstly English with French in second position, followed by German. There were very few examples in the survey of beneficiaries who had taken courses targeting any of the LWULT. This reflects the situation in the Member-States in which the less widely used and less taught languages (such as Danish, Finnish, Swedish, Greek, Portuguese) are not taught and therefore are not a priority when approving requests for grants. This situation was mirrored by the geographical location of courses which took place in the UK and France, followed by Germany, Italy, Spain and Ireland. In the 1998 Commission document referred to above, the data for the 1991-1996 period showed this trend was already in place.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Concerning the administrative and financial procedures, in most cases - with the exception of the Norwegian beneficiaries - this was the first time the beneficiary had received a European grant and the first time teachers in their institution had followed a European training course. They found out about the existence of the grants from both formal and informal sources: other colleagues, the National Agency or the Ministry of Education. However, it is the National Agencies which then provided the information, as was intended in the design of this action.

In some countries (such as French-speaking Belgium, France and Germany), at least a quarter of the teachers did not have to complete the application procedures themselves, as they were dealt with by the home institution. The length of time that teachers then waited for

approval of the grant varied considerably, depending on the country, from one to five months. Responses did not suggest that waiting for several months was a problem.

For the 1991-1996 period, the Commission document referred to above gives the average LINGUA B grant as just under €1,100. In the responses to the survey, the average grant had risen to €1200. However, it should be noted that in all countries, except Portugal, the exact amount of the grant could vary moderately from one teacher to another to take into account travel and accommodation expenses to different countries. Portugal was the only country where teachers had to make several requests before receiving a grant, not doubt due to a high level of demand.

Most respondents said that the grant they received corresponded to the amount they expected, but there were a few exceptions. Beneficiaries in Portugal and Sweden and to a lesser extent in Bulgaria, Estonia,, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia had received less than they expected. More than two-thirds of the respondents received 80 per cent of the grant before the course and the remaining 20 per cent after their return. However, for the other third, the full amount was received after the course.

LINGUA B grants were intended to help cover the cost of travel, course fees, accommodation and subsistence. In practice, according to the questionnaire returns, they covered the full cost of fees and accommodation but the extent to which they covered travel costs and subsistence varied. Teachers from Austria, Germany and Portugal, for example, were not very satisfied with the amount of the grant. In the case of Austria, this perception was substantiated by the interviews carried out with national actors in which one interviewee mentioned that it was national policy to give lower grants in order to increase the number of beneficiaries. The percentage of costs covered varied from 52 per cent in Finland to 91 per cent in the UK. Most teachers received no other source of funding.

The Courses

Two-thirds of the respondents to the postal survey did not know whether or not their course had been developed with LINGUA A funding. It has therefore not been possible to make links between the two actions. The average length of a course was about 14 days.

The majority of the respondents considered that the course enabled them to improve their competences in the language they taught, which fulfilled the main objective of LINGUA B. They also highlighted the exchange of ideas, improvements in their way of working and their oral and comprehension competences in the language as useful outcomes. Beneficiaries also mentioned that the course had shown them examples of good practice that they could use in their institution, new teaching approaches and had led to contacts with staff in other institutions.

A further criterion of the Commission was to prioritise innovative approaches. A large majority of the courses followed by the teachers surveyed focused on the use of new technologies in language teaching. In general, the courses focused on new teaching materials or approaches, but rarely on methods of assessment.

Follow up

In the majority of cases, responses to the postal survey indicated that there was no follow-up by the course organiser after the course. Any dissemination was undertaken by the individual teacher. According to the questionnaire responses, the situation varied from one country to another. The German and Austrian beneficiaries stated that there was no follow up to courses they followed and they did not disseminate what they had learned on returning home. Teachers from Greece, France, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK gave mixed responses, while the only group of teachers who felt that there had been some follow up by the course coordinator was from Spain.

For those beneficiaries who considered that they were able to use what they had learned in their everyday work, it was usually in their own institution, either in the classroom or shared with other colleagues. However, they considered that the outcomes they could share with other teachers in their school were very limited.

Evaluation of the course

The beneficiaries saw the impact of the course as follows:

- *The European dimension:* The majority of the respondents underlined the development of contacts with colleagues form other countries and being able to establish networks. The training course gave them international contacts which could lead to setting up exchanges. The possibility of exchanging ideas and points of view on teaching was also important. An exchange of experience and taking a course in another country allowed them to discover new approaches and learn more about other education systems, but also to stand back vis-à-vis their own system and realise that other colleagues were facing similar difficulties. The final point mentioned concerned the fact that the experience opened up a multicultural dimension for them.

- *Benefits for the institution:* The main benefit mentioned was the fact that the quality of teaching improved, due to better linguistic skills, a better knowledge of the cultural context and of new pedagogical tools. Some beneficiaries also mentioned that they felt more confident and more motivated, which they felt was to the advantage of the institution. Beneficiaries also considered that their institutions improved their profile when they sent staff on European training courses. In some cases, this led to more language teaching or the introduction of a language which was not previously taught. It could also lead to establishing or strengthening international programmes and exchanges. The final benefit which the beneficiaries highlighted for their institutions was that sending staff on European courses could lead to better relations in the institution: between staff and students, but also reinforcing the team.

- *Benefits to pupils/students:* The impact on students concerned three aspects. The first was the use of new materials and approaches to teaching. Secondly, an improvement in the quality of teaching was beneficial and thirdly their own increased

motivation meant that they could motivate students better and develop the interest in school projects.

The respondents were unanimous in their positive evaluation of the experience. They considered that the training courses were useful and a large majority would like to follow another similar course in the future. They felt that they had improved the quality of their teaching, developed a network of contacts in Europe, increased their interest in continuing training, which would lead to greater job satisfaction.

Respondents made some suggestions to improve the programme. It would be useful to check the content of courses, the balance between theory and practice, the mix of nationalities and even the participants' language level. They also felt that it was important to make sure that the centre was adapted to residential courses for adults and was sufficiently well equipped. Teachers suggested that it would be useful to encourage recognition of the fact they had followed a European training course and that more publicity should be made about the action.

11.2.3 LINGUA C

LINGUA C provided grants for *Assistantships for future language teachers.* It enabled trainee or recently qualified language teachers (who had not already been employed as teachers of the target language) to spend a period of between 3 and 8 months at a host institution in a participating country other than their own. The *Guidelines* stated that it would "normally be a country where one of the official languages is that which the future teachers will later be teaching. However, in order to give due priority to the least widely used and least taught languages, an exception may be made in order to permit LINGUA assistants to travel to a country where such a language is spoken, even if they may later be teaching another language" (*Guidelines for Applicants 1998*).

The main objectives of the assistantships were to provide future language teachers with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge of foreign languages and other European countries and education systems. It also provided learners with the possibility of upgrading and broadening their language skills by acquiring or improving their competence in the assistant's language. It was hoped that this would increase their general motivation to learn languages and stimulate their interest in the country of the assistant.

The role of the assistant in the host institution was defined quite broadly to include not just language but also the culture of their country of origin. Institutions hosting assistants were required to establish a work programme which could include preparing or implementing a European partnership in the school. Host institutions could be any educational or training institutions recognised by the appropriate authorities of the host country, including primary or secondary schools (general, technical or vocational), vocational training or adult education institutions, but not universities.

The procedure was decentralised; applications were made to the National Agency in the assistant's country of origin, which then selected the approved applicants. The host institutions were selected by the National Agencies in the host country. The grants allocated covered return travel to and from the host country and a monthly contribution towards subsistence costs.

Under SOCRATES I, LINGUA C was a small action in terms of the number of beneficiaries. It is estimated that from 1995 to 1999, about 2,800 future language teachers benefited from a LINGUA C grant. The number per annum rose from 201 in 1995, which was a pilot year, to an estimated 875 in 1999.

The two tables which follow show firstly the number of applications and grants approved and awarded for LINGUA C by academic year (Table 11.8) and secondly the number of grants awarded by home and host country for the period 1995-2000 (Table 11.9). The data for these tables were provided by the National Agencies following a first request made in May 2000 and reiterated in September 2000. Unfortunately, due to lack of time, new staff or the fact that data were not held centrally, some National Agencies were not able to provide the data necessary and the tables are therefore incomplete.

The data available in Table 11.8 shows a total of almost 7000 applications for the period 1995-2000 of which 32 per cent were approved. This calculation does not include those countries for which the data is not complete, e.g. the UK. The number of grants awarded in comparison with those approved cannot be calculated as some countries only supplied information on applications and awards. Portugal was the country in which the percentage of approvals in comparison with applications was the highest (80%). Until 1999 the rate of approval was almost 100 per cent but in the last two years of SOCRATES I the number of applications in Portugal rose substantially. In Germany, the Netherlands and Norway the rate of approval was also high ranging from 51 to 65 per cent. Bulgaria and Slovenia did not have a budget for LINGUA C which explains the absence of data. In some other Central and Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary a Poland and Romania, the rate of awards granted was low (from 11 to 24%) Over the full period of the programme, there was a generally positive evolution with the numbers of applications, approvals and grants rising.

Table 11.9 shows that the UK was the host country which received the highest number of LINGUA C beneficiaries followed by Denmark, Spain and France. Given the gaps in the data, this conclusion is provisional. Few assistants went to the Central and Eastern European countries. Those who did came mainly from the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany and went to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Data Used for the Analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The analysis of LINGUA C is based on data collected by:

- The postal survey sent to a sample of former assistants. The questionnaire asked about the assistants' personal background and the profile of their studies at home and abroad. It covered the cost and funding of the assistantship and preparation before departure. Assistants completed information about the data they had received, their duties and the general experience and assessed the outcomes. Most of the questions were closed, while some which dealt with why they went, the value of the experience and their impact on the host institution were open.
- The analysis of statistics collected from the National Agencies.
- The working group discussion at the transnational workshop and questionnaires filled in by the education establishments present in the group.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the interviews with key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries.

Reference is also made to earlier documents examining the implementation of the action:

- SOCRATES / LINGUA Action C – *Assistantships Evaluation Event*, Lisbon 31 May to 2 June 1996
- Analysis of the Development of LINGUA Actions B, C and E (SOC/COM/98/017

The Analysis

The Beneficiaries

Out of the total number of respondents to the questionnaire, 85% of the assistants were women who were between 25 and 26 years old in 1999. This confirms the 1996-1997 analysis in which 83 per cent of the assistants were women (*Analysis of the Development of LINGUA Actions B, C and E, SOC/COM/98/017*). Situations differed among countries, as the assistants from Austria, Finland and Sweden in the present cohort were all women but, among those going to Finland and Hungary 50 per cent were men. They tended to describe themselves as coming from average income families or above. Almost 70 per cent of the respondents were in their fifth year of study when they went abroad as a LINGUA assistant.

Duration of the Assistantship

The average duration of the assistantship (including teaching and holiday periods) was 6 months with the Danish, Finnish and Greek assistants in the sample completing the shortest periods (less than 5 months) and the Belgian, Spanish, French and Portuguese students completing the longest (6 to 8 months). Reports from assistants analysed in the Commission

document suggested that the longer assistantships were more effective in achieving the aims of the programme.

Reasons for Requesting a LINGUA C Grant

Questionnaire respondents were asked why they requested a LINGUA grant. The main reasons given were firstly a contribution to their personal development and to gain a teaching experience. They saw it as a new experience, an experience abroad, a break with their home culture and even a break before starting work. This period abroad led them to think about their career and whether or not they really wanted to teach and to have a better understanding of the different aspects of teaching. They also wanted to improve their language competences and their knowledge of the host country. Some wished to improve their oral capacity and their comprehension, while others wanted to improve their teaching competences and be able to compare different working methods. Finally, the respondents considered that this experience made a contribution to their personal development.

Host Countries

Out of the 325 responses to the questionnaire, the four countries which hosted the highest proportion of assistants in 1998-1999 were Spain (13%), Italy (12%), France (9%) and the UK (8%). In comparison, the definitive figures available for 1996 and 1997 show a slightly different situation. In 1996, the UK hosted 16 per cent of the assistants, followed by Spain (12%) and France (10%). Italy hosted 7 per cent, about the same number as Sweden and Germany. In 1997, France and the UK hosted the highest proportion (12% each), closely followed by Spain and Italy (10% and 9%). The survey figures suggest that the popularity of Spain and Italy gradually increased during the funding period.

There were definite "preferences" for countries. Thus, for example, one-third of the Belgian assistants in the sample went to Ireland, while a quarter of the German assistants went to Spain and almost a quarter to Italy. 50 per cent of the respondents from the Netherlands also went to Spain. The Danish assistants on the other hand went to more countries in more even numbers, as about 15 per cent went to Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands. This was also the case of the Italian assistants, as 11 per cent went to Belgium, Germany, Denmark and the UK and smaller percentages to other countries. Looking at the sample from the point of view of the host country, there are similar groupings. Thus, half of the respondents who went to France came from either the UK (33%) or Spain (20%) and half who went to Ireland came from just two countries as well, France (25%) and Spain (23%). 50 per cent of the assistants in the sample who went to Greece came from France.

For the period 1995-1997, nearly 36 per cent of assistants went to countries where the main languages are usually classified as less widely used, i.e.: Danish, Dutch, Greek, Portuguese, Finnish, Swedish, Icelandic or Norwegian. For the sample, the comparative figure is 30 per cent.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Concerning administrative and financial issues, the assistants generally submitted their request for funding 8 months prior to their departure and received approval and notification of the grant about 4 months before their departure. Most received the first payment a month before leaving.

The average grant, which was given not as a salary but to cover subsistence costs, was €3600 for the full period and €620 per month, but this varied considerably according to length of stay, country of origin and host country and the monthly amount. It would appear that the Danish assistants received the lowest monthly amount (€497), while the British and Italian assistants received €700 per month and the Greek assistants the highest amount of €782 per month. The assistants who went to Portugal, the Czech Republic and Hungary received the lowest monthly amount (less than €500), whereas those who went to Finland, Sweden and Iceland received the highest amount (over €700).

The average cost of travel was €303 (for one return journey between the home and host country) which meant that, on average, a beneficiary cost (grant + travel expenses) about €3900. For the years 1996-1997, the average grant was slightly lower, €606 per month and the average cost per beneficiary was calculated at €4038. There does not therefore seem to be much fluctuation over the years. The LINGUA grant covered 77 per cent of the assistants' sources of income during the period abroad. In contrast, over half the assistants' income came from their parents at their home institution. In general, they estimated their expenses to be less per month in their home country than in the host country, €415 to €592.

Documentation and Preparation Prior to the Assistantship

Assistants were asked about the type of information they received before going abroad and the means of preparation for their stay. On the whole, they were quite satisfied with the different types of general information they received, but dissatisfied with information about language courses, administrative questions and the methods of teaching used in the institution.

Concerning the preparation of the assistants and education institutions, the 1996 evaluation emphasised the need for preparation and for the National Agencies to provide each host school and each LINGUA assistant with an induction course at the start of the assistantship to clarify the objectives of the scheme and to ensure that each participant had the information they needed to make their project a success. At the time, it would appear that the Commission was looking into ways of resourcing such courses.

According to the questionnaire responses, assistants were generally either given or provided with written documents concerning most aspects (practical questions, society and culture in the host country, academic and linguistic preparation). In some countries, such as Belgium, the UK and Finland, information meetings were organised on practical issues or on more academic issues (Finland, Czech Republic, Portugal and Spain). In Germany, Greece, the Czech Republic, and France future assistants attended either voluntary or obligatory

language courses. The future assistants received information about the host institution before their departure either directly from the institution or from their National Agency. However, it would appear that a high proportion of French, Finnish and Greek assistants received no information on the host institution prior to their departure.

The Host Schools

75 per cent of the assistants worked in one school only. Overall, 60 per cent were in general education secondary schools, 22 per cent in technical and vocational secondary schools, 35 per cent in primary schools and 8 per cent in adult education institutions[2]. The proportion in secondary schools was the same for the 1996-1997 cohorts, but the breakdown between general and technical and vocational education is not available in the published sources. For those who worked in more than one school, whether on a consecutive or a simultaneous basis, varied considerably according to country.

Teaching Hours and Tasks

At the time of the 1996 evaluation, there was general agreement among participants that assistants should spend 12-16 hours per week on school-based work, including class contact hours and other school work such as assisting with European projects. This was confirmed four years later by the questionnaire. Though the number of hours taught varied quite considerably from under 12 to over 15, it averaged about 14 hours a week.

Of the assistants surveyed, 65 per cent taught the language of their home country, in most cases together with another language. The most common languages taught were English (42%), French (20%), German (18%) and Spanish (8%). It would appear that three-quarters of the assistants in the sample who came from Denmark, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic did not have the opportunity to teach in their mother tongue. This was the same for about half of the assistants from the Slovak Republic and Finland and almost half from Greece. Of the assistants who went to Spain, the UK, Greece and Italy, about one-third did not teach in their mother tongue. In Italy, Germany, Belgium, France and the Netherlands, just over a quarter were in the same situation. In all of these cases the respondents reported that they taught in the language of the host country and/or another. The majority of those who taught in a language other than that of their home country stated that they volunteered to do so.

In addition to language teaching, almost all the assistants had some possibility of teaching about their home country and culture either on a regular or irregular basis. Half of them sometimes gave classes on the history or geography of their country. No other subjects were taught regularly by a substantial proportion of the cohort. It is interesting to note that in 1996 the group of host institutions and assistants gathered in Lisbon emphasised the importance of the assistant's time being spent in non-language as well as language lessons in order to cover the full range of subjects taught.

[2] The total comes to over 100 per cent because of multiple choice answers.

Most were able to teach in a team with other teachers and almost 70 per cent were able to plan the work programme with the staff in the school. They highlighted that they learned about teaching approaches that were different from those in their home country and were encouraged to develop materials and resources. For 7 out of 10 assistants the school was expecting them and had planned the assistantship so that they felt well integrated in the school. In general, their living conditions were satisfactory.

Evaluation of the Assistantship

The assistants stated in their questionnaire responses that the assistantship enabled them to improve all their skills in the language of the host country, in particular their oral competence. It also contributed to their general knowledge about the country and its culture and helped with their relations with people in the country. This confirmed the first impressions drawn from the Lisbon meeting. From the professional point of view, the former assistants felt that they had been able to put into practice the theories learned during their teacher training period and to develop new methods and become more familiar with teaching. From the point of view of putting their training into practice, some respondents highlighted the contacts they had established with pupils and, in particular, experiences of working with pupils in disadvantaged situations.

As a consequence of the assistantship, the respondents reported that they were more at ease speaking the language, understood better, had developed their vocabulary and their interest in the country and had greater awareness of the social and cultural diversity and social or family models. They also mentioned the contribution of the assistantship to their overall personal development and their career prospects. For some, the experience had improved their labour market position, as they could also teach the language to adults and teach their own language as a foreign language. Most of them stated that they had rapidly found a post on returning home. As far as their personal development was concerned, the former assistants felt they were more motivated to teach and had acquired greater independence, confidence and maturity.

An Illuminative Example of the Impact on Host Schools

A group of host schools from France and French-speaking Belgium were invited to the Transnational Workshop held in France in May 2000 as part of the evaluation. Their discussions and the short questionnaire they filled in showed a high level of satisfaction with LINGUA C. For these schools (and one adult education centre) the advantages of hosting a LINGUA C assistant were that it was stimulating for both the staff and the pupils who all benefited from being able to work with the assistant. For the teachers, it was an opportunity to improve their language skills and to exchange information and practice with a teacher from another education system. In some cases, the assistant was able to help to establish contacts with institutions in their home country.

The whole school benefited in terms of opening people's minds to other countries and cultures and the experience was also seen as a positive contribution to the school's image in

general. This point had been discussed at the Lisbon evaluation event in 1996, emphasising the importance of the assistantship being envisaged as a project for the whole school. The group of host schools at the transnational workshop in May 2000 felt that working with the LINGUA assistant could benefit all members of staff and all the pupils/students.

After the workshop, the host institutions present completed a short questionnaire. It appears that the assistants were mainly perceived as representing their country and culture. They brought a certain number of different attitudes to the school in terms of their teaching methods, provided an external point of view on how things were done and were even seen as rather "exotic". Their linguistic role may however have been limited, depending on whether or not the school had organised time for the assistants to teach their own language. In both the workshop discussions and in their questionnaires, the group of host institutions highlighted the need for greater flexibility on the part of the staff and the fact that when the assistant follows classes, the school loses time for teaching the official curriculum. Overloaded curricula are a fairly typical problem for secondary education in most of the participating countries. However, the hosts felt that the presence of an assistant had re-motivated the pupils in language learning and had contributed to improve their level. This was even truer if it was the first time the school had had assistants. Their approach to teaching was considered less formal and, since they were quite young, they were seen as closer to the pupils than the other teachers.

The importance and the quality of their relations with the pupils were also mentioned by the assistants who regretted, on the other hand, a lack of consideration on the part of some staff. In some cases, they did not feel that their classes were recognised as valuable and that their timetables had been badly prepared. They also pointed out that the curricula often only encouraged pupils to take an interest in one foreign language, English, which meant that their competences were not fully used.

For the group of host institutions surveyed, the assistants had carried out a broad range of tasks in addition to assisting the language teachers. They had worked with pupils who had fallen behind to help them catch up, participated in project work such as designing on-line lessons, had run a language club, established contacts in their home country in order to set up exchanges, etc.

The group was asked if it had some clear recommendations it would make to other colleagues. It felt that establishing a clear "contract" with the assistant and, where possible, integrating their work into the school's project were essential. It emphasised the importance of discussing the fact that an assistant would be coming to the school with the rest of the staff to ensure their participation and support. These recommendations confirm those of the evaluation event in Lisbon about the importance of managing the assistantship well. It is also important to check that assistants really do have a good knowledge of the language they will be teaching even if they do not come from that country. Finally, it is important to make sure they have good living conditions.

11.2.4 LINGUA D

This action targeted the *Development of instruments for language learning and teaching, and the assessment of linguistic competence*. The objective was to help to improve the learning and teaching of languages through European cooperation in the production of curricula, materials, methodologies, etc. in a learner-oriented perspective.

The application procedures were centralised; the coordinating partner submitted a proposal for the partnership which had to comprise organisations and institutions from at least 2 participating countries, one of which usually had to be a country in which the target language was spoken. Target organisations were universities and organisations responsible for designing education programmes, developing methods of assessment, using new Information and Communication Technologies, promoting language skills, etc.

The partners could apply for a small grant of up to €1,000 for a preparatory visit to design the project. The European grant generally constituted 50 per cent maximum of the total project costs and could be granted for up to 3 years (renewable annually).

Table 11.10 below shows the number of new and renewed projects each year and the mean support granted. Over the 1995-1999 period, a total of 86 projects received funding with an average annual grant of about €82,000 (for the years 1995, 1997 and 1998).

Table 11.10
Number of Transnational Cooperation Projects Established and Renewed and the Support Requested and Awarded – by Year

	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total (1)
Number of transnational cooperation projects					
New	34	22	14	16	86
Renewed		21	27	15	43
Total	34	43	41	31	
Support requested (mean)	237,293		280,102	213,662	202,389
Support awarded (mean)	95,367		130,610	84,265	81,735
Ratio of support requested and awarded	41.8		43.4	40.3	43

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels

(1) The figures for LINGUA D project grants for 1999 were not available when the database was transmitted to the evaluators.

From the 86 new projects approved for the four-year period shown, 50 per cent received funding for at least a second year (see above Table 11.10). There was a much higher number of projects approved for the first year of funding in 1995 than in the subsequent years, but, overall, each year about 30-40 projects received funding. The ratio of support awarded to support requested (just over 40%) did not vary considerably over the period.

Table 11.11 shows funding renewals per year. Almost 45 per cent of the 1995 projects were funded for three years. This dropped to less than a quarter for the 1996 projects. In 1997,

however, almost 60 per cent received a second year of funding. Only information about the first year of funding is available for the 1998 projects.

Table 11.11
Project funding renewals 1995-1999

	Year of selection				Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	
One year	35.3	40.9	42.9	100	50
Two years	20.6	36.4	57.1	0	26.7
Three years	44.1	22.7	0	0	23.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(34)	(22)	(14)	(16)	(86)

Source: database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels

Data Used for the Analysis

(For a detailed presentation of the data collection methodology see Chapter 9)

The data used for this analysis are mainly drawn from:

- The postal survey sent to project coordinators which asked them to provide information about the coordinating institution and the composition of the partnership. They were also asked about the project objectives, activities and content, the target group, languages targeted and the main thematic areas. There were questions on the partnership process, the participants (and whether any of the pupils/students targeted had special needs) administrative and financial issues and the evaluation, results and dissemination. Most of the sections contained closed questions, but there were some open questions on results and impact.
- The database analysis.
- Interviews with project coordinators. The interview guide contained questions on why the coordinator had chosen to seek funding from SOCRATES, the contribution of the programme to achieving results, issues of dissemination, impact and follow-up and finally suggestions for improvement.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops, as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries

Reference is also made to a Commission document: *Analysis of the Development of LINGUA Actions B, C and E (SOC/COM/98/017)*

The Analysis

Why SOCRATES?

From the interviews carried out with LINGUA projects it would appear that institutions chose to apply for LINGUA D funding in order to finance a particular product or because they felt it was the best programme to respond to their needs. They had found out about the programme through their National Agency, from other colleagues or even through the press.

Partnerships and Coordination

The database of the Technical Assistance Office shows that there have been coordinators of LINGUA D projects in all the EU Member-States except Spain and Luxembourg. However, 63 per cent of the project coordinators came from five countries: Germany, France, Greece, Italy and the UK. In the case of Greece, the new projects approved were concentrated in two years, 1995 and 1996. The size of the countries and therefore the potential number of institutions eligible for funding must be taken into consideration in interpreting the figures. This is also the case when examining the participating institutions by country, as Germany, Italy and the UK were the most frequent partner countries. It should be noted that some projects may have had several partners from one country, which could affect the overall balance.

The analysis of the questionnaires sent to project coordinators indicated that three-quarters of the partners knew each other before starting the project. New partners were brought in through other colleagues.

The composition of the partnerships represented in the questionnaires is quite varied, as there were non-profit associations, private companies, local public authorities, adult or continuing education providers, although higher education institutions prevailed, since they constituted almost half the partners, according to the Technical Assistance Office data. There were no nursery or primary schools in the partnerships. This is not surprising since they would tend to lack the type of expertise needed to design education programmes, develop methods of assessment, etc.. The average number of partners per partnership, according to the database figures, was seven.

Half of the partnerships tended to be clustered around either linguistic families (the Latin languages or Germanic-Scandinavian languages) or geographical proximity. The other half were more mixed, with a North-South spread.

Either English or German was the only or one of the working languages (both for oral and written communication) in three-quarters of the projects surveyed. Over half declared that they used more than one language for oral work and a third for written communication.

In general, the experience of working in a partnership both at national and transnational level was appreciated by the coordinators who filled in the questionnaire. They felt that they had been able to fix clear objectives for their work, deadlines had been respected and a system

of communication established. One of the interviewees pointed out that, in order to carry out research and development work on languages, a transnational partnership was almost an obligation. Another suggested that it provided a contribution to validating (or not) one's approach. Difficulties raised by the respondents were mainly due to over-loaded timetables and the financial procedures. Most of the partners stayed until the end of the projects surveyed and almost all signed a formal contract.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Moving on to the administrative and financial procedures, although coordinators reported no difficulty in obtaining application forms, comments were more mixed concerning whether or not the forms and selection criteria were clear. Interviews substantiated the impression given by the questionnaire returns that applications were complicated.

On average, for the questionnaire respondents, the time period between filling in the forms and obtaining approval was about seven months. Though almost all of them had obtained a grant on first application, for three-quarters the amount was lower than requested. Figures available for 1996, 1997 and 1998 show that the mean ratio of support awarded to support requested over the three years for LINGUA D projects was 40-43 per cent. Requests for grants averaged from €200,000 to €280,000, while the average annual grants awarded were situated between €80,000 and €130,000. This meant that partnerships had to readjust their budgets. Questionnaire respondents reported that this had led them to reduce their work plans and ambitions for the project or that they had been obliged to seek other institutional support. Redefining budgets led to more time being taken up for administrative work.

For the majority of the project coordinators surveyed, grants arrived late. It has not been possible to check whether this was due to delays in the Commission or because beneficiaries had not returned their contracts rapidly. However, they were, on the whole, satisfied with the help obtained from the administrative services of the Commission, the Technical Assistance Office and their National Agency, though a few regretted the lack of information and support. One interviewee said that European funding may be the only source of project funding open to them and so coordinators felt a high level of frustration with the procedures, as they tended to hinder project progress.

In general, the interviews confirmed the complexity of applications, but also raised two other issues which are equally relevant to other Transnational Cooperation Projects. Firstly, European reporting requirements and deadlines could be different from those in their country and this could lead to extra work. Secondly, the fact that approved budgets were not fixed provoked several comments, as partners were not always familiar with procedures under which the final *tranche* of the budget would only be paid if expenditure had been judged eligible, despite the fact that the money had already been spent on the project. Some coordinators who were interviewed felt that there had been some modifications in eligibility of spending rules during funding periods.

Thematic Areas and Target Populations

According to the Technical Assistance Office data provided by the application forms, the main priorities on which projects focused were the less widely used and lesser taught languages (69%), information technologies (68%), the cultural context of language learning (54%), mobility (53%), self-learning (50%) and open and distance learning (42%) Overall, few projects targeted early language learning (4%) or made reference to plurilingual language learning (5%). The focus differed from country to country. In certain countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany and Finland, there was greater focus on open and distance learning, whereas projects coordinated from Iceland were interested in disadvantaged groups of learners. In France, 50% of the projects were interested in raising language awareness and 20% in early language learning. In Austria, one focus of all the projects was languages for specific purposes. Projects could, of course, indicate several priority areas in their applications.

The largest education sector targeted as end users by the projects, according to the database, was secondary education (61%). This is not surprising as this is the stage of education at which most language learning takes place. Half the projects also indicated adult education and higher education as end users and one third home learners and vocational training. At least three-quarters of the projects targeted pupils and students and over half also targeted teachers. The levels of end users were mixed, with about half the projects targeting beginners, intermediate and advanced. All countries, with a few exceptions, followed this pattern. In Austria, projects focused on adult learners, higher education and vocational education and training. In Portugal, although the main group was secondary schools, vocational education and training schools and higher education also appeared as target groups.

In the projects surveyed by questionnaire, the main areas dealt with were:

- Innovatory approaches to language learning (two-thirds of the respondents);
- Learning materials (two-thirds also);
- Use of new technologies;
- Self-learning approaches;
- The cultural context of language learning,
- Mobility and exchange of pupils,
- Intercultural education.

Few coordinators who were surveyed mentioned the participation of pupils with special needs and over two-thirds of the projects were not concerned with gender issues. The database shows that few projects prioritised disadvantage.

Among the projects surveyed by the questionnaire, there was a broad variety of target languages. Though more projects targeted Italian, English, German, French and Spanish, the LWULT languages were clearly present. Almost two-thirds of the projects surveyed had

at least one LWULT language among its target languages. One project also included sign language.

Over two-thirds of the respondents mentioned that evaluation had been planned, whether through informal discussion and peer groups or in some cases with an external evaluator. Three-quarters of the projects monitored their progress regularly. Evaluation represented between 5 to 10% of the total budget. None of the interviewees had participated in either a national or a European evaluation of projects.

Building an Impact

The questionnaire respondents saw the impact of the project as follows:

- *The European dimension:* This was interpreted as raising the awareness of participants in the project to the possibility of developing approaches to language learning methods and materials at the European level. Increasing transnational contacts and developing common approaches based on good practice and synergy were also mentioned.
- *Benefits for the institution:* The projects enabled the institutions to open up to new partnerships and could lead to a better understanding of their own organisation and a better organisational profile in so far as they were involved in innovatory work such as developing new tools for language learning.
- *Benefits to staff:* The projects contributed to developing a team spirit and generated great enthusiasm. Staff learned how to manage projects and coordinate international work. Their contacts with European organisations improved and the project could also lead to improving the quality of their work and the tools they worked with. Their own competences with new technologies and multimedia, as well as their pedagogical approaches, developed.
- *Benefits to students/pupils:* Respondents were asked to indicate if they thought there would be any direct benefits to students and pupils. Their replies focused on the fact that they became more aware of other cultures, had more contacts with other countries and became more involved in learning another language.

Dissemination of Outcomes

Dissemination of results and outcomes was undertaken for three-quarters of the projects surveyed. Coordinators considered that they had received very little support for this activity from the National Agency, the Technical Assistance Office or the Commission. Dissemination mainly targeted similar organisations and students and pupils. But 60 per cent of the respondents also addressed their dissemination to countries which were not involved in the partnership. Means used were training sessions for teachers, conferences and seminars, press conferences, etc. but few partners used the media. Though the focus of dissemination activities tended to be local, regional and national, about one-third of the respondents mentioned European dissemination and another third the potential impact outside Europe.

Between 5 and 10 per cent of total project budgets was used for disseminating results and outcomes, but most coordinators estimated that, in order to carry out dissemination of the

project correctly, they would have needed a larger budget, more time and better contacts with publishers. LINGUA D was a product-oriented action in so far as it supported development of teaching and learning methods and materials. The issue of commercial dissemination was raised specifically at the transnational workshop and therefore the role of editors in the partnerships, as participants felt that such an orientation implied larger budgets over and above LINGUA funding. One interviewee suggested that it would be useful to have some examples of good practice in dissemination to help them envisage how and what to plan. As there was no single European market for language learning tools, commercialisation and marketing would have to take into account a broad variety of individuals, institutions and therefore markets. The existence of catalogues of products was appreciated.

Future Work and Suggestions for Improving the Programme

A majority of the projects would like to continue the work after the end of the funding period and would also like to be involved in a network on the thematic area and further European projects, but two-thirds would not accept the role of coordinator. One coordinator envisaged future work in the context of the ERASMUS institutional contract in his higher education institution.

Coordinators surveyed suggested annual fairs for the exchange of information about projects and to contribute to developing synergy. They also felt that more help with dissemination would be very useful.

The SOCRATES Contribution

Some LINGUA D projects had links with both ERASMUS and LEONARDO actions and to a lesser extent with COMENIUS projects. One third of the project coordinators who were surveyed had been involved with other European projects, usually SOCRATES and often LINGUA, prior to their current project.

LINGUA gave institutions the opportunity to work in a transnational partnership that could not have existed without European funding. This, in itself, was seen to contribute to the credibility of the project and the coordinating institution. It also provided a framework for the partners to work together.

For some, LINGUA was an opportunity to "open up" their institution and introduce an element of internationalisation. As such, it provided awareness-raising. For others, however, there was a certain level of disappointment due to an impression that no-one really cared about results and outcomes.

11.2.5 LINGUA E

This action funded *Joint Educational Projects (JEP)* which aimed to contribute to an improvement of young people's motivation and capacity to communicate in a foreign language. The grant covered activities, including exchanges, in general, between technical and vocational institutions in 2 participating countries. The purpose was for the young people in the partner institutions to work together on an agreed topic with direct communication. Exchanges had to be reciprocal and last at least 14 days in each case. Priority in selection was given to the less widely used and lesser taught languages and to those partnerships which included vocational and technical institutions and/or situated in rural or disadvantaged areas with little previous experience of transnational cooperation. This was the LINGUA action which most directly involved schools.

The procedure for applying for grants was decentralised and applications were made to the National Agencies. The education institutions in the partnership could apply for a small grant of up to €1000 for a preparatory visit to design the Joint Education Project. The European grant generally constituted 50% of the total project costs, but could go up to 75% in special circumstances.

Data Used for the Analysis

This section is largely based on data collected by the specific evaluation carried out by Deloitte and Touche (see: *Evaluation of European School Partnerships under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E*, July 2000).

The specific evaluation of LINGA E used as one of its main sources of data the results of an evaluation study, BABELE, which examined the outcomes of LINGUA Joint Education Projects. It was coordinated by the Italian National Agency and the study was launched three years after the beginning of the SOCRATES programme and funded under Complementary Measures. Questionnaires were sent to schools in 17 countries to 129 project coordinators, 120 head teachers, 1831 pupils/students, and 1690 parents for a sample of the JEPs funded in 1997/1998. The aim was to assess the development of language awareness through the LINGUA E project, as well as other factors such as the development of communication skills, participation of families, the improvement of cultural awareness, etc.

In addition, Deloitte and Touche carried out in-depth interviews using interview guidelines with 16 JEPs (two schools were visited in most cases).

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops organised by the global evaluation as well as the interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries.

The Analysis

This section summarises selected main points of information from the Deloitte and Touche evaluation report, including the conclusions. Readers are directed to their report for more detailed information.

The Schools Involved

According to the data collected by Deliotte and Touche from the Commission and the National Agencies, the number of schools involved in Joint Education Projects over the five years has been relatively stable, with about 1,500 schools in partnerships every year. The figures for 1998/1999 were estimates, based on information available at the time of writing the report. The number of projects cannot be deduced from the number of schools supported as, in some cases, schools may have participated in more than one JEP.

The figures for 1997 indicated that nearly 60 per cent of all the pupils involved were from vocational and technical schools, but with substantial variations among countries.

The Partnerships

As JEPs were bilateral, there were usually two partners per project. According to the survey carried out by Deloitte and Touche, it would appear that in some cases schools established a bilateral partnership with LINGUA E funding first and then developed a multilateral partnership with COMENIUS 1 funding. Partners were found through personal contacts or the National Agency.

Budgets

LINGUA E grants were based on the principle of 50 per cent matched-funding but with the possibility of National Agencies going up to 75 per cent European funding in special circumstances. These circumstances were indeed referred to in some of the interviews with key actors in the participating countries who stated that they used this flexibility to give support to schools in disadvantaged areas or to pupils with special needs.

As LINGUA E funded the mobility of the pupils, the evaluators estimated the average grant per participant per year. It was about €330 (for the years 1996/1997).

The Projects

Though LINGUA E partnerships developed a very broad range of topics and themes including environmental issues, culture and heritage, cultural differences, lifestyles, vocational topics, etc., the results were expected to focus on the acquisition of the languages of the countries in the partnership and pupil mobility.

Impact

In the interviews carried out with key actors in the participating countries, an overall high level of satisfaction with LINGUA E was expressed, as for example in Sweden where one interviewee said "t*he value-added is that internationalisation becomes a real issue, not just words*". However, some interviewees commented on the fact that the period of mobility, which must be two weeks for each partner, discourages some schools which find it too long. Key actors in Germany pointed out that there was a contradiction between prioritising classes from vocational education and training but insisting on two weeks away. In the case of pupils training under the Dual system, their employers may not be favourable to this type of exchange and may not agree to time off work. The length of the stay was also felt to be a drawback in Belgium (both French-speaking and Dutch-speaking). In French-speaking Belgium, interviewees felt that teachers and parents were perhaps not used to groups going away for so long. It is an issue in Norway too, as it is difficult to fit it into the school's organisation. In addition, funds are not always sufficient to cover the full period. In the Netherlands, the need to consider lowering the fixed term for the exchanges from two weeks to one was mentioned in the context of establishing mechanisms for equal opportunities.

LINGUA E seems to have fulfilled one of its main priorities, which was the participation of pupils/students in vocational education and training institutions. This was not without difficulty in some countries, given the apprenticeship structures. Interviewees in Ministries and National Agencies suggested that it may be useful to re-consider the length of the mobility period to allow for shorter exchanges.

The issue of pupil mobility was discussed at the Transnational Workshop where a series of arguments was put forward supporting the view that SOCRATES should continue to support or even increase support for the mobility already organised. Participants felt that for schools (including the post-compulsory technical and vocational schools/colleges), mobility was an interesting way of improving understanding of the interculturality and the European dimension. The process of learning to communicate was considered to be an important aspect of exchanges and staying with a host family gave pupils a good opportunity to learn about the culture and country. This was also a conclusion of the BABELE evaluation study which examined the effects of LINGUA E. Though teachers noted some effectiveness in the short term, a broader research perspective would nevertheless be useful, as the experience of the moment, however positive, must be balanced against the longer term effect. The importance of defining the purpose of the mobility was emphasised as an essential ingredient of a LINGUA E project.

Nevertheless, a perceived advantage of mobility for pupils is that they may go to countries that they otherwise would not have visited, hence an aspect, however brief, of opening up to new cultures. This, in turn, begs the question of language learning as exchanges between some combinations of countries use English as a vehicle of communication alongside their own languages. This may lead to a certain uneasiness between implementing the European dimension objective at the same time as that of encouraging and supporting the learning of

the less widely spoken/taught languages. It is an interesting example of the type of difficulty that an action can encounter in promoting two objectives simultaneously.

The following points are a summary of the conclusions of the Deloitte and Touche evaluation report. They conclude that the JEPs considerably contributed to increasing the motivation and capacity of young people to communicate in foreign languages, since projects were jointly undertaken by groups of young people in partner institutions in two participating countries and they worked together on a jointly designed topic related to their education and training. The projects were set up in such a way that direct communication between the young people of the different groups was the primary focus. They therefore had the opportunity to experience foreign languages in a new environment. As a result they were able to have a deeper knowledge of each other's culture. The objective of involving vocational and technical schools was reached.

In partnerships in which one of the less widely used and less taught languages was involved, projects tended to include provision of basic instruction in the partner language and the exchange phase of the project included time for the instruction of the language. Though the exchange was an essential part of the JEPs, young people who were unable to participate in them were nevertheless able to participate in other activities of the project or benefit from the outcomes.

Deloitte and Touche highlighted selected points they considered required further analysis. They suggest that further investigation into the impact of the project on the pedagogical plan or the mission statement would be useful, as would be issues related to the organisation and the structure of JEPs and the involvement of non-language teachers in the project.

11.3 Summary of Points of the LINGUA Actions

(1) The partnerships in LINGUA A were dominated by the presence of higher education institutions which reflects their role in teacher training in most countries. Though partnerships demonstrated a North-South and recently East-West mix, four languages predominated as the most common target languages: English, French, German and Spanish. Nevertheless in 40 per cent of the projects surveyed at least one of the less widely used and less taught languages was targeted. One quarter of all projects were generic in terms of language. Within the framework of developing initial or continuing training modules and materials for teaching staff, the most popular thematic areas were the less widely taught and less used languages, use of computers and open and distance learning.

(2) Though the composition of the partnerships in LINGUA D was quite varied, there were many higher education institutions, which is no doubt to be expected in terms of expertise. LINGUA D targeted secondary education but also adult education, higher education, vocational training and home learners at all levels. There was a broad variety of target languages. In addition to Italian, English, German, French and Spanish, the LWULT

languages were clearly present, as almost two-thirds of the projects surveyed had at least one LWULT language among its target languages. One project also included sign language.

(3) The following points about administrative and financial procedures are common to Transnational Cooperation Projects under all actions. For both LINGUA A and D, the administrative procedures were considered to be too complicated, too much work and the regulations complex to understand. Partners deplored the long wait for the results of applications and a lack of transparency about selection criteria. It should, however, be noted that in the 1999 Commission document on selection for that year, the criteria are clearly outlined. But there was a relative satisfaction with information obtained from the services of the Commission, the Technical Assistance Office and the National Agency.

(4) Once grants had been approved, partners had to cope with the consequences of greatly reduced budgets in both actions. This they frequently reported implied a reduction in the dissemination budget or other activities or looking for additional funding. Following late approval for the first year's funding, coordinators deplored the fact they had to request renewal (theoretically on the basis of the achievements of the current year) soon after project work had started. The final point which was strongly criticised by coordinators was that approved grants were not fixed but depended on proving eligible expenditure and matched funding.

(5) The outcomes of the administrative and financial difficulties led some coordinators to be little inclined to renew the experience as coordinator. They recommended mutual deadlines and one comment summed up nicely the attitude to the procedural difficulties: "*The objectives of the SOCRATES programme is what we all want to achieve and we would like to do it without fighting against the elements*." This is highly unfortunate as it tends to suggest that the efforts of the implementing team to encourage and support the production of concrete outcomes may be undermined by bureaucratic procedures. The types of suggestions made by project coordinators in the interviews to improve the procedures are reflected in the new arrangements for SOCRATES II. Solutions have been adopted but will need to be carefully monitored in the coming period.

(6) The predominance of women language teachers in secondary schools as beneficiaries of LINGUA B grants reflects the gender structure of many education systems and the main location of language teaching. The age of the "typical" LINGUA B beneficiary (40-50) raises the issue of whether or not LINGUA should target the younger teachers with the aim of building a longer term impact.

(7) For the survey respondents, the courses they followed with LINGUA B grants allowed them to improve their competences in the language targeted and their working methods and to establish relations and exchanges with other teachers. They considered the experience very useful and motivating. The less widely used and lesser taught languages were not significantly covered by LINGUA B grants which largely funded participation in courses for teaching English, French and German, which are the main languages taught in secondary

schools. It is a decentralised action and therefore beneficiaries (and the courses they will attend) are selected by the Member-States.

(8) One of the major issues discussed at the Transnational Workshop concerning the SOCRATES contribution to teachers' professional development was that of the feasibility of mechanisms for acknowledging participation in courses. There are different national approaches, as in some countries courses can contribute to a further teaching qualification. It was suggested that any form of recognition would have to be linked to an assessment of the courses.

(9) At present, LINGUA B grants concern considerably less than 10 per cent of the language teachers in the participating countries. The issue of whether or not the action should aim to attain a critical mass is linked to issues of follow-up after courses and the dissemination of what individual teachers have learned. In order to reach far higher numbers of language teachers, either the budget would have to be substantially increased or the grants lowered. There is clearly an on-going debate in some participating countries between reducing the percentage of costs covered in order to give grants to more teachers or covering most costs in order to make sure that personal financial considerations do not prevent teachers from participating. It is an acute problem in countries where teachers' salaries are low in comparison with the cost of participating in a training course abroad, e.g. for the Central and Eastern European countries. From this point of view, the issues of numbers and impact cannot be separated from issues of equal opportunities and access. The issue is the same for COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B.

(10) The potential impact of LINGUA B must also be assessed for the broader impact on the beneficiary's home institution. Whether or not teachers have the possibility of disseminating information about the course and what they have learned after their return varies considerably according to country. Given that numbers are unlikely to increase substantially in the short term, it may be useful for participating countries to reflect on whether and how more benefits could be drawn from the experiences of the beneficiaries.

(11) The assessment of LINGUA B is partially linked to that of LINGUA A. It was not possible through the postal survey to determine the share of LINGUA A and other courses for which teachers received grants. The same questions are valid for both types: What criteria can the National Agencies use to select courses for applicants? How do they judge the suitability and validity of a course? How does the Commission know it is obtaining value for money?

(12) About three-quarters of the LINGUA A projects surveyed led to a training course for which a LINGUA B grant was available. The projects surveyed and interviewed had not undergone a national or European quality assessment prior to running the course, though they were obliged to integrate an evaluation procedure into their project. Given that more courses will be available this year, it seems increasingly urgent to reflect on appropriate and user-friendly criteria for external assessment of the quality of courses and the means to do it, while taking into consideration that the usefulness of a particular course may well differ

according to country, depending on the characteristics of the education system and training needs.

(13) With the start of the second phase of SOCRATES, catalogues of courses are being established and beneficiaries will be invited to carry out an assessment of courses. It may however be necessary to consider more systematic and common mechanisms for quality assessment of training courses.

(14) Though LINGUA A projects carried out dissemination work in their own countries, there is little evidence, for the moment, of the embedding of modules and courses produced in national teacher training programmes. It may well be too early, but the potential for mainstreaming could be analysed as one aspect of the criteria for a quality assessment of the product.

(15) One of the main difficulties of LINGUA D is to assess the quality of the outcomes. At present, it is the responsibility of the projects to integrate appropriate methods of evaluation into their work plan, but there are currently no mechanisms, either at European or at any national level (as far as the interviews allow this to be estimated), to evaluate the products of LINGUA D funding. If investment in products and materials for language learning is to continue, it may be useful to reflect on appropriate mechanisms for quality assessment.

(16) Despite the fact that the project partnerships in LINGUA D appear to plan quite extensively for dissemination with the budgets at their disposal, project coordinators would appreciate more assistance from the National Agencies, the Technical Assistance Office and the Commission. Annual fairs were thought to be a useful way of exchanging information about products and approaches and perhaps also for clustering efforts.

(17) LINGUA C achieves, at least partially, the objective of prioritising the less widely used and taught languages, as 30 per cent of the assistants go to those countries. This would tend to suggest that there is a sufficient level of curiosity among future language teachers to find out about languages and cultures other than those they have studied, if the means are available. LINGUA C opens up these possibilities. But it would appear that substantial numbers of assistants from Denmark, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Finland and Greece did not have the opportunity to teach the language of their country.

(18) The total cost of an assistant has not changed significantly over the years of SOCRATES I and the grant appears to cover expenses sufficiently. It has been suggested that LINGUA C costs too much in comparison with LINGUA B, given the number of beneficiaries. However, debates on the comparative merits of the actions must take into consideration not just cost but longer term impact and breadth of impact. The LINGUA C grant covers a much longer period than LINGUA B and there is an immediate impact on the education institution which hosts the assistant. In some cases, the assistants help to establish partnerships with institutions in their home country which built in an element of continuity to the experience.

(19) There are areas in which the implementation of lingual C could be improved. They mainly concern the tasks undertaken by assistants and the preparation of both the assistants and host schools. By 1999, preparation had not become systematic; only some assistants received information packages or attended courses. The success of the action appears to lie not in the formal aspects but in the good will of the education institution to integrate and welcome the assistant and the flexibility of the assistant to adapt to a new education system. Host schools emphasise the importance of planning for the assistant and managing the process to ensure that as many members of staff and pupils as possible are involved.

(20) In terms of the types of education institutions involved, 60 per cent of the sample went to general secondary schools. Within a perspective of targeting the populations who are less likely to learn foreign languages and increasing parity, it may be interesting under SOCRATES II to examine the feasibility of increasing the share of technical and vocational secondary schools and adult education institutions which host assistants.

(21) Overall, there is a high level of satisfaction both from the assistants and the host schools. This is reflected not only in the survey responses and workshop discussions, but also in interviews with national structures. The main criticism is that the action had too small a budget. In the interviews carried out with national actors, it was suggested that LINGUA C had completed a highly successful pilot period during SOCRATES I and should now receive sufficient funding to substantially increase the number of beneficiaries.

(22) LINGUA E seems to have fulfilled its main priority, which was the participation of pupils/students in vocational education and training institutions. This was not without difficulty in some countries, given the apprenticeship structures. Interviewees in Ministries and National Agencies suggested that it may be useful to re-consider the length of the mobility period to allow for shorter exchanges.

(23) In summary, LINGUA E has funded about 1500 in partnerships each year over the five-year period and nearly 60 per cent of all the pupils involved were from vocational and technical schools but with substantial variations among countries.

(24) The partnerships contributed to increase the motivation and capacity of young people to communicate in foreign languages in so far as projects were jointly undertaken by groups of young people in partner institutions in two participating countries and they worked together on a jointly designed topic related to their education and training. The projects were set up in such a way that direct communication between the young people of the different groups was the primary focus. They therefore had the opportunity to experience foreign languages in a new environment. As a result, they were able to have a deeper knowledge of each other’s culture. The objective of involving vocational and technical schools was reached.

12. OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)

By Jean Gordon and Stéphanie Caillé

12.1 Introduction

In all of the project-based and developmental actions supported under SOCRATES I, activities using open and distance learning methods and resources, new media, information and communication technologies were encouraged.

The OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)[1] Action was exclusively devoted to the "Promotion of OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING" as such. In the *Guidelines for Applicants 1998*[2]*,* the action was defined as referring to:

- the introduction of new modes of "open" learning through all available delivery mechanisms, notably through multimedia resources and services, in all places where some form of education takes place;
- the provision of "distance" learning services.

Over the period of the SOCRATES I programme, there was an important expansion of the range of new information and communication technologies which could be used in distance learning and also of institutional and individual access to them. Internet-based approaches to distance learning have been largely experimented and piloted, often with the support of other EU funding, such as the ADAPT programme.

The ODL strand of SOCRATES I was a small pilot action which was integrated into the chapter on Horizontal Measures. It received about 3.5 per cent of the total budget and, as such, the amount of overall activity was necessarily limited.

12.1.1 The Objectives of OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING

The main aim of this Action was to enhance cooperation among the "actors" or "players" who were involved in:

- integrating new technology and new media into the educational process including the training of teachers and managers;
- promoting and providing OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING services.

[1] We have used the acronym throughout the chapter as it has now become well understood and widely accepted.

[2] Though the *Guidelines for Applicants* could undergo some modification from one year to the next, we have used the 1998 version for all general descriptions as that year came half way through the programme once it was well underway but not yet into the transition period to SOCRATES II.

This action was especially concerned with ensuring that the educational community at large benefited from the work and that the educational community played a full and determinant role in the process of conceiving and designing educational and multimedia resources.

The objectives were defined as:

- contributing to cooperation between institutions and organisations working in the area in order to promote the transfer of good practice and create synergy at the European level in areas of common interest,
- enhancing the skills of teachers, trainers and managers in the techniques and methods used,
- ensuring that techniques and methods are appropriate for the context in which they are used,
- improving the quality and user-friendliness of approaches,
- working towards a better level of recognition of qualifications obtained through ODL products and services.

Furthermore, the Guidelines stated that, in selecting projects for support, attention would be given to projects which promoted equal opportunities between women and men and addressed the needs of learners in rural areas or less favoured regions in terms of educational infrastructure and of those who were disadvantaged for socio-economic reasons or because of personal disability.

12.1.2 The Target Audience

The ODL action targeted a broad audience as follows:

- Teaching or administrative staff and students in higher education institutions
- Teacher trainers
- Head teachers
- Teaching staff at school
- Foreign language teachers
- Pupils
- Adult learners
- Inspectors
- Educational and curriculum advisors
- Organisations concerned with intercultural education and educational associations
- National, regional, and local education authorities
- Publishers, producers of educational software and programmes and other enterprises

12.1.3 ODL Selected Quantitative Data

The two tables which follow provide data firstly on the applications for support and the grants awarded (for the years 1995-1998) and secondly on the budget for the ODL action. There have been a total of 166 projects funded with an average annual grant of about €100,000 per annum.

Over the four-year period for which data are available, just over a quarter of the requests for support under the ODL action were satisfied. For the first year of the programme, one-third of the projects were approved, but this proportion then dropped in the following two years and in 1997 only 14 per cent obtained support. The proportion then rose again in 1998 to almost 40 per cent (see Table 12.1).

Table 12.1
ODL Applications for Support and Grants Awarded in the Years 1995 – 1998 – by Year of Selection (absolute numbers)

	Year of selection				Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	
Applications	97	144	136	103	480
Grants awarded	33	40	19	41	133
Ratio of grants awarded and applications (%)	34.0	27.8	14.0	39.8	27.7

Source: Statistical annex – SOCRATES centralised actions; 1995 – 1998; SOCRATES & YOUTH Technical Assistance Office.

The budget for ODL was increased in 1996 and remained at the same level for the following years (see Table 12.2). It represented *circa* 3.5 per cent of the total SOCRATES annual budget and almost 10 per cent of the budget for Horizontal Measures.

Table 12.2
The OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING Budget 1995-1999 – by Year of Selection

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
Total Budget in Euro	3,879,093	7,284,899	7,244,421	7,330,163	7,251,527	32,990,102

Source: Source: SOCRATES budget 1995-99 (ecu/euro) EUR 15

12.1.4 The Evaluation Criteria for OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The overall evaluation criteria which were implemented were presented in Chapter 9. This section aims to specify the criteria for OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING. The evaluation of this action within the SOCRATES I programme was designed to examine the relevance of the programme and how far it suited the expectations, interests and needs of the target populations, as well as the extent to which the actions were appropriate to cover the full

scope of the objectives targeted. It focused on whether objectives had been met and whether the action undertaken met the expectations of users.

(1) *The scope of the institutions involved* in ODL projects as coordinators and as partners in order to estimate the impact of the programme in terms of breadth of coverage. The evaluators were asked to pay special attention to the role of the higher education sector in this action during SOCRATES I. There is an issue about the types of institutions which are equipped (including financially) to undertake project development in ODL and whether their size has a subsequent effect on dissemination and transferability. The extent to which the SOCRATES programme has contributed to broadening the scope, the relevance and the use of ODL across different types and levels of education was also examined by the survey, as well as the target groups which have been most affected by the action.

(2) *"Making a difference":* i.e. the impact of the funded activity on the partner organisations and their environment and more broadly on the education systems in which they work. The evaluation sought to highlight the types and variety of impacts on the different actors. It focused on issues concerning both content and dissemination of information about the funded activity and the exchange of experience, information and methodologies among researchers, practitioners and administrators. It also examined the issue of quality assessment of outcomes and products with a view to transfer into the systems involved through the postal surveys, interviews and workshops.

(3) The extent to which participation in European-funded work can promote national and regional bodies, organisations and agencies leading to a higher level of recognition of their work. The latter point may then, in turn, contribute to the dissemination of best practice.

(5) *The overall management of the ODL programme:* This issue was addressed through the interviews carried out at EU level and with the national key actors in each of the participating countries, as well as through the postal surveys and project interviews. It examined the beneficiaries' levels of satisfaction with the programme and the extent to which it has provided a support structure for their development work or alternatively hindered progress due to the administrative and financial procedures.

(6) *Dissemination:* The evaluation sought to investigate

- the levels, types and audiences for dissemination;
- whether or not budgets had been sufficient to build in a sufficient level of dissemination;
- the contribution of national agencies and regional or local education structures and bodies to dissemination of results and outcomes.

(7) The *synergy* created between the ODL strand and other actions of the SOCRATES programme.

(8) *Transferability and Sustainability:*

- Has the ODL structure been able to take into account the potential for multiplier effects and how?
- Are the project funding periods long enough to reach a stage of development in which it becomes possible to examine multiplier effects and transferability?
- Do funded activities produce an outcome or result which is transferable? Are there the mechanisms to assess this factor?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to take this aspect into account?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to build sustainability?
- Is it feasible? If so, under what conditions?

The ODL team in the then Directorate General XXII organised regular meetings for project coordinators. At each meeting, projects presented their 'work-in-progress' and worked together in thematic working groups. The reports provided the evaluation team with a very useful resource for developing the survey tools. The regular monitoring of project progress, through meetings, enabled the Commission to better understand the content and rationale developing within the ODL action and thus move towards SOCRATES II and MINERVA. The external evaluation sought to examine the contribution of the SOCRATES programme in terms of the management, implementation and impact and hence the role of ODL projects within that framework. The two activities have, therefore, used different sets of criteria for different purposes, but they are complementary.

12.2 The Action

Two main types of activities were funded:

A. European Partnerships/Partnership Projects

B. Observation Projects

A. *European Partnerships*: For partnership projects, support took the form of a grant to a European partnership of at least three organisations in at least three different participating countries. The 1998 Guidelines noted an average of six partners and the predominance of higher education institutions. The partnerships were funded to

- develop experimental pilot projects;
- develop innovative concepts, methodologies and approaches for the design of high quality educational software;
- enhance the skills of teacher trainers and managers in the use of innovative methods and techniques involving ODL, etc.;
- promoting systems for the exchange of information and educational materials, etc.

B. *Observation Projects*: The purpose was to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of the art of any particular aspect of ODL or the use of new educational technologies. The organisation may be in just one participating country, projects had to involve cooperation among organisations in several countries.

ODL was a centralised action, with applications sent to the Commission. Given the diversity of the projects, financial support could vary considerably. It was provided on a cost-sharing and annual basis and was available for up to two, and, in exceptional cases, three years. In order to ensure the greatest possible multiplier effect, the Commission organised two 2-day contact meetings each year with all selected projects, the cost of which coordinators had to build into their budget. Partners could apply for a grant for a preparatory visit for project development purposes. Grants did not normally exceed €1,000 per person.

Table 12.3 shows the number of projects selected and renewed each year and the mean support requested and awarded. It is followed by table 12.4 which shows the proportion of projects which were funded for one, two, or three years.

Table 12.3
Number of ODL Transnational Cooperation Projects Established and Renewed and the Support Requested and Awarded – by Year of Selection

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
New	33	40	19	41	33	166
Renewed	-	29	35	19	35	106
Total number	33	69	54	60	68	
Support requested (mean in Euro)	*	221,864	221,967	211,080	*	*
Support awarded (mean in Euro)	*	104,799	95,504	103,697	*	*
Ratio of support awarded and requested (%)	*	50.4	45.4	52.0	*	*

Source: Database of the Technical Assistance Office
* No data available

Over the five years, there were a total of 166 projects of which 65 per cent received funding for at least a second year. With the exception of 1997, there were between 35 and 40 new projects every year. The ratio of support approved to support received varied very little and averaged 50 per cent (see Table 12.3).

As can be seen from Table 12.4, nearly three quarters of the 1995 projects received two years of funding. This decreased to two-thirds for the 1996 and 1997 projects, while projects receiving one year of funding increased from about 10 per cent to 20 per cent (after 1995, for the period from 1996 to 1998). Ten to fifteen per cent of the projects went on to a third year of activity.

Table 12.4
Duration of ODL Transnational Cooperation Projects - by Year of Selection of Projects
(Percentages)

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
One year	12	25	21	22	100	36
Two years	73	65	63	78	.0	57
Three years	15	10	16	.0	.0	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(33)	(40)	(19)	(41)	(33)	(166)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels

12.2.1 Data used for the analysis

(for a detailed presentation of the methodology see Chapter 9)

The data used for this analysis are mainly drawn from:

- The *postal survey* sent to project coordinators. They were asked to provide information about the coordinating partner, the composition of the partnership, target groups, the thematic areas on which the project worked, its objectives and main activities. There were also questions concerning links to other projects, the partnership process, the participants (including pupils/students with special needs), administrative and financial procedures, evaluation, results and dissemination. Most of the sections contained closed questions, but there were open questions on outcomes and impact.
- The *database analysis*. The Technical Assistance database provided a range of information drawn from project applications which included the national and institutional composition of partnerships, thematic areas, target groups, etc. It also provided the quantitative data for the centralised actions.
- *Interviews with project coordinators*. The interview guide contained questions on why the coordinator had chosen to seek funding from SOCRATES, the contribution of the programme to achieving results, issues of dissemination, impact and follow-up and finally suggestions for improvement.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops, as well as interviews with of key actors involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and the postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries

12.2.2 The Analysis

Why SOCRATES?

From the interviews carried out with ODL project coordinators it would appear that institutions chose SOCRATES for a variety of reasons which included the fact that they needed funding to develop a project idea and in order to continue already started research. They felt that SOCRATES was the programme that was most geared towards the university sector, including for those coordinators who had participated in the Réseaux d'Institutions de Formation (RIF) before SOCRATES. They also wished to gain the added-value of working in an international context. One of the projects interviewed had in fact attempted to obtain LEONARDO funding before turning to the ODL action of SOCRATES. The coordinators who were surveyed first heard about the programme through their National Agency or through research they had carried out on funding possibilities.

Partnerships and Coordination

The Technical Assistance Office data which were based on project applications showed that the countries in which there were the highest number of project coordinators were the United Kingdom (18%) and Italy (12%). A further group of countries included Germany (7%), Spain (6%), France (8%), Sweden (6%) and Norway (7%) where each had coordinated between 6-8 per cent of the projects. These seven countries are home to the institutions which coordinated 65 per cent of all the projects. The size of the countries must be taken into consideration in interpreting these figures in the case of countries with high populations (Germany, Spain, France, Italy and United Kingdom). The group also included two Scandinavian countries (Sweden and Norway). The Central and Eastern European countries have participated in the programme as project coordinators since 1998.

The analysis of the questionnaires sent to project coordinators indicated that in the majority of cases the partners knew each other before starting the project. Otherwise, contact was made through other colleagues, the European Commission or conferences. In two-thirds of the projects surveyed the coordinators were men; they were teachers, directors of the coordinating institution or European project managers in a higher education institution (almost 50%) situated in an urban area (two-thirds).

According to the Technical Assistance Office database, higher education institutions represented almost 60 per cent of the participating institutions and non-profit associations nearly 13 per cent. A further 7.5 per cent were made up of secondary schools, but few primary schools were involved. Some partnerships also included adult or continuing education providers, research institutes and private companies. The average number of partners in a project was about eight, but more than 20 per cent of the projects had 11 or more organisations in their partnership.

ODL in participating countries[3]

Countries varied as to whether they saw themselves as having a tradition of open and distance learning. This therefore affected the implementation of this action. So for example some Danish interviewees considered that they had little tradition of ODL but strong pedagogic traditions. The action had in fact raised interest so that some institutions using more traditional forms of delivery were developing ODL approaches. Equally in the Czech Republic, interviewees commented that ODL did not start until the early 1990s, which meant that, though higher education institutions could find partners abroad, it was very difficult for schools to participate. In Hungary on the other hand, there was a good network of ODL centres mostly created within the Tempus framework to which they considered that SOCRATES had not contributed much, as there were few Hungarian partners. Potential applicants were only just beginning to recognise the importance of ODL. In the UK, where ODL had dealt largely with information and communication technologies, the action was appreciated and it was felt that its focus on the educational applications of information and communication technologies had also contributed to some government initiatives. In Romania, it was hoped that one impact of the programme would be to increase the awareness of decision-makers in education about the importance of information and communication technologies in the field of ODL. A different aspect was highlighted in a Spanish interview. This was the equal opportunities facet of ODL approaches in so far as some of the beneficiaries in Spain were unqualified school leavers following vocational training courses;

It is interesting to note that in most cases the partnerships coordinated by the questionnaire respondents demonstrated a North-South mix with, in recent years, some partners from the Central and Eastern European countries. The working languages were, in order of importance, English (in almost all the projects), French, German and Italian or Dutch.

In general, the experience of working in a partnership both at national and transnational level was appreciated by the coordinators in the sample who considered that their partnerships had managed to agree on clear objectives, had set up a system of communication and all the partners had respected deadlines for the work. Most of the difficulties mentioned tended to be linked to over-loaded timetables and administrative issues. However, for almost one third of the projects, at least one partner left the partnership before the end of the funded period. One interviewee stressed the importance of setting up a solid structure rapidly, as, despite a high level of acceptance that spending had to be monitored, coordinators could find it difficult to collect all the necessary bills from the partners. The fact that a formal partnership contract had been signed (in 70% of the partnerships) did not seem to influence the departure of the partners, as the main reasons given were financial difficulties linked to budget reduction from the Commission, change of strategies in partner institutions and transfer to another post or leaving the partner institution. It should be noted that respondents did not all agree that a formal contract was useful.

[3] We have included inserts on a range of themes and preoccupations drawn from the interviews with, and questionnaire returns from, key actors in the participating countries. They are intended to be illustrative and provide interesting examples. They do not reflect official statements and are not intended as examples of national policies nor are the lists of countries exclusive.

Interviewees had mixed feelings about working in a transnational partnership. In certain cases, the difficulties seemed to outweigh the advantages. The fact that partners could be very far away was felt as limiting the creation of group dynamics.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

Project coordinators reported that they had addressed the European Commission, their National Agency or Internet in order to obtain information about the action. Respondents had not had any particular difficulties in obtaining the application form, which they found quite clear, and were satisfied with the documentation. The interviews suggested that previous experience of institutions in European programmes influenced the ease with which they coped with the administrative procedures. It was felt that experienced coordinators had an advantage in terms of access to information.

Most of the respondents considered that selection criteria were transparent but complained about the time they had to wait to receive a reply about their application. The average was about seven months. Less than two thirds obtained a grant on first application and for more than half the amount was lower than they expected. Figures are available for 1996, 1997 and 1998. They show that the mean ratio of support requested and awarded over the three years for ODL projects was between 49 and 51 per cent. Requests for grants averaged €176,342, while the average grants awarded were *circa* €82,870. This meant that partnerships had to readjust their budgets, reduce their work plan, and decrease the number of partners or activities or final products.

Though one interviewee considered that the financial reporting had become easier over the life-span of the project, others considered that the regulations were too rigid. Several interviewees pointed out the difficulties of introducing modifications to the budget once it had been approved. One frustrating example was given of a coordinator who had applied during his project for funding to participate in a conference but which was granted after the conference had taken place.

For the majority of the questionnaire respondents, payments arrived late. They explained this by the complexity of monitoring procedures. The fact that the coordinators carried full financial responsibility for the project and had to spend a great deal of time on administrative procedures was criticised. For some of them, it led to their decision not to coordinate another project. More than 25 per cent of the coordinators who were surveyed did not want to coordinate a project again.

Survey respondents considered that requests for renewal of funds came too soon after approval. One interviewee described it as "*unhelpful, inefficient and illogical*".

On the whole, the type of help received on the financial monitoring from the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and the Commission was judged to be adequate by the survey respondents, but they criticised the lack of communication with their National Agencies. One respondent would like the Commission to recognise more explicitly the importance of the

coordination function. Moreover, one interviewee suggested that it would be useful for staff from Brussels to visit them in order to provide feedback on what they were doing.

Thematic Areas and Target Populations

According to the Technical Assistance Office data based on application forms, the main objectives of projects were cooperation (52%), dissemination of good practice (33%), developing pedagogical frameworks (35%) and skill enhancement (31%). The main content areas dealt with in the projects surveyed (and based on work carried out) were given as :

- teacher training (more than one third),
- consultancy in ODL or the use of information and communication technologies (one third),
- development of the European dimension and culture (less than one third).

It should be noted that multiple responses about thematic areas were possible both in the application forms and in the survey questionnaire. In the applications, prospective coordinators were asked which sectors they would address. Almost two-thirds of the projects intended targeting higher education undergraduates and over 40 per cent secondary schools. A third of the projects also targeted postgraduates and the adult and continuing education sector. (The latter probably included teacher training in some countries.) Almost two-thirds of the projects aimed to produce guidelines and almost 60 per cent intended to develop web pages as an outcome.

85 per cent of the coordinators who were surveyed developed the project in order to respond to an identified need and one third said that they wanted to work with European partners or to follow up other development work underway. About 20 per cent of the respondents said that they were working with pupils with special needs. These projects concerned either people living in rural areas, or disadvantaged young people, or people with special learning needs. The database information provided confirms this figure of about 20 per cent addressing the issue of geographical distance and difficulty of access. It was particularly important in certain countries such as Denmark, Greece, Portugal and Norway. Only 12 per cent of the projects surveyed were concerned with issues of gender.

One of the ODL projects, SUSTAIN, coordinated from a research institute (SCIENTER) in Italy, was developed to promote effective dissemination of the outcomes of the ODL action. The partnership collected information about all the SOCRATES ODL projects approved since 1995 and drafted a thematic review corresponding to the main themes.

As a further indication of the thematic areas dealt with by the ODL projects, we have listed below the number of projects corresponding to each major area defined by SUSTAIN:

Number of projects	Thematic area
69	Resources and training for teachers and trainers
59	ODL integration (in university teaching, school teaching, work-based learning)
50	European networks, observatories, databases, bibliographies and "system" projects to support large communities of people involved in ODL
43	Joint content development
36	Collaborative learning and other innovative pedagogic approaches
19	Socially disadvantaged groups and lifelong learning
16	Cross cultural and cultural mobility
15	Developing models of virtual classrooms

In most cases, the projects surveyed targeted higher education students and teachers or pupils from secondary institutions and adult learners. Some target groups, such as trainers or publishers, did not appear in the answers to the questionnaires. The average age of pupils concerned by these projects was up to 16. This is confirmed by the database which shows that the participation of higher education institutions, secondary schools and adult or continuing education institutions has risen gradually between 1995 and 1999. The main target group addressed in the applications was teachers/trainers (90%). 40 per cent of the projects targeted education managers and a third trainers/staff developers. ODL students were also targeted by 40 per cent of the projects.

Almost all the respondents had planned an evaluation of their work and the majority evaluated their activities through informal discussions within the partnership at regular intervals throughout the project. It represented less than 5 per cent of the total budget. None of the projects interviewed had participated in any evaluation organised at national or European level.

Building an Impact

The coordinators who were surveyed saw the impact of the projects as follows:

- *The European dimension:* It was defined in terms of exchange of expertise among partners or exchange of experiences in dealing with difficult issues. The respondents felt they had obtained better knowledge of different types of European practice in the areas in which they were working and had published at European level. An ODL project was a way of broadening European contacts in order to develop more projects and be in communication with different types of institutions. Through their projects they felt they belonged to a common movement. For one of the interviewees the programme had forced them to *"think European"* and now they were moving on to develop their network in the hope of developing both their technical competence and their 'image'.

- *Benefits for the institution:* Coordinating a European project enabled an institution to improve the quality of the work carried out and the training materials available. They developed new administrative skills and learned to work with European regulations and institutions. Relations between teaching staff and students benefited from the project work and enabled them to introduce new technologies into their teaching programmes. The way they worked with ODL became more professional. Being involved in this type of project helped them to enhance and broaden their networks. The credibility of the institution was improved, as were contacts with institutions in other parts of Europe. One respondent noted that the project had enabled the institution to develop an institutional strategy which was shared with partner organisations.

- *Benefits to staff: Staff* learned to manage projects and to work with networks. They developed contacts with colleagues abroad, helped by the use of Internet. Regular contact improved language skills and made them more aware of cultural differences and different ways of working. Staff improved their competences in the area of new information and communication technologies, pedagogic approaches and team working.

- *Benefits to students/pupils:* Participating in an ODL project enabled students to learn to work in teams and to share their research with other students. Their linguistic skills improved, as did their competences in new technologies. They developed a better understanding of certain problems and were more aware of different European approaches to the areas in which they were working.

In most cases, the coordinators who were interviewed assessed the impact (and dissemination) at local level referring either to their institution or the region. They confirmed the survey results that this type of project would probably have some impact on the students. In one case, the project had produced a self-learning package that would help student teachers in their everyday work and make them more familiar with, and more competent in, using net-based resources. However, the coordinator was not sure whether this would be the same in all the partner institutions. In other cases, the effect on students was seen to be less concrete, more diffuse, but developing.

Dissemination of Outcomes

Dissemination of results and outcomes was undertaken by three-quarters of the respondents, in most cases with support from their National Agency, the Commission or from the Technical Assistance Office. It accounted for 5 to15 per cent of the total project budget. Target audiences were mainly other staff in their organisation, other similar institutions and the education system in their country. For more than 80 per cent of the projects surveyed, dissemination took place mainly through Internet. However, most of the coordinators considered that in order to carry out a full dissemination plan correctly, they would have needed more time and a larger budget.

Interviewees had different definitions of dissemination. They differentiated between disseminating information about the project from that concerning the product. So, for some

partners, dissemination was about making the activity and partnership better known, for others it was linked to disseminating as well as possible the tool developed. One coordinator who was interviewed described the catalogue of European projects and initiatives that her institution had produced in order to make their work better known locally and contribute to their 'image'.

For most interviewees, there was a lack of structure for dissemination at the European level. Very little was known by coordinators about other projects and what was really happening. They would have welcomed what one interviewee called a "*shop window*" for projects which received support from the Commission. This was felt to be a real challenge as, in some cases, research undertaken at the European level was not taken seriously by the home institution which tended to view it as something done "*in one's spare time*" and not as part of the mainstream or core activity of the institution. A major issue was the budget available. One interviewee suggested the possibility of clustering projects for the purpose of dissemination in order to overcome the issue of under-funding. It could also contribute to more substantial and better coordinated dissemination of results.

Future Work

Though most of the projects surveyed would like to continue the work after the end of the funding period and would like to be part of future European projects, few wished to undertake the coordination tasks again.

One interviewee was interested in further exploring the use of ODL in lifelong learning and particularly as a way of opening up access to education and thus contributing to equal opportunities.

Another interviewee highlighted the added-value to their organisation of having coordinated a SOCRATES ODL project, as they had started receiving requests from other organisations to participate in new projects. They saw this as a sign of success and were pleased to note that other projects now referred to their pilot work.

The SOCRATES Contribution

For more than two-thirds of the coordinators who were surveyed, the project did not follow a previous project. In those cases in which it did, it was usually with SOCRATES funding (either COMENIUS or ODL). Just 15 per cent of the projects were linked to other current initiatives, either funded by another European programme, such as LEONARDO, or a national initiative.

This programme enabled institutions and their staff to develop an international approach and to envisage and implement their work differently. One interviewee felt that the best feature of the programme was the range of initiatives which it accommodated. ODL was found to be open, including to ideas that at first sight might not have seemed typical 'SOCRATES' ideas.

The funding was a very essential enabling factor which allowed them to bring together a broad partnership. The grant made it possible to cover travel costs.

In terms of their contribution to the SOCRATES/ODL objectives, interviewees took different perspectives. Two were concerned with the issue of achieving the right balance between developing open and distance learning approaches based on the use of new technologies while ensuring equal opportunities to the end-users. Others felt they had contributed to the overall objectives in so far as they had brought together actors at national and transnational levels, had fostered an exchange of ideas and, in so doing, had also explored solutions to linguistic and cultural barriers.

Coordinators' Suggestions for Improving the Programme:

Concerning the administrative and financial procedures, the interviewees considered that:

- delays in obtaining approval for renewal must be shortened;
- administrative support had to be strengthened;
- the possibility of introducing modifications without going through complex procedures should be examined.

Coordinators would appreciate:

- standard documents to give them assistance in managing partnerships and projects;
- More staff in the Technical Assistance Office to be able to cope with requests for help from project promoters and applicants.

Another suggestion, which compared SOCRATES I to an earlier initiative, is also worth mentioning. One interviewee felt that the Réseaux d'Institutions de Formation (RIF), an initiative which ended in 1996, should be reconsidered, as it was both user-friendly and a good way of linking groups of people to work together on a topic. The potential impact was considered to be more interesting than that obtained from facilitating individual mobility of students or teachers.

12.2.3 Summary of Points

(1) Altogether, the three types of institutions most present in ODL projects are higher education institutions, non-profit associations and secondary schools. The former constitute the largest group of partners and coordinators. The data show that there are frequently mixed partnerships in which universities are working with target groups in schools. The main group of pupils involved are in the 16-plus-age range. Universities demonstrated their role as leaders in the ODL action. It may be interesting to consider how to encourage them to play a more strategic role in the new MINERVA programme which coordinates more mixed partnerships in order to link the designers and researchers to the users. This would reinforce further their contribution to cooperation in this area.

(2) ODL projects covered three main areas of interest: teacher training, consultancy in ODL (including the use of technologies) and the development of the European dimension and culture. It is important to note that the teacher training element is present in the ODL action as well as in the more school-oriented actions (COMENIUS 3.1 and LINGUA A). It would appear that the projects developed with support of this action brought a response to the objective of training teachers to integrate new technologies.

(3) One-fifth of the projects are working with target groups with special needs either in terms of socio-economic disadvantage, rural areas or special learning needs. The ODL action made a useful contribution to the equal opportunities objectives of SOCRATES.

(4) The ratio of budgets approved to budgets requested was slightly higher for ODL projects than for COMENIUS and LINGUA action, as the mean ratio was 50%. This still means substantial reductions that had to be compensated for either by reduced activity or complementary sources of funding.

(5) A high percentage of the projects planned to use Internet as a tool for dissemination. In order to make dissemination more efficient and make better use of small budgets it was suggested that it could be interesting to consider clustering projects at the dissemination stage.

(6) The criticisms of the administrative and financial procedures and suggestions for improvements are essentially the same as those made by coordinators whose projects were funded under other actions. SOCRATES II has set up mechanisms designed to respond to these issues. They will need careful monitoring in the coming period.

(7) The ODL action was able to integrate a broad variety of initiatives despite a small overall budget. This was highly appreciated by the project coordinators.

13. ADULT EDUCATION

By Jean Gordon and Stéphanie Caillé

13.1 Introduction

ADULT EDUCATION was the Action of the Socrates programme created to enhance the European dimension in all areas of adult education (general, cultural and social). It focused on 'education activities' as opposed to the 'vocational training' activities supported by the LEONARDO da VINCI programme.

The ADULT EDUCATION Action within SOCRATES referred to all types of educational initiatives which were open to adult learners, irrespective of their previous educational qualifications. It could be defined by reference to the transnational aspect of the cooperation established among groups of partners, as well as to the European content that characterised the activities supported.

The ADULT EDUCATION strand of SOCRATES I was a small pilot action integrated into the Chapter of the programme which contained the Horizontal Measures. ADULT EDUCATION was part of the third Action concerned with the Exchange of Information and Experience. It received 2.7 per cent of the total budget, which limited the amount of activity that could be funded. Under SOCRATES II, a new Action – GRUNDTVIG - has been created. It integrates the ADULT EDUCATION activity of SOCRATES I, defines adult education within the framework of 'other educational pathways' and places it firmly within a perspective of lifelong learning.

13.1.1 The Objectives of ADULT EDUCATION

The ADULT EDUCATION action of SOCRATES I and the LEONARDO da VINCI programme were designed to "seek to address, together, the increasingly apparent need for a vigorous policy of lifelong learning, at European level just as within each of the participating countries".[1]

Specific objectives, presented in the *Guidelines to Applicants*, included:

- Enhancing the quality of adult education provision in Europe within an overall perspective of lifelong learning;
- Promoting the exchange of experience, information, innovation and good practice among participating countries;

[1] Though the **Guidelines for Applicants** could undergo some modification from one year to the next, we have used the **1998** version for all general descriptions as that year came half way through the programme once it was well underway but not yet into the transition period to SOCRATES II.

- Enhancing adult learners' knowledge of cultures, traditions, languages and all aspects of social political and economic life in other participating countries;
- Enhancing adult learners understanding of political economic and administrative aspects of the EU itself and the key questions facing it in the future, with a view to promoting active citizenship.

Some of the overall objectives were made more specific during the programme. So, for example, in 1998, the Commission promoted greater involvement of educational activities through the participation of cultural/artistic organisations and institutions such as museums, libraries, theatres, and opera houses in order to enhance the cultural aspects of the action.

13.1.2 The Target Audience

Overall, the target audience was very broad:

- Teaching staff at higher education institutions
- Teachers' trainers
- Foreign language teachers
- Adult learners
- Apprentices
- Inspectors
- Educational, curriculum and career advisors
- Organisations concerned with intercultural education, educational associations and cultural organisations
- National, regional and local education authorities
- Publishers, producers of educational software and programmes

In selecting projects for support, special attention was given to projects which addressed the needs of adult learners in rural areas and disadvantaged regions or who were disadvantaged for socio-economic reasons or because of disability, but also to projects which promoted equality of opportunity between men and women.

13.1.3 ADULT EDUCATION Selected Quantitative Data

There were a total of 182 projects funded over the period 1995-1999, with an average annual grant of €76,531 per annum.

The two tables which follow show firstly the applications for support and year and the grants awarded (Table 13.1) and secondly the budget for the action (Table 13.2).

Over the four-year period for which data are available, 45 per cent of the requests for support under the ADULT EDUCATION action were satisfied (see below Table 13.1). For the first year of the programme, just over half the requests were approved, but this proportion then decreased in the following two years and, in 1997, less than 40 per cent of applicants obtained support. The proportion then increased again to over half in 1998.

Table 13.1
ADULT EDUCATION Applications for Support and Grants Awarded in the Years 1995 - 1999 – by Year of Selection (absolute numbers)

	Year of selection				Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	
Applications	58	89	84	88	319
Grants awarded	31	37	32	45	145
Ratio of grants awarded and applications (%)	53.4	41.6	38.1	51.1	45.5

Source: Statistical annex – Socrates centralised actions; 1995 – 1998; SOCRATES & YOUTH Technical Assistance Office.

The budget for ADULT EDUCATION was doubled in 1996 in comparison with the 1995 allocation of funds. It then decreased in 1997 and 1998 but returned to its 1996 level once more in 1999 (see below Table 13.2). It represented *circa* 2.5 per cent of the total SOCRATES annual budget and 7 per cent of the budget for Horizontal Measures.

Table 13.2
The ADULT EDUCATION Budget 1995-1999 – by Year of Selection

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
Total Budget in Euro	2,848,783	5,414,452	4,874,140	4,963,189	5,586,385	23,686,948

Source: Source: SOCRATES budget 1995-99 (ECU/EURO) EUR 15

13.1.4 The Evaluation Criteria for ADULT EDUCATION

The overall evaluation criteria implemented were presented in Chapter 9. This section aims to specify the criteria for ADULT EDUCATION. The evaluation of this action within the SOCRATES I programme was designed to examine the relevance of the programme and how far it suited the expectations, interests and needs of the target populations, as well as the extent to which the actions were appropriate to cover the full scope of the objectives targeted. It focused on whether objectives have been met and whether the actions undertaken met the expectations of the users:

(1) *The scope of institutions* involved in ADULT EDUCATION in order to estimate the impact of the programme in terms of size, penetration into education systems and breadth of coverage. Equal opportunities criteria were taken into consideration where possible, including the notion of disadvantage and the participation of rural areas. The characteristics

of the partnerships and how they worked in practice have been included. The data are taken from the postal surveys, the project interviews and the Technical Assistance Office database.

(2) "*Making a difference"*; i.e. the impact of the funded activity on the partner organisations and their environment and more broadly on the education systems in which they work. The evaluation sought to highlight the types and variety of impact on the different actors. It focused on issues concerning both the content of the impact and dissemination of information about the funded activity. Through the postal surveys, interviews and workshops, it also examined the issue of quality assessment of outcomes and products with a view to making a broader impact on the systems involved.

(3) *Improved European awareness*: The approach to evaluating how the European dimension has been taken into consideration focused essentially on the qualitative data collected through interviews and the national and transnational workshops.

(4) *The overall management of the ADULT EDUCATION programme*: This issue was addressed through the interviews carried out at EU level and with the national government bodies and agencies in each of the participating countries, as well as through the postal surveys and project interviews. It examines the levels of satisfaction of the beneficiaries of the programme and the extent to which it has provided a support structure for their development work or alternatively hindered progress due to the administrative and financial procedures.

(5) *Dissemination*: The evaluation sought to investigate:

- the levels, types and audiences for dissemination;
- whether or not budgets were sufficient to build in a sufficient level of dissemination;
- the contribution of national agencies and regional or local education structures and bodies to dissemination of results and outcomes.

The lack of adequate dissemination of ADULT EDUCATION project outcomes and results was one of the issues raised in the interim evaluation of the ADULT EDUCATION action, carried out on all the projects funded between 1995 and 1997 and coordinated by the Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (DIE). The report entitled, *Adult Education and Learning in Europe*, was the outcome of this evaluation project called *MOPED – Monitoring of Projects: Evaluation as Dialogue*.

(6) *Transferability and Sustainability:*

- Was the ADULT EDUCATION structure able to take into account the potential for multiplier effects and how?
- Are the project funding periods long enough to reach a stage in development in which it becomes possible to examine multiplier effects and transferability?
- Do funded activities produce an outcome or result which is transferable? Are there the mechanisms to assess this factor?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to take this aspect into account?
- How do the national authorities and/or agencies attempt to build sustainability?
- Is it feasible? If so, under what conditions?

(7) Following the recommendation of the MOPED study to examine the issue of *accreditation* within the framework of the ADULT EDUCATION action, it is one area of investigation examined within the surveys and database analysis of thematic areas.

13.2 The Action

The activities supported within this action: *European projects in Adult Education* came within the two thematic areas as follows (see *Guidelines for Applicants 1998*):

A. Projects addressing key issues for adult education in Europe
B. Projects designed to promote knowledge and awareness of Europe/European countries among adult learners.

A. Projects addressing key issues for adult education in Europe were designed to enhance the quality of provision in Europe within an overall perspective of lifelong learning. Four main themes were developed:

- The promotion and development of individual demand for education among adults.
- The supply of educational activities for adults.
- The development of support services for adult learners and adult education providers.
- The promotion of flexible accreditation and certification systems.

B. Projects designed to promote knowledge and awareness of Europe/European countries among adult learners. These projects were concerned firstly with enhancing adult learners' knowledge and understanding of the cultures, traditions and languages, as well as the social, economic and political life of the participating countries. Secondly, they were concerned with improving knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the European Union.

Proposals were expected to produce outcomes which could be transferred, disseminated or commercialised and applicants were encouraged to include an ODL dimension in their projects.

ADULT EDUCATION was a centralised action and applications were made to the Commission. Community financial support was provided on a cost-sharing and annual basis and was available for up to two, and in exceptional cases, three years. The level of the grant could vary considerably depending on the objectives of the project. Partners could request a grant for a preparatory visit to undertake project development. These grants did not normally exceed €1000 per person.

Table 13.3 shows the number of Transnational Cooperation Projects in Adult Education funded and renewed, as well as the support requested and awarded. The second table, 13.4, shows the proportions of projects which received funding for one, two, or three years.

Over the five years, there was a total of 182 projects selected of which half received at least a second year of funding (see below Table 13.3). During the first year of the programme, less than 20 projects were approved, but in the following years between 30 and 45 projects were selected every year. This is the action in which the ratio of budget approved to budget requested was the highest - just over 50 per cent on average.

Table 13.3
Number of ADULT EDUCATION Transnational Cooperation Projects Established and Renewed and the Support Requested and Awarded – by Year of Selection

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
New	19	42	32	45	44	182
Renewed	-	15	31	31	35	94
Total number new and renewed	19	57	63	76	79	
Support requested (mean in Euro)	*	168,389	152,170	154,993	*	*
Support awarded (mean in Euro)	*	85,783	75,298	68,512	*	*
Ratio of support awarded and requested (%)	*	50.4	51.9	49.3	*	*

Source: Database of the Technical Assistance Office
* No data available

As Table 13.4 shows, nearly one third of the 1995 projects received three years of funding. This decreased to 12 per cent for the 1996 projects, while projects receiving two years of funding increased from 47 per cent for 1995 projects to 62 per cent for 1998 projects.

Table 13.4
Duration of ADULT EDUCATION Transnational Cooperation Projects - by Year of Selection of Projects (Percentages)

	Year of selection					Total
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
One year	21	41	19	38	100	48
Two years	47	48	59	62	.0	42
Three years	32	12	22	.0	.0	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(19)	(42)	(32)	(45)	(44)	(182)

Source: Database of the SOCRATES Technical Assistance Office in Brussels

13.2.1 Data Used for Analysis

(for a detailed description of the methodology see Chapter 9)

The data used for this analysis are mainly drawn from:

- The postal survey sent to project coordinators. They were asked to provide information about the coordinating partner, the composition of the partnership, target groups, the thematic areas on which the project worked, its objectives and main activities. There were also questions concerning links to other projects, the partnership process, the participants (including pupils/students with special needs), administrative and financial procedures, evaluation, results and dissemination. Most of the sections contained closed questions, but there were open questions on outcomes and impact.
- The database analysis. The Technical Assistance database provided a range of information drawn from project applications which included the national and institutional composition of partnerships, thematic areas, target groups, etc. It also provided the quantitative data for the centralised actions.
- Interviews with project coordinators. The interview guide contained questions on why the coordinator had chosen to seek funding from SOCRATES, the contribution of the programme to achieving results, issues of dissemination, impact and follow-up and finally suggestions for improvement.

Some reference is also made to data collected through the workshops, as well as interviews of key actors in the management and implementation of SOCRATES in 19 of the participating countries and a postal survey of key actors in the other 11 participating countries.

13.2.2 The Analysis

Why SOCRATES?

From the interviews carried out with ADULT EDUCATION project coordinators, it would appear that they chose Socrates for three main reasons. In some cases they wished to promote good practice and quality in adult education. The SOCRATES programme allowed them to examine the issue of quality from the point of view of adult education rather than the other way round. Secondly, SOCRATES support provided the opportunity to develop a transnational project with a solid educational content. Thirdly, this action gave them the possibility of obtaining a higher level of funding than other SOCRATES actions.

One interviewee pointed out that adult education may not be a high priority activity, especially within a university, as it does not constitute research. He went on to say that "*unless you are winning the battle in the university you are not going to be able to do this kind of project*". SOCRATES, in these circumstances, was a way of obtaining more recognition for adult education activities within coordinating institutions.

The coordinators who were surveyed first heard about the programme through colleagues, their National Agency or through the Ministry of Education.

Partnerships and Coordination

The Technical Assistance Office data show that the countries in which the highest number of projects were coordinated were the United Kingdom (17%), Italy, Spain and Germany (12% each). Together, these four countries were home to the coordinating institutions in 53 per cent of the total number of projects. The size of the different countries and therefore the number of 'potential' coordinators, must be taken into consideration in interpreting these figures. France, on the other hand, one of the group of 'high' population countries, only coordinated 6 per cent of the total number of projects.

It is interesting to note that 8 per cent of the projects were coordinated from Sweden. In the interviews with key actors at national level, it was pointed out that there is a strong tradition of adult education in Sweden but SOCRATES funds were very small in comparison to national funding.

The analysis of the questionnaires sent to project coordinators indicated that in the majority of cases the partners knew each other before launching the project. Otherwise, contact was made through other colleagues or conferences.

According to the Technical Assistance Office database figures, 72 per cent of the coordinating institutions were made up of higher education institutions (18%), regional or national non-profit associations (30%) and international non-profit association (24%). This was the only action in which international non-profit associations were well represented. It was also the only action in which associations represented over half the coordinating organisations. Public authorities and private companies represented just 12 per cent of the project coordinators. The average number of partners in a project was seven.

Just over half of the coordinators who answered the survey were women, and they were mainly either directors of the coordinating organisations, heads of department or project managers in either adult or continuing education institutions (over 40%), associations (one quarter) or higher education institutions (just over 15%). Four-fifths of these organisations were in urban areas and for 80 per cent of the organisations, and an even higher percentage of the coordinators, this was the first time they had coordinated a project.

In most cases, the partnerships demonstrated a North-South mix with, in recent years, some partners from the Central and Eastern European countries. The working languages indicated by the survey respondents were, in order of importance, English (75% of projects), French (35% of projects), German and Spanish (more than 15%).

In general, the respondents reported that experience of working in a partnership both at national and transnational level was appreciated, as they considered that they had managed to agree on clear objectives, set up a system of communication and had respected the deadlines for reports. The main difficulty was linked to over-loaded timetables. However, for

one quarter of the projects, at least one of the partners left before the end of the project's funded period. The fact that a formal partnership contract had been signed (75%) did not seem to have an influence, as the main reasons given were: transfer to another post, difficulties in finding complementary funding, change in the strategy of the institution, lack of time and lack of real investment. Yet almost 75 per cent of respondents had a positive reaction about the usefulness of a formal contract.

Administrative and Financial Procedures

The coordinators surveyed obtained information from the European Commission, the National Agency or the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels.

Moving on to the administrative and financial procedures, the survey respondents did not have any particular difficulties in obtaining the application forms and they tended to find the documentation and the *Guidelines* quite clear. However, one of the interviewees suggested that it would be useful if the application forms were in more (or all) of the official languages. Despite the clarity, two of the interviewees estimated that it took the equivalent of a month's work to apply for funding and it was clearly more difficult for 'first time' coordinators (the majority of questionnaire respondents). An electronic version of the application forms would be appreciated.

Respondents complained that selection criteria were not transparent and they had to wait a very long time to obtain a reply about their application, on average eight months. In addition, funding arrived late, which made it very difficult for the poorer institutions to participate if they did not have their own funds to start the project work before the first payment. One interviewee summarised the situation as follows: "*Most projects are forced to start with a mortgage*".

Though most respondents obtained a grant on first application, more than half received less than they had requested. Figures available for 1996, 1997 and 1998 show that the mean ratio of support requested and awarded for ADULT EDUCATION projects was just over 50 per cent. This was the highest ratio of any of the Transnational Cooperation Projects. Requests for grants averaged €158,517, while the average awarded was *circa* €76,500. As a result, partnerships had to readjust their budgets and reduce their work plans and their activities.

The renewal procedure was criticised, as applications for the following year's funding had to be made just after the start of the project. As one interviewee said, though the rationale is understandable, the process is *disconcerting*. It was felt that there was insufficient flexibility to introduce modifications once a project had been approved.

The funding period of one year renewable was felt to be too short and it was suggested that two or three years for this type of project would be more realistic. The MOPED evaluation referred to this issue and suggested that projects should be approved for a longer period.

More than a quarter of coordinators who were surveyed did not want to coordinate another project as there was a certain financial risk in managing a project and coordination took too much time.

On the whole, the type of help they received from the Technical Assistance Office in Brussels and the Commission concerning the financial monitoring was judged to be adequate. But they criticised the lack of communication with their National Agencies. One of the recommendations of the MOPED evaluation was to enhance the participation of national agencies in this action in terms of information, knowledge about the programme and procedures.

Thematic Areas and Target Populations

The main areas dealt with by the ADULT EDUCATION projects surveyed were:

- Development of the European dimension and culture (60%);
- Developing tools and approaches for improving equal opportunities (40%);
- Building networks (35%)[2]

According to the Technical Assistance Office data, the interpretation of the 'European dimension' in the context of the ADULT EDUCATION projects, was essentially civic education and parent education. In some countries, such as the UK and Italy, the European dimension was frequently developed through cultural and artistic activities, whereas in Greece it was the environmental aspect that was most common. Themes such as initial teacher training modules/courses and mobility and the exchange of staff were virtually not existent. The issue of accreditation as a key question was not present in many projects. This theme was examined in the MOPED evaluation and led to a recommendation that more attention be paid to accrediting the achievement of learners both in comparison with the national vocational accreditation and certification systems and within a perspective of European mobility. By the end of SOCRATES I it had not become an important issue for the projects. The projects intended to focus on intercultural issues (19%), produce courses or modules (54%) or seminars on the learning process (40%) and enhance adult education through better information (31%). One-third of the projects developed partnerships between the formal and non-formal education sectors and one-quarter was interested in individual pathways as a learning priority.

Around 85 per cent of the coordinators in the sample had developed the project in order to respond to an identified need and, for more than 50 per cent of them, working with European partners was an important motivation. The database information, based on the application forms, shows that one of the principal areas of work to be developed in most countries concerned disadvantaged adults and in particular people with a disability (a target group for 11% of the projects) or the unemployed (also a target group for 11% of the projects). The Greek coordinators were an exception, as they were particularly interested in issues involving migrants. In comparison, only 13 per cent of the survey respondents said that they

were working with students with special needs, but just over a quarter was concerned with issues of gender. Almost 60 per cent of the projects targeted adult learners in general.

In most cases, the projects surveyed targeted adult learners, teachers and lecturers, as well as disadvantaged adults. Groups such as social and care workers or parents as learners were under-represented.

Less than a third of the respondents had developed the project as a follow-up activity to a previous project. Any previous projects had been implemented with either SOCRATES or LEONARDO funding. 12 per cent of the projects were linked to another project underway, whether funded by SOCRATES or by a national initiative.

Almost all the coordinators who were surveyed had planned an evaluation of their work, usually through informal discussion within the partnership or with the help of structured self-evaluation techniques. Evaluation took place at regular intervals throughout the project and represented less than 5 per cent of the total budget. None of the interviewees had participated in an evaluation at either national or European level. One partner found that being audited by the European Commission was not necessarily negative, as they had at least received a visit from someone "*in the system*". Another interviewee raised the issue of quality assessment of projects from the selection stage onwards, wondering whether or not the efficiency of the programme would be improved by more structured monitoring of the content. It was also suggested that evaluation criteria could be developed through the coordinators meetings in Brussels. It was also a recommendation of the MOPED evaluation team that an "*acceptable system of evaluation, assessment and monitoring to assess the overall effectiveness of projects and to ensure the quality of the outcomes."*

Building an Impact

The notion of 'impact' was felt to be dependent on the type of project (desired outcomes and results), as well as on the type of messages the partners were seeking to disseminate. An example was given of the importance of assessing the impact of training activities on how students' attitudes evolve. Another project coordinator pointed out that her aim was essentially to influence national policy about adult education provision. In a third example, the aim was to have the project results integrated into a local policy statement on sustainable development.

In the questionnaire responses the project coordinators saw the impact on the groups involved in their project as follows:

- *The European dimension:* It was defined in terms of improving their knowledge of the different ways of working in Europe and different systems of education. Coordinators became aware of the wealth of diversity in Europe. An ADULT EDUCATION project was seen as a way of broadening European contacts in order to develop more projects and disseminate results more widely.

[2] The total comes to over 100% due to the possibility of multiple answers.

- *Benefits for the institution:* Coordinating a European project was felt to be beneficial in terms of the teaching materials and modules produced both for the coordinating institution and the partners. A European project was also a way of bringing in extra funding to the institutions and strengthening their networks.
- *Benefits to staff:* Staff learned to manage projects and work with networks. Being in regular contact with colleagues in other countries improved their language skills and made them more aware of cultural differences and differences in adult education systems. Improving information technology skills and professional development were also cited.
- *Benefits to students/pupils:* Participating in ADULT EDUCATION projects allowed the students to improve their knowledge about other European countries and to learn about managing a project. Their linguistic and communication skills also benefited. Sharing experience with disadvantaged persons was also mentioned as a positive factor. One coordinator remarked that the adult participants had increased their level of curiosity about other countries and wanted to visit the partners.

Dissemination of Outcomes

This is an area where the MOPED evaluation was very critical of what had taken place. Their analysis found that many barriers existed to dissemination of the outcomes of projects such as questions of copyright, translation, publishing, updating, etc. The number of potential users was not very clear. In their conclusions they recommended giving consideration to establishing a common dissemination structure at European level to support the international dissemination which partner institutions could not provide.

The range of results and outcomes of the projects surveyed were very broad. Among the group interviewed they included a solar powered coffee machine, a training programme, guide books, broadcasts, etc.

Dissemination of results and outcomes was undertaken by three-quarters of the respondents, in most cases with little support from their National Agency, the Commission or the Technical Assistance Office. It accounted for less than 5 per cent of the total project budget. Answers to the question of dissemination varied considerably, depending on whether or not the project was product-oriented and whether or not there was a definite local target group to inform. In the case of a UK project, for example, the project team was informing local (immigrant) communities and local policy makers about the project and its outcomes on an on-going basis. In some cases, the coordinators were used to doing regular dissemination about their work via journals, newsletters, the web, conferences, etc.. It would appear that this was the action which was most concerned with taking forward messages to the decision- and policy-makers.

Target audiences were mainly similar organisations in the partner countries, local organisations and the education system. Some projects also targeted individuals and institutions in countries not involved in the partnership. The methods of dissemination were very varied: special meetings, conferences or seminars, Internet, articles, etc.. However,

projects did not often disseminate their activities through exhibitions or arts activities, even though the Commission prioritised the involvement of cultural/artistic organisations and institutions from 1998 on. Most of the coordinators who were surveyed considered that in order to carry out a full dissemination plan correctly, they would have needed more time and a larger budget.

Future Work

Though most of the projects would like to continue the work after the end of the funding period and would like to be part of future European projects, few wished to undertake the coordination tasks again. Interviewees found the work too time-consuming.

For future projects, coordinators would like more flexibility and simpler renewal procedures. They also suggested more involvement of the National Agencies in this action and would welcome more support at national level. One interviewee feared lack of incentive at local and institutional level to continue the work undertaken in situations where universities consider European project work as a money loser and are therefore not prepared to continue providing support.

They suggested that it would be useful to organise the exchange of experience and expertise in a more formal way, through, for example, meetings or fairs.

The SOCRATES Contribution

The funding was considered to be an essential contribution of the SOCRATES programme. This programme enabled projects to take place and development work to be done more quickly than if funding had not been available. However, the amount of reporting was felt to hinder progress and interviewees suggested that they could have achieved more with flexibility in the requirements and if the Commission had respected deadlines. As one coordinator pointed out "*it is critical to be on time when the time-scales are short."*

The amount of time spent on administration reduced the time on project work. One interviewee stated that it was difficult to admit the real time spent on the project, as it might lead to sanctions within the institution. However, another interviewee added that the demands of the programme at least served as a lever, helping the coordinators to obtain monitoring information from the partners.

For one of the interviewees whose project was working with immigrant communities in three countries, the advantages of being part of SOCRATES were very important, as this project had created a strong basis for future work. Socrates was seen as having a strong transnational basis, which was challenging for partnerships.

It was difficult for coordinators to estimate to what extent they had contributed to the objectives of the programme, as the latter were seen to be fairly broad. One interviewee raised the issue of the less tangible outcomes, such as the effect on the beneficiaries, which

might not be apparent during the project lifecycle. Though in general the interviewees felt part of a European programme, one of them raised the issue of how to impart this same feeling to the people they were training. For another interviewee, although she felt she was a partner in a European cooperation project, she was not sure that she felt part of a broader programme.

In some cases, key actors at national level considered that SOCRATES had led to ADULT EDUCATION receiving a higher profile in their national systems. One Spanish interviewee felt that the Socrates action had contributed to the specific programme on adult education established in Spain in the late 1990s. A similar comment was made in Italy: adult education had achieved a higher level of recognition and the NGOs were better mapped. Other countries, such as Sweden, felt that they had a tradition in this area and that the Socrates funds were very small in comparison to national funding. In addition, given their structure of a large number of very small organisations run at local and regional level, developing projects and submitting applications was not very realistic. For Portuguese colleagues, their preoccupations with issues such as illiteracy, poverty and women returners to the labour market did not necessarily fit in with the perceived preoccupations of potential partners.

Coordinators' Suggestions for Improving the Programme

Coordinators would like to see longer funding periods, allowing sufficient time to develop and test a model. They would like simpler renewal procedures at a more appropriate moment. More involvement of the National Agencies would be appreciated.

Coordinators felt that there was a high cost to working in transnational partnerships for countries on the 'periphery of Europe'. This, in turn, raises the issue of having to use apex flights and the effects on family life.

13.2.2 Summary of Points

(1) The mix of partner organisations in ADULT EDUCATION was different from the other actions with a high percentage of non-profit associations which is representative of this sector of education. It is interesting to note that international non-profit associations constituted a quarter of the partner organisations.

(2) According to the survey data, projects concentrated on activities involving the European dimension, tools for improving equal opportunities and developing their networks. Accreditation of learning was not a major issue examined, despite the fact that the target population was predominantly adults in disadvantaged situations. This is all the more surprising as approaches to the accreditation of prior experience and learning have been developed in recent years in certain of the participating countries in order to respond to the education and training needs of adults in disadvantaged situations and to take into consideration 'hard' and 'soft' skills and formal and informal learning.

(3) The criticisms of the administrative and financial procedures are very similar to the points raised by coordinators of projects funded under other actions. They are not specific to this action. However, the issue of funds arriving late may have been more critical for partnerships which bring together groups of non-profit associations. They do not have their own funds with which project activities can be carried out while waiting for the European funds to arrive. Coordinators also favoured longer funded periods in order to allow for a more realistic development period. The shortness of the funding period was also highlighted in the MOPED evaluation. Project coordinators would appreciate being able to make applications in more of the Community languages and submit them electronically.

(4) From the group of actions analysed for this section of the global evaluation, this was the group of coordinators who were most concerned with taking forward 'messages' to decision-makers, whether at local or national level.

14. SOCRATES I: COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By Jean Gordon, David Parkes and Stéphanie Caillé

Why SOCRATES?

This chapter picks up on the issues outlined in 9.2 (the overall issues) and counterpoints them with the conclusions from the results of the evaluation of the COMENIUS**,** LINGUA**,** OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) and ADULT EDUCATION actions in the four preceding chapters. The text therefore repeats where appropriate and develops where necessary. The evaluation examined the management, outcomes and results of SOCRATES I. For some of the issues presented, solutions may have been included in the design of SOCRATES II. The fact that there is not systematic reference to the second phase of the programme is in order to focus on an assessment of SOCRATES I and, in particular, on areas where careful monitoring of new developments would be strongly recommended. Specific recommendations are presented in the final section of this chapter.

14.1 Participant Perceptions

The actors participating in the evaluation whether by interview, questionnaire return or workshop were broadly positive in their responses to those actions of the programme in which they were involved. There was a favourable ‘buzz’, whether referring to individual or institutional development or to added value for the system as a whole.

The following are illustrations which give the flavour of that "buzz":

- *COMENIUS 1* as one of the actions most directly involving schools brought Europe into several thousand classrooms, including some small rural classrooms, and allowed exchange among schools in an increasing number of regions of Europe. It contributed to prioritising disadvantaged areas, schools and pupils and gave primary schools the opportunity to be involved. The 'European dimension' was developed concretely, including through teacher mobility and communication among pupils.
- For *COMENIUS 2*, for example, there were comments on the importance of the action in helping *partners* to legitimate new ideas and approaches (in both their home institutions and *systems*), strengthen networks, comparatively test initiatives and develop an intercultural dimension. It was one of the actions which enhanced cooperation between schools, associations and higher education.
- Benefits for *COMENIUS 3.1* included reference to developing innovative products which could be used locally; improving the competence of teaching staff and therefore training; improving staff management, language and information and communication technologies skills.

- For COMENIUS 3.2 there was the opportunity to test the content and quality of materials and approaches (for the organisers) and to follow a European in-service training course in another country for most trainees. The interaction with colleagues from many other countries stimulated interest in Europe and in continuing training. It motivated teachers to develop projects and partnerships.

- LINGUA A was seen to benefit both the profile of and the language skills within an institution, as well as the individual language and management skills of staff. It provided the framework for development work on the use of computers and open and distance learning in language learning and teaching.
- *LINGUA B* enabled language teachers to improve their competences in the language targeted and their *working* methods and to establish contacts with other teachers.
- *LINGUA C* had the most marked and enthusiastic responses. This was reflected in the will of the education institutions to integrate the assistant and of the latter to adapt to a new system. For the assistants, it contributed to their personal and professional development both at the level of specific language skills, knowledge and understanding of the other system and culture and at the level of their own independence, confidence and maturity. The experience for the host institutions was a factor of motivation and opening up to other cultures.
- *LINGUA D* was seen to help institutions to adapt structures to facilitate innovation in developing new approaches and tools in language learning and staff via project involvement and international networking.
- LINGUA E was one of the actions which most directly involved schools with a focus towards and a positive impact on disadvantaged areas with little experience of transnational cooperation. It provided a framework for involving vocational education and training schools and colleges in bilateral exchanges around a project and language.

- ADULT EDUCATION provided an opportunity to involve disadvantaged adults, including from minority cultures, in educational activities which lay the foundations for better employability by developing "hard" and "soft" skills. For the partner organisations, of which over a half were non-profit associations, it helped to foster networks and exchange of practice and experience. For actors in the field in many countries, it raised the profile of their sector within the home system.
- For ODL, there was greater interest in countries with a limited tradition and experience. Concerning information and communication technologies aspects, there has been development for the less developed and more sophisticated review from the experienced with a clearly educational orientation. The teacher training perspective was significant, as was the contribution to developing mechanisms for equal opportunities through work with remote areas and on special learning needs.

In summary, participants saw the impact on institutions, staff and pupils/students as follows:

Benefits to Institutions

- Helped them to think 'European' and open up internationally
- Improved the profile and image with own authorities
- Had significant repercussions on small organisations
- Contributed to the quality of working methods and materials used
- Developed project management skills in the organisation
- encouraged team work and had an effect on relations within staff, between staff and students and with parents, etc.
- Provided a source of outside funding which gave them access to activities and products

Benefits to Staff

- New and improved skills: languages, project management, ICTs, managing budgets
- Improved areas of professional competence
- Encouraged team work
- Improved their knowledge of an area of work through project activity and transnational cooperation: e.g. exclusion, combating racism, etc.
- Provided the opportunity for exchange at practitioner level

Benefits to Pupils/Students (direct or indirect, depending on the action)

- Greater motivation
- Benefited from new materials, methods, approaches
- Learned to work in teams
- Improved their ICT skills
- Better understanding of issues explored

There are very strong criticisms, which will be picked up later in the section, of the regulations, financial procedures and administration of the SOCRATES components, but for the illuminating feedback, the participants were mainly positive concerning content, opportunity and impact. "*SOCRATES is not perfect but it's good"*, and "*the existence of a budget and the clarity of the rules meant that there was a game to play. There was a referee and there were real opportunities*".

Participant perceptions are vital to the continuity of the programmes and are one aspect of ‘impact’ (i.e. client satisfaction indicators). Another aspect is to look for both hard and soft measures of outcomes reflecting the declared aims/objectives of the programme.

14.2 Objectives and Outcomes

For both the above, the SOCRATES I global evaluation primarily concentrates on issues that are integral to and related to the implementation of the Programme, but there is also a broader and deeper context which helps define SOCRATES and the evaluation. The principal aspects of that context worth keeping in mind (and constantly referred to by the actors as well as flagged up in Chapter 9.2) are that

- The Programme is a "tool" of other, wider policies, aims and values of the Commission and the Member States with which it must be compatible. SOCRATES does not stand alone.
- The question is frequently put whether SOCRATES is more than the sum of its parts, although some parts (such as ERASMUS and LINGUA) existed before the whole?
- Does it matter for the impact on actors, institutions and systems, whether the whole is greater than the sum of the parts? Do participants need to feel that they are part of a greater coherent whole. Could the outcomes be improved if they did?

All three questions, but particularly the first, are consistently put by interviewees but might reasonably be put by members of the European Parliament in reviewing the nine main aims of the Programme.

To define that greater coherent whole, the Commission has a set of policy aims to which the varying educational objectives of the eligible countries have contributed. However, differing emphases from Member States have perhaps led to the Commission concentrating on implementation and mechanisms, making things happen, rather than defining very specific policy objectives. Those that are defined (and worth recalling) are the following:

1. to develop the European Dimension in education at all levels so as to strengthen the spirit of European citizenship, drawing on the cultural heritage of each Member State;
2. to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement in the knowledge of the languages of the European Union and in particular those which are least widely used and least taught, leading to greater understanding and solidarity among the peoples of the European Union and to promote the intercultural dimension of education;
3. to promote wide ranging and intensive cooperation among institutions in the Member States at all levels of education, enhancing their intellectual and teaching potential;
4. to encourage the mobility of teachers so as to promote a European Dimension in studies and to contribute to the qualitative improvement of their skills;
5. to encourage mobility for students; enabling them to complete part of their studies in another Member State, so as to contribute to the consolidation of the European Dimension in Education;
6. to encourage contacts among pupils in the European Union and to promote the European Dimension in their education;
7. to encourage the academic recognition of diplomas, periods of study and other qualifications, with the aim of facilitating the development of an open area for cooperation in education;
8. to encourage open and distant education in the context of the activities of this programme;
9. to foster exchanges of information and experience so that the diversity and specificity of the educational systems in the Member States become a source of enrichment and of mutual stimulation.

The objectives are placed in the broader framework of Commission aims. Thus, in the preamble to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing SOCRATES in 1995, it is stated that SOCRATES should ensure "equal opportunities for boys and girls, men and women"; "that children and adolescents with disabilities are able to participate as fully as possible" and that it "should promote access particularly for the less-privileged, to the initiatives organised as part of the SOCRATES Programme, thus actively combating social exclusion."

The European Dimension is mentioned in four of these aims, contributing to the notion of an overall coherence to the programme. But for many actors in the Programme it has become futile to attempt to fully understand or look for the cohesive elements in those policy aims. SOCRATES may succeed in policy terms just because it is possible for different constituencies and levels to reinterpret policy in their own terms.

This is a critical point to make since, if 'policy' issues are shifted for definition to a more local levels (as the actors suggest), then the umbrella Programme is seen by most participants to work best (including concept/funding/structure/regulations) as an adjunct or a supplement in supporting a local institutional strategy. The institution may be a school or locality or region or Member State, but essentially 'the institution' needs to have its own policy and strategy to which the SOCRATES package (from whatever action) acts as a resource supplement. From this point of view, the 'additionality' of European programmes is recognised as essential to their success. As a further plus, at local level, enhancement of democracy is more likely.

In metaphorical terms, whether there are a thousand flowers blossoming with the seeds sewn from Brussels or whether the seeds sewn locally are supplemented by a dose of fertiliser from Brussels is not important. Either way, the human and financial resource is seen as 'added-value' from Brussels, but dominant locally. The general view is that success depends on the presence and clarity of local policy and the strength of commitment to a strategy of implementation.

In implementing SOCRATES at all levels, the question was raised in chapter 9.2 as why we want change and, if so, of what kind?. Is it to be proactive towards or to respond to:

- the social and economic context?
- globalisation?
- the labour market(s)?
- new technologies?
- mobility of the workforce?
- European integration?
- other?

Implicitly, the response has been of a DG Education and Culture type rather than of a DG Employment and Social Affairs type, thus the culture rather than 'employability' element (hence perhaps the relative lack of resources) was stressed. The mix of policy aims is broad and ambivalent, mixing higher education and other sectors without fully taking cognisance

(aims 5 and 7 for example) of the issues of transparency of vocational qualifications (a focus of LEONARDO) for future workforce mobility.

14.3 The European Dimension

Broadly, the European Dimension is perceived by the actors as a 'good thing', but it can be and is defined differently by different participants and constituencies within the SOCRATES Programme. One might sum up the broad view in the following way: the definition of the European dimension and discussion about it should not be too abstract. Most interviewees feel that they know what it is in practice and in context but would hesitate to apply an umbrella label. Everyone can give examples, but, in the end, the European Dimension is best defined by series of small steps taken within specific projects. The very fact of working with people from other countries is considered to provide added-value.

For some people, the most important aspect is the fact that SOCRATES provides the structure and support which enables them to work with people from other countries. It allows them to foster and develop their networks. This process may be the most significant aspect of the European dimension. But participants also describe the impact in terms of the European dimension as a better knowledge and understanding of other systems, cultures, and countries, as well as greater awareness of diversity (language, education, culture). It is present in the examination of common issues and differing solutions. Importantly, the European dimension is the critical view of their own system and situation which develops through a transnational approach.

COMENIUS projects defined the European dimension by the fact that they belonged to a network which led to European teams working together on exchange of expertise, good practice and methods which brought into play their different approaches and education systems, including through the use of information and communication technologies and made them feel part of a larger community of interests and ideas. They felt that by raising awareness of cultural differences, initiating discussion on racism in education or democracy, encouraging mutual understanding and increasing people's understanding of minority groups enhanced the perception of a European dimension. The fact that partnerships could be extended to include institutions from the Central and Eastern European countries made an important contribution to the European dimension. The discussion on the European dimension led coordinators to comment on the need to enlarge "Europe" to include the minority cultures in Society.

LINGUA projects defined the European dimension very broadly in terms of an exchange of expertise among partners, working together on a concrete project, an experience of intercultural work, establishing a consensus around common working methods. It raised awareness of the possibility of developing an approach to developing language learning methods and materials at European level. The European dimension was frequently referred to as belonging to a group or a model, but these projects allowed actors in the field to develop approaches and products which addressed the needs of a broader audience outside Europe.

The evidence suggests that the notion of the European Dimension provides the symbolic catalyst which provides the 'out there' from which the 'down here' can draw strength. In short, there may be no need to go for the single overall aim which draws the diverse components together.

14.4 Outcomes

While the feedback from participants suggests that SOCRATES has a 'feel good' factor related to process and a discernable impact on the actors and their institutions, there is little evidence, so far, of carefully evaluated hard outcomes related to products and which are specific to the stated aims. This does not mean that the quality results do not exist but that they have not been checked, collected, disseminated and shared at national and/or European levels.

Interviews of key actors in the participating countries, of project coordinators, questionnaires to key actors and project coordinators, and discussions at the transnational workshop all confirm that there have been few examples of systematic national or European quality assessment (as on-going monitoring or final evaluation) of courses, products or outcomes. One example is the BABELE project which evaluates the outcomes of LINGUA E partnerships in a broad range of participating countries for one year of the programme.

Equal Opportunities[1]

Interviewees were asked about the mechanisms which were established in their country to ensure that the equal opportunities objectives of SOCRATES were implemented. Responses varied considerably from country to country. This reflected the reality of the field. In general, gender considerations were not the most important for the key actors, given the type of gender balance in education in many European systems. Many examples were given of mechanisms that sought to encourage participation from schools that did not usually take part in bilateral or multilateral activities. Thus, in Sweden, the Czech Republic and Denmark attempts were made to support schools in disadvantaged areas or classes that would not usually travel abroad. This was also the case in France where the regional officers sought to promote the programme to schools in education priority zones. In one region, a priority in the coming period will also be to bring in more special education institutions. This is also the case in the Netherlands where special education classes had a priority and in Finland where priority could be given to special schools' applications, though there were not a high number during SOCRATES I. In Hungary, the experience of the first years has suggested the need for a mechanism which gives more support to small schools in order to ensure that a "culture gap" does not appear between the big, city schools which are capable of carrying out projects and the smaller schools. One educational priority in Spain is integration, i.e. addressing the needs of children from migrant and gypsy families and other people in marginal situations. This has been an important focus of the programme. These are just a few examples from the interviews.

The equal opportunities objectives provide a good example of the lack of monitoring. Though there are certainly interesting and substantial outcomes in many countries through the

[1] We have included inserts on a range of themes and concerns drawn from the interviews with, and questionnaire returns from, key actors in the participating countries. They are intended to be illustrative and provide interesting examples. They do not reflect official statements and are not intended as examples of national policies, nor are the lists of countries exclusive.

different actions, no mechanisms have been established to allow for evaluating progress or innovation. Despite the fact that future project promoters must include reference to equal opportunities elements in their applications, this information is neither checked in final reports, documented nor analysed.

There is a debate which is common to the different strands as to whether one is aiming at a *process* or a *product*. In general, there is a high level of agreement that dissemination will be targeting several audiences which lay between the general public and fellow practitioners. Depending on the exact project or activity, dissemination of outcomes may be about any, some, or all of the following: practice, method, materials, processes, curricula.

Illustrative of this range are the perceived outcomes from a number of components

- For COMENIUS 1, the most important outcomes were the promotion of cooperation and exchange among schools, including a large number of primary schools. The percentage of schools involved varied considerably form one country to another. A few report rates of participation of over 10 per cent. The partnerships were the occasion to develop concrete approaches to the European dimension in the classroom which partners felt could be usefully disseminated to other schools in their system.
- Declared outcomes for COMENIUS 2, for example, include: institutionally, better working relations among departments; for staff, improved management of conflict towards consensus; for pupils, better relations with staff. This action had a strong focus on developing teaching methods and pedagogical approaches for learners with special needs and, in particular, with learning difficulties.
- For COMENIUS 3.1, impact includes: at institutional level, innovatory curriculum products used locally; for staff, management skills and linguistic competences; for pupils, new learning approaches. More than half the projects surveyed addressed the issue of special needs in education. It also includes a large number of training courses which have been piloted at least once.
- For COMENIUS 3.2, the immediate benefits were for the education staff who participated in the courses in terms of an opportunity of exchange with teachers and other education staff from other countries. They report taking home examples of good practice, but having few opportunities of sharing them with colleagues.
- For LINGUA A, institutions felt an improvement in their national profile; staff not only improved their inter cultural awareness but also their information and communication technology skills; the latter is also true for pupils. The action led, among other products, to teacher training courses and modules, many of which were piloted. In 40 per cent of the projects surveyed, at least one of the less widely used and lesser taught languages was included in the target languages.
- For LINGUA B, the benefit was substantial for individual language teachers but there was greater difficulty in sharing results with colleagues and the institution.
- LINGUA C was felt to be a success in genuinely opening up intercultural discussions and perceptions, and broadening horizons. The impact on the host institutions was clearly significant, as it provided a unique experience of integrating a trained teacher from another education system into the school's activity, both classroom and extra-curricula.

An outcome which was specifically referred to by the assistants in addition to the added-value in professional terms was the fact they found a teaching post easily on returning home.

- LINGUA D, though product orientated, also shares 'opening up' and horizon broadening outcomes. This action has achieved an important though unwritten objective, that of raising awareness of the importance of developing language learning and teaching methodologies and materials in transnational teams. The participants were, however, conscious of the urgent need for external assessment of the quality of their results, for finding appropriate mechanisms to establish more exchange at this level and for increasing dissemination with other promoters. Two-thirds of the projects included at least one of the less widely taught and lesser used languages in their target languages.
- LINGUA E fulfilled one of its main objectives in so far as there was substantial participation of pupil/students in vocational education and training. The direct communication established between the students through classroom activities and the exchanges was felt to be an important outcome.
- The ODL action has enhanced knowledge of the different European practices and experiences, broadened networks and encouraged institutions to 'think European'. A significant result was the involvement in teacher training and the fact that 20 per cent of the projects targeted special needs either for special learning needs or relating to geographical disadvantage.
- The ADULT EDUCATION sector, as a result of the SOCRATES action, is better understood and receives better recognition in some of the participating countries. An interesting outcome was the focus on delivering messages to policy- and decision-makers.

If process is perceived as important as (hypothetical) products then the effect on individual pupils and teachers of taking part in a transnational project is seen in itself to be highly beneficial.

However, this debate is difficult to conclude since, for COMENIUS 3.1 and 3.2 and LINGUA A and B, more systematic evaluation of the quality of courses would make it possible to assess outcomes more specifically and build on them in future projects. There has been little evaluation and pulling together of products of other actions, which also makes it difficult to fully appreciate the outcomes and makes the debate on dissemination more difficult. It has been suggested that longitudinal studies on the impact of experiences (particularly of mobility) on individuals would be as useful as they are for higher education.

There has been adequate North/South partnerships and increasing Central and Eastern European participation since they joined the Programme, but not necessarily a proportionate percentage mix from participating countries and certainly not in language use.

There has been a high level of participation of higher education institutions (partly in relation to financial risk); more teacher than pupil participation and in both cases over reliance on the benefits of the experience rather than hard evidence of outcomes in terms of institutional change and the most important performance indicator: curricular change. This is not to say

that there has not been any, merely that, for the most part, the evidence has not been systemically collected, analysed and disseminated either at national or Commission level.

Similar observations apply to LINGUA, but with a further problem for the second objective of SOCRATES I; i.e. the programme has served rather less to further the cause of the less widely used and less taught languages and rather more to propagate the use of English and to some extent French (a phenomenon one observer described as the 'coca-colarisation' of English). The less widely used and lesser taught languages were targeted by partners who were developing training modules or courses and language learning materials and methods. The transnational groups were conscious of the need to take a broad perspective on language learning. It is very difficult to assess the real outcomes. On the one hand, from the point of view of the training courses that were implemented, it is clear that Member States fund teachers to follow courses in the languages taught in schools: English, French, German, Spanish. Understandably, LINGUA can suggest new directions but cannot change national education policies. But the lack of quality assessment of products makes it even more difficult to assess the place of the less widely used and lesser taught languages in the concrete results.

The ODL action has taken a structured approach to testing mechanisms for encouraging synergy among projects and ordering and analysing outcomes in order to be able to examine outcomes more effectively. The regular coordinator meetings have sought to be an exchange mechanism with feedback from the field activities and opportunities for joint development of thematic areas.

Adult Education, a small action in SOCRATES I, was the subject of an extensive interim evaluation coordinated by the Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung DIE (see Chapter 13) which also emphasised the need for more structured approaches to evaluation and dissemination of outcomes and results.

On the evidence (or lack of it) one would be hard put to define the European Dimension outcomes in objectives 1,4,5 and 6; to justify the outcomes in objective 2; to classify and evaluate the products in objectives 3, 4, 8 and 9. Objective 7 represents ERASMUS with a longer development record and a more substantial evaluation investment.

We can say there have been:

- mobility,
- cooperation,
- contacts,
- exchanges,
- products.

with which the participants are largely satisfied. We can say that, at the local level, participants have developed policies and implemented strategies with encouragement from the 'bigger' idea out there and feel they have benefited from a transnational and comparative

perspective. The participants have informed the evaluation team about the local/institutional effects. This means there is now a basis for continuing to check and monitor those effects under SOCRATES II. At systemic and European levels, the mechanisms still need to be established.

The evaluation examined three transversal issues for COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION. They were equal opportunities, the role and use of information and communication technologies in the actions and sustainability. The third is dealt with in section 14.10.

Equal opportunities

- From a gender perspective, women are clearly very well represented in the projects and initiatives. They formed the majority of beneficiaries of training grants and over 80 per cent of the assistants. This result reflects the gender make up of the European education systems. If under SOCRATES II a broader range of education staff participate in the training activities, this will inevitably alter the gender balance, given that, in many education systems, women make up the bulk of the teachers in primary and secondary education and especially in language teaching, but not in education administration.
- The role of local and regional advisors in COMENIUS/LINGUA schools partnerships was very important in targeting either rural schools or schools with a disadvantaged population or with pupils with special needs. The partnership between the National Agencies and the regional staff in seeking to promote participation from schools which do not usually participate in European activities has established a solid basis for increasing their participation under SOCRATES II.
- One of the major successes of LINGUA E was the participation of vocational education and training schools and colleges in the bilateral partnerships, thus promoting participation among groups which are often less likely to benefit from a European experience.
- In some centralised actions (such as COMENIUS 2 and 3.1, ODL, ADULT EDUCATION) a significant proportion of the projects targeted either disadvantaged groups or learners with special needs in each case from the specific standpoint of the action. Only ADULT EDUCATION targeted gender issues significantly (25% of the projects).
- the specific evaluation examining the participation of people with disabilities points to the need to improve access to information as a first step to improving participation and to disseminating more effectively examples of good practice to encourage other promoters to integrate beneficiaries with a disability.
- Though the evaluation activities show that there has been great involvement to take forward the broad equal opportunities agenda, the data on which to base a more consolidated analysis are not systematically collected and analysed. Information about what is being done in the field needs to be improved and made available.

The Role and Use of Information and Communication Technologies

- ICTs provided a focus of work in some actions, were the means to develop exchange and communication in others and have also been developed as a mechanism for contributing to equal opportunities of access to learning.
- In the ODL action, the use of new technologies and their integration into the education and learning processes were developed with a view to overcoming barriers to learning for those living in remote rural areas and to support special learning needs.
- Surveys reported an impact on staff and students in so far as participating in projects and partnerships contributed to improving their ICT skills.
- In several countries, national key actors emphasised that participation in a COMENIUS or LINGUA partnership was often the occasion for a school to obtain the necessary equipment for electronic exchange and to develop the use of Internet and e-mail in classroom activities through the project implemented. In some countries, there was a policy to support the acquisition of equipment. In COMENIUS 1, as mobility was not supported, the ICTs developed a "virtual mobility" aspect.
- Teacher training courses focused on the use of computers and Internet in the classroom.

14.5 Mobility

There has not been substantial research or longitudinal studies on the types of mobility undertaken with COMENIUS and LINGUA support from the point of view of the effect it has on the participant. It is suggested that investigation could be undertaken (perhaps in collaboration with the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme) to enlighten the organisers of mobility on its effects and effectiveness depending on the age of the participants, their roles and functions, the circumstances (both of the individual and the context).

Indicative of the lack of hard evidence are the contrasting points of view about whether or not school exchanges broaden horizons. In the case of LINGUA E exchanges, which allowed for a two-week stay in the partner country, though doubt was voiced on whether or not it was too short for students to learn anything of the other culture, few systems would have been able to incorporate a longer period of exchange. In some countries, even two weeks was difficult to accommodate, especially for students on vocational courses which include work periods. The illuminative experience of the moment, however positive, has to be balanced against the measurement of the longer term effect.

There is a further issue as to whether programmes should concentrate on teacher or pupil mobility. It is suggested that teacher mobility may be more cost-effective in terms of the impact it creates, while recognising the difficulty of applying research methodology (with definable limits) to the scale of the European context.

A perceived advantage of mobility for pupils is that they may go to countries that they otherwise would not visit, hence an aspect, however brief, of opening up to new cultures.

This, in turn, begs the question of language learning as exchanges between, for example, Norway and Crete may be facilitated if one accepts English as one of the vehicles of communication for the partnership. One group suggested that the use of English for communication purposes was not necessarily a bad thing if it allowed for intercultural exchange. This leads to a certain uneasiness between implementing the European dimension objective at the same time as encouraging and supporting the learning of the less widely spoken/taught languages, as actions may be addressing simultaneously more than one objective.

14.6 Teacher Training

The educational aims addressed by the teacher training actions were preferably defined (by the actors) in terms of the *professional development* of the teacher rather than of *training* as such. The Programme could have a direct effect on the practice of teaching through courses (COMENIUS 3.2 or LINGUA B grants, but also LINGUA C assistantships), running projects and partnerships (mainly COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E) or as end-users in projects (e.g. COMENIUS 2 or ODL).

For teachers' professional development, the idea of a European dimension was defined differently from the institutional context. It was defined by comparative method, more a question of assonances and dissonances within the European domain or the areas of convergence and divergence. For most teachers and future teachers, one of the positive aspects of the experience was the possibility of finding out 'how it is done' in other countries and systems, i.e. the approach developing through SOCRATES is based on the philosophy of widening the concept of professional development by providing a range of cultures and people. As an aim, it is consistent with SOCRATES objective 4.

There are two immediate issues concerning the target groups for grants. Firstly, courses offered under COMENIUS 3.2 tended to mainly attract teachers, despite the fact that the target group of the action was much broader. The importance of bringing in people who hold other functions within the school community was often highlighted. There is a similar discussion over LINGUA B target groups, as some national key actors regretted the limitation to teachers of foreign languages or working through the medium of another language. In order to ensure that school partnerships include rural and disadvantaged areas, the need to open up language development courses to non-specialists to give them the skills and confidence to participate was emphasised. This would however entail a substantial modification of the target audience and would also reduce the number of language teachers who benefit from European training courses. The need to examine how to provide more extensive language learning provision for teachers who wish to participate in European partnerships is an issue which could also be usefully examined in the participating countries.

There is also a debate about the age-groups that should be a priority for funding, with some participants regretting that grants did not focus sufficiently on young teachers who were

starting out in their career. Other feedback suggested that the age group of beneficiaries (on average 40-50) reflected the characteristics of the teaching profession in many countries. SOCRATES I provided for in-service training provision but not for pre-service or induction with an ensuing debate on whether or not the main target should be in-service or initial teacher training. There is a clear need to distinguish between the different phases and reflect on how to build in continuity.

The need for local recognition or acknowledgement of participation in training courses was one of the most frequent issues raised. Given the range of approaches to teachers' professional development in the different countries, there is not one type of recognition that would be appropriate everywhere. In line with other current initiatives linked to vocational/professional qualifications, one suggestion was to examine the feasibility of a portfolio of competences.

The issue of recognition was also raised concerning teachers' participation in project work. The issue for national systems is whether they wish to recognise and even reward extra-curricula activity, the acquisition of project management skills, intercultural skills and a range of "soft" skills which are not easily measurable in teacher qualification categories.

It can be very difficult for teachers to follow up European activity in the school if there is no institutional support. One suggestion is to encourage more than one teacher from a school to follow European training courses in order to have several people interested in developing a European input in a school's projects.

14.7 Dissemination

Dissemination was frequently perceived to be a weak aspect of the programme. There was concern about the general lack of dissemination strategies at EU, national and regional levels. Projects wanted to have feedback after sending in reports. They wanted acknowledgement that what they were doing met with the approval of others. This may have been in terms of professional recognition, of their home institution, the local situation, etc., but equally of those responsible for the programme.

There was a need for promoters to feel that they were contributing to the programme's objectives but, equally, that the outcomes of their projects had been assessed by professionals, not just by administrators.

Dissemination of successful *processes* was often seen to take place at local level. Where there was a *product*, participants considered that it should be monitored and appropriately disseminated at either regional or national level. Outcomes of transnational projects were felt to be the responsibility of the Commission. Thus, products require targeting. Different approaches are required at micro and macro levels: a half page; a text; a model, a workshop etc..

Project coordinators felt very frustrated about dissemination at whatever level. Budget reductions (following approval) led to small dissemination budgets but high expectations on the part of the Programme. It may not have been possible to complete sophisticated educational products during the funded period and their commercialisation would have entailed further and larger budgets. Information about the products and outcomes can be disseminated locally through seminars, conferences, courses, etc., but assistance is required for larger scale and more systemic dissemination.

Having examined issues of "to whom" and "how", "with what", the issue of impact on curricula and systems remains. In terms of the projects and partnerships coordinated by schools or designed with schools as target groups, a major question is how well have the products of all this transnational activity been embedded in the curriculum ? Does it remain an interesting but disposable quantity, organised outside school time by volunteers? Or is there a real impact on the curriculum, bringing about sustainable change? Perhaps this is the most important performance indicator of all. The conclusion is the same as above. There is no hard evidence of systematic collection and examination of outcomes with a view to integrating good ideas, good practice, good materials, etc. into local, regional or national systems.

14.8 Administrative Obstacles to be Overcome

In terms of policy and strategy, content and implementation there were many political and physical, intellectual and management problems, but at the centre of participants' frustration were regulatory, procedural, resource and administrative problems, what one interviewee called the "*neurotic mechanisms*". There were many similar examples but the following extract sums up neatly the contradiction between enthusiasm and the obstacles to be overcome: "*I was struck by the following contradiction. In this type of project everything depends on the enthusiasm of participants, their involvement, even a "militant" approach in favour of opening up to Europe but everything in this type of project is held back by bureaucracy, fussy formalism and Brussels even suspects people of cheating. This leads to a tension and at the end of the three years the second aspect has exhausted the first*". A large minority of coordinators who were surveyed were unwilling to renew the burden and the stress.

The Commission's Report on the initial implementation phase of SOCRATES (SOC/COM/98/043) shows the cumbersome nature and the lack of transparency of the procedures for applying for support under the programme. It goes on to say that such criticism must be considered and analysed with caution. While certain areas of administration were favourably received, overall, the criticisms echoed Commissioner Chris Patten's summarised view of procedures for TACIS and PHARE which was "change them or lose half the programme".

The Commission's Report identified the smallness of the budget. Interviewees identified that SOCRATES and LEONARDO together occupy only 1 per cent of the Agricultural budget. For 'sustainability', a giant leap is required. But it is a success of the Programme to have engineered so much (estimated up to ten times in human resources) in local effort. The commitment deserves the concomitant effort towards simplification and transparency.

Provision made for SOCRATES II has taken into account many of the criticisms and suggestions. It will be very important to monitor regularly whether or not they are having the desired effect.

14.9 Evaluation

Evaluation is a form of quality assessment which enables us to measure and assess (quantitatively and qualitatively) the outcomes and products (tangible and intangible) which derive from the objectives.

A question which was frequently raised concerned the need to develop *criteria* for evaluating products and outcomes. The question was: *is evaluation taken seriously?* Did the Commission fail, in this area, to ensure that continuous monitoring and evaluation were carried out through the lifetime of a project? In the responses, differentiation was made between Programme and project evaluation and summative (as in the final report process) and formative and ongoing project evaluation. This issue has been amply highlighted in the earlier chapters. No evidence was found at national or at European level of a systematic approach to assessing the quality of outputs, whether teaching and learning materials or training courses, as part of the review process and in order to ensure that the benefit of innovative outcomes was felt as widely as possible. With the second phase of SOCRATES underway, it seems more and more urgent to reflect on appropriate and user-friendly criteria and mechanisms for assessing the quality of outputs and outcomes with a view to contributing to the discussion on the best use of funds.

14.10 Impact and Sustainability

A major issue is whether or not SOCRATES can ever address a large enough number of teachers to make a direct impact on education systems. The actors pointed out that if SOCRATES funding was seen as resources for change, then in order for the change to be effective, up to 10 times that funding support would be required from the home institution (region, state, etc.). The benefit depended on the implementation strategy adopted locally which needed to be consistent and long term. Formulating strategy will need to include a reflection on the types of obstacles to be overcome if larger numbers of teachers are to benefit from SOCRATES. Obstacles mentioned in questionnaires and interviews were: non replacement of teachers, general financial issues, the need for recognition in career or

qualification terms, the need for recognition through financial reward or time allowance. These are enabling means.

Given the larger picture, most projects, whether implemented within the SOCRATES context or others, had difficulty in sustaining the hoped for outcomes, whether because of shortages in time and resources, or a shortfall in political will. Actors wondered how far the SOCRATES components were embedded in the central activities of schools, universities, etc. in order to survive the inevitable ending of the programmes and central funding. The same question can of course be asked of regions or even Member-States and associated countries.

This comes back to the issue of attaining a ‘critical mass’ (or not) and the 'mainstreaming’ (or not) of outcomes. Is SOCRATES, in the end, about funding an activity which is complementary or supplementary to mainstream activities in the education systems? Or is it about contributing to fundamental change? The two approaches are obviously not seen to be in opposition, but the first may be the easier to implement in the short term. The second requires greater political will, a more organised strategy and a high level of coordination and cooperation among actors at the different levels. It also requires the political will of the Member States and the means to go with it.

The question is left open as to whether the Programme itself can fundamentally change the system (towards the desired outcomes) or whether it may support change strategies, locally, with convergent objectives. The latter would be, in itself, a considerable success.

The overall response emerging from the actors was one of adaptation and evolution over a period. It was felt that obstacles could be best overcome locally with a bottom-up approach. Progress and the dissemination of improvement are a long term business, but that institutional embedding has to be managed locally. However, local embedding is undoubtedly helped by the existence of the "big idea" out there.

14.11 Recommendations

(1) *The aims of SOCRATES* and the ‘notion’ of the ‘European Dimension’ should remain broad and subject to transnational, national and local interpretation within the confines of individual actions/programmes. The role of the ‘European Dimension’ as a *symbolic catalyst* is positive.

(2) The implementation of the main objectives of SOCRATES is largely dependent on successful *local policies and strategies.* Commission and National support (conceptual, evaluative, resourcing and budgetary) should be managed so as to be more simply and transparently directed to that end.

(3) The outcomes of the components (related to the general aims) should be subject to ongoing and more rigorous *evaluation***.** There should be better structured and more systematic approaches to quality assessment, dissemination, transfer and ‘embedding’. For

example, longitudinal studies of the individual and collective impact of mobility would be useful.

(4) *Links* with other programmes (LEONARDO: transparency of qualifications) and experience of other components (ERASMUS: impact of mobility) could be better consolidated.

(5) The quantitative and qualitative *distribution of the participants* should be reviewed both in the Programme and in its components. Schools' participation should be increased as a percentage of the total. Besides *ERASMUS*, higher education institutions occupy a high percentage of other components. There should be further consideration of how to support small institutions which do not have their own means to fund financing shortfalls, while not denying the valuable contribution and expertise of the higher education institutions. Teacher participation could be balanced by representation from other school constituencies. The gender, age and role distribution of participants should be monitored (who are we developing and for what and when?).

(6) ADULT EDUCATION, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING, information and communication technologies (whether as actions or themes) deserve greater emphasis. The latter not only in quantitative terms, since together they would provide coherence of target clients, content and method under a *lifelong learning in action* heading.

(7) Participation in component activities should be subject to greater *acknowledgement at the institutional and national levels*. For the former, this could take the form of time allowances, teacher replacement and/or financial reward. For national levels, particularly in teacher training, one could envisage, for example, modular credits towards diplomas or masters awards. This is already the case in some countries and thus it is consistent with the objectives of SOCRATES to encourage best practice.

(8) *Dissemination* of policy and practice require review. Conceptually, clarity is required on the nature of products (process or artefact). The role and responsibility of each level (local, nation, transnational, Commission) should be better articulated. Evaluation, overview and dissemination of key outcomes and products should be under the responsibility of the Commission, especially for transnational projects. The role of National Agencies should be reviewed with a view to greater involvement in content, dissemination and evaluation. While the budget allowance for dissemination could be increased, its effective deployment by the Commission should be improved.

(9) *Regulation, procedure, administration, management, financial and budgetary processes* (lack of virement between headings for example) are seen by most actors as major obstacles to project acceptance, delivery, im*p*lementation and renewal. The Commission's Interim Report (SOC/COM/98/043) was hesitant in its *recommendation* for overhaul. SOCRATES II has taken some steps which will need careful monitoring. Yet this report (which concentrates on content rather than procedures) cannot recommend strongly enough the need for simplicity and transparency.

(10) *Sustainability* requires resources and longevity; political will and a benign environment, together with clear policies and strategies and high levels of coordination and cooperation. At systemic (European) level, these factors are difficult to bring together. Therefore, the recommendation for the SOCRATES Programme is to continue to support a 'bottom up' approach as a supplement to (converging) local initiatives and strategies, while bearing in mind that local success is helped by the 'big idea' out there.

15. The Implementation of SOCRATES at the National Level

By Stéphanie Caillé, Jean Gordon, Sander Lotze and Marijk van der Wende

15.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the implementation of SOCRATES at the national level and on the interaction between the programme and national policies for the internationalisation of education. The main results of a study on national policies for internationalisation in higher education, which was carried out some years ago, showed that the European action programmes have had a major impact. It also revealed certain trends in the rationales for internationalisation policies (i.e. educational, economic, cultural, and political) and a shift towards wider geographic interests in internationalisation (Kälvermark & Van der Wende, 1997). Against this background the external evaluation team has sought to extend the analysis of the national context to all areas covered by the SOCRATES programme.

15.1.1 Aim and Focus

This part of the evaluation aims to further the understanding of:

- the way in which SOCRATES has been implemented and managed at the national level (as a whole and for individual component parts);
- the role played by SOCRATES in the national policy context; and
- the interaction between European programmes and national policies with a view to the internationalisation of education.

In order to study the implementation of SOCRATES in the national context, the evaluation team focused on:

- the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of SOCRATES and of the mechanisms for interaction between actors at the European, national, and institutional levels;
- the views of the various stakeholders on the role and functioning of SOCRATES in national contexts;
- the relationship and complementarity of SOCRATES with national policies and priorities for the internationalisation of education, as well as expected changes.

15.1.2 Questions for the Evaluation

The questions in this part of the evaluation concentrate on the following clusters:

- The design of the SOCRATES programme: as an integrated programme, combining activities in various areas of education; relationship between means and objectives.
- The management of SOCRATES at the national level: national structures for management of the programme; strong and weak points in the management structure; mechanisms for communication between actors; expected changes for SOCRATES II.
- The support system and overall appraisal: budget provisions; main successes and failures of the programme; suggestions for future changes and improvements of the EU education programmes.
- SOCRATES in the national policy context: priorities and objectives of the countries' internationalisation policies, role of SOCRATES in relation to the latter; some specific issues.
- For the ERASMUS component in particular: achievement of objectives; mobility; European dimension; effectiveness of procedures and criteria; link to globalisation; expectations for the next generation of EU programmes.
- For each of the COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION components: the management of the action and support system; perceived results and overall appraisal, evaluation and suggestions of improvements.

15.2 Methodology

Data were collected in eighteen countries by means of interviews and in another eleven countries by means of a written questionnaire, the design and content of which was identical to the interview guidelines (see Table 15.1).

Table 15.1
Means of Data Collection - by Country

Interviews conducted in:		
Austria (AT) Belgium (BE-FR/ BE-NL) Denmark (DK) Finland (FI) France (FR) Germany (DE)	Greece (GR) Ireland (IE) Italy (IT) Netherlands (NL) Portugal (PT) Spain (ES)	Sweden (SE) United Kingdom (UK) Norway (NO) Romania (RO) Hungary (HU) Czech Republic (CZ)
Written questionnaires sent to:		
Cyprus (CY) Estonia (EE) Iceland (IS) Lithuania (LT)	Liechtenstein (LI) Slovakia (SK) Slovenia (SI) Bulgaria (BG)	Latvia (LV) Luxembourg (LU) Poland (PL)

Respondents were identified by contacting the SOCRATES Committees in the participating countries requesting suggestions for key actors to be interviewed. Thus, the following categories of key persons were approached:

- government administrators in charge of European policies,
- government representatives on SOCRATES advisory committees,
- non-government members on the advisory committee,
- members of the country's sub-committee for higher education,
- officers of the National Agencies.

212 persons were surveyed. Thirteen responded by returning the questionnaire (unfortunately, no replies were received from Bulgaria, Latvia, Luxembourg and Poland) and 199 persons were interviewed. They represent the various levels and organisations involved, as shown in Table 15.2.

Table 15.2
Type of Actors on National and Institutional Level Interviewed - by Country (absolute numbers)

	AT	BE-FR	BE-NL	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	UK	GR	HU
Ministry	7	3	-	-	2	5	2	2	6	2	6	3	2	3
National agency	5	2	5	2	6	11	6	1	3	3	10	6	5	6
Higher education institutions	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	1	1	2

	IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	NL	NO	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	Total
Ministry	2	1	4	-	1	3	2	2	1	3	2	-	64
National agency	6	4	7	1	-	6	4	4	7	7	1	1	119
Higher education institutions	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	16

The team of researchers was able to conduct all the interviews in the national language of the country concerned except in the Czech Republic and Hungary where the interviews were carried out in English. The reporting was done in English following a semi-structured format. Questionnaires were all answered in English. Some interviews were conducted with groups of people. Hence, the total number of documents (n=160) that was analysed was smaller than the total number of interviewees (199).

Interviewees and respondents were asked to reflect on the design of the SOCRATES programme, the management of SOCRATES at the national level, the support system and the main successes and failures of the programme, the role of SOCRATES in the national policy context, and the various components of the programme (ERASMUS, COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION). Some questions were addressed to all respondents, some were only asked to persons with a specific responsibility. In some cases,

they were not answered, due to lack of time during the interviews. Therefore, the size of the population varies for some of the issues. This will be indicated in the various tables and figures.

Qualitative data analysis was carried out for all the interviews and questionnaires. For the sections concerning the programme as a whole and ERASMUS, the QSR NUD*IST Vivo (version 1.1) programme for qualitative data analysis was used in order to facilitate the analysis of the large amount of qualitative data gathered. However, in a multi-country study approach, interpretation of the data may be influenced by translation into English (differences in terminology), restructuring data according to the reporting format (questions were sometimes asked in a different order, following the course of the conversation) and by coding data for processing.

The evaluation team considered that it was not appropriate to analyse the interviews and questionnaires for COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION using the same data analysis programme as was used for the main body of interviews for the following reasons. Given the range of actions and sub-actions, the evaluators aimed to interview at least one person in each country with a responsibility for the action (as in the case of ODL and ADULT EDUCATION) or for sub-actions (as in the case of LINGUA and COMENIUS). In some countries different staff or departments or even agencies deal with the different sub-actions, while in others one person may take responsibility for more than one sub-action. In some cases interviewees and questionnaire respondents were in the National Agency, in others in ministries. There was a notable difference in the information gathered for the centralised and the decentralised actions.

15.3 The Design of the SOCRATES Programme

15.3.1 SOCRATES as a Combined Programme

The SOCRATES programme is a follow-up to a range of exchange and cooperation programmes (e.g. ERASMUS, LINGUA, etc.) and is intended to: “Contribute to the improvement of the quality and interest of education for children, youth and adults, through improvement of the European co-operation and the accessibility of education systems in the different states” (Council decision 819/95/EC). For the first time, actions and strands related to different areas of education, which previously existed in separate programmes, were combined into one programme. The SOCRATES programme consists of three chapters: one which focuses on higher education (ERASMUS), one on school education (COMENIUS), and a third, the Horizontal Measures, which contains a range of actions, including the promotion of language learning (LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING, ADULT EDUCATION, etc.

Respondents were asked to reflect on this combination of activities in the various areas of education and to compare it with the previous situation. For the totality of the countries, most

respondents (64%) were enthusiastic and found it an improvement. However, there were some criticisms concerning its implementation:

- Most respondents argued that, although the idea of combined actions is very good, in practice the synergy between the various sections and actions could be improved. This could be achieved by improving the information on the programme.
- Furthermore, it was said that the national education structure and its management, which usually depend on separate directorates (and sometimes ministries) and agencies for the different areas of education, could be another factor which prevented synergy between the different sections and actions.
- And finally the various sections of the programme were not always structured in such a way that synergy could be fully achieved (see below, Section 15.5.2).

The Northern EU countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) are fairly negative (65%) about the consequences of combining the various actions within SOCRATES.

15.3.2 Coherence Between Objectives and Design

A second question concerned the coherence between objectives and means: is the programme designed in such a way that the objectives can, in principle, be achieved by undertaking the eligible actions?

70 per cent of the respondents said they considered the design of the programme coherent with its objectives. Many, however, found that the objectives were rather abstract and formulated in a very general way. Hence, they found it difficult to answer this question. In another part of the interview, some 25 per cent of the respondents identified the programme's design as one of its main failures (see below, Section 15.5.2). The abstract objectives also made it difficult to evaluate the programme. Many respondents therefore asked that the aims should be better defined so as to be able to monitor and evaluate the different strands on a more qualitative basis, leading to greater insight into the tangible effects of the programme (see below, Section 15.6.3).

15.4 Management of SOCRATES at the National Level

15.4.1 Structures for the Management of SOCRATES at the National Level

In order to study the role and functioning of SOCRATES at the national level, it is important to understand the structure used to manage the programme. Respondents involved in national level management were asked to provide data on the structure for the management of SOCRATES in their respective countries. This provided a wealth of information. Obviously, the situation differs greatly. Some basic data are provided here.

There are 14 different models for the management of SOCRATES in the 26 countries concerned (see Table 15.3). The model involving one ministry and one external national agency is the most frequent (6), followed by the model with one ministry and one internal agency (4) and the model with one ministry, one external agency and one advisory board (3). In other cases, various ministries are concerned, i.e. those responsible for the different levels of education, for science, research, etc. The organisation of the national agencies also differs according to country. In some cases, it is part of a ministry (internal). Respondents indicated that this presented certain advantages, such as clear and quick internal communication. However, it could also negatively affect the transparency of certain procedures and tasks. This may cause problems for applicants who want to receive information or advice.

Table 15.3
Basic Features of the National Structures for the Management of SOCRATES

		AT	BE-FR	BE-NL	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	UK	GR
Ministries		2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
National agencies	Internal	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-
	External	1	-	2	-	1	± 6	2	-	1	2	-	2	1
Advisory board(s)		1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-

		HU	IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	NL	NO	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK
Ministries		1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
National agencies	Internal	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
	External	1	5	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	1	1
Advisory board(s)		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-

Countries where the national agency is not part of the ministry (external) see the advantages of the model which separates administrative and political responsibilities. They claim that it leads to less bureaucracy and greater efficiency. Disadvantages, however, are the slow information flow and, in some cases, the lack of information between the organisations. Half the countries have a structure with more than one agency. Some reported competition among the agencies and/or a lack of co-ordination. In order to avoid these problems in the future and to increase transparency, there will be only one national agency responsible for the management of SOCRATES II. If necessary, it can subcontract to other organisations.

Nine out of 26 countries have a SOCRATES advisory board. Its tasks differ according to country. They may range from general exchange of information and views regarding the distribution of grants. Some boards have a sub-division on separate advisory committees for the different strands of the programme.

Countries gave different answers with respect to the decision-making process concerning the programme. The following countries stated that the ministry took the main decisions: Dutch- and French-speaking Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Countries where decisions are taken collectively by several actors were: Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden. Spain indicated that there were major on-going changes with respect to decision-making structures.

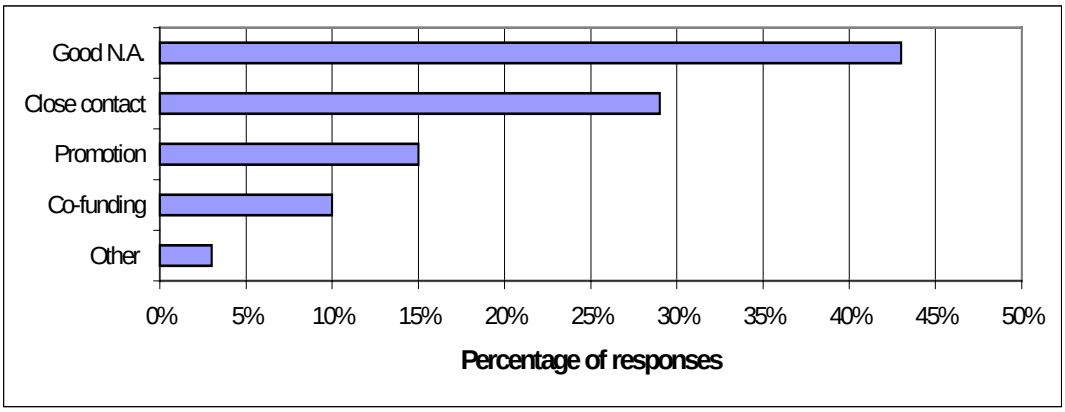
15.4.2 Appraisal of the National Management Structure

Concerning the interpretation of the following data on the appraisal of the national management structure, it should be borne in mind that most of the respondents themselves represent this national level: 60 per cent work at a national agency and 32 per cent at a ministry. Views from actors at other levels may thus be different.

The general appraisal of the national management structures was positive: 67 per cent of respondents saw them as being sufficient to good, although various recommendations for improvement were made (see below, section 15.4.3). 33 per cent found the national management structure insufficient. In France and Germany it was reported that the complexity of the structure, involving actors and agencies at the regional level, had led, at least in the first period, to problems such as the ineffective use of grants and available budgets. Improvements had been made during the course of the programme and restructuring is foreseen for the start of SOCRATES II. Dutch-speaking Belgium commented on a lack of transparency of the management structure and some problems with respect to the division of labour between the various actors involved. On the positive side, Romania was very satisfied with its management structure. In various countries, efforts are underway to redefine the responsibilities and to speed up the administration procedures.

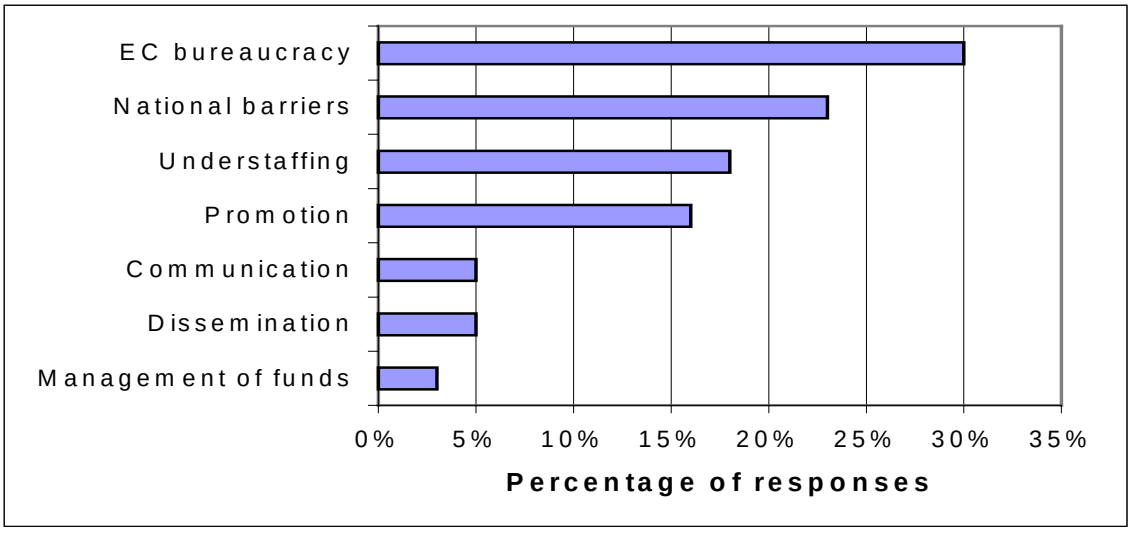
In Figure 15.1, the major strong points of national management structures are presented showing a high level of satisfaction with the way in which national agencies were organised. In the table below, this is labelled as "good N.A.". However, it should be remembered that most respondents were themselves national agency staff. Another strong point which was mentioned was the “close contact” between the national agency and the educational sector. Furthermore, the promotion of the programme in the country and the fact that some governments provide co-funding for SOCRATES projects were appreciated by some of the respondents.

Figure 15.1
Major Strong Points in the National Management Structure Stated by Actors at the National Level (percentages, n=67, multiple reply)



With respect to the weak points (see Figure 15.2), national level actors perceive the bureaucracy of the European Commission and the related high pressure on administrative processes in combination with insufficient staff at national level as a major problem. A related complaint concerned the fact that information was often not available in time. This had severe practical implications for the management of the programme at the national level. Besides, national barriers (including bureaucracy at this level) may hinder the smooth implementation and management of the programme, especially in cases where no clear policies for internationalisation exist, or where links between SOCRATES and the country's education policy are unclear. Both strong hierarchical structures, as well as the situation in which certain actors enjoy a large degree of autonomy (e.g. special categories of schools), can hinder the effective implementation of the programme. Concerning the promotion of the programme, the respondents seemed satisfied with what they had achieved so far, although further improvements would be necessary.

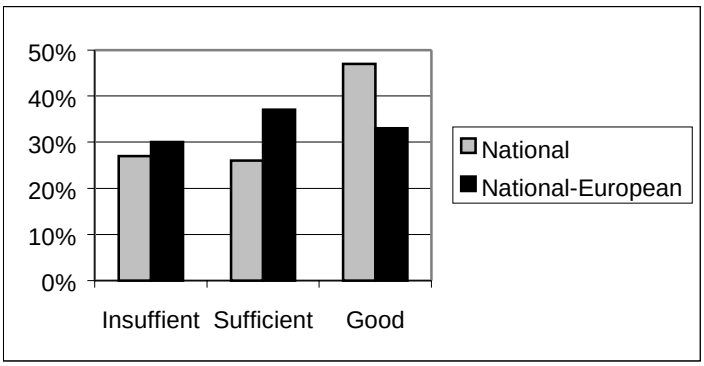
Figure 15.2
Major Weak Points in the National Management Structure Stated by Actors at the National Level (percentages, n=68, multiple reply)



15.4.3 Communication Mechanisms Between Actors

Different communication mechanisms are employed to exchange information between the European, national and institutional levels, e.g. personal contacts, national programme committees, regular and *ad hoc* meetings, conferences, workshops, newsletters, magazines, websites, etc. The main channels used by the European Commission are the SOCRATES Committees and the Higher Education and Schools Committees. The general appreciation of the communication structures at the national level and between the national and the European level is presented in Figure 15.3.

Figure 15.3
Appreciation of Mechanisms for Communication at the National Level and Between National and European Level (percentages, n=33 resp. 62)



The main criticism of the functioning of the various committees mentioned above was the lack of a clear agenda for meetings and, above all, the consistent late arrival of documents. This causes serious problems for the preparation of the meetings and hence hampers the possibility of effective discussion and decision-making. Some interviewees mentioned that they had the feeling that these meetings were no more than a formality. They believed that a more serious reflection on the objectives of the committees and an improvement of the flow of information were necessary. The respondents emphasised that, in general and on a personal basis, the contacts with the Commission and Technical Assistance Office officers were good. Problems were mainly due to the complexity of the bureaucratic structure in which staff had to operate.

Respondents were positive about the amount of information which is available on the website of the European Commission. However, the new database for statistical and financial data, SOCLINK had experienced serious teething problems. The general opinion was that it was too slow and not sufficiently user-friendly. Another electronic network is NETY, an Intranet for national agencies. The late implementation of the network, the high costs and the computer system were assessed quite negatively. But respondents recognised the possible advantages of such a network, if set up and used in the right way. The opinions differed with regard to the amount of useful information that circulates at present. This may be due to the fact that not all agencies use the network effectively. Still, a good communication system is

considered absolutely necessary, as it facilitates effective day-to-day communication between organisations in different countries and with different organisational structures.

15.4.4 Expected Changes for SOCRATES II

Respondents were asked to reflect on the expected results of the change in the management structure for SOCRATES II. 56 per cent thought the new situation would be an improvement, especially with respect to the coordination of activities, division of labour, communication, etc. Positive expectations are that the decentralisation of the management structure and the fact that there will be only one national agency per country will enhance flexibility and efficiency. It was argued that the national agencies are closer to the field of education and that the management of SOCRATES II could benefit from the experiences obtained under SOCRATES I. However, more pessimistic views were also expressed. They referred mainly to the fact that more work would have to be carried out at the national level but without adequate resources. Therefore it was argued that budgets and numbers of staff of national agencies should be increased. Some respondents feared that the European Commission would impose more detailed requirements at the national level and that the fact that national agencies will be accountable to both the European Commission and the national ministries could lead to more complexity and possibly tensions. The fact that only ministerial representatives will be members of the SOCRATES committee and the sub-committees received mixed reactions.

Comments on the expected changes in SOCRATES II, which went beyond the discussion of management issues were extremely rare. A few respondents reflected on the content of SOCRATES II (e.g. more emphasis on lifelong learning, the use of ICTs and the role of SOCRATES in the wider educational and internationalisation policy of the country) or on the Bologna process. These few comments were basically optimistic, but it would appear clear that the respondents were almost exclusively concerned with the technical and financial aspects of the programme and did not go much beyond the short to mid-term perspective.

15.5 Support System and Overall Appraisal

15.5.1 Allocation of the EU Budget

The respondents were asked how they evaluated the allocation and use of the available EU budget with respect to reaching the programme's objectives. 43 per cent answered that this was done in an effective way, 44 per cent considered that improvements were necessary and 13 per cent found the budget allocations not effective. Very different and sometimes contrasting arguments and suggestions were noted in this context. Some argued that mobility grants should increase because they are too low, while others said there was enough money for this activity and that other strands should get more. Again, another group stated that such problems were due to the fact that some countries did not provide the required co-funding. Some illustrations are given below.

Responses for COMENIUS indicate that higher levels of funding overall would be welcome in some of the participating countries such as those in Central and Eastern Europe and Greece. Concerning the allocation of funding for schools under COMENIUS 1, a majority of the respondents were in favour of maintaining small grants for a large number of partnerships in order to encourage a broad impact. Though the level of demand for COMENIUS funding varied from country to country, respondents considered that the overall demand was rising. Some respondents pointed out that high numbers of rejected applications discouraged potential coordinators who had invested a lot of time in the application process. The positive aspect of a high demand was that the countries concerned were able to make a real selection from among the candidates, which was not always the case in countries where levels of demand remained low.

With respect to LINGUA, comments on budget allocations varied considerably depending on the sub-action and country. In general, concerning LINGUA E partnerships, respondents preferred to keep the current situation with a larger number of smaller grants rather than fewer, larger projects.

Interviewees in the Czech Republic and Greece said the overall budget allocated for ODL was sufficient, given a low level of demand. However, some other countries highlighted the need for higher budgets, taking into consideration the cost of the use of technology in these projects. Finally, for ADULT EDUCATION, some countries such as the Czech Republic and Portugal considered the budget was sufficient, as they did not have a high level of demand for funding. However they noted a greater awareness about adult education and therefore considered that, in the future, overall budgets would have to be increased in order to meet new demand. For other countries, such as Germany, the budget was too low and the grants too small.

Views were also expressed about the flexibility of the financial rules of the programme. While some stated that budget regulations were quite tight and could even lead to the exclusion of certain projects, others reasoned that money could sometimes be given to projects under different actions just by changing their description. There was a general agreement,

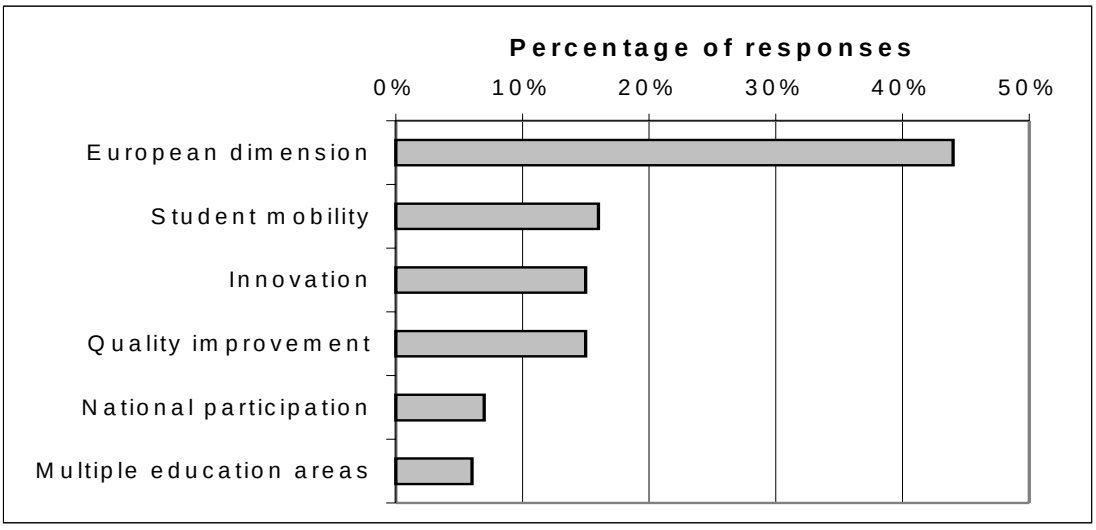
however, that the overall flexibility of the programme should be enhanced to achieve its objectives and to avoid a situation whereby some countries did not use their entire budget when others did not have enough money. A further issue raised in this context was whether or not national administrations should be allowed to vire funds (at least for a small percentage) from one decentralised action to another if the demand was higher for one action than for another.

A general complaint concerned the timing of the payments. Delays were too frequent; funds were generally received very late. This caused serious problems for the planning of projects, which, in some cases, had to be cancelled. The programme was seen to suffer from technical imperfections, which became counterproductive in the end.

15.5.2 Major Successes and Failures of the Programme

Clearly, the main success of SOCRATES was seen in the development of a European dimension in education (Figure 15.4). This includes better knowledge of foreign languages, the understanding of one's own culture in the European context and the awareness of being a part of Europe, the knowledge of the educational systems of other countries, and the exchange of best practice with other countries.

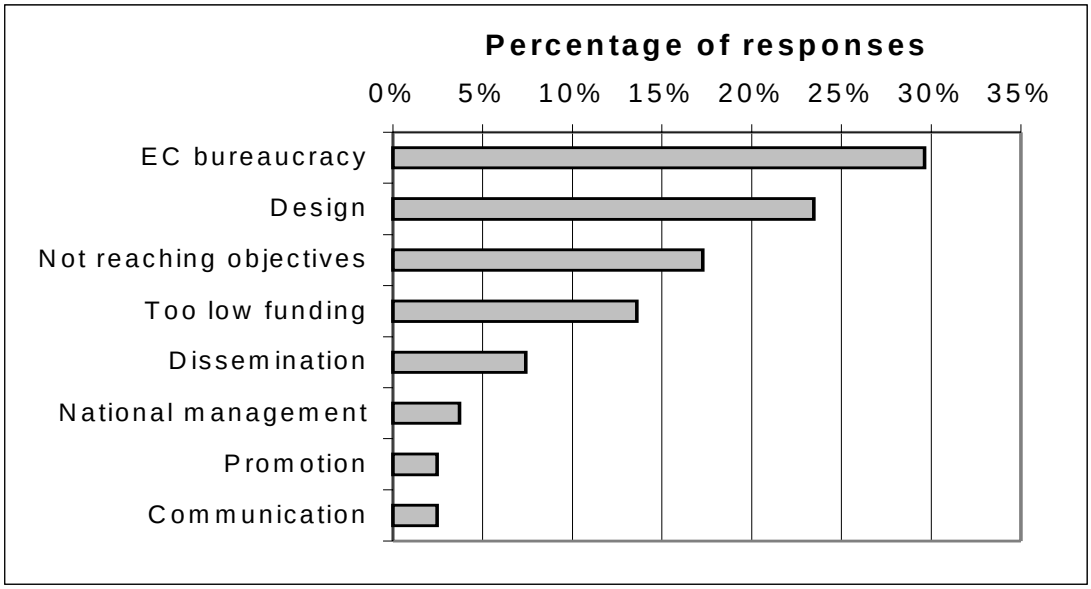
Figure 15.4
Major Successes of the SOCRATES Programme According to Actors at the National Level (percentages, n=65, multiple reply possible)



The problems as enumerated in Figure 15.5 have already been partly discussed in the previous paragraphs. The major problem was seen in the functioning of the European Commission. Complaints referred more especially to the late reception of payments, information and documents for meetings.

According to the actors at the national level, the design of the programme suffered from a lack of clear objectives, the complexity of the application procedures, insufficient financial flexibility and a lack of real synergy. As one respondent noted: "*In theory it looks nice, but in practice there are too many barriers.*"

Figure 15.5
Major Failures of the SOCRATES Programme According to Actors at the National Level (percentages, n=54, multiple reply possible)



Respondents feel that certain objectives were not reached or only partly reached. This concerned more especially curriculum development, teacher staff mobility, open and distance learning, and the training of teachers.

Low funding may be one of the reasons for not achieving all the objectives. This may be linked to a mismatch between objectives and the amount of available money. Respondents saw greater flexibility in the programme and its budget rules as a solution to this problem.

15.5.3 Future Scenarios and Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents came up with many recommendations and suggestions for improvement. The main ones are summarised below, with some recommendations concerning specific actions.

Since the bureaucracy of the EC was seen as the main problem in the *functioning of the programme*, firm recommendations have been made in this area:

– improve the links with the Commission: through simplification of administrative procedures, higher level of transparency about rejected projects, a reduced length of time for approvals, more budget flexibility in particular concerning matched-funding (including

the possibility of viring funds between actions to a limited extent in order to respond to national contexts), and by ensuring delivery on time of documents, information, and payments;
- involve the national structures more closely in the management of the centralised actions (i.e. more feedback from Brussels) or even decentralise them.

The *design of the programme* could be improved by:

- increasing its coherence, synergy, and flexibility;
- focusing the evaluation of the programme on qualitative impact rather than on quantitative achievements;
- taking a chronological approach in the actions from kindergarten to university;
- making the horizontal measures less marginal and less complex;
- addressing the obstacles to mobility.

With regard to the *eligible activities*, improvements could be made by:

- for ERASMUS: including the exchange of non-academic staff; increasing possibilities for ODL; increasing the use of ECTS; closer co-operation with other programmes such as LEONARDO.
- For COMENIUS: reducing the number of sub-actions; increasing the budget for COMENIUS 3.2; ensuring that European projects are integrated into schools' projects and reflect national policy preoccupations in order to encourage sustainability.
- For LINGUA: allowing countries to focus on the languages which provide real mobility for their population, whether this includes the lesser used and less taught languages or not, and making language training for non-specialists eligible for support.
- For ODL: more decentralisation in order to take into consideration the national context and needs more effectively; greater dissemination of information and outcomes in order to reach a more varied range of structures and to inform potential project promoters more effectively about the possibility of obtaining funding; a larger overall budget.
- For ADULT EDUCATION: the budget should be increased in order to reinforce adult education across Europe. Within the same aims, it may be interesting to fund a greater number of smaller projects.

The *promotion of the programme* could be enhanced by:

- the development of user-friendly guidelines;
- conferences and information meetings with applicants;
- including larger budgets for dissemination ;
- setting up networks of projects to consolidate the impact of the programme.

- using up-to-date, widely available databases to disseminate useful information.
- examining the possibility of including new activities such as "job swops" and funding dissemination,
- the development of a general media profile.

15.6 SOCRATES in the National Policy Context

Questions related to the role of SOCRATES in the national policy context were only put to government representative(s) who had the main responsibility for SOCRATES and could give an overview of the wider policy context. This explains the low number of respondents in this section.

15.6.1 National Policies for the Internationalisation of Education

Respondents were asked whether their country had a formal policy for the internationalisation of education. The following countries answered in the affirmative: Dutch-speaking Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Other countries may well undertake international activities (e.g. bilateral agreements, exchange programmes, projects, etc.), without having any formal policy paper describing objectives, etc.

Furthermore, all the respondents were asked to indicate the main objectives for internationalising education in their country, regardless of whether these were formally stated in policy documents or not. In the latter case, the personal opinion of the respondent may be an important basis for the response. In the former case, this is less likely, although respondents may not always be aware of the content of the policy documents.

Improving the quality of education was clearly the most frequently cited objective (75%) in the countries' policies for internationalisation of education. Second was the development of the European dimension (55%), which was generally seen as an element in the broader internationalisation policy. The third objective was the development of an internationally competitive education sector (40%), mainly higher education. Finally, several countries focused on the export of knowledge in their internationalisation policies, i.e. the recruitment of foreign students, forms of transnational education, etc. (25%).

15.6.2 The Role of SOCRATES in the National Policy Context

The question concerning the role of SOCRATES in the national policy context and in relation to the internationalisation policy in particular received a very positive answer. 46 per cent of the respondents indicated that it played an important role and 38 per cent that it played a very important role. Hence, 84 per cent of the respondents agreed that SOCRATES played a role in the national context, which is close to the 80 per cent of the interim evaluation (GMV Conseil, 1999). There was no great difference between the "important" and "very important" response in relation to the countries' geographical location, size or whether they are members of the EU, candidate countries or EEA/EFTA countries.

Respondents were also asked to study the role played by the programme in relation to the country's internationalisation policy or efforts. 43 per cent found their country's policy complementary, 36 per cent reinforcing, 7 per cent competing and 14 per cent saw some contradiction.

15.6.3 Some Specific Issues

Evaluation Procedures

One of the frequently heard criticisms regarding the European education programmes is that the qualitative effects of the programmes at the European level are not well known. Answers to the question concerning the evaluation efforts undertaken at national level revealed that in 17 out of the 26 countries no specific evaluations were carried out. For most of the respondents evaluation only took place informally through discussion and meetings. In most cases, no real criteria for evaluating the products and outcomes of projects and partnerships have been developed at national level. The main reason given for this was a lack of funding and manpower at the national level to carry out serious evaluations. Moreover, it was said that the programme's objectives were difficult to evaluate anyway.

Some exceptions should be noted, however. Surveys on ERASMUS student mobility have been carried out in some countries. Evaluation criteria for COMENIUS were developed in Hungary and the UK and a methodology and tools for self-evaluation approaches for school partnerships (MICE) were developed by a team in France, Belgium and the Netherlands under Complementary Measures and examined by all the National Agencies. A qualitative study on LINGUA was carried out in Austria and in Finland quality criteria for planning were included in national guidelines. The Italian national agency carried out a multi-country evaluation of LINGUA E, BABELE. In Germany the evaluation of ADULT EDUCATION was integrated into a broader European evaluation study on this subject (MOPED) and in Spain a quantitative evaluation was carried out in this area.

An increasing need is felt for European-level evaluation that focuses on the qualitative aspects of the programme. This should not be limited to interim and final evaluations, but

could be a more continuing form of monitoring. Most respondents were unhappy with the fact that SOCRATES II was already launched before the results of the final evaluation of the first phase were available.

Equal Opportunities

With respect to the issue of equal opportunities, the SOCRATES programme is guided by the following principle: “Community aid will be awarded according to the principle of equality of opportunities, particularly between men and women. The specific needs of disabled persons who participate in activities developed in the framework of this chapter should be taken into consideration when the amount of grant is agreed” (819/95/EC) and the programme should promote access particularly for the less-privileged, thus actively combating social exclusion."

Respondents were asked about the mechanisms which existed in their country to ensure equal opportunities. Most of them answered that it was a principle embedded in national policy and legislation and thus no specific mechanisms were needed in the context of SOCRATES. Still, in 40 per cent of cases it was reported that a specific mechanism was in place. It appeared that respondents had different interpretations regarding the issue of equal opportunities. Some addressed equality between men and women, some the issue of immigrants or gypsies, young and old students and some the issue of disadvantage.

In COMENIUS the notion of equal opportunity, for the actors at national level, mainly concerned the involvement of beneficiaries in isolated areas or young people and schools in more disadvantaged situations or which had not previously developed European projects. In the UK, one respondents said that the support structures had attempted to make sure that Gypsy educators were able to work in Action 2 but that *"it is not easy to do things in a European context that are difficult in the national context.*" This aspect was also mentioned by a Finnish respondent.

Some respondents raised the issue of the participation of pupils with special needs such as in the Netherlands where special classes for children with learning difficulties were one of the COMENIUS priorities. In other countries, as in Greece for example, emphasis was placed on targeting information in order to prioritise schools in remote areas.

The main aspect promoted under LINGUA was access and inclusion. Thus several countries indicated that they targeted schools in disadvantaged areas or with pupils with special needs in order to increase participation. In the Netherlands and the UK, schools in special circumstances were able to shorten the mobility period in LINGUA E and in the UK helpers were funded to accompany pupils with special needs. Greece prioritised the more remote areas as did Sweden for its Northern region. Funding might be raised or special guidance given. In the selection of projects, the Finnish authorities prioritised special schools, but there were not many applications and interviewees felt that the problems to be solved in this area were well upstream of application procedures.

Co-ordination with LEONARDO

In almost half the countries, there was a formal coordination mechanism with LEONARDO, in 16 per cent only some form of informal coordination, and in 36 per cent there was no such mechanism. The last category includes France and Germany, which will have formal co-ordination mechanisms during SOCRATES II.

15.7 The ERASMUS Component

Questions concerning the ERASMUS, or higher education, component of the SOCRATES programme were only put to those with a specific responsibility for higher education. They may work in ministries, national agencies or higher education institutions.

15.7.1 Achievement of the ERASMUS Objectives

The formal objective of ERASMUS is formulated as follows: “ERASMUS is aimed at improving the quality and the "European dimension" of higher education (university and non-university sectors)”. Respondents were asked how far the objectives of the ERASMUS part of SOCRATES had been reached. 72 per cent answered that they had been reached to a large degree and 28 per cent that they had only been partly reached.

Those who answered partly felt that the objective was too vague to be assessed. Furthermore, they said that they knew about the quantitative achievements in the area of student mobility but that they would also like to know about the qualitative effects. More especially, respondents from Finland and France answered that the objective was only partly reached. This may be due to fact that the Finnish respondents were not very positive about the new design of the programme either. In the case of France, it may be linked to dissatisfaction with the national management structure.

The respondents who answered “to a large degree” said that the student mobility objective had been reached. Some added, however, that a real European dimension (in the sense of intercultural awareness) had not yet been fully reached. Besides, it would be extremely difficult to assess or measure this dimension. One interviewee stated that: "The monitoring and evaluation of ERASMUS should reflect its wide scope, since it is not only aimed at providing funds for temporary student mobility and related co-operation between higher education institutions. It also seeks to influence the structure and ethos of higher education institutions and, consequently, the learning environment for students"

15.7.2 New Characteristics of ERASMUS in the Framework of SOCRATES

With the launch of the SOCRATES programme new measures were introduced to broaden its strategic basis at the level of the higher education institutions. They concerned:

- the introduction of the institutional contract (IC);
- the introduction of the European Policy Statement (EPS);
- the change from multilateral to bilateral cooperation arrangements between higher education institutions.

Respondents were asked how they assessed the value of these new characteristics of ERASMUS. Table 15.4 shows that the overall assessment is positive.

Table 15.4
Assessment of the New Characteristics of ERASMUS by Actors at the National Level
(percentages n=25-41)

	Negative	No difference	Positive
Institutional Contract	5	10	85
European Policy Statement	9	32	59
Bilateral cooperation	4	48	48

Despite the fact that many people were opposed to the new characteristics at the start of the programme, after the initial changes in 1997, many respondents came to the conclusion that they often brought improvements. As one respondent stated: “The Institutional Contract and the European Policy Statement (EPS) to be submitted for ERASMUS have forced the higher education institutions to think about an overall strategy and that was good. However, a comprehensive strategy works better in smaller institutions and is more difficult to realise in the larger ones.” It was argued that the institutional contract should become more flexible in this respect. The administrative workload weighs heavily on small institutions, unlike the larger ones which have special international offices. It was generally felt that the administrative load was too heavy in relation to the support provided.

Furthermore, it was argued that the EPS gave the impulse to think about internationalisation strategies. This was an innovation, especially in the smaller institutions and for the Central and Eastern European countries. For larger institutions, internationalisation strategies were less new. It is regrettable that so little was done with the EPSs afterwards. Some people said that, as a result, the development of new policy statements consisted in copying the statement of the year before.

The change from multilateral to bilateral arrangements was judged neutral to positive, but, here too, there were complaints about the amount of paperwork involved in the contract that had to be signed by every partner. But these bilateral agreements provided a clear legal basis for cooperation.

15.7.3 Procedures and Criteria

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they found the procedures and criteria used in the award processes and the reporting requirements productive or counterproductive in achieving the strategic aims of the programme. 42 per cent found them productive, while 33 per cent considered that they ought to be improved and 25 per cent thought they were counterproductive. Concerning the last two categories, there were a number of frequently heard remarks. First, funding for student mobility should not be based on projections, but on actual numbers. Second, more information should be made available on the reasons for the rejection of proposals. Third, teaching staff mobility required too much long-term planning.

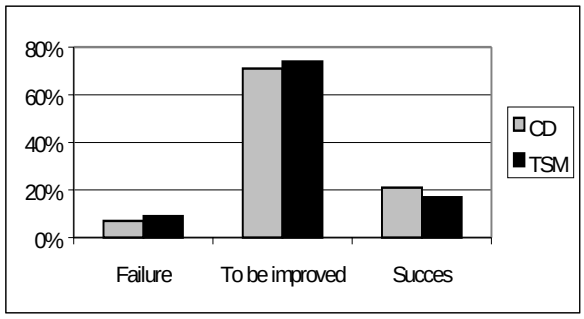
Compared to the interim evaluation, in which 50 per cent of the people were critical about the way in which the application procedures and criteria were used, this reveals an even higher percentage (58%) of persons who are still not satisfied with the way in which procedures and criteria function. This seems to be related to the fact that the EC bureaucracy is mentioned several times as being one of the obstacles to an effective implementation of the SOCRATES programme.

15.7.4 European Dimension for Non-Mobile Students

For many years, ERASMUS mainly functioned as a student exchange scheme. With the launch of SOCRATES, emphasis was placed on a wider range of actions to develop a European dimension in the studies of non-mobile students. Activities such as curriculum development and teaching staff mobility were developed and were expected to contribute to this aim.

Respondents were asked whether they found that ERASMUS had been successful in developing a European dimension in the studies of non-mobile students. Figure 15.6 shows clearly that great improvements are needed in this area. At the same time, respondents seemed to agree that there was a potential for curriculum development and teaching staff mobility for non-mobile students.

Figure 15.6
Appreciation of Activities Aimed at Non-Mobile Students by Actors at the National Level (percentages)



Comments on the role of curriculum development activities suggested that they are not yet optimally used because they are not yet well-known. Besides, it is a very time-consuming type of activity and only small grants are available. It was suggested that curriculum development could be used more effectively if national agencies had more direct information about it and could thus promote it more actively. Comments on teaching staff mobility relate to problems linked to the need to plan too long in advance and to other practical obstacles. It was suggested that teaching staff mobility should be more closely linked to other actions.

15.7.5 Balance Between the Actions

As explained in the previous paragraph, the ERASMUS component of the SOCRATES programme includes a wide range of actions. Respondents were asked what they thought about the balance that had been reached between them. It seems that most respondents are satisfied with the new balance, as 65 per cent said that it was good. It also seems that SOCRATES has been successful in broadening the scope of the programme. Almost one third would like to see more non-mobility actions. This seems to coincide with the finding that much must be improved in actions that focus on non-mobile students. Only few respondents (5%) asked for more mobility.

15.7.6 ERASMUS and the Challenges of Globalisation

Higher education institutions operate not only in a European, but also in a wider international context. They are increasingly influenced by the challenges of globalisation (e.g. the emerging international student market, the role of new technologies, 'borderless' education, etc.). Most respondents agreed that ERASMUS was either important (30%) or very important (67%) in helping institutions to meet the challenges of globalisation, although it was also said that the programme was more important for smaller institutions and countries that are not yet members of the European Union.

Furthermore, some respondents saw a relationship between the process of European cooperation as enhanced by the ERASMUS programme and the Bologna Declaration. Some wondered if and how this initiative would affect student mobility in the future. One assumes that there will be a trend towards more structural cooperation in the area of curriculum development and the adjustment of degree systems. An expansion of the ECTS system can be expected in this context. But, according to the respondents, student mobility will remain important. The possibilities of virtual mobility by means of ICT are valuable, but they will also stimulate the demand for physical mobility. Finally, it was confirmed that in many countries, internationalisation had become an institutionalised feature of the higher education sector.

15.8 The Management of COMENIUS at the National Level

15.8.1 Management of the Actions and the Support System

Major Strong Points and Major Difficulties

In general key actors in the participating countries considered COMENIUS to have been one of the most successful strands of the SOCRATES programme. As one interviewee said: *"Everybody saw COMENIUS as a panacea";* and all those who were surveyed were in agreement that this programme had made a substantial impact in so far as it had introduced a European dimension into schools but also through the effects it had on national curricula. Thus in Austria, interviewees highlighted the priorities set in the field of internationalisation of the education system, while in the UK, they welcomed a stronger focus on the European dimension by inspectors and by the Ministry of Education.

At the same time, interviewees in most countries were critical about the difficulties caused by a certain number of aspects which mainly affected the administration of the programme. As far as decentralised actions were concerned, the time schools had to wait for grants to arrive was strongly criticised as, in some cases, it made a difference as to whether or not a school was able to remain in a partnership. They also drew attention to what they saw as bureaucratic procedures and a lack of flexibility concerning the funding of the different actions - the share of budgets among the sub-actions, among projects, between partners and coordinators, etc.. Some respondents commented on the way in which this aspect hindered the national management of the programme. A further point which attracted criticism was a perceived lack of transparency and information, on the part of the Commission, concerning the centralised actions and in particular, the reasons for project applications being accepted or rejected. This point was also raised by several project coordinators in interviews. Finally key actors at the national level found little effective synergy among the different strands of the programme and sometimes confusion between LINGUA and COMENIUS.

Over and above these general considerations which were common to most of the countries, certain aspects of the management of the programme were selected for comment in specific countries. Greek interviewees referred to the difficulties for Greek beneficiaries to participate

in courses with COMENIUS 3.2 grants, given the level of funding and the distances they had to travel. They also pointed out that it was very difficult for schools to participate in projects if equipment costs could not be an eligible cost. Primary schools in France encountered a different type of problem in so far as they were not financially autonomous and therefore had to enter into complex arrangements in order to receive small amounts of funding. A similar problem was encountered in Spain. In both cases the national systems have reviewed arrangements in order to rectify the situation for SOCRATES II.

The Promotion of COMENIUS

According to the respondents, COMENIUS was promoted in an effective way in their countries. A broad range of means of promoting the programme was used in most countries and included: a CD ROM on project applications (in Hungary), regional or local promoters (such as staff in teacher training institutes), information campaigns and days, leaflets, regional or local conferences, periodicals and newsletters, brochures, magazines, Internet, etc. Providing sufficient and clearly targeted information to potential beneficiaries was considered an important task of the National Agencies.

Attention was drawn to regional differences in some cases, such as in Germany where differences among the *Länder* were noted: "*It was hoped that after participation in COMENIUS 3.2 teachers would then apply for project grants in COMENIUS 1, but that did not happen as much as it was envisaged. Many schools were not informed about the existing opportunities because information either remains in the regional authorities and is not passed on to schools or the brochure that was designed to inform them simply became one of many papers and information material lying around and was thus not properly perceived and read*"

Information was often sent to schools through bodies and organisations at local and regional levels and therefore depended very much on the local education staff whose mission it was to inform schools about COMENIUS. This approach was felt to have been effective in several countries which were surveyed. One example was the establishment of a network of specialised advisors in the French education regional offices to inform and assist schools on all the opportunities offered to them by the European programmes. This has been very successful in stimulating broad-based participation in COMENIUS.

15.8.2 Perceived Results and Overall Appraisal

Main Successes and Failures of COMENIUS

Overall the COMENIUS chapter of SOCRATES I was perceived by the key actors at national level to have achieved important goals. The following four points received a high level of general agreement among the respondents who considered that:

– Schools had become more dynamic with both secondary and primary schools developing a European dimension in their work and transnational partnerships. This was particularly

important for the more isolated regions such as in Finland where one interviewee drew attention to the fact that "Before COMENIUS Finland did not have any bilateral agreements on teacher exchanges like in Great Britain or France. Finland was geographically and also mentally far away from Europe. COMENIUS has given a chance to Finnish schools to get nearer".

- Teacher mobility had increased. Respondents thought that this had probably had an effect on classroom practice.
- European projects had been undertaken by a broader cross-section of schools than previously and were not just limited to an "élite". This opinion of the key actors who were surveyed was substantiated by the analysis carried out by Deloitte and Touche for the specific analysis on school partnerships.
- Working in a COMENIUS partnership could lead to changes in the relations among the different actors in the education systems. As one Norwegian interviewee suggested: "It has a tendency to spread to other levels: parents, local communities, enterprises and this tendency … shows that education is not just something that goes on in schools.

The comments above are essentially positive. Two other issues raised in the interviews focused on the purpose of European projects in schools and potential problems of sustainability of the activities established. Thus, a few interviewees were sceptical about the value of COMENIUS partnerships in certain schools and wondered whether they might have been used to attract pupils, rather than for pedagogic purposes. Others raised the issue of the length of time teachers and project coordinators would be able to maintain the investment of time and energy required to sustain a European project, particularly given the small amounts of funding allocated. The success of the programme depended on their continuing involvement

The Achievements of the COMENIUS actions

COMENIUS 1: Most respondents considered that this action had reached its objectives as it had provided the opportunity for schools to develop very concrete multilateral partnership activities with schools in other eligible countries. It had encouraged both teachers and pupils to be more mobile and to improve their understanding of other cultures. For respondents in France, COMENIUS 1 had provided a "space" in which schools could develop their own initiatives and, as such, it created an incentive and gave them a legal framework for developing activities linked to their school's project. Similar comments were made in several other countries. Respondents emphasised that the strong points had been in the communication established among the partners, the level of preparation, the variety of themes developed and the involvement of the whole school.

COMENIUS 2: This was a centralised action and seen to be more controversial, as the theme of intercultural education was, in itself, a subject of discussion. Some respondents would have liked it to be defined more clearly by the Commission, while others felt that the initiatives in this area were frequently undertaken by the same groups of partners with little involvement of schools. Some interviewees also raised the question of whether or not this type of action should be centralised or decentralised, as some National Agency staff felt that,

in this area, the national contexts were very important and might not have been sufficiently understood by staff in Brussels. Some countries such as Finland and the Czech Republic considered that their grant for this action might have been too large, given the target population. Other countries, such as Spain, used the possibilities offered by COMENIUS 2 to reinforce national policies on immigrant workers or the Gypsy population.

COMENIUS 3.1: This action was assessed as a useful way of developing new tools for teaching and learning within a framework of transnational cooperation. Concerning the funding, however, some respondents, for example in Ireland, pointed to a discrepancy between what they saw as the high level of investment needed to make an application in comparison with the low level of grants awarded. On the positive side, national key actors considered that this action had allowed institutions to improve their profile and for some to develop their activities and competences by working with more experienced institutions in partner countries.

COMENIUS 3.2: The possibility of obtaining training grants for European courses was assessed very positively. One concern raised was the difficulty encountered by teachers from some countries due to a high level of foreign language skills of other course participants. Italian and Greek respondents raised this issue: "The only really big problem we have is the language. Teachers who do not speak any English are not going to participate in any projects with their class. This point of view was expressed in Italy but also in other Southern countries."

15.9 The Management of LINGUA at the National Level

15.9.1 Management of the Actions and the Support System

Major Strong Points and Major Difficulties

Overall, LINGUA was considered by most of the respondents to have been a good programme that provided, along with COMENIUS, the opportunity for schools to develop an international activity. This was balanced by comments about its "horizontal" characteristics. For one interviewee LINGUA brought no added-value to the SOCRATES programme and could not be considered a horizontal measure as it was seen to focus mainly on schools. For others, it provided a solid transversal contribution through language development. For some respondents, LINGUA was a successful horizontal action that provided small but effective grants.

Among the strong points mentioned were the following. LINGUA had:

- helped schools to develop new channels of communication through Internet and e-mail;
- given them skills in designing and implementing European projects;

- increased the professional experience of grant beneficiaries through the training activities;
- involved teachers in curriculum development, whether within their own school or more broadly.

The major difficulties encountered in the management of the programme were associated, in most countries, with the administrative procedures for applicants, project coordinators and agency staff and the workload they entailed. This raised the issue of whether or not National Agencies were adequately staffed and whether procedures needed simplifying. Some agency staff emphasised difficulties in their contacts with Brussels, delays in procedures, the difficulty of supplying information to SocLink and insufficient feedback on the centralised actions and on project funding refusals. In one case an interviewee pointed out that it could be difficult to respond to the requirements of both the national and European accounting systems at the same time. In some cases partners from the Central and Eastern European countries reported particular problems in obtaining the visas to fulfil the mobility requirements.

Another weakness to which several interviewees drew attention was the partner search facility, as it was felt that the database did not correspond to the needs of schools. The issue of a lack of dissemination of the outcomes of LINGUA actions A and D was raised in Germany where it was suggested that the catalogue of projects should include information about the outcomes and results.

The Promotion of LINGUA

A broad range of means of promoting the programme was used in most countries and included: regional or local promoters, information campaigns, leaflets, regional or local conferences, newsletters, brochures, magazines, Internet, etc. Providing sufficient information to potential beneficiaries and targeting it was considered an important task of the National Agencies. In Sweden, one interviewee suggested that a larger budget would be useful to allow staff to go out to schools and other institutions in the field. Other countries dealt with this problem by using a network of local and regional promoters. An Austrian interviewee explained that the first year they had targeted all eligible schools and then followed up the second year with more specific targeting of specific types of schools or regions. In Germany, presentations were also designed for Chambers of Industry, Crafts and Commerce, as well as for the local employment services, to raise awareness about LINGUA E. They reported that applications through the Chambers had subsequently increased. For LINGUA B and C some countries held information meetings that targeted people who were likely to be interested.

In Slovenia, which joined the programme recently, training courses have been organised to assist potential project promoters in developing projects and to train them in project management skills. This approach was also mentioned in Hungary as a way of increasing the number of institutions that are able to make applications.

The issue of the link between promoting the programme and the limitations of the budget allocation was raised in Denmark and Ireland where interviewees pointed out that, if they had promoted the programme too effectively there would have been far more applications than they could possibly fund. Too many refusals could lead to disappointment and to a decrease in the number of applications. The issue was also discussed in Austria. None of the larger countries raised this issue.

15.9.2 Perceived Results and Overall Appraisal

Main Successes and Failures of LINGUA

The decentralised actions were seen to have been more successful in some countries as decision-making took place at the national level and the agencies disposed of more information about projects and partnerships.

Many successful aspects of the LINGUA actions were highlighted. Respondents felt that the programme encouraged institutions, schools, teachers, students to:

- think about internationalisation,
- formulate objectives for school projects,
- build partnerships,
- develop student mobility,
- develop a European dimension in their work,
- improve teaching methods and, in general, the quality of teaching,
- engage in curriculum development,
- develop cooperation by universities and teacher training institutions with those in other countries,
- increase the motivation for language learning,
- increase the capacity to use other languages,
- increase the awareness of the linguistic variety in Europe.

One interviewee felt that, over the years, the content of LINGUA exchanges had developed successfully. They were no longer just "tourism". In the Czech Republic one respondent welcomed the opportunities provided by the LINGUA actions for the Czech system in so far as schools had been able to establish partnerships with institutions in other countries. They intended to use examples of good practice and good projects from this first experience in order to motivate other schools to apply.

On the negative side the low level of funding, especially for schools and teachers, was mentioned as well as the need to strengthen the evaluation and dissemination of activities. Some interviewees discussed the reluctance of schools to apply when the programme first started. They felt that motivation had been low at first and schools had been hesitant about

mobility projects which involved using another language. This was a difficulty which National Agencies had had to address through the promotion of the programme.

The Achievements of the LINGUA Actions

Overall, achievements mentioned included

- increasing the involvement of the inspectorate ,
- introducing a European dimension into the work of schools and encouraging a more international approach,
- providing an added-value for the school,
- giving teachers and students an experience of other European countries (including those that are not common holiday destinations),
- encouraging more language teaching,
- encouraging students and teachers to think about their own language differently.

The position of the lesser used and lesser taught languages, one of the priorities of the LINGUA programme, was not frequently mentioned in the interviews. When mentioned, it tended to be in the context of interviewees seeking to explain why this priority was less important in their country.

LINGUA A and D: Comments were mixed about these two actions that were frequently assessed together probably because they were centralised actions and the national actors tended to feel they lacked information about them. Whereas some interviewees felt that these actions had supported an interesting range of projects, others felt they were costly for what they produced.

LINGUA B: There was not felt to be a high level of complementarity between LINGUA A and B with relatively few grants going to teachers taking courses developed under LINGUA A. It was hope that a better link would be established under SOCRATES II.

There were differing assessments about the level of the support given to teachers. Whereas the French interviewees found the support too low, in Sweden grants were reduced (in percentage of costs covered) in order to meet a higher number of demands. This debate frequently came up in the interviews whether the action should support more people at a lower rate or fewer at a rate that covered all their expenses. The significance of the decision was not the same depending on the level of teachers' salaries and whether or not they could supplement the cost of taking a training course abroad. It was pointed out that this is notably the case for teachers from the accession countries where it is considered very important that they receive their grants before going on the training course.

In some countries it was suggested that LINGUA B grants tended to be used as a "failsafe" to update the skills of teachers. It was not always easy to cope with the high numbers of applicants in countries where LINGUA B could appear as a substitute for teacher training schemes which had been the victim of cut-backs. One interviewee would have liked to see

national policies playing a bigger role in the allocation of teacher training grants. Responding to demand was also an issue raised, for example in Portugal, where interviewees drew attention to the waiting list for grants, as they received about 400-500 applications a year but could only fund about 250.

The issues of the amount of the training grants and who should be eligible were raised. In the UK, it was felt that the obligation for teachers to have three years' experience before applying for a grant did not suit the very young profile of UK teachers. In Sweden and Austria, grants had been reduced in order to accept more applications. Dutch respondents, on the other hand, felt that their difficulty in spending all the action B and C budgets was due to restructuring in their education system, which meant that teachers are in high demand. In the Czech Republic and Hungary, there were large numbers of applicants partially due to the re-training of former teachers of Russian and a perceived need to upgrade the skills of language teachers.

A final issue raised was that of the content of courses and their effectiveness. It was suggested that it was difficult for National Agencies to check the content and outcomes of training courses. The fact that under SOCRATES II a common guide to courses will be developed led to questioning about the criteria for including courses, who would decide, etc. For some respondents, the need to broaden the eligibility of LINGUA B courses to non-language specialists was seen as very important in order to encourage more teachers to develop projects and partnerships in a perspective of early language learning.

LINGUA C: This action was, on the whole, considered to have been very successful and well worth the money spent (e.g. in the Dutch and Greek interviews) but had too small a budget. Some interviewees felt that the grants were too small to adequately cover the assistants' costs (e.g. in the Italian and UK interviews). The important benefits to host schools were mentioned and it was suggested that the Commission should consider raising the overall budget in order to respond better to the demand.

LINGUA E: Respondents considered that this action had provided mobility for young people who might not have had the opportunity and it could give them a positive experience of foreign languages when their classroom experience had been negative. In some countries, the number of schools involved was a sign of the success of the programme. Thus, in Finland, by the end of SOCRATES I, about 15 per cent of schools (including primary schools) were involved in either LINGUA or COMENIUS partnerships. In Norway, this figure was 6 to 7 per cent.

In some countries, the fact that LINGUA E mobility periods had to last two weeks was felt to be a barrier, particularly since one of the LINGUA E priorities was to include classes in vocational education and training streams. In Germany, that was the case because of the requirements of the dual system. However, the issue was also raised in Belgium, as it was felt that families were not used to mobility periods that lasted two weeks and in Norway due to difficulties of fitting in with school timetables. Some respondents in Spain felt they had been successful in building up the participation of vocational schools whereas one

respondent in France suggested that they needed to put more focus on this area. LINGUA E was seen to encourage schools to integrate a European dimension into their projects.

In order to be successful, respondents listed the following factors:

- good preparation and a solid partnership with good working relations established,
- a high level of guidance from the National Agency,
- integration into the school's project,
- support from the head teacher,
- a product and a clear work programme,
- the grant had to arrive more rapidly (as schools could not pay for large numbers of air tickets and then wait for reimbursement).

This latter point was emphasised in the Central and Eastern European countries where schools did not have their own sources of funding which could be used while they waited for the grant. It was noted that, in some cases, schools had been obliged to pull out of a partnership for this reason.
Working towards a "product" was highlighted as important by some interviewees but other respondents pointed out that in order to produce something worthwhile, schools might have to seek further sponsorship and this was not an area in which they had experience.

15.10 The Management of OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) at the National Level

15.10.1 Management of the Actions and Support System

Major strong points and major difficulties

In exploring the main strong points and difficulties in managing this action interviewees discussed communication and contact problems. Key actors in some countries mentioned that it was difficult to ensure a sufficient level of contact with project coordinators given that ODL was a centralised action while other interviewees felt that they did not have enough contact with the Commission or regretted the lack of feedback to the National agencies on the projects and applications. A fourth issue raised was the difficulty of establishing partnerships among different types of organisations and institutions. This led to a situation in which there was not always a sufficient "mix" of types of organisations in project partnerships.

The promotion of ODL

A range of means were used to disseminate information about the ODL action: meetings, seminars (with representatives from Brussels), mail shots, brochures, newsletters, etc.. In some countries, such as Norway, information on the ODL action was included in meetings

about ERASMUS and other actions of the SOCRATES programme. Two difficulties were mentioned in this area. The first concerned the potential target group for ODL support which was very broad and therefore made it more difficult for National Agencies to target potential coordinators and partners. Secondly, one National Agency regretted the fact that they did not have sufficient human resources to be able to promote the action effectively, which they felt showed in the low number of projects coordinated from their country.

15.10.2 Perceived Results and Overall Appraisal

Main Successes and Failures of ODL

ODL was seen broadly as a transversal activity which addressed large numbers of potential beneficiaries and targeted a wide range of participants. Interviewees considered that it contributed to supporting cooperation among institutions and encouraged an exchange of experience among teaching staff. Overall the SOCRATES programme had raised awareness about ODL. As one interviewee stated: "*One of the main successes of the SOCRATES programme was seen in the fact that the Adult Education and the ODL strands forced the Ministry to think about these issues. Before that there was no national policy on these issues."*.

The achievements of the ODL action

According to the respondents, few or no national measures for open and distance learning had existed until quite recently in almost all the countries surveyed. Thus, in some cases the ODL action in SOCRATES I had, in practice, been a mechanism for stimulating national activity. This type of effect was mentioned in both Ireland and the UK, for example. Elsewhere, as in Hungary, Romania and France interviewees felt that the programme had contributed to raising awareness about ODL.

However, countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic and Portugal noted that it was mainly higher education institutions that participated in projects. It was suggested that whereas higher education institutions have a tradition of international cooperation and finding partners abroad, it was much more difficult for schools, even with help from the National Agencies. As one interviewee suggested, higher education institutions tended to have more staff who were experienced in planning large, technical projects. School were seen to be just at the beginning of the process of understanding and implementing open and distance learning. Some National Agency interviewees would welcome the opportunity to promote ODL more at local level in the future in order to encourage more diversified applications and more interaction among different types of institutions.

Some early difficulties in promoting the action were felt to be attributable both to a lack of recognition of the activity at national level and to the fact that the objectives were not always clearly understood. However, interviewees welcomed progression in the recognition of ODL at national level. For Spanish interviewees, one of the main advantages they saw in the ODL

action was the fact that it had encouraged teachers and students to work together and had therefore contributed to improving relations. One interviewee made the following assessment: "*It has been helpful in achieving objectives but the total budget was so small that you cannot expect it to have achieved a big impact. It was very helpful.*"

15.11 The Management of ADULT EDUCATION at the National Level

15.11.1 Management of the Actions and Support System

Major strong points and major difficulties

ADULT EDUCATION has developed very differently from one country to another but it would appear that this action has now been well-accepted and obtained strong support in most countries. However, most of the interviewees agreed that the National Agencies could have benefited from receiving more information as they found it difficult to disseminate information about the action. They would also have welcomed better communication with the Commission, particularly concerning selection criteria of projects.

One interviewee pointed to gaps in information. National agencies obtained the application forms and saw the outcomes of the selection procedures, but they did not always obtain any feedback from the approved projects. One opinion voiced was that decentralising procedures would facilitate the process of integrating project activity into national policy developments.

In this context, interviewees welcomed the changes under SOCRATES II which introduce greater involvement of the National Agencies. They hoped this would have an effect on the coordination of activities and lead to greater flexibility at project level. They also hoped it would contribute to improving the profile of adult education in the national contexts.

The promotion of ADULT EDUCATION

Staff in National Agencies reported that the ADULT EDUCATION action had been promoted nationally in a variety of ways which included seminars, information on the web, joint meetings organised for both the ADULT EDUCATION and ODL strands, etc.. It would appear that even though this was a centralised action, information by the National Agencies was an essential factor in stimulating applications. As one interviewee pointed out: "*One consequence of not advertising is that it may have limited the number of good quality applications that we saw. There are very good networks in (…) so the experience that people have travels fast. Bad experiences can damage the reputation of the programme and it takes a long time to recover. This is something of which the Commission is not terribly aware of*".

15.11.2 Perceived Results and Overall Appraisal

Main successes and failures of ADULT EDUCATION

It would appear from the responses that the introduction of the ADULT EDUCATION action provided all the European countries with the opportunity of raising awareness of the importance of lifelong learning at the national level. This led to different outcomes and comments. In some cases, there was a rise in the number of applications, as for example in Romania and in other cases, as in Greece, measures in favour of adult education were strengthened. Other countries mentioned the development of international networks (e.g. in Finland), while some (such as in Austria) felt that national structures and ministries had become increasingly aware of the importance of this aspect of education.

Achievements of the action

Adult education is not an area considered to be of equal importance in all European countries, nor has it developed to the same extent everywhere. The key actors who were surveyed emphasised the importance of the national context to explain the impact (or lack of it) of the action.

Thus, countries such as Denmark and Sweden, in which measures in favour of adult education have existed for a long time, felt that the grants allocated by the Commission were too small and that other sources of funding also available in their countries might have been more attractive to project promoters. The main impact of SOCRATES had been the internationalisation of the projects which were supported.

For other countries such as Hungary, Romania, the UK, France and Spain where adult education was not very structured, SOCRATES had provided an opportunity for awareness-raising at the national level, an increase in the demand for funding, an improvement in the quality of the projects submitted and also a higher level of recognition of this sector of education. As one interviewee pointed out: "*Adult education is the poor man of education. The fact that it was recognised by SOCRATES gave it some recognition that was lacking before*".

For countries in which there was no real tradition of adult education, SOCRATES was felt to have contributed to putting it on the national agenda. Thus, an Italian interviewee estimated that "*Adult Education has become priority within our Ministry as a result of the SOCRATES programme. After that a department of the Ministry picked up the issue on the political level*". However, as a Czech interviewee suggested, the lack of local structures could hinder development: "*But as long as there is no formal policy in the field and a very new structure (department) in the Ministry for that the results will be insignificant*".

15.12 Summary and Conclusions on the Implementation of SOCRATES at the National Level

225 persons involved in the management and implementation of SOCRATES at the national level, representing national agencies, ministries and higher education institutions, etc., were interviewed or addressed by questionnaires. Their opinions and suggestions are summarised below.

The design of SOCRATES as a combined programme, integrating actions in a range of areas of education, was evaluated positively at the national level. It was found to be an improvement in relation to the previous situation where the various levels and areas of education were addressed by different EU action programmes. However, in practice, the synergy between the various sections and actions could still be improved. Respondents also emphasised that the objectives of the programme should be formulated in a more concrete way in order to enable better monitoring and evaluation.

The structure of the management of SOCRATES at the national level differs widely: 14 different models were found in the 26 countries concerned. In most cases, representatives (a majority of them working for national agencies) were positive about the functioning of the structure in their country and more especially about how the national agency was organised. Major weak points in the management at the national level were linked to the difficulties of working with the EC bureaucracy (e.g. late arrival of payments) and to national barriers and bureaucracy, which may hinder the smooth implementation of the programme.

Communication mechanisms between actors at the national level were better evaluated than communication between the national and the European level. The main criticism concerned the consistent late arrival of the documents and the lack of preparation of the meetings of the SOCRATES Committee and the sub-committees for ERASMUS and school education.

56 per cent of the national level representatives were optimistic about the changes in the management structure for SOCRATES II. Most comments concerned the future of the programme related to the technical and financial management of the programme, very few only to the long-term impact of the programme.

The major successes of SOCRATES are seen in the development of a European dimension in education. The major failures are linked to the functioning of the EC bureaucracy and to the design of the programme. In particular, a lack of clear objectives, the complexity of the application procedures and the lack of flexibility and thus of real synergy were mentioned.

Most countries have national policies for internationalisation, either formal or more informal. The improvement of the quality of education is the prevalent aim of these policies, followed by the development of a European dimension and of an internationally competitive higher education sector (including higher education export). 84 per cent of the respondents stated that SOCRATES played an important to very important role in this context. In a large majority of countries the programme was found to be complementary to or reinforced the country's

internationalisation policy. Only in a minority of cases was it found to be competing or contradictory.

The achievement of the objectives of ERASMUS was positively evaluated. So were its new characteristics, such as the institutional contract and the European policy statement and, to some extent, the shift from multilateral to bilateral agreements between institutions. Respondents were also satisfied with the balance between the various actions, although actions that focused on non-mobile students (i.e. curriculum development and teaching staff mobility) should be developed and improved. Almost all the respondents agreed that ERASMUS was important for higher education institutions in facing the challenges of globalisation. But most of the respondents at the national level were still not satisfied with the procedures and criteria used in ERASMUS.

COMENIUS was considered by the national structures to have been one of the most successful actions of the programme in terms of the impact it had on schools and even on national curricula. On the negative side attention was drawn to the sometimes severe difficulties of dealing with the administrative and financial procedures both for national structures and for project coordinators and other beneficiaries. Despite this, most countries were experiencing a growing demand for support, at least for the school partnerships. The importance of regional and local mechanisms for promoting the programme were highlighted, as were the ways in which national structures had contributed to the equal opportunities objectives by targeting disadvantaged or rural areas, peripheral zones, special education provision, etc. Overall, concerning school partnerships, the largest action of COMENIUS for the national structures, there was a marked preference for continuing with the policy of small grants for a large number of projects in order to reach as many education institutions as possible.

The LINGUA action was positively assessed overall though there was some discussion about whether or not it had fulfilled its purpose as a horizontal action. The same type of difficulties in dealing with the administrative and financial procedures were raised as for COMENIUS. The national structures noted the successful outcomes of having prioritised vocational and technical education institutions and in some cases special education classes for mobility support under LINGUA E. They emphasised the importance of the regional and local networks for promoting the actions which supported school projects and for targeting specific geographical areas or types of education provision. The teacher training actions of LINGUA were assessed positively as to their use and appeal. The level of individual grants and the overall budgets were discussed in terms of effectiveness and the numbers of beneficiaries supported. On the whole the national structures evaluated more positively the decentralised actions for which they had a higher level of understanding and information.

The OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION actions were both centralised actions and therefore there was no direct management at the national level. This led to difficulties on the part of the national structures in clarifying their roles for these actions. The issue of the level of individual project grants was raised for the ODL projects, given the importance of technology resources. Interviewees also discussed the need for the

National Agencies to have the necessary resources to target potential partners in a more selective manner under SOCRATES II so as to broaden the range of institutions involved. For both ADULT EDUCATION and OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING, the respondents highlighted strongly the importance of the SOCRATES programme in stimulating national activity and contributing to developing national policy.

16. The SOCRATES Support Programme: Framework and Management

By Ulrich Teichler

16.1 Introduction

Unlike the national or regional decision-making powers, the supra-national European authorities cannot set regulatory frameworks for the education system, establish and approve educational establishments, and fund and supervise the daily operations and outcomes of the educational institutions and processes. Their domain of activity is determined by the national governments and they must, in cooperation with the national authorithies:

- create programmes to stimulate interest in the educational world,
- provide financial incentives for action,
- design and implement a regulatory framework that aims to determine how closely or loosely the beneficiaries follow the goals and operations envisaged in the programme.

Obviously, the means at the disposal of the European authorities to pursue certain goals are less direct and less powerful than those of the responsible authorities in the Member States. This means that, first, the educational activities and outcomes stimulated by the European Commission are likely to be prescribed to a lesser extent than respective activities shaped by national authorities. This is relevant for the evaluation of the educational outcomes of SOCRATES. Second, European policies must be more imaginative than those of national authorities in order to be able to shape the educational realities – therefore the evaluation of SOCRATES must ask whether the programme was successful in mobilising the education system. Third, the framework and the management of SOCRATES must correspond to the conditions of select programming and steering through incentives. Fourth, a policy is needed to determine if the programme steers the activities to be supported or leaves room for different use of the support by beneficiaries, i.e. what are the acceptable activities which receive support (the terms “bottom up“ versus “top down“ often employed in this debate are misleading)?

This must be taken into account in evaluating the SOCRATES programme. As one key issue, the evaluation must examine whether SOCRATES is imaginative and mobilising and whether this leads to valuable results, even though the processes are steered only to a limited extent by the programme. This is addressed in various chapters of this study and will be addressed again in the final chapter.

The evaluation must also examine whether the framework and management of SOCRATES serve their purpose well in the given context. This is the major theme of this chapter.

Since the European Commission is a supra-national agency and must legitimise its actions *vis-à-vis* national governments, one can assume, as a working hypothesis of this evaluation study, that:

(a) the governance of the SOCRATES programme could yield to the typical danger of bureaucratisation, which is considered endemic to governmental and quasi- governmental agencies in two respects:

- a substantial over-steering of the programmes: too strict a prescription of the activities to be supported,
- a procedural over-steering of the programme: demanding over elaborate application reports, accounting procedures, evaluation procedures, control procedures, etc.;

(b) the European Commission, because of the weak potential of a financial incentive programme to carry out the substantive intentions, could be all the more in danger of counterbalancing this endemic weakness by procedural over-steering.

Though this evaluation study focuses primarily on analysing the experiences of the SOCRATES beneficiaries, it certainly does not want to share the beneficiaries‘ most convenient view that maximum funds should be provided for activities with minimal substantive guidelines and minimal administrative requirements. Yet it is legitimate to ask whether the SOCRATES programme and the related framework conditions, as well as the management processes for awarding and supervising, strike an appropriate balance between an open pursuit of interesting educational concepts and substantive and procedural over-bureaucratisation.

This chapter does not intend to cover all the dimensions of the framework and the administration of SOCRATES. Nine themes are addressed. They are those which were most often discussed in the documents analysed or by the people addressed in this evaluation study: SOCRATES as the umbrella of programmes, the nature of the goals pursued, the types of activities supported, the structure of the SOCRATES programme, the funding modes, the relationship between “top down“ and “bottom up,“ the shaping of the educational activities, the administration of the SOCRATES programme, and, finally, issues of evaluation and dissemination.

Among the themes that are not addressed in this chapter, information about the educational programmes of the European Union and the opportunities for support implied have been an issue of debate in the past. Though this obviously is not viewed as a major issue anymore for the Programme in general, one of the main conclusions of the evaluation on the participation of people with disabilities in the different actions of SOCRATES is the need to review ands adjust the types, styles, formats and access to information.

16.2 SOCRATES as an Umbrella

The introduction of SOCRATES as a “combined“ or “umbrella“ programme which puts most educational support measures of the European Union under a common roof seems to have been an important symbolic step. Firstly, SOCRATES, the first major decision to reorganise educational programmes since the Maastricht Treaty which established that European activities could cover all sectors of the educational system, symbolises the system-wide character of the educational support programme. It aims to make European educational activities more visible.

Secondly, SOCRATES aims to set in motion certain substantial commonalities of the various educational sub-programmes, to open up opportunities for educational “cross-fertilisation“ and to establish combined and common administrative procedures.

But the question whether SOCRATES is more than the sum of its parts cannot be answered in the affirmative without hesitation, since:

- most actors surveyed in Brussels or at a national level did not observe major gains in terms of a coordination of goals, processes of administering the programme, modes of evaluation or cooperation between the sub-programmes which might off-set the additional complications of an enlarged administrative framework,
- most beneficiaries are interested in specific components of the SOCRATES programme and not in the programme as whole. Thus, new names such as COMENIUS seem to offer more of a sense of identification than the umbrella of the programme (only within ERASMUS does the term SOCRATES seem to have a stronger meaning of symbolising a change of goals and administrative processes launched in 1997/98).

Obviously, the umbrella hardly affects the administrative and educational processes in the various areas of educational activities which are supported, and many individual areas seem to be small components of the overall programme.

This is convincingly taken up by the decision to introduce additional names for various areas of support in SOCRATES II, e.g. GRUNDTVIG and MINERVA in addition to ERASMUS, COMENIUS and LINGUA. Thus, the identity of the European educational innovation will be reinforced by the naming of the various educational target areas, while SOCRATES will continue to call for inter-area coordination, where reasonable and feasible, and for a greater weight of education in overall European policies.

However, criticism was voiced about the programme division between SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI. In some cases, it was argued that this is inconsistent with the idea of underscoring the role of education in Europe through an umbrella programme. In other cases, problems of overlapping or lack of coordination were mentioned.

16.3 The Nature of the Goals Pursued

The configuration of the goals officially stated as major SOCRATES goals, for example in the Council decision to establish SOCRATES, and those additional or latent ones, i.e. visible only to those who are able to analyse the "inner logic", the "disguised objectives" and "hidden agendas", can best be characterised by classifying them into three groups:

(a) a multitude of operational objectives, e.g. developing mobility, promoting contacts and cooperation, extending the use of foreign languages, encouraging recognition, or modernising educational processes,

(b) a single major substantive goal of enhancing the "European dimension" of education to be inspiring, while remaining vague and mysterious, and

(c) a difficult arena of secondary goals for which ways must be found to reduce tensions or to consolidate contradictions between serving the broadest possible participation and serving quality, between intra-European diversity and wishes and pressures for convergence, between "top-down" goals and stimulation of "bottom-up" innovation, between measures requiring trust among partners and measures which take conflicting competition for granted, between national subsidiary demands and national prerogatives and moves towards "de-nationalisation" and new common European activities, between Europeanisation and wider geographical perspectives of internationalisation and globalisation.

One could praise the characteristics of the SOCRATES goals as "concrete" or criticise them as "superficial", "flexible" or "vague", as "challenging" or "incompatible". On the basis of the information collected in the framework of this evaluation study, we argue that the strong "operational" nature of the goals pursued and the "flexibility" of the substantive goals are positive in many respects.

- The emphasis on operational goals in conformity with the impression that almost all beneficiaries of SOCRATES support consider the "experiential learning" opportunities abroad and the European mobilisation experienced in joint educational projects as most valuable, even if the impacts of these experiences cannot be clearly established.
- The "flexibility" of SOCRATES helps to strike a balance between the top-down steering desires of the European Commission and the inclinations of the potential and real beneficiaries to endlessly speculate about hidden goals, priorities and selection criteria of the Commission and to seek advantages through opportunistic adaptation on the one hand and room for bottom-up options and initiatives on the other.
- What the persons and participating institutions pursued and actually achieved can be interpreted and appreciated because of the operational and flexible thrust of SOCRATES as a major contribution to enhancing the European dimension. Deviations from national tracks, new educational methods, fostering multicultural environments, searches for a common European culture, technological competition with other parts of the world are likely to enhance the "European dimension". This emphasis, expressed as an open umbrella, does not necessarily mirror the typical political tactics of establishing

heterogeneous alliances, but could be indicative of mutual stabilisation and cross-fertilisation of various “European“ objectives.

Also, a certain degree of vagueness makes it easier to “survive“ the heterogeneity of the secondary goals. It facilitates a coexistence of measures which serve broad participation with measures that aim at exceptional quality, measures that address the Europe region with measures that take account of Europe’s position in the world, etc.

This does not mean that total satisfaction can be diagnosed. Two arguments in favour of a clearer European vision in SOCRATES were strongly voiced:

- Targets which, unlike “mobility“ and “use of different European languages,“ do not allow easy operationalisation may not be pursued successfully if the vision of the European dimension does not become clearer and more concrete. For example, the aim of making ERASMUS beneficial to non-mobile students remains uninspiring if there are no concrete images of the “European dimension“.
- Globalisation trends and greater efforts to move towards European convergence (the “Bologna process“) were interpreted by some interviewees as calling for new European educational policies, e.g. putting the cooperation between Europe and other parts of the world to the fore and supporting activities to develop curricular models that could be used across Europe.

Therefore, a thorough analysis of the approaches to the “European dimension“ which have emerged through the successful SOCRATES-supported projects could be timely. This would show whether the conceptual value of the multitude of projects was more valuable for identifying common future directions than the current public debate would suggest.

16.4 Types of Activities Supported

The various activities supported by SOCRATES can be classified into:

- “mass activities“, i.e. mobility of large numbers (of students, teachers and persons with other functions),
- “selective activities”, i.e. joint educational activities, often of a developmental nature, undertaken by institutions or persons which form a network for that purpose.

The SOCRATES support for mobile persons does not only address individuals *per se*. Rather, support is generally provided if their mobility is embedded in an educational setting which helps to increase the value of individual mobility and which, in return, is expected to gain from it.

The term “mass“ components of SOCRATES is justified, even if some of these sub-programmes can only provide support for a very small proportion of the target population (notably within COMENIUS and LINGUA), because they share the characteristics of mass

programmes. The aim is to ensure large participation. The system of application and award is strongly shaped by “distributional“ or “maximum spread“ criteria which aim to ensure that the participants are statistically representative according to country or region, field, gender, socio-economic background, etc. The amount of the award per case is small. In contrast, support of the second selective type is a quite large and is provided to a relative small number of networks via their coordinators. Conceptual criteria of quality and relevance dominate the award decision, even if a certain spread according to countries or additional distributional criteria are taken into consideration.

Many actors and beneficiaries seem convinced that a mix of “mass“ and “select“ components is beneficial for SOCRATES. Mass components are viewed as important because a European dimension of education should be available to all citizens in Europe. They have a strong element of mobilisation: many people are inspired. It is widely argued that an educational programme could not count on substantial political support if it did not involve large numbers of people and if a broad spread of persons was not involved. Selective components are viewed as indispensable to ensure quality and developmental progress. The co-existence of mass and selective programme components can be mutually beneficial: the mass mobilisation provides a basis of persons who are ready to embark on more ambitious developmental activities, and the results of the developmental activities can be disseminated to improve the educational conditions in which the large numbers of beneficiaries are active.

This does not mean, however, that the way in which the “mass“ and “select“ components of the SOCRATES programme coexist is always appreciated. The mass components of SOCRATES face two challenges:

- The mobilisation of large numbers of persons can be seen as a typical first step. This programme component can be viewed as superfluous, once mobilisation has successfully spread. Accordingly, the European educational programme should serve the launching and “take off“ period of educational innovation. If this succeeds, either the beneficiaries themselves or the national governments would provide the means to continue.
- Decisions were taken that all “mass“ components of SOCRATES were managed at a decentralised level by national agencies which now rule the awarding process and control the use of the support. According to some estimates, about 70 per cent of the SOCRATES funds are managed at a decentralised level. This is the result of a political decision about the role of European and national actors in the framework of subsidiarity; it is also widely viewed as serving effective allocation and efficient management. Decentralised management, however, could be viewed as a natural first step towards the principal “outsourcing“ and, in the end, to a complete separation.

SOCRATES is expected to comprise selective support components which stimulate the development and quality of European educational activities. Most actors seem to agree that these components should be decided upon and managed centrally by the European Commission with decentralised authorities and agencies involved mostly in pre-selection and

administrative assistance. But it seems questionable whether the mechanism of reinforcing development and quality of SOCRATES-supported educational activities actually works:

- Although the amount of financial support for the individual “select“ activity seems impressive compared to support for individuals in the framework of “mass“ activities, the means provided for the former are often too small to justify very ambitious expectations and tough quality selection.
- The pressure to use “distribution“ criteria, even for the support of select educational activities, is so strong that selection according to criteria of quality and relevance could easily be diluted .
- It is widely questioned whether the European Commission is capable of having the conceptual competence and the political legitimacy of selection.

According to interviews and discussions carried out in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study, the problems of justifying selection within SOCRATES seem to be enormous. Therefore, selection processes involving educational experts in order to ensure that a range of opportunities are provided for a “political“ counterbalancing of the experts' suggestions are very complex and time-consuming. The demand made on the higher education institutions to address the European dimension strategically and to present a European Policy Statement as part of their application for an Institutional Contract could not be reinforced by a policy which substantially rewards convincing strategies. Furthermore, the Commission feels hampered in implementing a central dissemination policy of the most valuable results of “selected“ SOCRATES projects because some results cannot legitimately be considered as highly relevant or of good quality.

Finally, there seems to be problems in dividing the management and the criteria of support between the “mass“ and “selective“ components of SOCRATES. The divided support lines are often not helpful in stimulating integrated action on the part of the beneficiaries. For example, support for teaching staff mobility both in schools and higher education institutions is administered at a decentralised level and is awarded primarily according to distributional criteria which are expected to serve the strategic action of institutions and the “selected“ educational projects.

Admittedly, one cannot expect a consensus among experts about quality, and there are difficulties in predicting the quality of results on the basis of the application or other information available prior to the educational activity. Political actors often mistrust the experts‘ ratings and challenge their legitimacy. Beneficiaries are often concerned that the experts are selected according to political intentions. There are rivalries between the political actors at the European and national level about determining the selection decisions within SOCRATES. Everybody agrees that the political actors should not set highly selective priorities but rather foster plural options of development and quality. But in the end, everybody is convinced that the compromises made to take account of these concerns lead to insufficient room for strategic options to reinforce desirable selection according to quality and visible criteria of relevance, to an undetermined call on the educational institutions to act more strategically, to low quality support projects, to substantial overlapping of the projects

which are supported, and to avoidance behaviour as far as centralised dissemination of good results of educational projects is concerned.

Obviously, there is no perfect solution to the inherent dilemmas of expert versus political legitimacy, of quality versus relevance, of prioritisation versus plurality and spread, between forecast of the optimum and risk strategy of diversification amidst uncertainty, etc. But the current state of affairs is widely criticised as:

- providing too little reliable support for high quality and interesting concepts, thus foregoing clear signals of stimulation for valuable educational innovation,
- lacking minimum coordination within the various sub-programmes and actions of SOCRATES,
- reinforcing complaints among the potential and real beneficiaries of the programme about a “lack of transparency“, widespread speculations, and gossip about the presumed real criteria and underlying policies which do not necessarily indicate a healthy interaction of “top down“ and “bottom up“ influences on the activities that are aimed at, and
- leading to over-cautious behaviour on the part of the Commission concerning the evaluation of the substance of educational projects and the dissemination of good practice and good results.

These observations made in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study do not call for an optimal solution. They suggest, however, that the Commission should seek to establish a consistent procedure of consultation and decision-making regarding application, award, assessment of results, and dissemination which could lead to taking acceptable selection decisions which are not primarily interpreted as giving less freedom but as a signal of support for flexibility and plurality and prioritisation of quality and widely accepted relevance. If this is not viewed as a “mission impossible“ or a “mission undesirable“ from the outset, SOCRATES could certainly benefit from braver compromise.

16.5 The Structure of the Programme

There is a continuous debate about the optimal division of the SOCRATES programme according to sub-programmes and actions. On the basis of the arguments heard, we are inclined to argue that:

- a certain overlap of various sub-programmes according to educational sector and type of educational goals and activities, described by the Commission as “vertical“ and “horizontal“ measures, cannot be avoided. No concept is at hand which offers a more convincing solution than the one that is currently implemented,
- the divide between SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI is likely to be debated further,

- the changes made in SOCRATES II seem to increase the status of COMENIUS as a school programme,
- there are strong arguments in favour of establishing a sub-programme which merges the various areas of support for teacher education,
- the preservation of specific names for sub-programmes and the addition of new names (GRUNDTVIG, MINERVA) are likely to reinforce identities for those involved.

However, we did note a sense of urgency to search for a restructuring of the programme.

Even the debates on funding priorities within SOCRATES are less heated than outsiders might have expected. It is widely taken for granted that the Commission's support for higher education started earlier than that for schools and has taken root. But greater support for activities within schools and within adult education is often advocated. The debate, however, does not have any strong "cannibalistic" overtones. Rather, actors tend to fear that things will not change rapidly and one tends to hope that European policies will shift – slowly or more rapidly - from agricultural and regional concerns to the enhancement of a knowledge-society and that educational programmes will eventually benefit from this trend.

16.6 The Funding of Educational Activities

Altogether, activities that are eligible for SOCRATES support have become so popular in Europe that interest in undertaking these activities is greater than the financial means available in almost all areas. The award decisions seem to be guided by a rationale of dealing in part with the 'bottleneck' through selective award decisions and in part through expecting a "matching" of resources on the part of the beneficiaries. This policy is implemented differently in the various sub-programmes and actions and has different consequences.

In ERASMUS, some funds are, in theory, provided for almost all students and teachers named in the institutional applications. The theoretically available amount of funding per eligible student and teacher is so small that adjustment processes are accepted on both sides. Hence, a substantially smaller number of mobile students and teachers receive an award which covers a "reasonable" proportion of their expenses. We observed that less than half the "expected mobile students" actually went abroad in the late 1990s when some 60 per cent of their expenses were covered by ERASMUS funds (compared to over 50% going abroad with almost 90% of their expenses funded in the early 1990s), and that less than a quarter of the „expected mobile teachers" actually went abroad when, on average, about 60 per cent of their expenses were also covered (instead of about half going abroad with about 70% of their expenses funded in the early 1990s). There is no evidence that the increase in expected co-funding (covered by the students and their parents as well as by the home institutions in the case of the teachers) has changed the composition of participants. Yet there are many indications that it would not be feasible to greatly increase mobility quantitatively if the rate of coverage by ERASMUS was not raised.

Concerning support for teachers to participate in European training courses under COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B, there is an-ongoing debate among actors at the national level about whether to reduce the amount of the grant in order to fund more individuals or whether to maintain a policy of covering the majority of the education staff's expenses. The context of the debate, for them, is an overall budget which seems unlikely to increase substantially in the near future. Whereas for LINGUA B the percentage of the costs covered by the grant varied from just over 50 per cent to 90 per cent, depending on the country, for COMENIUS 3.2 the grants covered about 90 per cent of the costs for trainees from all the countries. Some countries implemented a policy of reducing the grant in order to fund more teachers. However, in countries where teachers' salaries are lower, in particular in the Central and Eastern European countries, this debate poses the issue of access to European training courses. In the latter countries, receiving a sufficient grant in advance is necessary to ensure participation. One country reported having had to cancel its participation because the funds had not arrived in advance.

Concerning educational and administrative activities aimed to support mobility and curricular innovation activities, the higher education institutions and academics show considerable flexibility and willingness to contribute with their resources. The higher education institutions on average make available two staff position for the administration and services related directly to ERASMUS, and teachers, on average, spend five hours a week on ERASMUS. The higher education institutions have reasons to believe that they cover the lion's share of direct expenses for European and international activities, and the changes in the educational programmes implemented as a consequence of the European programmes could be *de facto* the largest resource contribution by the higher education institutions in this domain. The limits of institutional flexibility in matching are reached, however, when it comes to educational projects which have been applied for and have not received a considerable amount of ERASMUS support. In these cases, the projects will usually not be implemented.

Both administrators and teachers in higher education institutions are convinced that SOCRATES is beneficial despite these problems and that the Europeanisation of higher education has progressed substantially over the years. Yet, there are two indications that some of the improvements envisaged with the launching of SOCRATES are diluted by the award and funding policy:

- In the framework of the bilateral contracts between higher education institutions which are required since the launching of SOCRATES to secure the quantity and quality of student and teaching staff mobility, the institutions, as a consequence of the award and funding system, make out a vast number of contracts for teaching staff mobility with no intention to either send teachers abroad or host teachers. They do so to increase the funds made available for the actual mobility. There are great doubts as to whether a system which tries to inflate the number of agreements which will never materialise can contribute successfully to the quality of realised activities.
- Many higher education institutions react cautiously to the Commission's requirements and incentives to develop European policies. They see little room for a strategy around SOCRATES if student mobility is widespread, if teaching staff mobility is not highly

attractive, and if the Commission is likely to fund at most the costs for only one or two projects of curricular innovation coordinated by the individual institution when it is the Commission that selects the projects which are awarded support. The basis for an institutional strategy is often viewed as being too limited in this context.

Schools differ substantially in their response to the provision of partial funding. They have less flexibility to reallocate their resources than higher education institutions and the school teachers' work is prescribed to a much larger extent than that of academics. Therefore, their educational activities greatly depend on the resources provided by the SOCRATES programme. Criticism was expressed that the European Commission could have designed its concept of partial and incentive funding on the basis of prior experience with higher education institutions which led them to expect too high a level of matched funding from schools.

A policy of partial funding is more likely to deter schools from playing the coordinating role in applications for Transnational Cooperation Projects. They do not have their own funds to launch the project activities when the European funds arrive late. There is also the question of expertise, time and mission which clearly played a significant role. In all the Transnational Cooperation Projects which develop teaching and learning materials and methods which will have a direct bearing on schools, higher education institutions are most represented in the partnerships. The interviews undertaken and the workshops organised in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study suggest that schools will scale down their participation in projects more substantially than higher education institutions if the funds are viewed as insufficient.

The two actions designed specifically for schools were LINGUA E and COMENIUS 1. The former provided small grants to implement the project but funded the real cost of pupil mobility as an integral and obligatory part of the partnership. The latter did not fund pupil mobility and the grants for implementing the project designed by the multi-lateral partnership were funded with very small amounts (€3000 per annum for the coordinator and €2000 for each partner school). Where possible, schools sought complementary funds. In both actions, the national authorities were very aware of the need to target the promotion of the action in order to reduce a disproportionate participation of "rich schools" as opposed to those in less advantaged situations or areas. This concern was voiced by several interviewees.

Finally, schools, far more than higher education institutions, feel that the European Commission, in cooperation with the national governments, should be more active in ensuring professional recognition of teachers' involvement in SOCRATES. This could be achieved through reduced teaching loads, financial compensation, certification of competences acquired through involvement in SOCRATES-supported projects and the inclusion of European activities in the criteria for professional promotion.

The other type of institution whose ability to participate in innovative education activities is strongly affected by the matched-funding criteria and the allocation and management of resources is the non-profit organisations. They play an important role in certain education

development activities in some of the participating countries. This is clearly the case for Adult Education projects and those targeting children of migrants, Gypsies and all the categories included in Comenius 2 funding. Though they may not represent a substantial proportion of the participating institutions compared to the mainstream education institutions in the SOCRATES programme, their contribution is considered significant in specific areas. According to the interviews and the workshops, non-profit organisations will scale down their projects substantially if the funds allocated are viewed as insufficient.

16.7 "Top-down" Programming or Stimulating “Bottom-up“ Activities

There is a perennial debate in SOCRATES about the extent to which the support programme and the Commission aim to steer European educational activities “top-down“ and the extent to which the beneficiaries have room for “bottom-up“ action through the projects they design and request support for. Are activities supported within SOCRATES mainly programmed from above, or is SOCRATES a “let thousand flowers bloom“ programme?

The reality certainly lies in between: dozens of flowers seem to bloom in various prescribed flower-beds. While the Commission perceives great room for bottom-up influence, many of the potential and actual beneficiaries engage in extensive speculations about the intentions and the selection criteria they ought to take into account when complaining about the lack of “transparency“. And experiences with the administrative rigidities of the SOCRATES programme are often interpreted by the potential and actual beneficiaries as indications that the programme must be more strongly steered “top-down“ than the Commission claims in public.

In fact, the reports on educational activities undertaken suggest that there is a wealth of diverse concepts and projects. Many of those who opt for interesting educational innovation within SOCRATES praise the flexibility of the support programmes and suggest that it should be preserved. Thus, the ODL action was appreciated, since it was able to take on board a broad range of preoccupations and thematic areas. One must bear in mind, though, that an evaluation study which focuses on the experiences and results of the activities actually undertaken is not in a position to judge the degree to which “bottom up“ and “top down“ thinking dominate the selection when award decisions are made.

16.8 The Administration of the SOCRATES Programme

The administration of the SOCRATES programme is a constant issue of debate. “Over-bureaucratisation“ or similar terms are often used by the beneficiaries to point to what they view as a major procedural *malaise*. The perceived multitude and minuteness of regulations for application, award, use of funds and reporting requirements, and the tedious processes are sources of constant complaint. In particular,

- The work load for potential and selected support recipients that is imposed by the Commission through the requirements concerning the areas of support, rules for application, acceptable and non-acceptable items of expenditure, reporting etc., tends to be viewed as disproportionate compared to the financial support received.
- It is widely believed that the rules implicitly favour certain types of Euro-smart applicants and create inequalities for those who do not understand them, do not have the necessary administrative infrastructure and do not want to be socialised that way.
- The decision-making processes tend to be viewed as too long and the late arrival of award decisions and provision of funds - often after the beginning of the activities - obviously puts substantial onus on the beneficiaries. This is often seen as undermining the rate of participation and the quality of the activities.
- According to some observers, the many administrative specifications could lead potential beneficiaries to restrain their educational 'imagination' and put most of their energy into finding ways to meet the requirements or 'beat the system'.
- The detailed financial regulations are claimed to create a considerable risk, as expenses incurred for activities may not be reimbursed because of bureaucratic 'traps'. Thus, some interviewees thought that regulations concerning eligible expenditure had been modified during funding periods.

Of course, it is known in the field that the Commission must strike a balance between calls for efficiency and effectiveness and increasing demands for accountability (fuelled by the recently mounting critique of misuse of funds on the part of the Commission). Of course, critique of administrative processes is so widespread that certain complaints do not necessarily lead to administrative reform. But SOCRATES is so popular in providing highly appreciated educational opportunities that the readiness to 'suffer' seems to be very great. One may have different views about acceptable amounts of administrative load and the acceptable duration of processes such as the time-span between application and award. But one must bear in mind that the Commission's actions are largely determined by the Member States and that SOCRATES is a largely decentralised programme where Member States play a major role.

Yet, the critique about the management of the SOCRATES programme tends to be so bitter that it surpasses the usual complaints about administrative burdens. Beneficiaries feel they are treated like “children“ or “potential criminals“. And it is worth noting that many of those in charge of educational programmes in the Commission share these views and consider themselves, as one interviewee put it, as “hostages of the financial control people“. If

somebody were in a position to phrase the state of affairs in a polite way, he could suggest that : “The European Commission is more visionary than managerial“.

Those in the educational field who greatly appreciate the substantive thrust of the European policies express concern that those in charge of European policies – the European Council, Parliament and Commission - are willing to accept such a bad image. The typical critique could be summarised in three rhetoric questions: Why, at times when educational institutions are expected to be more efficient, do the European authorities, as sponsors of educational innovation, want to be the symbol of inefficiency? Why, at times when educational institutions are asked to be more flexible than ever before, does the Commission want to be an incarnation of rigidity? Why, in a programme which aims to enhance the European dimension through cooperation based on mutual trust, do the control procedures want to create the impression that mistrust is on the European agenda? It is widely believed that the Commission no longer perceives the wide gap which can be seen in SOCRATES between the popularity of European concepts and mistrust as far as political and administrative mechanisms are concerned.

This evaluation study can report the critique, but cannot judge how strong its effects are on the quality and the impact of educational activities supported by SOCRATES. This study can, however, show that efforts to improve the situation through small steps have not really led to major improvements. For example, the time span between application for ERASMUS student mobility grants and the actual transfer of money to the students became slightly longer between the early 1990s and the late 1990s. Also, new ideas to change the modes of application and awards, e.g. the introduction of the bilateral contracts and the European Policy Statement in ERASMUS or the decentralised management of mobility, often led to greater overall complexity. Finally, we were informed that assessments of the results of the detailed financial control processes show that there is little misuse of funds.

One of the Commission staff members who was interviewed summarised the situation as follows: the primary concern of the Commission is justifiable procedures and criteria for the selection and award decisions and compliance to the rules on how to properly spend the funds provided, but it is hardly concerned with the educational outcomes of SOCRATES. This statement is certainly too harsh, but it points to a direction of desirable improvement: the procedural control of the generally small financial support could be alleviated or substituted by an output assessment. Educational quality would be given stronger weight than procedural compliance.

16.9 Information on Activities and Evaluation

Provision of basic information, as well as monitoring and evaluation, seem to be held in high esteem by many actors and beneficiaries of SOCRATES. Evaluation (in this section used as an umbrella term for accountability-oriented information, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) could serve the following purposes:

- accountability of the SOCRATES programme as a whole,
- feedback to identify those aims and measures of SOCRATES which are likely to be successful, thus inspiring improvements in the programme as a whole,
- output-oriented accountability of the beneficiaries (possibly instead of the financial-process-oriented accountability discussed in the previous section),
- feedback to the beneficiaries in order to help them put their activities in perspective and improve them.

The climate around SOCRATES seems to be favourable for evaluation. This is underscored by the great emphasis laid on reports of the results required of the beneficiaries and by the evaluation requirements formulated in the Council decisions about the establishment of SOCRATES and the continuation in SOCRATES II. Also, the authors of most of the evaluation studies undertaken in the past reported that they had received great support from those they asked to share their experiences.

But the European Commission has many channels of informed sophisticated guesses about the reality of SOCRATES – through the experiences of the staff in the Technical Assistance Office, through communication with the national agencies, deliberations in advisory boards, the organisation of workshops and conferences, etc. – and must often sum up the experiences at such short notice that the value added to systematic evaluation exercises is not always rated highly.

In the application, award and reporting system established in the SOCRATES programme, an enormous wealth of information is collected which could be transformed into a valuable quantitative and qualitative reporting system on the programme. The available data are sorted to support “distributional“ award decisions regarding student and staff mobility according to home country, host country, field etc. Hence, well-organised statistics are made available about the number of persons applying for mobility and the number of persons awarded support for mobility. Valuable as this information may be, it is often published instead of statistics on the real number of mobile persons. This often creates a misunderstanding in the public. The overbooking statistics of the “expected“ numbers of mobile persons are thought to be the number of those who are actually mobile with SOCRATES support. So far, the Commission has established a system of collecting regular statistics on the actual numbers of only ERASMUS students. In most other areas, no statistics on actual numbers of activities or beneficiaries are provided, even after many years, even as basic information for the final evaluation of a programme phase such as this SOCRATES 2000 evaluation.

Data on the numbers and characteristics of the education staff and future assistants who apply for and obtain a European training grant (COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B and C) are held by the national agencies which submit an annual report on the activity. The evaluation study has experienced severe difficulty in collecting adequate quantitative data to estimate whether these actions have reached their objectives. The attempt to integrate all the necessary data into a centralised database, SocLink, has encountered great problems, ranging from late arrival of data to a certain resistance from some national agencies to comply with requests because of the type of software used, work overload, lack of staff, etc.. It seems reasonable, at the end of five years of activity, to be able to map out accurately participation in terms of numbers by host and home country, gender, nature of post held and type of home institution, and the amount of the grant that is allocated. As with ERASMUS, it is also important to evaluate the proportion of demands met for future budget discussion. There are no tools to do this at present.

The staff members of the Commission in charge of the various sub-programmes of ERASMUS occasionally undertake informal *ad-hoc* monitoring activities to prepare selection decisions, modifications of the programmes, committee meetings, etc. This is also the case for certain actions of COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION. Valuable as these activities often are for informed decisions, they do not translate into a regular and comprehensive monitoring system.

The European Commission commissioned various studies to analyse selected areas of SOCRATES and develop concepts for further improvements (for example on the role of European Policy Statements in higher education and on ECTS). At the early stages of ERASMUS, a regular programme of evaluation studies was established over a period of seven years. A similar regular system has not been established in any of the sub-programmes since the launching of SOCRATES.

The studies commissioned on selected areas provide valuable feedback and ideas for improvement. Some, however, are criticised as being too sympathetic with the programme from the outset. Many studies commissioned to key actors in the field are very valuable for ideas about future developments, but often lack the necessary distance to the subject under scrutiny. Some studies even seem to have a stronger public relation than analytic function.

The overall evaluation studies commissioned at an interim stage or at the end of a major phase of the predecessor programmes and of the SOCRATES programmes (such as this study) could provide valuable information, interpretations and recommendations. However, this system seems to be quite vulnerable: some of these studies are rated by knowledgeable readers as very valuable, while others are more superficial and poor. These major evaluations must collect large amounts of information within a short period of time, which represents a heavy burden, and are expected to make up for the lack of continuous monitoring. Moreover, the broad range of sub-programmes and activities covered by SOCRATES makes it difficult to find experts who can analyse and assess the programme as a whole.

Evaluation and monitoring studies are occasionally published in a visible way by the Commission or other institution or publisher. But a consistent publication strategy is not in place, some interesting studies are never published, and most publications come out very late. For the public, it is almost impossible to locate the studies being undertaken, and it is even difficult for the key staff at the Commission.

The European Commission is currently deliberating on taking steps to introduce a regular system of statistics, monitoring, and evaluation studies. The proposals indicate a high level of awareness of the potential advantages and possible problems in establishing a regular system of evaluation which could serve accountability and improvement and be valuable for the SOCRATES programme as a whole and its beneficiaries.

Based on the experience of this evaluation study, on the analysis of other studies undertaken in the framework of this study, and on prior experiences with other evaluation and monitoring studies, we suggest considering the following to improve the evaluation of SOCRATES:

(a) As the decentralisation of the management of SOCRATES has progressed, it becomes important to coordinate the evaluation between the Commission, the national agencies and the national governments. If no agreements on common thrusts are reached, the information basis will become weaker and weaker.

(b) The European Commission should establish a unit (possibly within the Technical Assistance Office) which is in charge of regularly compiling the information, monitoring the information gathering, and cooperating closely on procedural and information matters with external evaluation studies. This unit should be the storehouse of all methodological and content dimensions of the monitoring and evaluation activities (and not a mere evaluation policy unit or a unit that delegates tasks to the various programme units which must give priority to the management of the operational issues of SOCRATES).

(c) The Commission should avoid over-ambitious decisions about priorities of regular monitoring and evaluation. There are dangers that the evaluation and monitoring programme might collapse because it pursues over-ambitious goals, and that the work load and costs involved in setting up a good quantitative information system may not leave enough room and funds to commission valuable “qualitative“ studies.

(d) Those in charge of setting up a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system should re-examine all application and reporting requirements from the point of view of how valuable they are and how the information could be easily handled in the framework of monitoring and evaluation activities.

(e) The European Commission should set up mechanisms which ensure a certain degree of independent evaluation and give greater credibility to evaluation. This could be done by appointing an evaluation coordinator or an evaluation coordinating team of external people who have substantial knowledge of the educational field under consideration and of the concepts and methodology of evaluation, statistics etc. They could moderate the expectations of those responsible for the policy and programme and those responsible for the financial control of the Commission. The European Parliament, the national governments, the representatives of the education system etc., could suggest priorities of

regular monitoring and evaluation, could examine the results of the evaluation studies, and could be warrants of an open publication strategy (i.e. only filtering those studies which lack the necessary quality).

(f) The regular monitoring and evaluation programme should be designed in such a way that it can feed the major interim and final evaluations of the SOCRATES programme. This would allow these major evaluations to base most of the fact-finding on a secondary analysis of prior studies.

(g) A coherent publication and dissemination policy should be established which ensures that all quality information which transgresses the internal issues of the Commission is rapidly available and generally accessible. Also, documentation that is easily accessible should be made available for research, evaluation studies, and other relevant information undertaken in a decentralised manner.

(h) The monitoring and evaluation system should be designed in such a way that it can produce credible output measures of SOCRATES-supported activities. Thus, it could provide the foundation for a replacement of the current financial- and process-oriented control system by an educational-output assessment system. Then, the Commission could be more demanding with respect to the quality of the final reports of the educational projects which, in turn, would allow for qualified evaluation activities based on those reports.

16.10 Dissemination

The SOCRATES programme supports many educational innovation projects. Many are likely to acquire experiences which are worth sharing with others and may have “products“ which could be disseminated. An active dissemination policy would also help to justify the use of SOCRATES funds for educational innovation projects, which, in comparison with mobility activities, absorb relatively large amounts of money for relatively few direct beneficiaries: dissemination would make sure that a larger number of people would benefit from the results.

Many observers argue that the European Commission was not very active in promoting dissemination. Three main reasons are given for this:

- Those responsible for SOCRATES within the Commission are so absorbed by the management of applications, awards and reporting procedures that activities related to the results of the educational activities, including evaluation and dissemination, do not receive the attention they deserve.
- The European Commission is cautious in taking on an active role in dissemination, because any activity beyond establishing catalogues of the available “products“ would require a substance-based prioritisation which it may not be in a position to make, or might not see itself, or be seen by others, as legitimately placed to do this.

- The functions, types and quality of the results of the educational projects are so diverse that any generalised dissemination strategy is discouraged.

In the course of the interviews and workshops conducted in the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study, three different types of “products” were highlighted which could be disseminated in various ways:

- The main aim of the projects is to acquire experience about ways of undertaking European educational projects. Dissemination of examples of good practice could be useful. They could be incorporated into handbooks for the various sub-programmes and actions of SOCRATES.
- The projects could lead to products which are valuable for the persons, departments and institutions involved in the project. Here, the type of dissemination which would be most valuable would highlight the outcomes in such a way as to stimulate others to pursue similar projects suited to their own needs.
- Finally, some projects develop products designed for general use. They deserve great attention in dissemination policies. In some cases, dissemination can easily be undertaken and externally funded, whereas in others support would be needed.

Most of those responsible in the Commission and many participants in educational projects agree that dissemination should be stimulated and wonder that the modes of dissemination, the target groups and the type of products should differ so strikingly. Therefore, they endorse the current practice in some sub-programmes and actions of SOCRATES of expecting the potential beneficiaries to envisage dissemination activities at the application stage and to provide some support for them from the outset. This ensures a higher degree of flexibility. The Commission should only try to make sure that some kind of dissemination activity is undertaken.

Second, many of those interviewed in this study about the potential opportunities and problems of dissemination emphasised that the value of local dissemination activities should not be underestimated and could have valuable mobilisation effects. They included, for example, the distribution of informal information documents to neighbouring schools on the experiences acquired within a project, short oral presentations during teacher training courses, regional project fairs, etc..

Third, many projects may have reached substantial results at the end of a period for which support was available, but have not yet produced “products“ that are ready for dissemination. It is suggested that the Commission extend funding opportunities for follow-up dissemination projects. Good results could be more predictable than new projects and sustained cooperation within the project teams could be valuable.

Fourth, it is suggested that the Commission extend the establishing of catalogues of “products“ of the educational projects supported by SOCRATES. New information techniques facilitate access to the products if they can be easily located. The Commission could help locate the products.

Fifth, the Commission should find ways of legitimising the selection of the qualitatively most demanding and most relevant project results for the purpose of joint dissemination. The problem of lack of competences and questioned legitimacy (see section 16.4) notwithstanding, the Commission should find the means of acceptable prioritisation.

16.11 Summary

SOCRATES as an umbrella programme contributes symbolically to the visibility of the European involvement in a broad range of educational activities. However, coordination across and “cross-fertilisation“ between programmes did not play a significant role. The recent policy of reinforcing or introducing new names for sub-programmes is valuable to support a feeling of identity for the beneficiaries, while the task for SOCRATES remains to call for coordination and cooperation, where feasible and reasonable, and to underscore the importance of European educational activities as a whole.

Goals pursued by SOCRATES put strong emphasis on operational objectives, leaving much room for the interpretation of the European dimension. They are controversial as far as the secondary goals are concerned (e.g. variety v. convergence). A certain variety and vagueness of the goals are positive for stimulating different European activities but may not suffice if more complex aims are to be pursued, e.g. strengthening the European dimension in the education of non-mobile students.

SOCRATES comprises support for “mass activities“, notably mobility, and for “selected“ ambitious projects of educational development and innovation. The need to support both types of projects cannot be disputed. It is generally assumed that the creativity and diversity of the latter projects gain from a flexible award policy, avoiding strong “top down“ steering. The Commission could contribute to the quality and relevance if an acceptable prioritisation policy could be found.

The structure of the SOCRATES programme, i.e. the division according to educational sectors or special cross-cutting issues, does not seem to be a major issue of concern. It is hoped that the inequality of financial support according to sectors will fade once the role of educational policies in the overall EU policy grows.

The current system of partial and incentive funding seems to “work“ in higher education to stimulate matching resources for mobility, infrastructure and specific projects awarded by the Commission. But it does not support the idea that the higher education institutions develop interesting European strategies on their own in which they incorporate European support. Schools, on the other hand, can only mobilise personal and material resources to a limited extent and thus tend to adapt their participation to the level of support available. European educational activities could gain if schools were targeted to encourage the participation of those who cannot join SOCRATES easily and measures were developed in cooperation with

national governments. This would reinforce the professional recognition of involvement in SOCRATES.

The administration of the SOCRATES programme is strongly criticised for being slow and late, requiring work loads that do not correspond to the financial support and putting humiliating emphasis on financial control. This is viewed both inside and outside the European Commission as reducing the quality of educational activities and as creating a general impression that the European authorities are “more visionary than managerial“, if phrased in a friendly way, and as inefficient, rigid and based on a culture of mistrust, if phrased in a less friendly way. The authors of this study strongly recommend abandoning tedious financial controls of small awards and moving towards an educational output-oriented supervision.

Though many statistics and monitoring and evaluation are available and though the climate around SOCRATES seems favourable for evaluation, major gaps are observed. Statistics on actual activities only exist in few areas, monitoring and evaluation lack continuity, the major interim and final evaluation are overburdened, evaluation is often criticised as not being sufficiently independent, and publication and dissemination lack a systematic policy. The system of statistics, monitoring and evaluation should be supported by a unit in charge of the daily routine, based on a realistic mid-term programme, coordinated with the Member States and supported by a regular publication and dissemination strategy. An independent evaluation coordinator or coordinating team should moderate the various substantive demands, the prioritisation, the quality, and the credible critical approach of evaluation.

Dissemination of the results of SOCRATES-supported educational projects is currently supported in various ways. This is appropriate because the types of results and their possible audiences are extremely varied. The Commission could improve dissemination by extending its support to major dissemination projects that follow development activities and by finding ways of legitimately supporting the joint dissemination of results of a select group of high quality and relevant projects.

17. Overall Summary and Recommendations

by Jean Gordon, Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler

17.1 Introduction

The SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation Study aimed to summarise the available information and to conduct a series of studies of actors and beneficiaries that could help to evaluate the results of SOCRATES five years after the launch of the programme. The major objective of the study is to identify the outcomes of SOCRATES with respect to the aims of the programme:

(a) Better knowledge of the EU languages,

(b) cooperation among educational institutions for the enhancement of intellectual and teaching potential,

(c) encouragement of teacher mobility, thus contributing to their skills and the European dimension in studies,

(d) encouragement of student mobility, again with the aim of contributing to the European dimension in education,

(e) encouragement of contacts among pupils,

(f) encouragement of recognition of the period of study in another European country, and

(g) encouragement of open and distance learning.

This suggests, of course, discussing (h) the outcomes of SOCRATES with respect to the European dimension as a whole.

Special attention is also given to four cross-cutting dimensions:

(i) the use of Community funding for the purpose of reaching these objectives,

(j) the appropriateness and efficiency of the programme design and management,

(k) the evaluation activities within the SOCRATES programme, and finally

(l) dissemination.

The evaluation study did not address activities of SOCRATES outside the domain of educational cooperation and mobility among institutions and persons involved, e.g. activities directly addressing professional recognition, the information systems, the support of associations or the promotion of educational research.

For this purpose of evaluation, available information was analysed, and 26 studies were undertaken (questionnaire surveys, interviews, workshops etc.) between October 1999 and

June 2000. The coordinator of the study was Ulrich Teichler (Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung, Universität GH Kassel, Germany) in cooperation with Friedhelm Maiworm (Gesellschaft für Empirische Studien, Kassel, Germany), both of whom shared the responsibility for the analysis of ERASMUS, and in cooperation with Jean Gordon (European Institute of Education and Social Policy, Paris, France), who was responsible for the analysis of COMENIUS, LINGUA, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING and ADULT EDUCATION. Marijk van der Wende (Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies, Twente University, Enschede, the Netherlands) was in charge of two studies. About 20 additional experts were involved in the processes of information gathering, four of whom are also co-authors of various chapters of this report.

17.2 Better Knowledge of the EU Languages

Better knowledge of EU language among higher education students was first promoted in 1987 in the framework of ERASMUS. For some years, a special action of LINGUA supported mobile students specialised in foreign languages. Since the launching of SOCRATES, this LINGUA action is again part of ERASMUS.

A survey showed that 60 percent of the 1998/99 ERASMUS students were taught exclusively in the host country language, 25 percent partly in the host country language and only 15 percent exclusively in the home country language or a third language. 42 percent of the teaching took place in English, 50 percent in four other major European languages and 8 percent in the remaining languages. Contrary to widespread expectation, the use of English has not increased in ERASMUS since the early 1990s – obviously a success of ERASMUS in stimulating the use of different languages.

However, learning in the host country language only prevails for students going to eight countries (United Kingdom, Italy, Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal and Germany), while other countries frequently offer teaching in a third language: notably Finland and the Netherlands succeeded in attracting more foreign student through a substantial increase of teaching in English.

The success of ERASMUS in stimulating the learning of foreign languages is also underscored by the fact that only about half the students feel sufficiently proficient before they go to the host institution but most feel proficient after the study period abroad. This underscores a deficiency of student exchange as well: good academic learning and full recognition upon return can hardly be expected if the language proficiency is not perfect at the beginning of the study period in another European country.

Many former ERASMUS students reported that their foreign language proficiency was a major reason for their recruitment by employers. They also stated that the use of a foreign language was one of the most regular European and international element of their job assignment.

The LINGUA programme aimed to improve the knowledge of foreign languages for a larger group of people to contribute to strengthening the European dimension in education and intercultural understanding. Results of the surveys and interviews undertaken and the workshops organised for this evaluation study show that the funded activities focused on a limited number of languages. In all the strands of the LINGUA action, English is the language that is the most used, whether as the vehicle of oral and written communication in a partnership, or as the target language in the courses, modules, teaching and learning materials developed and piloted. French, German, Spanish and, to a lesser extent Italian, are also target and working languages. This goes for teacher training.

LINGUA gave special priority to the less widely used and less taught languages (LWULT) of the European Union (Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Greek, Irish, Letzeburgesch, Portuguese and Swedish). The languages of the other participating countries were also eligible for support. Despite the fact that partnerships showed a good North-South and, in recent years, East-West mix, this was not systematically reflected in the languages used or targeted. However, it should be noted that in LINGUA A 40 per cent of the projects included at least one of the less widely used and lesser taught languages in their target languages, while a quarter focused on generic language skills. About two-thirds of the Lingua D projects included at least one of the LWULT among their target languages and one also included sign language. A closer examination of outcomes would be necessary to assess the effectiveness of the choice in terms of outputs and products. It can nevertheless be stated that these projects would not have existed without support form SOCRATES.

Under LINGUA B, most grants were allocated for courses focusing on English, French or German, which is in conformity with the languages most commonly taught in the participating countries. LINGUA C provided grants for recently qualified language teachers to spend a period abroad as assistants and about 30 per cent of the assistants surveyed went to countries in which the main language was one of the lesser used languages. It would appear from the survey that assistants from countries where the LWULT are spoken did not always have the opportunity to teach their own language, as the action stipulated.

LINGUA has succeeded in raising awareness of language diversity and is the only source of funding for partnerships that wish to develop language learning and teaching materials and methods from a transnational, trans-cultural and multi-linguistic perspective and concept. Its capacity to influence language learning and teaching is limited by the policies of the participating countries. The interviews of national key actors indicate that there is an on-going debate on whether the priority concerning the less widely used and lesser taught languages is realistic. Some respondents said they would prefer to be able to select beneficiaries according to the languages that are useful for their citizens.

Taking all of the LINGUA, COMENIUS, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION actions together, the surveys and interview results indicate that beneficiaries consider that their ability to communicate in a foreign language improved with SOCRATES. They mention this aspect as one of the main impacts on individuals participating in projects. The capacity to function in a foreign language was seen as an essential condition for participation in a project or

partnership. As a result, the fact that LINGUA support was only targeted to foreign language teachers was criticised. In terms of raising the awareness of a broader section of education staff to the importance of foreign languages, these actions have clearly been successful.

17.3 Institutional Cooperation for Intellectual and Teaching Enhancement

Teachers from different higher education institutions cooperate successfully in matters of curricular innovation. They receive support through the ERASMUS actions Intensive Programme, Curriculum Development and Thematic Networks, as well as through sub-programmes of LINGUA, ODL, etc. The activities are generally highly appreciated by the participants, though various problems are reported. As most of the projects supported since the launching of SOCRATES were not completed when the surveys and interviews were conducted, it is too early to assess their results. In many cases, they are obviously viewed by the participants as being the most valuable component of ERASMUS.

With the launching of SOCRATES, higher education institutions were required to formulate European Policy Statements as part of their application for support and to provide evidence that student and teaching staff mobility were safeguarded through bilateral contracts with other higher education institutions. The need to formulate EPS is widely viewed as a successful stimulator to take stock of one's European activities and consolidate modes of responsibilities, decision-making and services. It is obvious that curricular innovation activities tend to be viewed as a possibly key element of European policies of higher education institutions. There are reasons, though, to assume that the SOCRATES approach did not help to make inter-institutional cooperation an instrument of enhancement of intellectual and teaching potential as much as it was hoped:

- Many institutions do not set priorities in European activities of curricular innovation but wait until they know which activities the Commission is willing to support,
- there are question marks whether curricular innovation can be a major target of institutional policy, because this is often viewed as a decentralised responsibility.
- academics' interests to be involved in ERASMUS seem to have declined somewhat with the launching of the SOCRATES approach. It is too early to assess the effect of this change comprehensively, but some concern is felt.

On the basis of these experiences, one could assume that SOCRATES support for institutional cooperation in higher education could be more successful if

- the ERASMUS award differentiated more strongly according to the substance of European policies of the institution,
- the activities for which possible support is awarded were less prescribed by the SOCRATES programme,
- ways were found to re-establish academics' feeling of „ownership" of SOCRATES.

Institutional cooperation has developed both quantitatively and qualitatively due to the support provided by the COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION actions. The evaluation carried out by Deloitte and Touche on schools partnerships funded under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E estimates that, by 1999, there were about 9,000 schools involved in COMENIUS partnerships and about 1,500 LINGUA E partnerships every year. Neither of these forms of support existed as such before SOCRATES, with the exception of a small number of schools funded under the multilateral partnerships pilot scheme in the early 1990s.

COMENIUS multilateral partnerships have enabled schools at all levels in the education systems to develop a concrete European activity. About one-third of the schools which were supported were primary schools which, unlike secondary schools, had few opportunities for bilateral or multilateral cooperation under other programmes or initiatives. Hence, SOCRATES has opened up new areas of cooperation. It has been possible in many countries to prioritise rural or disadvantaged areas or schools in order to ensure that European cooperation was not just an extra advantage for the 'richer' schools. Though grants are very small, interviews tend to indicate that the preference is for high numbers of small grants to stimulate cooperation rather than smaller numbers of larger grants.

LINGUA E partnerships have been successful in achieving the objective of targeting vocational and technical schools and colleges. Thus, the Deloitte and Touche evaluation found that, for 1997, nearly 60 per cent of all schools involved were vocational or technical, though this proportion varied considerably from country to country. The value of cooperation with a language focus for education institutions where there is less emphasis on language learning than in the general education streams was seen to be very positive.

In both actions, different levels of cooperation were encouraged. Firstly, this was in terms of contacts among groups of pupils based on a project to be carried out. Secondly, there was cooperation between teams of teachers and other staff in partner schools. The evaluation carried out by Deloitte and Touche found evidence of a good level of integration of projects into school life, particularly for the COMENIUS partnerships.

Project-based cooperation in some actions of COMENIUS and LINGUA, as well as in ODL and ADULT EDUCATION, involved different sets of partners. Higher education institutions composed the highest proportion of partners in many of the actions (over half the partners in LINGUA projects and 60 per cent in the ODL projects). The proportion was lower in COMENIUS projects: 40 per cent for projects developing teaching modules and courses, but only 20 per cent in the action targeting the children of migrants workers, occupational travellers, travellers, Gypsies and intercultural education. In the latter, the non-profit associations and schools also played an important role in the cooperation established. In ADULT EDUCATION projects, non-profit associations constituted over half the partners, though higher education institutions were well-represented (about 20 per cent). For these associations, and more especially the small ones, it was often a first experience of working with partners outside their own country, the exception being those associations grouped in networks.

In summary, despite the range of target populations and the objectives of these actions, higher education institutions were the main institutions represented in the partnerships, followed by non-profit associations, local and regional public authorities and schools (depending on the specific focus of the action). The ODL action strongly advocated cooperation between universities and schools, of which there were some examples. Overall, the result of mapping out participation in the Transnational Cooperation Projects in COMENIUS, LINGUA, ODL and ADULT EDUCATION confirms a pivotal role for the higher education institutions in action-research, particularly involving new technologies, in teacher training and in the development of methods and materials for classroom use. However, the evaluation surveys and interviews found few examples of interaction between these project-based activities in the higher education institutions and the ERASMUS institutional contracts.

Project coordinators highlighted certain advantages of institutional cooperation in terms of the impact it had on their organisation. Cooperation with institutions in other European countries was seen as contributing to enhancing the profile of the institution and, within it, legitimating certain types of activities or new ideas. It appears to have acted as a stimulus for internationalisation policies and strategies, but it is not possible to estimate from the surveys whether or not these European-funded project activities were taken into consideration in European Policy Statements in those institutions where they existed. Institutional cooperation was also highly appreciated by coordinators because it contributed to the development of networks.

17.4 Encouraging Teacher Mobility

Mobility of teachers within higher education was encouraged through SOCRATES by providing more financial means for teaching staff mobility. In contrast to student mobility, the Commission has not established a regular statistical reporting system on the actual number of mobile teachers within ERASMUS. One can estimate, though, that the number increased from about 1,400 in the early 1990s to about 7,000 in the late 1990s.

Although the duration of teaching period is only eight days on average (in contrast to 24 days in the early 1990s), many of those mobile and even more of those not mobile state substantial difficulties in spending a period of teaching in another European country. In the majority of cases, the courses abroad are part of the regular programme of the host institutions, and a substantial proportion of the mobile teachers provide advice for their own students abroad or for the students at the host institution who are willing to be mobile. Moves towards using teaching mobility to strengthen the European dimension for non-mobile students are less impressive than one might have hoped for.

The decision not to award teaching staff mobility grants anymore „in Brussels“, but rather at a decentralised level may be viewed as efficient, given the large number of cases involved. But one wonders whether teaching staff mobility could not contribute more to the quality of student mobility and towards strengthening the European dimension of higher education if

financial support was not provided in small amounts each according to more or less „distributional“ criteria, but if there was more targeted quality selection for quality results. The goal might be served better if only those institutions which arranged a credible scheme of teaching staff exchange instead of a mass support to squeeze in a few days were awarded support.

Mobility among education staff in schools was supported mainly in two ways through SOCRATES: grants for language teachers (LINGUA) and grants for teachers and other education staff (COMENIUS) to follow in-service training courses. The two actions were very different in terms of the budget and the courses proposed.

LINGUA B grants funded over 34,000 teachers to follow, on average, a two-week language training course. The courses could either be those developed with LINGUA A grants or be provided by other (commercial) courses. They tended to target general language competence and frequently involved training in the use of new information technologies in language teaching and learning. COMENIUS grants, on the other hand, funded education staff to follow only the courses developed with COMENIUS 3.1 support. Overall, there were about 5,200 grants awarded for courses that lasted on average six days and covered a broad variety of thematic areas. Most of the beneficiaries were teachers, despite that fact that the action targeted education staff in general (head teachers, inspectors, librarians, etc.).

The level of satisfaction was very high, since the teachers appreciated the opportunity to exchange information and expertise with other teachers and improve their approaches to teaching. It is very difficult to assess whether or not there has been an impact on the home institutions, as, in general, teachers had limited opportunities to either disseminate information about what they had learned or even use it in their every day work. There does not appear to be a clear link between teachers who benefit from a training grant and then set up a multilateral or bilateral partnership or enter another partnership (e.g. COMENIUS 2). The results of the teacher surveys also suggest very limited participation of education staff with disabilities.

An issue raised in interviews concerned the profile of the teachers who were targeted. According to the surveys carried out, the staff who were awarded grants tended to be between 40 and 50 years old and had been teaching for over 15 years. Given the comparatively limited number of grants and the potential target population, some interviewees raised the issue of whether or not school teacher mobility should target younger teachers with the aim of developing a longer term impact. Others considered that it was a reflection of the age structure of the education systems and therefore appropriate.

Teacher mobility of a different type also took place through the preparatory visits and exchanges developed under COMENIUS 1 and LINGUA E funding for school partnerships that contributed to improving teaching skills and approaches. It was assessed in the specific evaluation as having had a positive effect on their understanding of other European countries and their education systems.

17.5 Encouraging Student Mobility

The number of higher education students who were supported during the academic years 1995/96 through 1999/2000 might be estimated at about 460,000, i.e. twice as many as those who were supported in the preceding five-year period. A substantial increase was achieved which was only due to a limited extent to the increase in the number of eligible countries (10 Central and Eastern European countries, as well as Cyprus).

A comparison of 1990/91 and 1998/99 ERASMUS student surveys suggests that the conditions and outcomes of temporary study in another European country have not changed substantially. There is an amazing degree of continuity. One might ask whether this is a „success" when taking into account the fact that the number of mobile students has doubled. Is it a sign of „stability" or of „stagnation" in the face of the room left for improvement? In one respect, at least, the term „stagnation" could be appropriate: the differences by countries did not diminish over time, as far as assistance provided and quality perceived are concerned.

Continuity can be observed, for example, in the following facts: the average duration of the period abroad remained at almost seven months, the academic quality of students was assessed by the teachers as on par to home students on average, and the quality of courses is assessed similarly by the students; assistance by the host institution while abroad continues to be more positively rated than preparatory assistance by the home institution; about 20 percent each of students of both surveys reported serious problems as regards administrative and financial matters, accommodation and recognition upon return. More than half believe that their academic progress while abroad was higher during the corresponding study period abroad, and less than 10 percent are dissatisfied. The cultural value and the experience of contrasting academic climates continue to be more appreciated than learning the typical academic course content as such.

A recent survey of graduates and of graduates some years after they had been ERASMUS students around 1992-94 also confirms more or less the results of a longitudinal study of the 1988/89 ERASMUS students. Study abroad seems to facilitate a smooth transfer to employment. Although former ERASMUS students rate their professional competences more highly than those who had not been mobile, the mobile students cannot count on substantially higher income, but they often take over visibly international job assignments. As the latter was observed by a lesser proportion of the graduates who were recently surveyed than by those of the previous survey, one could assume that the supply of internationally qualified graduates progresses more rapidly than the demand. The recent survey finally shows that former ERASMUS-supported students do not differ on average in their links between study abroad and employment from formerly mobile students who studied abroad with other funding and within other institutional contexts.

Teachers and institutional managers of higher education institutions continue to consider student mobility as the indispensable core component of ERASMUS within SOCRATES. Even though the times of political mobilisation and pioneering spirit might have gradually

given way to normalisation and routine, the value of ERASMUS in mobilising large numbers of students to compare learning experience through mobility continues to be high.

17.6 Encouraging Contacts among Pupils

Contacts among pupils were organised through the COMENIUS 1 multilateral partnerships and the LINGUA E bilateral partnerships.

In the case of the COMENIUS partnerships, contacts among pupils have been greatly promoted both directly and indirectly. Though the grant did not include funding for mobility, according to the survey carried out by Deloitte and Touche, many schools sought complementary sources of funding for this purpose. Otherwise, contacts have taken place through Internet, e-mail and a range of ways of sharing and transmitting information and documentation among the pupils involved. The interviews that were carried out do not suggest that there is a strong demand for mobility grants to be included in all partnerships. Establishing contacts is often felt to be highly beneficial to schools and mobility may add an organisational burden which would not be manageable with the limited resources available. The spread of the use of ICTs has contributed substantially to this type of classroom- based cooperation and the partnerships sometimes provided the opportunity for schools to acquire hardware (with or without support from their national system) and/or use computers more widely with the pupils.

The LINGUA E bilateral partnerships include a compulsory two-week mobility for all the pupils involved in addition to the joint work on a thematic area. Projects had to be set up in such a way that direct communication between the two groups of pupils was the primary focus. It was felt that they had the opportunity to experience foreign languages in a new environment and in a context that was directly linked to their educational and professional interest. Almost two-thirds of the classes involved in 1997 came from the vocational and technical education sector. However, it would appear that the mobility requirements of the programme encounter difficulties in some countries, given the organisation of courses in vocational and technical schools which integrate work placements in enterprises and of apprenticeship modes of learning. In some of the interviews with the staff that was responsible for the management of LINGUA at national level, it was suggested that some flexibility would be useful to allow partnerships to include mobility or not or to adapt it to the circumstances of the pupils. This was backed up, both in interviews and workshops, by arguments suggesting that as a two-week mobility period is too short to have much direct effect on the language skills of the individual, the purpose of the mobility lies elsewhere and the exact length is perhaps not the most important factor. There is a debate about whether LINGUA E mobility is about language acquisition, finding out about another culture or the experience of another country, or culture and language for groups of pupils who are less likely to do so by private means.

17.7 Encouraging Recognition of Study and Training in Another European Country

Temporary study in another European country is most highly valued if it is accepted as equivalent to study at home and thus could replace a corresponding amount of study time, courses, exams or credits. Therefore, support for student mobility was granted to the higher education institutions since the beginning of ERASMUS on condition that provisions were made for the recognition of the study achievements during the study period abroad. In addition, the European Commission supported the ECTS pilot programme from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. It provided special support for departments that were willing to introduce the European Credit Transfer system. The participating departments were expected to improve advance information on the study opportunities at the host institution, to arrange study plans in advance, to calculate the annual study load according to 60 ECTS and to guarantee credit transfer among the institutions participating in the pilot scheme. ECTS has spread substantially thereafter and now seems to cover about half of the ERASMUS students.

A comparison between student surveys of the early and the late 1990s provides evidence that recognition of study achievements abroad upon return remained on average at almost 75 percent outside the ECTS scheme. ECTS credit transfer, though not remaining as high as during the experimental period within a small network, proved to be successful in ensuring an 85 percent on average. Thus, the average recognition for all ERASMUS students increased as a consequence of the spread of ECTS from about 75 percent to about 80 percent.

But students increasingly expect that the overall period of study will be prolonged as a consequence of the study period in another European country. Even though ECTS has a counterbalancing effect, the prolongation expected on average by all ERASMUS students increased from about 45 percent in the early 1990s to 55 percent in the late 1990s. The finding suggests that, although recognition increases in terms of certification of study achievements during the study period abroad, a growing proportion of the certified recognition remains artificial because students do not have the opportunity of foregoing a corresponding number of course, exams or credits at the home institution.

The need for local recognition or acknowledgement of participation of teachers and other education staff in training courses supported by European training grants (COMENIUS 3.2 and LINGUA B) was an issue that was frequently raised by interviews and in workshops. Given the range of approaches to teachers' professional development in the different countries, there is no one type of recognition that would be appropriate everywhere. In line with other current initiatives linked to vocational/professional qualifications, one suggestion was to examine the feasibility of a portfolio of competences.

17.8 Encouraging Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and the Use of Information and Communication Technologies

The objectives of the SOCRATES programme in these areas were to promote services which provided open and distance learning and to integrate the use of new technologies and new media into the educational process through the OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING action which provided grants for 166 projects as one of the Horizontal Actions of SOCRATES I. In addition, an ODL approach and the integration of ICTs in education influenced many of the project-based actions and teacher training activities, albeit in different ways. Schools partnerships used ICTs extensively in their cooperation.

Countries did not all see themselves as having the same tradition of open and distance learning. This therefore affected the implementation of the ODL action. In some cases, it was felt that the existence of the action had led to positive developments at national level, as it had raised interest at institutional level in these types of approaches. The ODL Transnational Cooperation Project partnerships included a high percentage of higher education institutions (60%). In some cases, it is felt, that this is for financial reasons, as these projects tend to be resource intensive but the composition of partnerships also corresponded to action-research capacities in the tertiary sector. A grid established by a research project carried out by SCIENTER to enhance the dissemination of the outcomes of ODL projects showed that the highest numbers of projects focused on:

- resources and training for teachers and trainers;
- the integration of ODL approaches in university teaching, school teaching and work-based learning;
- European networks, observatories, databases, bibliographies and 'system' projects to support large communities of people involved in ODL.

The ODL action of SOCRATES has contributed to broadening and reinforcing the infrastructure and the support mechanisms for using open and distance learning approaches and integrating the use of new technologies. Under SOCRATES II, with the creation of the MINERVA programme, this action moves into a new development phase.

The role and use of information and communication technologies could be described as follows:

- ICTs provided a focus of work in some actions (LINGUA, ODL) and were the means to develop exchange and communication in others (COMENIUS 1). They have also been developed as a mechanism for contributing to equal opportunities of access to learning (ODL).
- In the ODL action, the use of new technologies and their integration into the education and learning processes were developed in some projects (20%) with a view to overcome barriers to learning for those who lived in remote rural areas and to support special learning needs.

- Surveys reported an impact on staff and students, since participating in projects and partnerships contributed to improving their ICT skills.
- In several countries, national key actors emphasised that participation in a COMENIUS or LINGUA partnership was often the occasion for a school to obtain the necessary equipment for electronic exchange and to develop the use of Internet and e-mail in classroom activities through the project implemented. In some countries, there was a policy to support the acquisition of equipment. In COMENIUS 1, since mobility was not supported, the ICTs developed a "virtual mobility" aspect.
- Development of teacher training courses funded under LINGUA A and training grants funded under LINGUA B focused on the use of new information and communication technologies in language teaching and learning. Participation in teacher training courses funded under COMENIUS 3.2 also focused on the use of computers and Internet in the classroom.
- Two areas in which LINGUA D projects that developed language teaching and learning materials and approaches focused were self-learning approaches and the use of new technologies.

17.9 Enhancing the European Dimension

The aims of the SOCRATES programme can be described in more or less operational terms, e.g. encouraging mobility, promoting contacts and cooperation, extending the use of various European languages, encouraging recognition or modernising educational programmes. Obviously, secondary goals also play a role, although they are based to a lesser degree on commonly shared values: Some hope that SOCRATES serve broadest participation, while others favour select support for high quality projects; some are in favour of stimulating intra-European diversity, while others see the need to reinforce converging trends; some advocate a subsidiary role of SOCRATES supported activities to national policies, while others see a virtue in the de-nationalisation pressures implied; some wish to strengthen the typically European goals, while others suggest incorporating European goals into a wider perspective of internationalisation.

Only one substantive goal of the European educational policies tends to be advocated, i.e. the enhancement of the „European dimension“ in education. This term seems to be perceived both as inspiring because it combines a large scale of sub-goals and as vague and mysterious because it does not call for clear directions and priorities.

One could praise these characteristics of SOCRATES goals as “concrete“ or criticise them as “superficial“, as “flexible“ or “vague“, as “challenging“ or “incompatible“. On the basis of the information collected in the framework of this evaluation study, we argue that the strong “operational“ nature of the goals pursued and the “flexibility“ of the substantive goals are positive in many respects:

- The emphasis on operational goals is in conformity with the impression that almost all beneficiaries of SOCRATES support consider the “experiential learning“ opportunities abroad and the European mobilisation experienced in joint educational project as most valuable, even if the impacts of these experiences cannot be clearly established.
- The “flexibility“ of SOCRATES helps to strike a balance between top-down steering of the European Commission and room for bottom-up options and initiatives.
- What the individual persons and institutions participating in SOCRATES pursued and actually achieved can be interpreted and appreciated as a major contribution to enhancing the European dimension because of the operational and flexible thrust of SOCRATES. There is a chance for a mutual stabilisation and cross-fertilisation of various “European“ objectives.

Also, a certain degree of vagueness makes it easier to “survive“ the heterogeneity among the secondary goals. It facilitates a coexistence of measures that serve broad participation with measures aimed at exceptional quality, measures that address the region Europe with measures that take account of Europe’s position in the world, etc.

However, total satisfaction cannot be diagnosed. Two arguments in favour of a more clear European vision in SOCRATES were strongly voiced:

- Targets, which, unlike “mobility“ and “utilisation of varied European languages,“ do not allow easy operationalisation might not be pursued successfully if the vision of the European dimension is not more clearly defined and concrete. For example, the aim of making ERASMUS beneficial to non-mobile students remains uninspiring if there are no concrete images of the “European dimension“.
- Globalisation trends and greater efforts to move towards European convergence were interpreted by some interviewees as calling for new European educational policies, e.g. putting the cooperation between Europe and other parts of the world the fore and supporting activities to develop curricular models that could be used across Europe.

Therefore, a thorough analysis of the approaches of the “European dimension“ which has emerged in the various successful ones among the SOCRATES-supported projects could be timely. This would show whether the conceptual value of the multitude of projects was more valuable for identifying common future directions than the current public debate is aware of.

17.10 Successful Use of Community Funds

Altogether, activities that are eligible for SOCRATES support became so popular in Europe that interest in undertaking these activities is clearly much greater than the financial means available in almost all areas. The award decisions that have been taken seem to be guided by a rationale of dividing the bottleneck in part through selective award decisions and in part through expecting a “matching“ of resources on the part of the beneficiaries. This policy is

implemented differently in the various sub-programmes and actions and has different consequences.

In ERASMUS, the grant made available per mobile student covered almost 90 per cent of the real additional expenses incurred during the study period in another European countries in the early 1990s, but only less than 60 per cent in the late 1990s. The mobile teaching staff reported a corresponding drop in the grant from about 70 per cent to about 60 per cent. There are no indications that the greater burden for students and their parents has changed the composition of ERASMUS students, but there are indications that suggest that ERASMUS mobility cannot be spread much further, if the rate of coverage by the ERASMUS grant is not increased as well. Also, higher education institutions are currently tempted to inflate the number of teaching staff exchanges in bilateral contracts with partner institutions which they do not want to carry out at all in order to obtain more funds for the actually mobile teachers; also, they seem to accept very modest goals, as far as the tasks and functions of teaching staff exchange are concerned.

As regards educational and administrative activities aimed to support mobility and curricular innovation activities, the higher education institutions and academics show considerable flexibility and willingness to contribute with their resources. The higher education institutions on average make available two staff position for the administration and services related directly to ERASMUS, and the teachers on average spend five hours a week on ERASMUS. The higher education institutions have reasons to believe that they cover the lion's share of direct expenses for European and international activities, and finally the changes in the educational programmes implemented as a consequence of the European programmes could be *de facto* the largest resource contribution by the higher education institutions in this domain. The limits of the institutional flexibility in matching is reached, however, when it comes to educational projects which are applied for and do not receive a considerable amount of ERASMUS support; in these cases, the projects will usually not be implemented.

Yet there are indications that some of the improvements envisaged with the launching of SOCRATES are diluted by the award and funding policy. Notably, higher education institutions react cautiously to the Commission's requirements and incentives to develop European policies. They view little room for a strategy around SOCRATES if student mobility is spread widely, teaching staff mobility is not highly attractive, and if the Commission is likely to fund at most the costs for only one or two projects of curricular innovation coordinated by the individual institution where the Commission selects the projects which are awarded support. The basis for an institutional strategy is often viewed as being too limited in this context.

A policy of partial funding is more likely to deter schools than institutions of higher education from taking on the coordinating role in applications for Transnational Cooperation Projects. They do not have their own funds which they can use to launch the project activities when the European funds are late in arriving. There is also the question of expertise, time and mission which clearly played a significant role. In all the Transnational Cooperation Projects which develop teaching and learning materials and methods which will have a direct bearing

on schools, the types of institution that are most represented in the partnerships are from the higher education sector. The interviews and the workshops organised in the framework of the SOCRATES 2000 Evaluation study suggest that schools will scale down their participation in projects more substantially than higher education institutions if the funds are viewed as insufficient.

It is argued that the European Commission must be more actively involved in schools than in higher education in order to mobilise the available resources. For example, active involvement of school teachers could be reinforced if the Commission found ways to cooperate with national governments in ensuring the professional recognition of teachers' involvement of SOCRATES.

This evaluation study cannot contribute substantially to the debate on two issues of the distribution of SOCRATES funds:

- first, the distribution of funds between „mass" components, i.e. mobility of students and teachers, and „select" components, notably innovation in curricula, teaching and learning. There are reasons to support both and the coexistence might be mutually beneficial, but the criteria of success are too different to allow any recommendation regarding the distribution of funds on the basis of an evaluation study such as this one;
- second, the distribution of funds according to schools and higher education institutions or according to different „horizonal actions": it is obvious that an expansion of the new sectors, e.g. COMENIUS, at the expense of the sub-programmes that have been in existence for a longer period, e.g. ERASMUS or LINGUA, could not be implemented without harming the latter. Therefore, most actors who were interviewed obviously prefer to wait for a general shift of the EU policy from the preoccupations of the pasts towards increasing support for education as a basis of the knowledge society.

It is widely believed, however, that the funds allocated for „select" components of SOCRATES would be better used, as discussed below, if the selection decisions were more „courageous" according to quality, relevance, originality and similar criteria and if the funds made available per project supported were increased.

17.11 Appropriateness and Efficiency of the Programme Design and Management

In addition to the issues of the structure of goals and the use of funds, five issues concerning the design and management of SOCRATES were addressed in this evaluation study: the effect of establishing SOCRATES as an umbrella of various support activities, the structure of the sub-programmes, the decisions regarding „select" components of the programme, the relationships between „top down" and „bottom up" steering, and the administration of the SOCRATES programme.

First, the introduction of SOCRATES as a “combined“ or “umbrella“ programme putting the majority of educational support measures of the European Union under a common roof seems to have been an important symbolic step. SOCRATES symbolises the system-wide character of the educational support programme. It aims to make European educational activities more visible and to set in motion certain substantial commonalities of the various educational sub-programmes, to open up opportunities for educational “cross-fertilisation“ and to establish combined and common administrative procedures.

But most actors who were surveyed did not observe major gains in terms of coordination of goals, processes of administering the programme which could off-set the additional complications of an enlarged administrative setting. Also, most beneficiaries are interested in specific components of the SOCRATES programme and not in the programme as whole. Obviously, the umbrella hardly affects the administrative and educational processes.

This is convincingly taken up by the decision of introducing additional names for many areas of support in SOCRATES II, e.g. GRUNDTVIG and MINERVA in addition to ERASMUS, COMENIUS and LINGUA. Thus, the identity of European educational innovation will be reinforced by the naming of the various educational target areas, while SOCRATES will continue to call for inter-area coordination and for growing weight of education in overall European policies.

Second, there is a continuous debate about the optimal division of the SOCRATES programme according to sub-programmes and actions. On the basis of the arguments heard, we are inclined to argue that a certain overlap of various sub-programmes cannot be avoided, the divide between SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI is likely to be debated further, the changes made in SOCRATES II seem to increase the status of COMENIUS as a school programme and the arguments in favour of establishing a sub-programme which merges the various areas of support for teacher education are strong.

Third, it is obviously very difficult to make selection decisions within SOCRATES regarding the financial support and other means of reinforcement of activities applied for or actually realised on the basis of quality, relevance, consistency or similar criteria. Therefore, „distributional“ criteria seem to come in play in the award of educational innovation projects. Also, the European Policy Statements only play a very limited role in the award of ERASMUS funds. Finally, the Commission hesitates to concentrate the support for dissemination on select successful projects.

It is understandable that the Commission is cautious, because a political actor does not have the expertise of selection, and experts could be viewed as being selected for political purposes. There is widespread concern about a hidden strong steering on the part of the Commission, and Member States also want to have their say. Moreover, no consensus can be expected among experts, and it remains uncertain to predict results on the basis of intentions. Yet, the current cautious policy does not ensure that the Commission gets rid of the widespread suspicion of a „hidden agenda“ in the selection. This comes up in the frequent call for „transparency“. And critique is widespread that the current modes of

selection do not provide sufficient signals that qualify, original innovation etc. are supported. The SOCRATES programme certainly would gain if a consistent policy of selection were established which succeeded in establishing a credible compromise between openness to diverse concepts and selectivity according to major criteria of quality and relevance.

Fourth, there is a perennial debate in SOCRATES about the extent to which the support programme and the Commission aim to steer European educational activities “top-down“ and the extent to which the beneficiaries have room for “bottom-up“ action through the projects they design and request support for. But neither strong steering from above nor a blooming of thousands flowers prevail. Instead dozens of flowers seem to bloom in various prescribed flower-beds. An endemic perception gap can be observed: while the Commission perceives a broad margin for bottom-up influence, many of the potential and actual beneficiaries engage in extensive speculations about the intentions and the selection criteria which they believe they ought to take into account when complaining about the lack of “transparency“.

Actually, the reports on educational activities undertaken suggest that there is a wealth of diverse concepts and projects. Many of those who are opting for interesting educational innovation within SOCRATES praise the substantive flexibility of the support programmes and suggest that it should be preserved.

Fifth, the administration of the SOCRATES programme is a constant issue of debate. “Over-bureaucratisation“ or similar terms are often used by the beneficiaries to point at what they view as a major procedural *malaise*. In particular,

- the overall work load on the part of the potential and actual recipients of support required by the Commission tends to be viewed as out of proportion with the financial support;
- the decision-making processes are critisised as lasting too long, and late timing of award decisions and provision of funds - often after the launch of the activities - obviously puts great onus on the beneficiaries; this often seems to undermine the quantity of participation and the quality of the activities;
- according to some observers, the multitude of administrative specifications could lead the potential beneficiaries to restrain their educational fantasy and put most of their energy into finding ways to obey the requirements or to 'beat the system';
- it is claimed that the detailed financial regulations may create a considerable risk that expenses incurred for activities which serve their purpose well may not be reimbursed, due to bureaucratic traps.

It is known in the field that the Commission must strike a balance between calls for efficiency and effectiveness and greater demands for accountability. Yet, the critique about the management of the SOCRATES programme tends to be so bitter that it surpasses the usual complaints about administrative burdens. Notably those in the educational field who highly appreciate the substantive thrust of the European policies express concern that those who are responsible for European policies are willing to accept such a bad image of being inefficient and rigid and spreading a culture of mistrust.

In the past, efforts to improve the management of the SOCRATES programmes by small steps of rationalisation, alleviation of administrative requirements and decentralisation were not successful. Obviously, more drastic reform measures are needed which would include a reduction of the number of coordination steps in the application and award process, a waiver of detailed control measures in the case of the award of small sums, and a transition from procedural control to outcome assessment.

17.12 Provision of Basic Data and Evaluation

Provision of basic information, monitoring, and evaluation in the framework of SOCRATES seem to be held in high esteem by many actors and beneficiaries of SOCRATES. Great emphasis is placed on reports on the results required by the beneficiaries and by the evaluation requirements formulated in the Council decisions about the establishment of SOCRATES and the continuation in SOCRATES II. Also, the authors of most of the evaluation studies undertaken in the past reported that they received staunch support from those who were asked to share their experiences.

In the application, award and reporting system of the SOCRATES programme, a wealth of information is collected which could be transformed into a quantitative and qualitative reporting system on the programme. However, precise statistics are only available on the number of persons applying for mobility and the number of persons who are possibly awarded support for mobility. In most areas, no statistics on actual numbers of activities or beneficiaries are provided. Informal *ad-hoc* monitoring activities in the context of preparation of selection decisions, modifications of the programmes, committee meetings, etc. do not translate into a regular and comprehensive monitoring system. The studies commissioned on selected areas provide valuable feedback and ideas for improvement, but some lack the necessary distance to the subject under scrutiny. Furthermore, the overall evaluation studies commissioned at an interim stage or at the end of a major phase of the predecessor programmes and of the SOCRATES programmes could provide valuable results, but the system of periodic overall assessment seems to be vulnerable: the quality varies. The major evaluations are burdened with collecting too much information within a short period of time. Finally, there is no consistent publication strategy concerning evaluation studies.

The European Commission is deliberating on steps to introduce a regular system of statistics, monitoring, and evaluation studies. The proposals discussed indicate a high level of awareness of the potentials and possible problems in establishing a regular evaluation system which may serve accountability and improvement and be valuable for the SOCRATES programme as a whole and for the beneficiaries. In this context, the following suggestions could be worth to be taken into consideration:

(a) As the decentralisation of the management of SOCRATES has progressed, the need for coordinating the evaluation between the Commission, the national agencies and the

national governments on evaluation matters increases. If no agreements of common thrusts are reached, the information basis will become weaker and weaker.

(b) The European Commission should establish a unit (possibly within the TAO) which is regularly in charge of compiling the information, monitoring the details of information gathering, and cooperating closely on procedural and information matters with external evaluation studies. This unit must be the store house of all methodological and content dimensions of the monitoring and evaluation activities.

(c) The Commission should make mid-term decisions about priorities of regular monitoring and evaluation. There are dangers that the evaluation and monitoring programme may collapse because over-ambitious goals are pursued, and that the work load and costs involved in setting up a good quantitative information system do not leave enough room and funds to commission valuable “qualitative“ studies.

(d) Those in charge of setting up a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system should re-examine all application and reporting requirements from the point of view of how valuable they are for monitoring and evaluation and how the information could be easily handled in the framework of monitoring and evaluation activities.

(e) The European Commission should set up mechanisms which ensure a certain degree of independent evaluation and increase the credibility of evaluation. This could be done by appointing an evaluation coordinator or an evaluation coordinating team of external people who have substantial knowledge of the educational field under consideration and of the concepts and methodology of evaluation, statistics etc..

(f) The regular monitoring and evaluation programme should be designed in such a way that it can feed the major interim and final evaluations of the SOCRATES programme for the future. This would allow these major evaluations to become most of the fact-finding on a secondary analysis of prior studies.

(g) A coherent publication and dissemination policy should be established which ensures that all quality information which transgresses internal issues of the Commission is rapidly available and generally accessible.

(h) The monitoring and evaluation system should be designed in such a way that it can produce credible output measures of SOCRATES-supported activities. Thus, it could provide the foundation for an eventual replacement of the current financial-process-oriented control system by an educational-output assessment system. The Commission could be also more demanding with respect to the quality of the final reports of the educational projects which, in turn, would allow for qualified evaluation activities based on those reports.

17.13 Dissemination

A substantial number of educational innovation projects supported by SOCRATES acquire experiences which are worth sharing with others, and have "products" which could be easily disseminated. Dissemination would make sure that a large number of people beyond those directly involved would benefit from the results. Many observers argued, however, that the European Commission was not extraordinarily active in promoting dissemination. Three different types of "products" were highlighted which could deserve to be disseminated in various ways:

- The projects serve to acquire experience about the ways of undertaking European educational projects. A dissemination of reports on good practice could be useful for various sub-programmes and actions of SOCRATES.
- The projects could lead to products which are mainly valuable for the persons, departments and institutions involved in the project, i.e. they are not easily transferable to others. In that case, dissemination would be most valuable to stimulate others to pursue similar projects which are suited to their needs.
- Finally, projects that develop products designed for general use deserve great attention. In some of these cases, dissemination can easily be undertaken and externally funded, whereas others would need support.

Dissemination is stimulated by the current practice in various sub-programmes and actions of SOCRATES for potential beneficiaries to envisage dissemination activities and provide some support for dissemination activities already from the outset. Hence, great flexibility is ensured and the Commission would only try to make sure that some kind of dissemination activity is undertaken. In addition, this study suggests that the value of local dissemination should not be underestimated: the distribution of leaflets to neighbouring schools on the experiences acquired within a project, a short oral presentation in a teacher training course, a regional project fair, etc. could have valuable mobilisation effects.

Moreover, many projects may have achieved substantial results at the end of a period for which support was available, but not yet "products" that are ready for dissemination. It is suggested the Commission extend funding for successor dissemination projects. Furthermore, the Commission may develop the publication of catalogues of "products" of the educational projects supported by SOCRATES. New information technologies facilitate access to the products if they can be easily located.

Finally, dissemination would be improved if the Commission found ways of legitimising the selection of the qualitatively most demanding and the most relevant project results for the purpose of joint dissemination. The issue of lack of competences and questioned legitimacy notwithstanding, the Commission should find means of acceptable prioritisation.

17.14 Concluding Remarks

Political programmes tend to be advocated with grandiloquent words that aim to mobilise, with self-praise and with high hopes that the mechanisms have great potential to carry through substantial change. And, in fact, a substantial degree of the success of SOCRATES may be due to the fact that the programme was advertised with a rhetoric that aimed to mobilise.

An evaluation study must avoid getting carried away by value judgements underlying the programme under scrutiny and must be sceptical about the impacts it is hoped to be reached through the measures chosen. For policies need honest evaluation in order not to lose touch with reality.

One must bear in mind that most honest programme evaluations call for modesty concerning the stimulation of rapid change. They also make the actors aware that the mechanisms chosen for targeted change tend to trigger off less targeted results than initially intended, because a multitude of contextual factors come into play in the implementation process. Finally, SOCRATES is a programme of indirect steering of the educational reality through funds. National traditions and policies, as well as a multitude of motives, programmes and actions of the beneficiaries contribute substantially to the actual outcomes. Therefore, an evaluation study which indicates numerous modest successes and problems does not question that SOCRATES can be generally seen as a success story.

The European educational programmes are successful as great mobilisers. ERASMUS inspired higher education in Europe around 1990 and continues to mobilise, though with less sense of novelty. Similarly, COMENIUS mobilised in the latter half of the 1990s where it could do so in the schools - though on a relatively smaller scale, if one takes into account the overall number of schools, teachers and pupils. It obviously was helpful for this mobilisation that „experiential learning“ in other institutions and countries was advocated as valuable and that the goals pursued and the content of educational projects were very flexible. It is also impressive to note that student and teaching staff mobility could grow from a modest beginning to large numbers with no visible decline of administrative and educational support and without a significant loss of quality.

Certainly, the increasingly favourable climate for Europeanisation and internationalisation was helpful in many respects. But one should not overlook conflicting constellations. For example, the fact that the use of different European languages did not decline substantially amidst lingua-franca pressures and that the level of recognition of study abroad did not erode in the wake of growing diversity in higher education and of an increasing sense of competition can be seen as a success.

It is generally appreciated that SOCRATES does not direct all its attention and funds to the mobilisation of large numbers and to other programmes which could easily lead to success, but also includes many educational innovation projects which involve higher risks as far as concepts, cooperation between participants from different countries and various issues of

implementation are concerned. These projects can stimulate new concepts and provide models to disseminate various aspects of a „European dimension“ much further than mobility. The European Commission faced more problems in establishing convincing steering mechanisms for these activities than for those mentioned above. In some respects, the conditions for support seem to curtail the innovative fantasy of the beneficiaries. In others, the Commissions seems to be over-cautious in establishing acceptable mechanisms of selection for award and for the dissemination of results.

Clearly, the greatest critique concerns the way the SOCRATES programme is managed: the length of decision-making process and the late timing of award decisions and provision of funds, the high administrative load required for modest funds, and the detailed procedural and financial control are much more negatively assessed than the widespread attitude of wanting maximum support with minimum constraints. Courage is needed to move away from detailed procedural control of the activities and from control of the expenditure of small sums to substantive assessment of the outcomes, because the Commission poses itself unnecessarily as the incarnation of inefficiency, procedural rigidity and mistrust. Only if the Commission, the Member States and other key actors counteract the concern with issues of accountability, is it likely that the Commission will be an acceptable and successful coordinator of more ambitious educational innovation projects that aim to enhance the European dimension.

First moves have been made in the direction of improving data provision and evaluation related to SOCRATES. This could contribute to the accountability of the regular affairs of the programme and could reduce the burden of wide-range information gathering within a very short time span which the major evaluation studies of the programme such as this one face at present. Last but not least, it could help to move towards an output-based assessment of the educational activities for which support is provided.

Thus, although the impressive success of SOCRATES does not provide reasons for major concern and although major decisions have been taken for the next stage of the SOCRATES programme, this evaluation study could point out some areas where better solutions could be found.

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