

HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

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27th Report of Session 2010–12

# **The Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe**

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Evidence is published online at [www.parliament.uk/hleug](http://www.parliament.uk/hleug) and available for inspection at the Parliamentary Archives (020 7219 5314)

References in footnotes to the Report are as follows:

Q refers to a question in oral evidence;

Witness names without a question reference refer to written evidence as listed in Appendix 2.

## SUMMARY

While the EU's formal role in higher education is limited, with Member States retaining primary responsibility for their universities, we believe that it has still added value to this area in a number of ways, particularly through the Erasmus programme for student mobility, which has now entered its 25th year. The Commission believes, however, that the potential of European universities to contribute to Europe's future prosperity, in economic and social terms, remains underexploited. Its Communication on the modernisation of higher education in Europe sets out how it intends to support this aim through a number of initiatives, many of which form part of its funding proposals for research, innovation and education for the period 2014 to 2020, and for which it has proposed a significant increase in funding. Some of these proposals are welcome but as European universities and Member States are currently operating within a very difficult financial climate, it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved.

Since 1999, significant changes to European universities have occurred outside the EU framework as a result of the Bologna Process, which has seen the closer alignment of higher education systems across Europe. 47 European countries participate, including all 27 Member States. The Commission, which is also a member in its own right, has played a key role in its development, particularly regarding mobility but also through the sponsorship and development of instruments that have become important parts of the Bologna Process. While the United Kingdom already complies with many of the Bologna Process' features, and many of our witnesses were positive about its role in principle, we developed the impression that the Government and many universities were yet to realise and fully embrace its potential benefits.

Subject to reductions being made in other areas of the EU budget and overall restraint being achieved, we support the allocation of a bigger proportion of funds to research, innovation and education. We consider that the targeting of resources in this way will result in long-term economic benefits for the EU. The Commission's proposal for a new university ranking instrument, U-Multirank, elicited strong reactions among our witnesses. While we consider that it overcomes some of the disadvantages inherent in the current world rankings, we believe that it is not a priority at this stage.

To us, the benefits of mobility, personally and in terms of increased employability, are important but have yet to be proven. However, the monoglot culture that prevails in the United Kingdom has prevented its students from participating in mobility schemes to the same degree as other Member States. Coupled with financial, socioeconomic and cultural barriers, increased participation in future cannot be assured. We therefore urge the Government to overcome the United Kingdom's lack of mobility culture by making language learning compulsory in primary and secondary school, ensuring the continuation of the fee waiver scheme and supporting the development of the proposed Masters level student loan guarantee facility, both of which will aid more disadvantaged students in particular. Universities and the Commission can also do more to increase participation by promoting mobility opportunities far more widely and by making Erasmus placements more flexible.

The United Kingdom has long been an attractive location for students from other parts of Europe and beyond in order to hone their English language skills. However, increasing competition from Continental universities—many of which now provide courses in English with sometimes significantly cheaper fees than in the United Kingdom—means that the Government should remain vigilant about any factors that could undermine the higher education sector's competitive position, including recent domestic reforms.

The EU can continue to make a positive contribution to the modernisation of European higher education but it must be pragmatic and concentrate on areas where it can truly add value. For its part, the Government should place higher education at the centre of its growth agenda, domestically and across Europe, by drawing on the potential of both the EU and the Bologna Process.

# The Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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### The EU's role in higher education

1. The EU has a limited role in higher education and recognises that Member States have primary responsibility for the organisation of their education systems. However, Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union enables the EU to contribute to: the “development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States”; the promotion of cooperation between educational establishments; the mobility of students and teachers through the recognition of diplomas and periods of study; the exchange of best practice and information; and through fostering links with third countries and relevant international organisations—with particular attention being given to the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States. Cooperation occurs through a framework known as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), which relies upon intergovernmental “soft law” mechanisms such as guidelines, benchmarking and sharing best practice.<sup>1</sup>
2. Since 1999, significant changes to European higher education have occurred as a result of the Bologna Process, which has seen the closer alignment of higher education systems across Europe. These have been achieved through voluntary engagement and unanimous intergovernmental decision-making between 47 participating European countries. So while the architecture of the EU and the Bologna Process are very different, the fact that all 27 Member States are also Bologna countries means that there are obvious synergies between the two organisations. Indeed, the EU has already contributed to the Bologna Process in a number of significant ways, not least through its sponsorship of the Erasmus programme.
3. The Commission published a Communication, *Supporting Growth and Jobs—an Agenda for the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Systems*, on 20 September 2011,<sup>2</sup> against the background of a funding squeeze on higher education across Europe. While acknowledging that responsibility for this area mainly rests with the Member States, the Commission believes that the potential of European higher education institutions<sup>3</sup> to contribute to Europe's prosperity and society remains underexploited. The Communication's main proposals are summarised in Box 1 and these provide the backdrop to our inquiry.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training (ET 2020)*, OJ 119, 28.5.2009, sets out how Member States are coordinating their work in this area.

<sup>2</sup> COM (2011) 567

<sup>3</sup> For the remainder of this report, the term “universities” is used to refer to all higher education institutions.

**BOX 1****Commission Communication**

The Commission proposes to:

- Launch a new “U-Multirank” performance-based ranking and information tool for profiling higher education institutions;
- Analyse the impact of different funding approaches on the diversification, efficiency and equity of higher education systems, as well as student mobility;
- Boost mobility at Masters level by proposing a EU level loan facility;
- Strengthen synergies between EU and intergovernmental processes (mainly the Bologna Process) and support the internationalisation of higher education;
- Put higher education at the centre of innovation, job creation and employability in various ways, including better convertibility of academic innovation into business and the development of a quality framework for traineeships; and
- Strengthen the long-term impact and complementarity of EU funding instruments: Structural Funds, the next Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (‘Horizon 2020’) and a new education, training and youth funding instrument (‘Erasmus for All’).

**Higher education in the United Kingdom**

4. There are a substantial number of first-class universities in the United Kingdom, some of which already enjoy significant international reputations and connections and also tend to be the European universities which perform the most strongly in global rankings.<sup>4</sup> This is likely, from the outset, to place the United Kingdom’s relationship with the rest of the EU regarding higher education on a slightly different footing. There are approximately 4,000 universities across Europe and the character of each country’s higher education sector is diverse. In some countries, institutions enjoy a great deal of autonomy while in others they are more closely aligned with the state, with more centrally prescriptive course structures and content. There is, however, much common ground between higher education institutions, in terms of interests and objectives, and a broader political recognition of the important contribution of the sector to the EU’s future economic growth. In the course of our inquiry, it became clear to us that the European and international dimensions have increasing significance for higher education in the United Kingdom.
5. As is the case between and within Member States, the higher education sector within the United Kingdom is also diverse. Responsibility for higher education is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Pre-existing differences between their respective higher education systems have become more pronounced since devolution, with English higher education experiencing the most profound changes, including higher tuition fees. As the operation of funding arrangements within the United Kingdom is a domestic matter, it falls outside the Committee’s terms of reference and was not therefore considered during our inquiry, beyond its impact on mobility in Europe. We did not therefore examine in detail the position whereby Scottish domiciled students and students from other Member States do not pay

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<sup>4</sup> For example: Times Higher Education World University Rankings

upfront tuition fees for studying at Scottish universities, unlike students from the other parts of the United Kingdom. However, we do not necessarily agree with the Commission's legal position on this matter.<sup>5</sup> We also noted the Scottish Government's intention, if permissible under EU law, to introduce a "management fee" to be paid by EU students to cover outlays such as student services and examination fees.<sup>6</sup>

### The Committee's inquiry

6. The Committee has conducted two previous inquiries in this area: on student mobility and on EU education funding.<sup>7</sup> The present inquiry took place in the context of negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), for the period 2014 to 2020, which anticipates substantial rises for the research, innovation and education budgets.<sup>8</sup> Starting from an acceptance that higher education has a role to play in boosting EU growth, we decided to consider the effectiveness of the EU's contribution to this aim; in which areas it could add value; how it could contribute to the EU's recovery from the financial crisis; if the proposals fully respected the principle of subsidiarity; and whether the funding increases were justifiable.
7. We begin by considering the Bologna Process, including the EU's role in its development and success, and its reception within the United Kingdom. We then consider the methods by which the EU makes a contribution to the modernisation of higher education in Europe including how these may help to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives of boosting jobs, growth and innovation, the effectiveness of EU funding in this area, the role of the European Research Area, the merits or otherwise of introducing a European universities ranking system—the 'U-Multirank' tool—and the EU's current international engagement. We then consider how greater student mobility can be achieved, in order to maximise its personal, academic and economic benefits, including how the Erasmus programme can accommodate a more diverse range of applicants. Lastly, we examine the merits of the proposed Masters student loan guarantee facility and how a greater alignment between the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive and the Bologna Process can be achieved.
8. The next Bologna Ministerial Conference is due to take place on 26 and 27 April 2012 in Bucharest and its deliberations will help to determine the

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<sup>5</sup> The Commission's legal position is that whereas Member States have full responsibility for the content and the organisation of their education systems under Article 165 TFEU, when exercising such responsibilities they are nevertheless obliged to respect relevant principles of EU law, particularly, in this context, the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality laid down by Article 18 TFEU. This requires that students from another Member State must be granted equal treatment with local students (i.e. Scottish domiciled students studying at a Scottish university) in all matters concerning access and the payment of fees. This is what happens at present. Whereas English, Welsh and Northern Irish students are treated differently and must pay fees for studying at Scottish universities, because this difference in treatment is entirely internal to the United Kingdom it therefore falls outside the scope of EU law and within the exclusive competence of domestic authorities or courts to assess whether this situation is compatible with domestic law.

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Government, *Putting Learners at the Centre: Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education*, September 2011, p. 53

<sup>7</sup> European Union Committee, 27th Report of Session 1997–98: *Student Mobility in the European Community* (HL Paper 116) & 17th Report of Session 2004–05: *Proposed EU Integrated Action Programme for Life-long Learning* (HL Paper 104)

<sup>8</sup> On which the European Union Committee has conducted a separate inquiry.

direction of the Bologna Process up to and beyond 2020. We hope that the Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts MP, will have the opportunity to digest the contents of this report in advance of attending this Conference. We also hope that the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove MP, will take account of our recommendations on the importance of language learning during the review of the National Curriculum. In the longer term, we also hope that this report will inform the negotiations on the new funding programmes—Erasmus for All and Horizon 2020—before they are agreed toward the end of this year.

9. The members of the Social Policies and Consumer Protection Sub-Committee who conducted the inquiry are listed in Appendix 1, showing their declared interests. We are grateful for the written and oral evidence that we received for our inquiry; contributors are listed in Appendix 2. In particular, we are grateful to the UK Higher Education International Unit,<sup>9</sup> the British Council, the National Union of Students and the European University Association for taking the time to provide evidence to the Committee. A note of the site visit that we conducted to the University of East London's Docklands Campus is contained in Appendix 3 and the call for evidence that we issued is reproduced in Appendix 4, while a list of acronyms and abbreviations can be found in Appendix 5. The evidence we received is available online.
10. **We make this report to the House for debate.**

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<sup>9</sup> This is an arm of Universities UK.

## CHAPTER 2: THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

### The Bologna Process

11. The Bologna Process is a voluntary, intergovernmental, framework between education ministers from 47 European countries.<sup>10</sup> It began with the Bologna Declaration in 1999<sup>11</sup> and included the goal of developing a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010.<sup>12</sup> Its main feature has been the adoption of a three-cycle system of Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates, which, while already familiar in the United Kingdom, has led to the radical reform and restructuring of some European countries' higher education systems. It has also involved the development of a system of recognition of credits for study, the promotion of mobility and greater co-operation in quality assurance standards. Its focus is encouraging greater compatibility across Europe rather than harmonising higher education systems. Over time it has agreed a number of policy aims, or 'action lines', which are set out in Box 2.

#### BOX 2

##### Bologna Process—10 Action Lines

###### Established in the Bologna Declaration of 1999:

- (1) Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- (2) Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles<sup>13</sup>
- (3) Establishment of a system of credits
- (4) Promotion of mobility
- (5) Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
- (6) Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

###### Added after the Prague Ministerial Conference of 2001:

- (7) Focus on lifelong learning
- (8) Greater inclusion of higher education institutions and students in the Bologna Process
- (9) Promotion of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

###### Added after the Berlin Ministerial Conference of 2003:

- (10) Doctoral studies and the synergy between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area

Source: UK Higher Education International Unit, Universities UK

<sup>10</sup> Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium (French and Flemish), Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom and Ukraine.

<sup>11</sup> The Bologna Declaration was adopted on 19 June 1999 by 29 countries, which is available here: [http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf). Baroness Blackstone was the UK signatory. This followed on from the Sorbonne Declaration on the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system by the four Ministers in charge for France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom on 25 May 1998, which is available here: [http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne_declaration.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> It was officially launched on 12 March 2010 with the adoption of the Budapest-Vienna Declaration by 47 countries; which is available here: [http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/2010\\_conference/documents/Budapest-Vienna\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/2010_conference/documents/Budapest-Vienna_Declaration.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> The third cycle—Doctoral degrees—was formally introduced to the Bologna Process following the 2003 Berlin Ministerial Conference.

12. Decision-making in the Bologna Process is the responsibility of the education ministers of each participating country. They meet in Ministerial Conferences, following which a *Communiqué* is adopted by consensus and then taken forward by the Bologna Follow-Up Group.<sup>14</sup> Since 1999, ministers have met five times to assess progress—Prague in 2001, Berlin in 2003, Bergen in 2005, London in 2007 and Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009. Individual universities and their representative organisations, including Universities UK, have also been active participants in this process. The Bologna Process has no centralised budget and instead each participating country and organisation meets its own costs, with the costs of the Bologna Secretariat being met by the host country for each Ministerial Conference.
13. All our witnesses were positive about the role of the Bologna Process and its benefits, with some also specifically endorsing the merits of its voluntary and consensual nature.<sup>15</sup> The European University Association (EUA)<sup>16</sup> told us “every single one of these 47 governments and the 47 university systems has taken part on a voluntary basis. There is no coercion or legislation. It is up to countries to decide whether they want to take part in these reforms”.<sup>17</sup> We received no evidence of any desire by any of the participating countries or organisations to reconstitute the Bologna Process on a more formal, bureaucratic or legalistic footing. The Government told us that the Bologna Process had led to significant changes to higher education systems across Europe, including the introduction of the three-cycle degree system to some countries for the first time and the agreement of common quality assurance guidelines and qualification frameworks.<sup>18</sup> We also heard that the impact of the Bologna Process had been felt beyond Europe, including China, where the chairman of million+, Professor Ebdon, told us he is regularly asked to speak about the Bologna Process.<sup>19</sup>
14. **We endorse the voluntary and consensual approach adopted by the Bologna Process and consider that it has resulted in tangible benefits for Europe.**

### The EU dimension

15. The European Commission is a full member of the Bologna Process, with the relevant Commissioner<sup>20</sup> attending each Ministerial Conference alongside the ministers from each participating country. Other bodies, including the European Students’ Union (ESU) and the EUA, are consultative members.<sup>21</sup> The European Commission is also a consultative

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<sup>14</sup> The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) meets every six months and is jointly chaired by the EU country holding the Presidency of the EU and a non-EU country. The BFUG is supported by a Bologna Secretariat.

<sup>15</sup> QAA and Russell Group

<sup>16</sup> The EUA represents and supports more than 850 universities in 46 countries, facilitating cooperation and the exchange of information on higher education and research policies. Members of the EUA include individual universities, national associations and other organisations active in higher education and research, such as Universities UK.

<sup>17</sup> Q 109

<sup>18</sup> BIS

<sup>19</sup> Q93.

<sup>20</sup> Mrs Androulla Vassiliou, the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Sport, Media and Youth, is due to attend the Bucharest Ministerial Conference on 26 and 27 April 2012.

<sup>21</sup> The other consultative members are the Council of Europe, UNESCO and its European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES), the European University Institute, the European Association of Institutions in Higher

member of the Bologna Follow-up Group and provides funding for ‘Bologna Experts’ across Europe,<sup>22</sup> research and development projects and student and staff mobility programmes such as Erasmus. While we received no evidence to suggest that the Commission would like a stronger role in European higher education or the Bologna Process, many of our witnesses raised concerns about the boundaries becoming blurred between the EU and the EHEA.<sup>23</sup>

16. **The Commission, and the EU more generally, plays a valuable role in the Bologna Process and adds value to higher education in Europe. However, we believe that it is important to retain clear demarcations between their respective remits and objectives in order to avoid duplication and ensure continuing complementarity.**

### The United Kingdom dimension

17. The United Kingdom already enjoys a unique position within the EHEA as its existing three-cycle degree structure is similar to the ideal espoused by the Bologna Process. Its universities also enjoy a high degree of autonomy, as well as a strong global reputation, which is maintained by a mature quality assurance system.<sup>24</sup> In European terms, British universities also dominate the European presence in league tables such as those compiled by the Shanghai Jaio Tong University and Times Higher Education World University Rankings. However, despite some British universities having a very European orientation, including the University of Kent which “positions itself to be the UK’s European University” with campuses in Brussels and Paris,<sup>25</sup> one of our witnesses referred to the “suspicious relationship of the British higher education sector to Europeanisation, outside the financing of research”.<sup>26</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit felt that fundamental aspects of the Bologna Process, such as the three-cycle system, had not generated much resonance in the UK due to its familiarity,<sup>27</sup> while the National Union of Students (NUS) drew our attention to the general lack of awareness about the Bologna Process among students and institutions.<sup>28</sup>
18. **The familiarity of the Bologna Process in the United Kingdom—such as the three-cycle degree structure—should not make universities complacent about its potential benefits, in terms of encouraging mobility and allowing greater collaboration with Continental universities, and they should endeavour to keep apace with developments in the rest of the European Higher Education Area. It**

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Education, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Education International Pan-European Structure and BUSINESS EUROPE.

<sup>22</sup> In the UK, 13 Bologna Experts were appointed by the British Council, with the Commission’s approval. They are generally senior academics and administrators but two student Bologna Experts, including Liam Burns (the current President of the National Union of Students), have also been nominated. Their job it is to help inform universities about the Bologna Process reforms, including the ECTS and Diploma Supplements.

<sup>23</sup> BIS, Scottish Government, QAA, Russell Group, University Alliance and Q 23

<sup>24</sup> In the United Kingdom, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is responsible for safeguarding standards and improving the quality of higher education.

<sup>25</sup> University of Kent

<sup>26</sup> Dr Anne Corbett

<sup>27</sup> Q 26

<sup>28</sup> NUS

**is in the interests of the Government, universities, staff, students, employers and wider civil society for the United Kingdom to continue to be actively engaged in the Bologna Process.**

19. While the Russell Group, 1994 Group, million+ and University Alliance<sup>29</sup> were all positive about the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement, and the use of these instruments among their members,<sup>30</sup> other witnesses pointed to problems with the implementation of the ECTS in practice. The University of Kent told us “the fact that higher education is a national competence and the recognition of qualifications is laid down in national legislation has proved to be a barrier”<sup>31</sup> while the University Alliance also stated that bachelor degrees are not fully accepted as exit qualifications by academics and employers in a number of countries as students were expected to progress to the Masters stage.<sup>32</sup> Further information about the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement is provided in Box 3.

### BOX 3

#### **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement**

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was introduced by the Commission in the late 1980s in order to allow Erasmus students to count their credits when they studied abroad. One year of study equates to 60 ECTS credits. The 2003 Berlin Ministerial Conference called for the ECTS to be used as an academic transfer and accumulation system across the EHEA. While being voluntary it has nevertheless become firmly part of the EHEA landscape, with many countries incorporating it in their national legal systems. That does not prevent some countries using their own credit systems, provided that they are in some way compatible with the principles of the credit transfer system.<sup>33</sup>

The Diploma Supplement was developed by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the Commission in order to provide students with a transcript of their academic record, which adhered to uniform criteria. The document should contain a description of the qualification that a student has received in a standard format, which is easy to understand and compare, and which also describes the content of the qualification and the structure of the higher education system within which it was issued. The 2003 Ministerial Conference also agreed that these should be made available, automatically and free of charge, to all students graduating from 2005.

<sup>29</sup> million+ is a university think-tank which provides evidence and analysis on policy and funding regimes that impact on universities, students and the services that universities provide for the business, health, education and not-for-profit sectors. The 1994 Group is an association of 19 internationally renowned, research-intensive universities, which aim to apply their members’ experiences to meeting the needs of students and staff, employers and industry, research councils and government agencies. The Russell Group is an association of 20 research-intensive universities, which are committed to maintaining the very best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and unrivalled links with business and the public sector. The University Alliance is a group of 23 business-engaged universities, which are committed to delivering world-class research and a high quality student experience.

<sup>30</sup> Q 93

<sup>31</sup> University of Kent

<sup>32</sup> University Alliance, supplementary evidence

<sup>33</sup> In Scotland the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is used while England, Wales and Northern Ireland use the Credit Accumulation Transfer System (CATS). The SCQF and CATS both use the same number of points and two SCQF/CATS points are equivalent to one ECTS point.

20. Many of our witnesses also raised specific concerns about the compatibility of Masters degrees in the United Kingdom with Bologna and the ECTS.<sup>34</sup> Masters degrees in many other Bologna countries typically last up to two years and therefore attract 120 ECTS credits. The Russell Group told us that “At the moment, for Masters, Bologna measures workload and numbers of hours. That is antithetical to the UK Masters, which is based on the quality of the outcome and the experience”.<sup>35</sup> In the United Kingdom, most Masters degrees last for 12 months and involve a more intensive 45 weeks of study as opposed to the standard academic year of 30 weeks. As a result they attract 90 ECTS credits, which the Commission has designated as the minimum amount needed for a recognisable Master’s qualification within the Bologna framework. Despite this, we were told that a number of universities in the United Kingdom had faced problems in securing recognition of the Masters degrees of their graduates from other European countries in those students’ home countries.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the Russell Group stated that the “UK’s representatives will need to pay close attention to the perception of UK’s one year second cycle (Masters) qualifications in Europe, and make clear that their value is demonstrated by learning outcomes and quality alongside hours and workload”.<sup>37</sup> Dr Anne Corbett, from the London School of Economics, also remarked that “It should be noted that these are not unique to the UK. It is surprising that the UK does not seem to have made any Bologna-wide alliance on this issue”.<sup>38</sup>
21. **We call on the Government to be more proactive in ensuring that the one-year Masters degree, which is already recognised in theory, is accommodated within the European Higher Education Area in practice.**
22. The Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts MP, admitted that engagement among universities with the Bologna Process had thus far been “mixed”. He also considered that the operation of ECTS was “not yet fully fit for purpose”,<sup>39</sup> although the Government are supportive of the underlying principle and appreciates how widespread the scheme has become across the EHEA.<sup>40</sup> We understand that the Government would prefer the ECTS to take more account of the outcomes rather than hours studied. The EUA told us that while Scotland participated fully with the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, the relevant authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland did not.<sup>41</sup> The Commission conducted a review of the ECTS in 2007 and have announced their intention to strengthen it further in the Communication.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> University Alliance, Dr Anne Corbett, Russell Group, Q 104 and Q 119

<sup>35</sup> Q 94

<sup>36</sup> University of Kent (regarding postgraduate degrees issued by their Brussels campus) and University Alliance, supplementary evidence

<sup>37</sup> Russell Group

<sup>38</sup> Dr Anne Corbett

<sup>39</sup> Q 72 and Q 91

<sup>40</sup> BIS

<sup>41</sup> Q 111. A report from the Bologna Follow-up Group—*Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2009*—confirms this disparity.

<sup>42</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 12

23. We developed the impression that the Bologna Process, while appreciated as a concept by our witnesses, had yet to reach full acceptance across the higher education sector in the United Kingdom. This was encapsulated by the Government's June 2011 White Paper on higher education, which made no reference to the European context.<sup>43</sup>
24. **We regret the fact that the Government's June 2011 White Paper on higher education made no reference at all to the European context, despite the clear importance of initiatives such as the Bologna Process to universities in the United Kingdom. We urge the Government and universities more actively to promote and exploit the actual and potential benefits of the Bologna Process to their students and staff, including the utility of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and the Diploma Supplement. Both of these instruments have obvious benefits but we regret that while they have been fully adopted in Scotland, this is not yet the case in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, despite their adoption by the majority of the 47 Bologna countries.**

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<sup>43</sup> BIS, *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System*, Cm 8122. The Scottish Government document—*Putting Learners at the Centre*—places more emphasis on the European dimension, particularly the funding opportunities for Scottish universities.

### CHAPTER 3: THE EU'S CONTRIBUTION OF THE MODERNISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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#### Europe 2020 Strategy

25. The Commission considers that universities have a key role to play in achieving “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>44</sup> and their preference for a substantial budget increase for education, research and innovation under the next MFF supports this aim.<sup>45</sup> They observe that investment in higher education in the EU is 1.3 per cent of GDP on average, compared with 1.5 per cent in Japan and 2.7 per cent in the US.<sup>46</sup> While the evidence we received contained mixed views about how investment could be boosted,<sup>47</sup> it is clear that European universities are currently operating within a very difficult financial climate. Governments and institutions have responded in a variety of ways, with some substantially reducing budgets in this area and others increasing expenditure as part of national growth strategies. The Commission believes that the level of investment will have important implications for Europe’s ability to remain competitive in a rapidly developing global market for higher education against increased competition from developed and emerging economies such as China and India, especially in light of its projected demographic decline. Some of our witnesses agreed with this position, with the UK Higher Education International Unit emphasising the contribution that collaboration across the EU had already made in this respect.<sup>48</sup>
26. **European universities are currently operating within a very difficult financial climate. This need not mean that the modernisation agenda cannot succeed but it is important for the Commission to be realistic about what can be achieved. The continued availability of funding for European universities from EU programmes is also important in this context.**
27. Europe 2020 includes the target that, by 2020, at least 40 per cent of 30–34 year olds should have a higher education qualification. In 2009 the EU average was 32.3 per cent, which was up from 22.4 per cent in 2000. In the same year, the United Kingdom was already just above the target at 41.5 per cent.<sup>49</sup> The Communication estimates that, by 2020, 35 per cent of all jobs in the EU will require high-level qualifications but that only 26 per cent of the current workforce has those qualifications.<sup>50</sup> The Russell Group considered that increased emphasis on postgraduate qualifications would

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<sup>44</sup> COM (2010) 2020, *Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, March 2010. Two of its flagship initiatives have relevance for higher education: *An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs*, which recognises the role of language skills in achieving a more dynamic labour market, and *Youth on the Move*, which emphasises the need for better language skills to allow greater mobility.

<sup>45</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 2

<sup>46</sup> COM (2011) 567, pp. 8–9

<sup>47</sup> UK Bologna Experts and British Academy

<sup>48</sup> BIS, Julia Osborn, University Alliance, Q 2 and Q 113

<sup>49</sup> BIS. In Scotland the rate was 46.7 per cent in 2008.

<sup>50</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 2

play an important role in plugging this gap.<sup>51</sup> A few of our witnesses urged the Commission to undertake research into employers' expectations in terms of higher education provision, employability, key skills, and the impact of mobility and work placement experience on graduates' preparation for employment.<sup>52</sup>

28. **We reiterate our support for the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy to achieve “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. We believe that the EU can add value in this area, and can support the EU’s economic recovery.**
29. **Given the increasing need for higher-level skills, higher education has a key role to play. To this end, we believe that the Commission should investigate the collection of further data linking higher education provision to employability in order to achieve a better match between university programmes and labour market demand, while recognising the more general benefits of studying for a degree for students and employers alike.**

### **The Knowledge Triangle**

30. While considering that the role of European universities is integral to achieving greater EU growth, the Commission believes that their potential is underexploited and can only be realised if they embrace their role in what Europe 2020 describes as “Knowledge Triangles” between higher education, research and innovation. This concept forms part of the Innovation Union flagship initiative, which emphasises, among other things, the importance of Member States’ investing more in research and development and strengthening the capacity of universities to engage in start-ups and spin-offs.<sup>53</sup>
31. The Innovation Union also highlights the role that organisations such as the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)<sup>54</sup> and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) can play in fostering closer collaboration between universities and business. Under the next MFF, the Commission has also proposed expanding the number of KICs from three to nine.<sup>55</sup> Many of our witnesses were enthusiastic about these organisations<sup>56</sup> including, in particular, the importance of encouraging links with SMEs.<sup>57</sup> We were impressed to see evidence of this in practice when we visited the University of East London’s Docklands Campus.<sup>58</sup> More information about the EIT and the KICs is provided in Box 4.

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<sup>51</sup> Russell Group

<sup>52</sup> UK Bologna Experts, University of Salford and Q 43

<sup>53</sup> COM (2010) 546

<sup>54</sup> The European Union Committee produced a short report on the EIT just before it was established: *Proposal to establish the European Institute of Technology* (25th Report of Session 2006–07, HL Paper 130)

<sup>55</sup> COM (2011) 822, p.16

<sup>56</sup> British Council, BIS, QAA, University Alliance, UK Bologna Experts and Q 114

<sup>57</sup> million+

<sup>58</sup> See the note of the site visit contained in Appendix 3.

**BOX 4****European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)**

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) was established in 2008 to promote the competitiveness of Member States by bringing together universities, research centres and businesses with a view to tackling major societal challenges in an innovative way. It uses a financial contribution from the EU budget to mobilise funds from the public and private sectors and also showcases engagements between education, research and business through its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The EIT provides 25 per cent of each KIC's running costs with KICs contributing the remaining 75 per cent. The EIT has a small secretariat in Budapest but is otherwise composed of its network of institutions across Europe. The three current KICs, which began in January 2010, focus on sustainable energy, climate change and the information and communication society. By way of example, the climate change KIC<sup>59</sup> is undertaking work on climate change mitigation and job growth potential of low carbon production systems, focusing on bio-renewables and on integrated energy production and consumption.

The Commission intends to roll out six new KICs during 2014–2020 in two phases. The first KICs, to be established in 2014, will have the following themes: innovation for healthy living and active ageing (improving the quality of life and well-being of citizens of all ages); food4future (sustainable food supply chain, from farm to fork) and raw materials (sustainable exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and substitution of raw materials). The next wave of KICs, to be established in 2018, will focus on: added value manufacturing (developing more competitive, sustainable and environmentally-friendly manufacturing processes); smart secure societies (addressing Europe's security gaps through the development and deployment of innovative ICT solutions); and urban mobility (delivering a greener, more inclusive, safer and smarter urban mobility system). The Commission intends to allocate €31.7 billion to the new KICs under Horizon 2020, with an increased allocation of €2.8 billion to the EIT (up from €309 million since its launch in 2008) under the next MFF.

32. The Government is supportive of the EIT's objectives but also made reference to the problems experienced with the establishment of the first three KICs. They seemed satisfied with the Commission's proposed changes to the operation of the EIT and KICs that are designed to address similar problems developing with the next wave of KICs. In this vein they support the gradual roll-out of the new KICs in order to allow proper evaluation to take place before each successive KIC is launched. However, they would also like more tangible evidence of the added value that the EIT and KICs are providing, including continued evidence of how the latter are linking the research base to innovation and developing business-university collaboration, before they will be convinced that a substantial funding increase is necessary.<sup>60</sup>
33. The Knowledge Triangle could also be assisted, according to the Innovation Union initiative, by the development of European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs).<sup>61</sup> These, it was proposed, should be launched to accelerate research,

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.climate-kic.org/>

<sup>60</sup> EM 17932/11, 17933/11 & 17935/11, submitted by BIS on 20 December 2011.

<sup>61</sup> COM (2010) 546, pp 22–26

development and market deployment of innovations to tackle major societal challenges, pool expertise and boost the competitiveness of EU industry. While the EIT and its KICs have been established as a long term project to develop innovation, the EIPs should have a less rigid structure, responding more quickly to immediate market needs and lasting only as long as necessary. To date, one EIP has been established as a pilot, Active and Healthy Ageing, while four others are in preparation, including one on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.<sup>62</sup> In our July 2011 report on Innovation in EU Agriculture, we supported this initiative, having taken compelling evidence on the value of EU networking in terms of developing relevant research and deploying it to the market. We emphasised that EIPs should be founded on effective, action-based co-operation.<sup>63</sup>

34. **We believe that the EU can play an important role in fostering greater collaboration between universities and businesses. Various EU initiatives have yet to prove their worth but have a great deal of potential. These include the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, its Knowledge and Innovation Communities and other initiatives, including the European Innovation Partnerships.**
35. In the domestic context, we note that the Government commissioned a review by Professor Sir Tim Wilson into how universities collaborate with business to ensure greater employability and how their role in research and innovation can be maximised. While the report, which was published on 28 February 2012, makes a number of welcome recommendations in these areas, it takes little account of the EU dimension.<sup>64</sup> The report makes passing reference to EU funding but does not acknowledge the Europe 2020 Strategy or the potential of the EIT, its KICs or the EIPs, in this area.
36. **We are disappointed that the Wilson Review did not take adequate account of the role that the EU can play in fostering greater collaboration between universities and businesses in the domestic context. We urge the Government to acknowledge the role that the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, its Knowledge and Innovation Communities and the European Innovation Partnerships can play when taking forward the Review's recommendations.**

### EU funding

37. As part of the current MFF for the period 2007 to 2013 a number of funding programmes exist that are relevant for higher education. These are the Lifelong Learning Programme, which includes the well-known Erasmus programme, which supports student placements in other European countries; the Tempus programme, which began in 1990 and promotes educational cooperation between EU universities and external institutions in third countries neighbouring the EU; and the Erasmus Mundus programme, which began in 2003 and aims to attract the best international students to the EU through scholarships, as well as facilitating academic cooperation between European universities and external institutions through joint postgraduate and doctoral programmes. European universities, particularly

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<sup>62</sup> COM (2011) 849, pp 8–9

<sup>63</sup> European Union Committee, 19th Report of Session 2010–12: *Innovation in EU Agriculture* (HL Paper 171)

<sup>64</sup> Professor Sir Tim Wilson DL, *A Review of Business-University Collaboration*

in the United Kingdom, also benefit from funding allocations under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

38. According to its proposals for the next MFF for the period 2014 to 2020, the Commission intends to target its funding in European higher education through three funding mechanisms: Erasmus for All, Horizon 2020 and Cohesion Policy instruments.<sup>65</sup> The Commission has proposed a 70 per cent budget increase for Erasmus for All compared with the current MFF, with a total allocation of €19 billion during the next MFF. They justify this increase on the basis that it will stimulate greater mobility, higher skills matched to the labour market, more jobs, greater innovation in the education sector and growth in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy's objectives.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, a substantial 40 per cent budget increase is also proposed for Horizon 2020.<sup>67</sup> Regarding Cohesion funding, the Commission proposes that 25 per cent of this (€84 billion) will be allocated to the European Social Fund under the next MFF, and they anticipate that over €40 billion of this amount is likely to be made available for education and training.<sup>68</sup>
39. Many of our witnesses supported the Commission's proposed funding increases in these areas.<sup>69</sup> Others supported the potential of Cohesion Policy funds to improve participation in higher education by students from less wealthy backgrounds.<sup>70</sup> Funds from the European Regional Development Fund have, in the past, also been invested in university infrastructure projects, including the University of East London's Docklands Campus.<sup>71</sup> However, the Minister and the UK Higher Education International Unit considered that these funds would have more significance for the newer Member States.<sup>72</sup> In our April 2011 report on the next Multiannual Financial Framework, we recommended an increase in spending on research and innovation, with funds transferred from the Common Agricultural Policy.<sup>73</sup>
40. **We support the allocation of a bigger proportion of the budget under the next Multiannual Financial Framework to research, education and innovation, subject to reductions being made in other areas of the budget such as the Common Agricultural Policy, and overall restraint being achieved. Closer alignment with the Structural Funds should also be further developed. We consider that the targeting of resources in this way will result in long-term economic benefits for the EU.**

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<sup>65</sup> European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund

<sup>66</sup> 17574/11, COM (2011) 787: *ERASMUS FOR ALL: the EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport*, 23 November 2011

<sup>67</sup> Both of these proposals are considered in more detail later in this report.

<sup>68</sup> COM (2010) 546, p. 15

<sup>69</sup> 1994 Group, Association of Colleges, British Council, Engineering Professors' Council, NUS, Russell Group, Scottish Government, University of Salford, University Alliance, UK Higher Education International Unit, million+, Q 95 and Q 113

<sup>70</sup> NUS, Russell Group and Scottish Government.

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>72</sup> Q 21.

<sup>73</sup> European Union Committee, 13th Report of Session 2010–12: *EU Financial Framework from 2014* (HL Paper 125)

### European Research Area (ERA)

41. Some degree of spending on research and development (R&D) is considered necessary in all Member States in order to stimulate innovation and economic growth. The Europe 2020 Strategy calls on Member States to spend the equivalent of 3 per cent of their annual GDP on R&D in order to keep pace with the United States (2.6 per cent) and Japan (3.4 per cent). The EU average is below 2 per cent, mainly due to lower levels of private investment. The figure in the United Kingdom was 1.84 per cent in 2009.
42. The Commission intends to enhance Europe's research infrastructure and increase academic mobility through the development of the European Research Area (ERA) to achieve a "genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation" by 2014 and to promote the EU as a study and research destination for top international talent. Over time the ERA and the Bologna Process, which began as separate initiatives, have become intertwined with the Berlin Ministerial Conference explicitly linking the two in 2003.<sup>74</sup> The Communication states that the ERA has already helped to foster economies of scale with cross-border research projects and investment, while increasing exchanges and cooperation between institutions.<sup>75</sup> The EUA emphasised that the grand challenges in research, such as health and energy matters, could be better addressed by cross-border partnerships than by national institutions acting alone, and that this could be facilitated by the right types of funding at the European level.<sup>76</sup> The Minister was enthusiastic about the prospect of greater ties between UK universities and their Continental counterparts on joint research projects.<sup>77</sup> Other witnesses talked of how other EU projects such as the Marie Curie Actions, which have supported the training, mobility and skills development of more than 50,000 young researchers since its launch in 1996, and the "bureaucracy-free" European Research Council (ERC), which provides grant funding for frontier research, have helped to foster a genuine European research community.<sup>78</sup>
43. The EUA told us that there were many obstacles to the further development of the ERA and the mobility of young researchers across Europe and internationally. These included differing national career structures, status issues, social security and the feasibility of creating supplementary pension schemes. However, the EUA also noted that these were difficult issues to address and that the Commission was reluctant to bring forward proposals in this area.<sup>79</sup> In this vein, the UK Higher Education International Unit called for the creation of a "one-stop shop for researchers" similar to the German Academic Exchange Service.<sup>80</sup> The Communication states that the Commission is intending to facilitate greater researcher mobility through a European Framework for Research Careers including helping researchers to

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<sup>74</sup> The Bologna Process involves 47 countries, while the ERA consists of the 27 EU Member States and 12 other associated countries from Europe and beyond.

<sup>75</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 6

<sup>76</sup> Q 113

<sup>77</sup> Q 75

<sup>78</sup> EUA, Russell Group, Q 2, Q 105 and Q 120. The ERC was established in 2007 under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development (FP7). It forms part of, and applies to the same countries as, the ERA.

<sup>79</sup> Q 120

<sup>80</sup> QQ 12–14

identify job offers and employers to find suitable candidates through the EURAXESS Jobs Portal.<sup>81</sup> In its recent White Paper on Pensions, the Commission also commits itself to pursuing the development of a pan-European pension fund for researchers.<sup>82</sup>

44. The Communication also calls on Member States and universities to improve the mobility of learners, teachers and researchers, in terms of better access, employment conditions and progression opportunities. This includes full implementing the Directives on students and researchers<sup>83</sup> and facilitating the issuing of Schengen Area visas to students and researchers for shorter periods.<sup>84</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit urged the Government to be vigilant that any proposals brought forward by the Commission in these areas were workable in the domestic context, particularly the proposed changes to the Directives. However, neither of these Directives applies to the United Kingdom and it is not part of the Schengen Area. Furthermore, the Government supports the principle of the ERA subject to it respecting the autonomy of Member States to implement their own national policies.<sup>85</sup> Some of our witnesses expressed concerns about the impact of the Government's policy on visa controls on the mobility of those academics resident in countries outside the EU, potentially making the United Kingdom a less attractive destination for non-EU researchers to the detriment of the EU as a whole.<sup>86</sup> The Minister did not share these concerns.<sup>87</sup>
45. **We believe that the development of a European Research Area can achieve real benefits for the United Kingdom and EU. However, much progress remains to be made in increasing the mobility of researchers, including career structures and pension rights. We urge the Government to give particular attention to this area, and to become fully engaged in any relevant proposals brought forward by the Commission, notwithstanding their non-participation in EU immigration measures.**

### *Horizon 2020*

46. Horizon 2020 will supersede the current Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development (FP7) and also incorporate funding currently provided through the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the EIT.<sup>88</sup> The proposal will also seek greater alignment with other funds available under the EU's Cohesion Policy and Erasmus for All, as well as simplifying the application process. The Commission has proposed a total budget of €80 billion for Horizon 2020 for

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<sup>81</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 11

<sup>82</sup> COM (2012) 55 final, *White Paper: An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions*, 16 February 2012

<sup>83</sup> Council Directive 2004/114/EC on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service and Council Directive 2005/71/EC on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research

<sup>84</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 7. The Schengen Area is defined in Appendix 5.

<sup>85</sup> BIS

<sup>86</sup> Q 68, Q 105, UEL and British Academy

<sup>87</sup> Q 81

<sup>88</sup> 17932/11, COM (2011) 808: *Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation*, 30 November 2011

the period 2014 to 2020. Compared with the total allocations to the separate programmes under the current MFF (approximately €57 billion) this represents a 40 per cent increase, including a 77 per cent funding increase (to €13.2 billion) for the ERC and a 21 per cent funding increase (to €5.75 billion) for Marie Curie Actions. It will also fund the further development of the ERA.

47. Our earlier report on the next MFF concluded that the EU added value in the area of research and innovation, which could support the EU's economic recovery after the financial crisis, and therefore recommended that the level of funding allocated to the next framework programme should be increased relative to FP7 and the EU budget as a whole.<sup>89</sup> It also made a number of related recommendations that we are pleased to note have all been satisfied by the current form of the Horizon 2020 proposal.
48. Universities in the United Kingdom have been very successful at securing these funds and have received the second largest allocation under FP7 to date. However, we understand that British industry has been less successful in this regard.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps for this reason the Government seem enthusiastic about the Horizon 2020 proposal and, with regard to the Commission's proposed budget increase, the Minister stated that the Government would like this area to receive a "higher proportion of a smaller total budget but considered the Commission's preferred increase to be unrealistic."<sup>91</sup>
49. **We reiterate our recommendation that the Government should support the allocation of a greater proportion of funds to Horizon 2020 under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. We also call on the Government to develop a dedicated strategy to encourage and facilitate industry's access to these funds.**

### U-Multirank

50. Current rankings—including the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and Shanghai Jiaotong University's Academic Ranking of World Universities—mainly focus on research-intensive universities and only include a small proportion of European universities. The Commission therefore believes that a wider range of indicators and information should be made available to increase transparency and allow more informed choices to be made, as well as supporting policy-makers' higher education reforms. In response, the Commission intends to launch U-Multirank in 2013, which will allow users to profile universities using a number of performance indicators rather than just research output.<sup>92</sup>
51. Most of our witnesses were not convinced by the merits of yet another league table, with the British Council description of rankings as both a "blessing and a curse" capturing this dichotomy well.<sup>93</sup> The Russell Group told us that "ranking universities is fraught with difficulties and we have many concerns about the accuracy of any ranking. It is very difficult to capture fully in

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<sup>89</sup> European Union Committee, 13th Report of Session 2010–12: *EU Financial Framework from 2014* (HL Paper 125)

<sup>90</sup> POST Note 359, *EU Science & Technology Funding*, June 2010

<sup>91</sup> Q 90

<sup>92</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 10

<sup>93</sup> Q 47

numerical terms the performance of universities and their contribution to knowledge, to the world economy and to society. Making meaningful comparisons of universities both within, and across, national borders is a tough and complex challenge, not least because of issues relating to the robustness and comparability of data”.<sup>94</sup> The EUA were critical of existing ranking systems as favouring very large research intensive institutions<sup>95</sup> and while they praised the proposal’s attempt to move away from research outputs to look at other indicators, they considered that this would be hard to achieve in practice, particularly due to the lack of data in some universities and Member States and the difficulties in collecting data more generally, including the additional burdens that this may place on universities.<sup>96</sup>

52. Many of our other witnesses raised a series of concerns: about the proposal’s lack of clarity as to whether it would be a ranking or transparency tool;<sup>97</sup> that the league tables market was already too crowded, with each ranking deploying its own methodologies;<sup>98</sup> that it would confuse applicants and be incapable of responding to rapidly changing circumstances in institutional profiles;<sup>99</sup> that it could become a “blunt instrument” which would “not allow different strengths across diverse institutions to be recognised and utilised” and end up being used as the basis for future funding decisions;<sup>100</sup> on the grounds of quality, accuracy and lack of data;<sup>101</sup> and that EU funds could be better spent on other EU priorities.<sup>102</sup>
53. Notwithstanding these concerns, if the Commission’s stated intention of increasing transparency and providing more flexibility for students to make an informed choice based on different criteria proved to be possible, then many of our witnesses were prepared to support its introduction as potentially adding value.<sup>103</sup> The UK Bologna Experts were of the same view but considered that U-Multirank’s success was “highly dependent on the extent of institutional engagement, coverage, and accuracy of data used to compile the rankings” and that it was “vital that the instrument recognises the diverse character of European HEIs in so far as direct comparisons can be iniquitous and misleading”.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Russell Group

<sup>95</sup> The EUA produced a report entitled *Global University Rankings and their Impact* in 2011. Its main conclusions were that while global rankings were now an established feature of the higher education sector, they concentrated on only the top research universities; the way in which rankings were compiled lacked transparency; truly objective indicators did not exist; the benefits provided by rankings did not necessarily outweigh the unintended consequences; proposals for new ranking systems, such as U-Multirank, would experience difficulties with data collection and that higher education policy decisions should not be based solely on rankings data.

<sup>96</sup> Q 121. Others had concerns about this—UK Higher Education International Unit, BIS, Russell Group, Q 16 and Q 84—but the British Council did not think this would be particularly burdensome, Q 47.

<sup>97</sup> QAA and UK Higher Education International Unit

<sup>98</sup> 1994 Group, University Alliance, Professor Furlong, million+, University of Kent, UK Higher Education International Unit, Q 16 and Q 106

<sup>99</sup> 1994 Group

<sup>100</sup> University Alliance. NUS and UK Higher Education International Unit echoed these concerns.

<sup>101</sup> Russell Group and Q 121

<sup>102</sup> Russell Group, BIS, Scottish Government and HEFCE

<sup>103</sup> British Council, Dr. Anne Corbett, University of Salford, Association of Colleges and Engineering Professors’ Council

<sup>104</sup> UK Bologna Experts

54. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) acknowledged the Commission's efforts to overcome some of the limitations of traditional league tables and to render it more objective but advised "caution in providing any form of official sanction to any one form of ranking tool given that universal ranking systems have a history of lacking real comparability and robustness".<sup>105</sup> The NUS also welcomed the Commission's efforts but still had doubts about how it would work in practice, believing instead that improving the public information made available to students could be achieved by alternative means "without the need to introduce (yet another) potentially subjective and confusing rankings system".<sup>106</sup> The Government considered that "it might be useful" if it genuinely provided a transparent source of information for students wanting to study abroad but were not convinced that it would add value if it simply resulted in an additional European ranking system alongside the existing international ranking systems.<sup>107</sup> However, the Minister struck a less positive tone when he told us that it could be viewed as "an attempt by the EU Commission to fix a set of rankings in which [European universities] do better than [they] appear to do in the conventional rankings".<sup>108</sup>
55. We were interested to note that THES have recently revised their global rankings in 2010 in order to apply a different methodology and include a wider range of performance indicators (up from 6 to 13).<sup>109</sup> They told us that their approach seeks to achieve more objectivity by capturing the full range of a global university's activities—research, teaching, knowledge transfer and internationalisation—and allows users to rank institutions (including 178 in Europe) against five separate criteria: teaching (the learning environment rather than quality); international outlook (staff, students and research); industry income (innovation); research (volume income and reputation); and citations (research influence). In order to inform the revision of their rankings, their data supplier, Thomson Reuters, conducted a global survey which found that many users distrusted the methodology of the existing world rankings.<sup>110</sup> While THES considered that rankings were "relatively crude" and could never be properly objective, they nevertheless considered that if used appropriately they could still provide a useful role in providing information.<sup>111</sup>
56. **We also believe that the provision of clear information and guidance to students is important in order to assist them in making an informed choice of university. However, we also appreciate how difficult it can be to evaluate a wider range of university performance**

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<sup>105</sup> HEFCE

<sup>106</sup> NUS

<sup>107</sup> BIS

<sup>108</sup> Q 84

<sup>109</sup> THES has published an annual World University Ranking since 2004. The new World University Rankings were first published on 16 September 2010 and then again on 6 October 2011. It only concentrates on 400 global research-driven universities, with the option of searching only European universities. A detailed overview was provided in their written evidence. The full methodology and the explanation of each of the 13 separate performance indicators used is available at: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2011-2012/analysis-rankings-methodology.html>

<sup>110</sup> Thomson Reuters, *Global Opinion Survey: New Outlooks on Institutional Profiles*, February 2010

<sup>111</sup> Times Higher Education World University Rankings

**indicators in an objective manner, noting the limitations inherent in many of the existing ranking systems.**

57. **Therefore, it is important that the Commission is clear about the purpose of U-Multirank, what information will be provided and what methodology will be used. If the perceived deficiencies in most other ranking systems are overcome in relation to this proposal then we could be convinced of the benefits of its introduction. However, until these deficiencies can be overcome, we consider that the Commission should prioritise other activities. In the meantime, rankings such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings may have a valuable contribution to make.**

### **Internationalisation**

58. The Commission intends to publish a Communication on the internationalisation of higher education in early 2013, which they hope will support the establishment and development of internationalisation strategies by European universities.<sup>112</sup> Internationalisation cannot be precisely defined but is commonly understood to mean rendering a university's courses, curriculum, students, research output and institutional links, more international in nature. Many universities in the United Kingdom already enjoy substantial, wider international links and the EUA considered that this might sometimes be at the expense of fostering European connections.<sup>113</sup> Many witnesses endorsed the internationalising benefits of existing EU programmes such as Erasmus Mundus and Tempus.<sup>114</sup> The British Council considered these programmes to be of paramount importance, saying "if internationalisation of European higher education is to be achieved, EU programmes must actively promote and enable both institutional links and staff and student mobility to countries outside Europe".<sup>115</sup> The Scottish Government were also enthusiastic about the EU's potential role in terms of funding, which they hoped would complement Scotland's mobility and partnership schemes with countries such as China and India, which they considered to be key partner countries for the Scottish higher education sector.<sup>116</sup>
59. Some witnesses expressed support for the Commission's proposed development of an EU internationalisation strategy but others were not convinced that this was a priority.<sup>117</sup> The EUA's view was that a "common European strategy would also lead to a better visibility of European higher education, study and funding programmes, thus benefitting all Member States and offering orientation in particular for those countries currently developing or revising their internationalisation strategies".<sup>118</sup> The Government were sceptical and stated that they wanted to ensure that any strategy did not duplicate what was already happening through the Bologna

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<sup>112</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 14

<sup>113</sup> EUA

<sup>114</sup> British Council, UK Bologna Experts, Scottish Government and Q 19

<sup>115</sup> British Council

<sup>116</sup> Scottish Government

<sup>117</sup> The EU and British Council (Q 122 and Q 50) were in favour while the QAA was opposed.

<sup>118</sup> EUA

Process.<sup>119</sup> They also wanted to avoid resources being put into any worldwide publicity campaign promoting EU universities to prospective international students, if this went beyond the provision of generic information. They considered that it was up to individual Member States to market their own higher education systems and universities and noted that universities in the United Kingdom had already been very successful at doing this.<sup>120</sup> The Russell Group echoed this view and hoped that any strategy would add value rather than impeding the international activities and partnerships of the already highly internationalised UK universities.<sup>121</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit called for more information about the proposal and questioned the usefulness and effectiveness of having an international strategy at the EU level, suggesting that the funds could be better spent on assisting individual universities in developing their own internationalisation concepts and profiles.<sup>122</sup>

60. **The higher education sector is global in character. Given the Commission's supporting role in higher education policy and the importance of internationalisation to the sector, we see value in the production of a strategy in this area. However, any such strategy must identify, with full justification, those areas where the EU can add value to avoid duplicating the work already being carried out by universities and Member States. Areas where the EU could potentially add value include supporting mobility schemes and encouraging cooperation between European universities.**

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<sup>119</sup> Q 86

<sup>120</sup> BIS

<sup>121</sup> Russell Group

<sup>122</sup> UK Higher Education International Unit

## CHAPTER 4: STUDENT MOBILITY

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61. The EU has taken the lead in encouraging mobility, most notably through the Erasmus programme. There is also a Bologna Process dimension, with the 2009 Leuven Ministerial Conference agreeing a target of achieving 20 per cent mobility experience among students across the EHEA by 2020. The next Ministerial Conference, in Bucharest on 26 and 27 April 2012, may also adopt a requirement for each country to adopt a “mobility strategy”. The Communication on the Modernisation of Europe’s Higher Education System states that the Commission is developing a “mobility scoreboard” to assess progress in removing obstacles to learning mobility within the EU.<sup>123</sup> Student mobility across Europe is not only fuelled by participation in the Erasmus programme but also by students who enrol abroad for a whole course or part of a course.

### The benefits of mobility

62. Some of our witnesses stressed the personal benefits of mobility experience.<sup>124</sup> The EUA said that “it gives young people the opportunity to move, to learn and to have different personal, social experiences as well as a different learning experience. The skills that they develop are skills for life and are absolutely the skills that we need to make our economies perform better as well. They are not just personal skills”.<sup>125</sup> Other witnesses emphasised the benefits in terms of increased employability for those who participate.<sup>126</sup> million+ told us that there were “real advantages to students in placements overseas. Placements generally benefit students. They help them to mature; they give them a wider set of experiences; they make them much more employable by a wide range of employers; and they are definitely to be encouraged”.<sup>127</sup> The Scottish Government said they were “committed to increasing the outward mobility of Scottish students in order to promote personal development and ultimately their contribution to the economy.”<sup>128</sup> However, while the UK Bologna Experts agreed with the employability benefits they also emphasised that “the mission of European Higher Education must also uphold civic values, and develop knowledge”.<sup>129</sup> Dovile Alsuskaithe, a Lithuanian student whom we met during our visit to the University of East London, emphasised that her Erasmus placement at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden had not only benefited her personally and academically but had also demonstrated her adaptability to prospective employers.<sup>130</sup>

### Data

63. While there is much anecdotal evidence suggesting that mobility experiences increase students’ employability, it seems that there is little

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<sup>123</sup> COM (2011) 567, p.11

<sup>124</sup> UK Bologna Experts, Russell Group and Q 53

<sup>125</sup> Q 124

<sup>126</sup> British Council and Q 101

<sup>127</sup> Q 100

<sup>128</sup> Scottish Government

<sup>129</sup> UK Bologna Experts

<sup>130</sup> See Appendix 3

hard evidence available, although the 1994 Group directed our attention to a HEFCE report. Based on a survey of students studying abroad during 2003/04, the report demonstrated that, statistically, participating students generally achieved better degree results and earned higher graduate salaries.<sup>131</sup> The University of Salford stated that a much “more convincing demonstration of the value of mobility (for students and researchers) in terms of employment and business outcomes” was needed, because much of “the current body of evidence is anecdotal and is based on an assumption that mobility/international experience is inherently ‘a good thing’ and worth the additional investment of ‘effort’, time and money”.<sup>132</sup>

64. The NUS and the EUA also raised concerns about the general lack of good quality data and different data collection mechanisms relating to student mobility across Europe.<sup>133</sup> The NUS stated that “At present there are a number of different agencies responsible for the collection of a variety of statistics. For many Member States, this can mean they are unaware of how many students—and more importantly what type—are undertaking study abroad, where they go, or what they do while there. We would recommend a standardisation of data collection, with one overall agency responsible at a supranational level”.<sup>134</sup> The Minister agreed with the NUS’s concerns about data quality and supported improved collection methods as long as they were cost effective and not unduly burdensome on institutions.<sup>135</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit told us that, in the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Statistics Agency already provided very good data sets but acknowledged that this was not necessarily the case in other Member States.<sup>136</sup>
65. The Commission acknowledges that there is a need for better labour market intelligence on current and future skills requirements in order to help identify growth employment areas and achieve a better match between education and labour market needs. Through Eurostat, they intend to improve the availability of data on learning mobility and employment outcomes, as well as constructing a European Tertiary Education Register.<sup>137</sup> While we asked many of our witnesses about the Commission’s proposed European Tertiary Education Register none were in a position to elaborate on the detail and some requested further information from the Commission before its merits could be debated.<sup>138</sup>
66. **Substantive research into the links between mobility experiences and increased employability is urgently required in order to substantiate the anecdotal evidence. In this vein we endorse the Commission’s intention to improve the availability of data on learning mobility and**

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<sup>131</sup> Q 100. HEFCE/British Council, *International student mobility*, 2004 & 2010 (updated). The report confirms that there is a lack of hard evidence concerning the impact of mobility on employability but much anecdotal evidence from employers that graduates benefit from having had a mobility experience during their studies.

<sup>132</sup> University of Salford. The British Council echoed this view, Q 42

<sup>133</sup> Q 60 and EUA

<sup>134</sup> NUS

<sup>135</sup> Q 85

<sup>136</sup> Q 16

<sup>137</sup> COM (2011) 567, pp. 10–11

<sup>138</sup> HEFCE and QAA

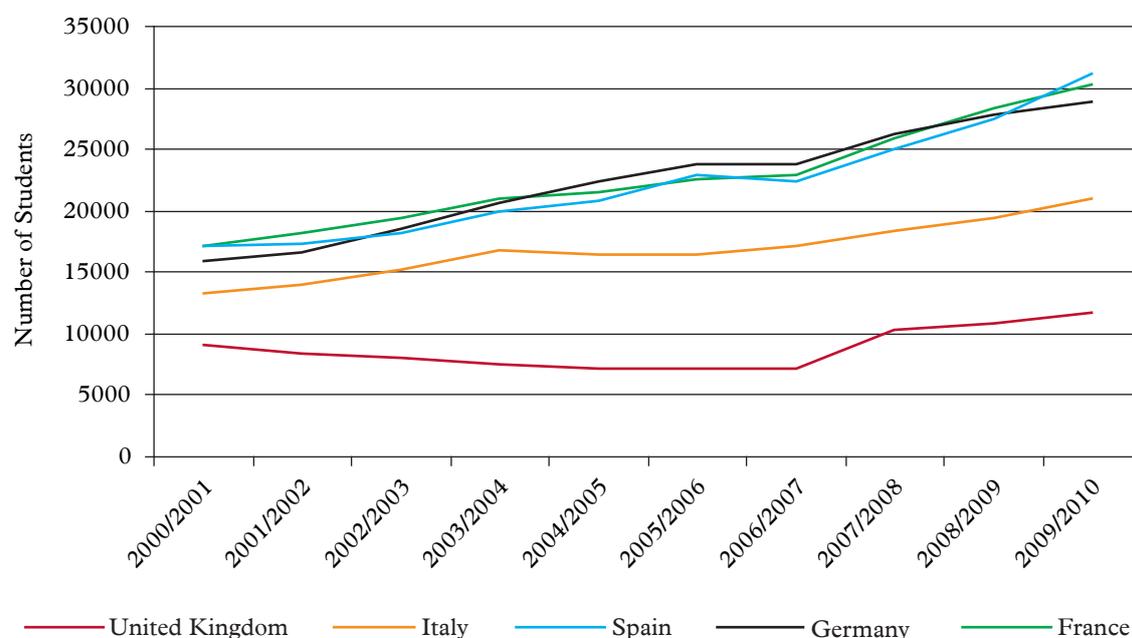
**employment outcomes but also urge them to pay more attention to how such data is collected. More information also needs to be made available about the proposed European Tertiary Education Register before its potential to add value can be considered by all concerned.**

### The Erasmus programme

67. The Erasmus programme is one of the best known and most successful EU programmes, which is aptly named after *Desiderius Erasmus*, the renaissance humanist.<sup>139</sup> The programme has now entered its 25th year, having been established in 1987. Since then, almost 2.3 million students have participated in study and work placements, and nine out of every 10 EU universities participate in the programme. The average duration of an Erasmus placement is 6 months and this has remained constant since 1987. During 2009/10, 213,266 individuals participated, representing just below 1 per cent of the total student population in the 32 participating countries. Of these over 61 per cent were female. Spain sent the greatest number of students abroad (31,158), followed by France (30,213) and then Germany (28,854). Spain was also the most popular destination for Erasmus students (35,389) followed by France (26,141) and then the United Kingdom (22,650). In total, 18 countries sent more students abroad than they received.<sup>140</sup> The total number of incoming and outgoing Erasmus students from 2000 to 2010 for the five most populous Member States—France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom—is contained in Figures 1 and 2.

**FIGURE 1**

#### Outgoing Erasmus Students by Member State, 2000–01 to 2009–10

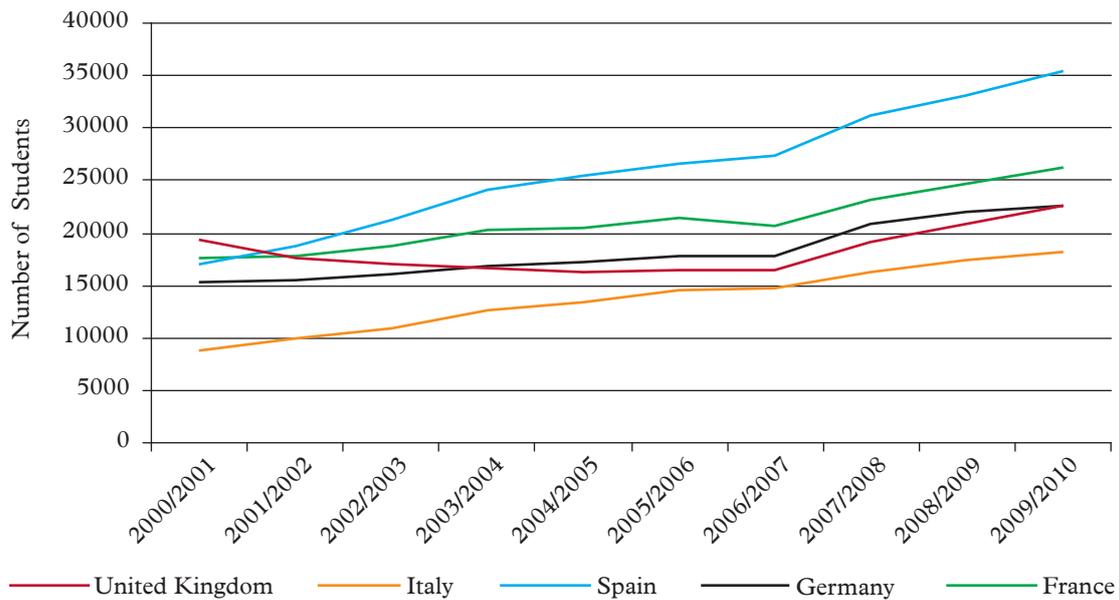


<sup>139</sup> He was born in the Netherlands and during his lifetime studied, taught and worked in Belgium, England, France, Italy, and Switzerland. He published a number of influential texts, including new Latin and Greek versions of the New Testament, and also debated the merits of the Reformation with Martin Luther.

<sup>140</sup> European Commission, *The Erasmus Programme 2009/2010: A Statistical Overview*, December 2011

FIGURE 2

## Incoming Erasmus Students by Member State, 2000–01 to 2009–10



Source: European Commission

68. Apart from facilitating greater mobility, the Erasmus programme was also expected to strengthen other forms of co-operation between universities across Europe and thus help to improve the quality of European higher education as a whole. The Commission maintains that there is, as a result of the programme, a greater sense of European citizenship and shared values.<sup>141</sup> All our witnesses were enthusiastic about the Erasmus programme and its perceived benefits.
69. **The Erasmus programme provides benefits to the universities and the students who participate, as well as to the EU as a whole. Not only do students going abroad benefit from their experience, but British universities benefit from the presence of Erasmus students from other countries. We believe that the benefits for students include improved interpersonal skills, language skills, character development, building confidence, increased cultural awareness and enhanced employability.**

### *Erasmus for All*

70. The Commission's Erasmus for All proposal brings together all the current MFF funding programmes for education, training, youth and sport into one unified programme, which will apply the well-known 'Erasmus' brand to all of the new sub-programmes.<sup>142</sup> It will support three key action areas, with two thirds of the budget being allocated to support greater learning mobility, including joint degree programmes and the Masters degree student loan guarantee mechanism (which is discussed below); one quarter of the budget supporting cooperation on innovation

<sup>141</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm)

<sup>142</sup> The existing Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes for vocational training and adult education, respectively, will become known as 'Erasmus Training', while the existing Comenius programme for schools will become known as 'Erasmus Schools'.

and good practices, including strengthening innovative partnerships between universities and business; and with five per cent of the budget providing support for policy reform, including the OMC approach, the proposed U-Multirank tool and the further development of Bologna tools such as the ECTS. The Jean Monnet Initiative, which promotes education and research on EU integration through support for dedicated modules and courses, Jean Monnet European Centres of Excellence and the College of Europe<sup>143</sup> will be preserved as a separate activity within the programme. We have already noted that many of our witnesses supported the Commission's proposed funding increase for Erasmus for All and while the British Council speculated that the increase could hypothetically result in a doubling of student mobility funding for the United Kingdom,<sup>144</sup> the Minister stood alone in opposing the proposed 70 per cent funding increase for Erasmus for All as being "completely unrealistic".<sup>145</sup> The Minister was not, at that stage, in a position to tell us if the Government intended to support any budget increase for this proposal during the negotiations.

71. **We welcome the Commission's intention to integrate the existing EU funding programmes for education, training, youth and sport into one unified programme. We note the Government's opposition to the Commission's preferred funding increase for Erasmus for All but reiterate our view that this programme merits a proportionately larger allocation under the next Multiannual Financial Framework.**

### **Mobility to and from the United Kingdom**

72. Globally, the UK is the second largest destination for students studying abroad, behind only the USA. The Government told us that during the period 2009/10, there were approximately 406,000 foreign students studying at universities in the United Kingdom while the number of UK students studying abroad was only about 33,000.<sup>146</sup> A study of British secondary school pupils intending to study abroad showed that the majority preference was for North American universities (56.5 per cent) rather than European ones (21.8 per cent).<sup>147</sup>
73. The British Council is the designated national agency for Erasmus in the United Kingdom and works closely with the Government regarding the operation of the programme. During the period 2010/11, they told us that there were 12,873 UK Erasmus participants, the highest number since the programme started in 1987.<sup>148</sup> The increase in participation seems to be, in part, due to the inclusion of work placements in the Erasmus programme

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<sup>143</sup> The College of Europe was founded in 1949 and provides postgraduate degrees in European studies through its campuses in Bruges and Warsaw. Many of its alumni progress to senior positions in the EU institutions.

<sup>144</sup> Q 49

<sup>145</sup> Q 87

<sup>146</sup> BIS

<sup>147</sup> BIS, *Motivations and Experiences of UK Students Studying Abroad*, January 2010

<sup>148</sup> British Council

since 2007, which many of our witnesses considered to be a positive step.<sup>149</sup>

74. However, as we have already noted,<sup>150</sup> outward mobility from comparator countries including France, Germany and Spain is still approximately three times that of the United Kingdom and, as a result, the United Kingdom is a substantial net receiver of Erasmus students from elsewhere in the EU. Regarding possible reasons for British students' continued reluctance to participate in mobility programmes, the NUS told us that their research had found that "28% of students decided not to study abroad because of uncertainty about language; 11% were unaware that opportunities were there at all and did not know that they could do it; and 37% cited financial implications".<sup>151</sup> These factors are explored in more detail below, alongside consideration of socio-economic and cultural barriers. Academic obstacles have also been cited, including concerns about the recognition of credits, the lack of compatible courses at partner universities and unaligned term dates. As we have already discussed, while the development of the ECTS has mitigated these concerns to an extent, some students still experience problems in these areas.<sup>152</sup>
75. **We note that students in other European countries appear to be more predisposed to participation in the Erasmus programme and mobility schemes more generally. We urge the Government and universities to do more to tackle the barrier to mobility in the United Kingdom.**
76. **We also support the notion that each Bologna country should adopt a "mobility strategy" and urge the Minister to support this at the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Bucharest.**

*Steering Group on outward student mobility*

77. The Government told us that they were committed to promoting outward student mobility and had established a Steering Group to this end. It was chaired by Professor Colin Riordan—who provided evidence to us during our inquiry on behalf of the UK Higher Education International Unit—and was tasked with reviewing current incentives, financial support and obstacles to outward student mobility.<sup>153</sup> After making an interim recommendation on the retention of the fee waiver scheme in December 2011 it reported to the Minister in March 2012, including recommendations on how to ensure that mobility continued and increased in the future. We understand that the Government is now deciding how matters should be taken forward in this area.

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<sup>149</sup> QAA, University Alliance, BIS, UK Higher Education International Unit and Q 59

<sup>150</sup> See Figures 1 and 2, p. 36

<sup>151</sup> Q 59

<sup>152</sup> UK Higher Education International Unit and Q 52. Also see Chapter 2. The Erasmus Student Network conducted a survey of 9,000 Erasmus students during the period 2010/11—*PRIME 2010: Problems of Recognition in Making Erasmus*, 27 September 2011—which found that only 73% received full recognition for their studies abroad, with some having to repeat either courses or exams on their return home.

<sup>153</sup> The work of the Steering Group was supported by four expert working groups, which considered the fee waiver scheme, business involvement and benefits to employability, UK institutional best practice and international best practice. BIS and the UK Higher Education International Unit acted as the joint secretariat.

### *Financial concerns and the fee waiver scheme*

78. The UK Higher Education International Unit stated that the most commonly cited barriers to mobility were financial. While Erasmus grants are available from the Commission—which were an average of €272 per month during 2009/10 but reduced to an average of €254 per month during 2010/11<sup>154</sup>—these are rarely sufficient to cover the costs of the placement, especially in the more expensive countries, which thus dissuades many less financially privileged students from viewing it as a feasible option.<sup>155</sup> Some institutions also offer bursaries to students from lower socio-economic groups and since 2011/12 the British Council has made a one-off supplementary grant of €500 available to students falling into this category.<sup>156</sup> The Scottish Government also recognised that financial concerns presented a barrier to mobility for many students and suggested that their commitment not to charge tuition fees should help to overcome this barrier. They are also exploring options to provide additional funding for Scottish students studying overseas as part of their Saltire Scholarships Programme and considered EU funding to be a crucial part of this.<sup>157</sup>
79. An Erasmus fee waiver, which involves the waiving of fees, for the duration of the placement that would normally be incurred for study at the student's home university in England and HEFCE, compensates the university concerned for its loss. The fee waiver is provided in addition to the Commission's Erasmus grants. HEFCE has proposed continuing the scheme until 2013/14, but there is no indication that they will be able to afford to compensate universities for the loss of much higher tuition fees in the longer term. The continuation of the fee waiver scheme is currently under review by the Government appointed Steering Group. The Devolved Administrations also provide a fee waiver and we understand that none have any plans to revoke it. Many of our witnesses pressed for retention of the fee waiver and the EUA warned that its removal would hit underrepresented and disadvantaged groups the hardest.<sup>158</sup>
80. **We consider the retention of the Erasmus fee waiver scheme by the Government, in some form, to be essential as it provides a substantial incentive for students to participate in the programme, particularly those from lower income backgrounds.**

### *Language skills*

81. The United Kingdom's lack of language competence is well known and needs little documentation.<sup>159</sup> Over time, it has arguably been compounded by the *de facto* adoption of English as the *lingua franca* of the EU institutions. After financial concerns, the lack of language skills is cited as a second

<sup>154</sup> European Commission, *The Erasmus Programme 2009/2010: A Statistical Overview*, December 2011

<sup>155</sup> UK Higher Education International Unit

<sup>156</sup> BIS

<sup>157</sup> Scottish Government

<sup>158</sup> Q 45, Q 102 and Q 118

<sup>159</sup> Research by the National Centre for Languages (CILT) suggests that foreign language learning in the UK, which was already comparatively low, has deteriorated even further over the last decade. See CILT, *HE language students in the UK 2002–03 to 2008–09: Annual analysis of HESA data*, 2010

important barrier to achieving greater UK mobility. The UK Higher Education International Unit saw this as a substantial reason for the United Kingdom's low participation in the programme, as students were "afraid of studying/working in a non-native language", meaning that the highest enrolment in Erasmus programmes was among UK language students. Furthermore, many universities were reluctant to send their students abroad unless the partner university could provide a range of courses in English.<sup>160</sup> In this respect, the University Alliance considered language to be less of an obstacle than previously because more Continental universities were now offering courses in English.<sup>161</sup>

82. Professor Riordan thought that the reluctance to learn languages in the United Kingdom was probably due to historical reasons and the British Council stated that this "fear of language" needed to be overcome.<sup>162</sup> They considered that foreign languages should become compulsory at both primary and secondary school, as a way of overcoming the "linguistic deficit" suffered by many students.<sup>163</sup> Other witnesses sympathised with this position.<sup>164</sup> At the university level they thought that the problem could also be tackled by allocating more resources to language centres or to extra-curricular courses offered by language departments, while the UK Higher Education International Unit called on the Commission to allocate specific funding for the provision of language training both before and during placements.<sup>165</sup>
83. The Government told us that they were fully committed to the teaching of languages in schools and that the current review of the National Curriculum was considering the status of languages at both primary and secondary level. They considered that the introduction of the English Baccalaureate<sup>166</sup> would "encourage more young people to take a language at GCSE level and should lead to a renaissance in languages in our schools".<sup>167</sup> The Scottish Government were also conscious about the lack of language skills being a problem and pointed out in their evidence to us that they were taking action to promote more widespread learning of languages in Scottish schools. They believed that raising awareness of the benefits of acquiring such skills, particularly for employability, would encourage greater participation.<sup>168</sup>
84. **The growing trend of using English as the dominant language in the academic world, as well as in the EU institutions, should not**

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<sup>160</sup> UK Higher Education International Unit

<sup>161</sup> University Alliance, supplementary evidence. The British Council stated that approximately 50 per cent of outgoing UK Erasmus participants were language students, whereas incoming Erasmus students study a much wider range of disciplines, with only around 15 per cent of them studying languages.

<sup>162</sup> Q 8 and Q 37

<sup>163</sup> British Council. The previous Government changed the National Curriculum to make languages optional.

<sup>164</sup> Professor Furlong, University of Salford, Q 100 and Q 115

<sup>165</sup> British Council and British Academy

<sup>166</sup> The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a new performance measure for any student who secures good GCSE or accredited certificate passes in English, mathematics, history or geography, two sciences and an ancient or modern foreign language. The Government intends the EBacc to become one of the main measures of achievement for schools in the future.

<sup>167</sup> BIS

<sup>168</sup> Scottish Government

**encourage the United Kingdom to be unconcerned about the opportunities and benefits presented by learning and working in another language. The United Kingdom has already fallen behind in language-learning capability. If this is not reversed it will not only threaten its ability to participate fully in EU programmes such as Erasmus but will also severely hamper individuals' employability<sup>169</sup> and the country's competitiveness within the Single Market and beyond.**

85. **As part of their reappraisal of language teaching policy, we recommend that language learning becomes compulsory at both primary and secondary school. Account should also be taken of the need for effective transition arrangements between primary and secondary school in this respect. Students need to be persuaded that they could benefit from Erasmus placements, even if they do not speak the relevant language fluently at the start of their assignments. Universities could also do more to encourage language skills among their students through language centres and extra-curricular courses, with support from the Commission where appropriate.**

*Socio-economic and cultural considerations*

86. The Communication on the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education System calls on Member States and institutions to encourage individuals from traditionally under-represented socio-economic groups into university education, through outreach in schools, targeted financial support to students from lower income backgrounds, by providing more transparent information on educational opportunities and bespoke guidance to inform study choices and reduce drop-out rates.<sup>170</sup>
87. A 2010 HEFCE report found that the most mobile students in the UK were "disproportionately young, female, white and middle-class, and are academic high-achievers".<sup>171</sup> The NUS considered this situation to be "untenable", in terms of the Bologna Process' social dimension and wider responsibilities to social mobility, and called for more targeted funding and resources (including information, advice and guidance) to be directed towards the students most in need.<sup>172</sup> The Government provided us with statistics on the socio-economic breakdown of UK Erasmus participants for the period 2008/09, which demonstrated clearly that students from ethnic minorities; with a disability; who were older; or who had parents from a non-professional background, were less likely to participate in the Erasmus programme.<sup>173</sup> These statistics are summarised in Figure 3.

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<sup>169</sup> Including candidates applying for jobs in the EU Institutions.

<sup>170</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 4

<sup>171</sup> HEFCE/British Council, *International student mobility*, 2004 & 2010 (updated), p. 2

<sup>172</sup> NUS

<sup>173</sup> BIS, supplementary evidence. The statistics also show that over 96 per cent were between the ages of 18 and 26 during 2008/09. However, five individuals over 65 years of age also participated during the same period.

FIGURE 3

### Analysis of UK Erasmus participants for 2008/09 by ethnicity and socio-economic group

POPULATION	Erasmus Population		Student Population	
	Total	%	Total	%
<i>Ethnicity</i>				
White	7,137	75.66%	845,716	71.92%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	43	0.46%	14,927	1.27%
Black or Black British - African	113	1.20%	40,069	3.41%
Other Black background	20	0.21%	3,558	0.30%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	164	1.74%	45,797	3.89%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	27	0.29%	28,435	2.42%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	10	0.11%	10,381	0.88%
Chinese	41	0.43%	12,862	1.09%
Other Asian background	64	0.68%	15,863	1.35%
Other (including mixed)	324	3.43%	43,907	3.73%
Unknown	182	1.93%	24,836	2.11%
Non-UK Students	1,308	13.87%	89,543	7.61%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,433</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,175,894</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<i>Socio-Economic Classification</i>				
Higher managerial and professional occupations	2,115	22.42%	181,277	15.42%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	2,338	24.79%	233,369	19.85%
Intermediate occupations	933	9.89%	109,909	9.35%
Small employers and own account workers	391	4.15%	56,722	4.82%
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	228	2.42%	35,274	3.00%
Semi-routine occupations	573	6.07%	102,779	8.74%
Routine occupations	231	2.45%	43,674	3.71%
Never worked and long-term unemployed	8	0.08%	1,868	0.16%
Not classified (including unknown)	2,616	27.73%	411,022	34.95%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,433</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,175,894</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<i>Disability</i>				
No known disability	8,779	93.07%	1,063,622	90.45%
A specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia	340	3.60%	57,705	4.91%
Blind/partially sighted	14	0.15%	2,016	0.17%
Deaf/hearing impairment	25	0.27%	3,311	0.28%
Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	12	0.13%	2,623	0.22%
Personal care support	0	0.00%	85	0.01%
Mental health difficulties	26	0.28%	6,052	0.51%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	7	0.07%	1,455	0.12%
An unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy,	88	0.93%	15,067	1.28%
asthma	15	0.16%	5,058	0.43%
Multiple disabilities	50	0.53%	9,178	0.78%
A disability not listed above	77	0.82%	9,722	0.83%
Not known				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,433</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,175,894</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

88. The “social dimension” first received recognition under the Bologna Process, with the 2005 Bergen Ministerial Conference agreeing that it was a “constituent part of the European Higher Education Area”. The 2007 London Ministerial Conference *Communiqué* also agreed that “the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations” and that “students [should be] able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background”. We understand that an Observatory on the Social Dimension in Higher Education began to be developed after the 2007

Ministerial Conference in order to improve data and monitoring in this area. The British Council and Government called for more research to be conducted by the Commission into social mobility issues in higher education<sup>174</sup> so providing adequate funding for the Observatory may provide a good opportunity to meet this objective. In this respect, we also noted with interest Birkbeck College's social class, gender, participation and lifelong learning (GLAS) project—co-financed by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme—and endorse its view that these issues are “common to all European countries and something, which requires a transnational, trans-cultural collaborative approach”.<sup>175</sup> We look forward to receiving notification of this project's findings in due course.

89. The EUA told us that “students whose parents have not attended higher education and have not been mobile have a much more difficult threshold to get over” and suggested that providing access to mentors inside the universities may mitigate this problem.<sup>176</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit talked about the persistence of “cultural and motivational barriers” and the “reluctance of individuals to move out of their comfort zone”, stating that “many students—especially less privileged ones and those who undertake part-time employment alongside their studies—do not see going abroad as practical possibility”. Staff from the University of East London also mentioned that many of their students had rarely left the local area let alone travelled abroad beyond visiting their ancestral country of origin.<sup>177</sup> The 1994 Group remarked that those students who enjoy the “social advantage of travelling widely before they go to university know that ‘abroad’ is not a frightening place”.<sup>178</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit suggested that a way of overcoming this barrier was by intervening in schools and families from an early age.<sup>179</sup> The NUS also talked of the “boyfriend/girlfriend effect”: having to spend time apart, giving up accommodation and a part-time job all acting as a disincentive.<sup>180</sup>
90. **The social dimension of the Bologna Process and the Erasmus programme is of paramount importance in terms of widening participation in higher education.**
91. **We consider that socio-economic and cultural considerations constitute significant barriers to mobility but we acknowledge that these issues are much harder to address than financial and linguistic challenges. In order to inform this matter we urge the Bucharest Ministerial Conference to endorse the further development of the Observatory on the Social Dimension in Higher Education in order to improve data and monitoring in this area. Intervention at an early age to ingrain mobility opportunities could also prove crucial in overcoming this barrier. Improving the flexibility of placements, and the provision of information about them, could also help to achieve wider participation.**

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<sup>174</sup> British Council and BIS

<sup>175</sup> Birkbeck College

<sup>176</sup> Q 118

<sup>177</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>178</sup> Q 103

<sup>179</sup> Q 24

<sup>180</sup> Q 57

*Greater flexibility*

92. Many witnesses thought the current emphasis on Erasmus placements of up to a year were too long, therefore reducing their appeal and that greater flexibility was needed.<sup>181</sup> The UK Higher Education International Unit was also supportive of shorter placements, stating that this “would enable many more students, and especially those currently underrepresented, to take part in the Erasmus programme, since shorter mobility periods would present less of a financial burden and would appear less daunting to individuals. This might also encourage longer periods of mobility at a later point, by helping to increase interest in work and study abroad and to build confidence in students”.<sup>182</sup>
93. The Scottish Government indicated that they had suggested to the Commission that the three month minimum duration for Erasmus placements was too long, particularly as it disadvantaged those on low incomes, as well as those with children or caring responsibilities. Their view was that “It is not so much the length of the experience that is significant but rather the quality of it and the learning outcomes that result ... For those who are less confident [about travelling to Europe to study] a short taster of studying abroad may well be the catalyst to further mobility in the future”.<sup>183</sup> The NUS emphasised the benefits of shorter periods of as little as two weeks, as well as shared semesters and also mentioned the possibilities offered by “virtual mobility” in terms of allowing students who are most at risk of never going abroad to experience what studying abroad was like and imbue them with some of the same benefits, including increased cultural awareness and academic confidence.<sup>184</sup>
94. **We call on the Government and the Commission to investigate the feasibility and potential advantages of introducing more flexible and shorter Erasmus placements, including how any administrative difficulties could be overcome in this respect.**

*More information*

95. The University of Salford remarked that, by the time students started university they were often reluctant to undertake placements and exchanges abroad due to their lack of knowledge about the opportunities and suggested that mobility opportunities should be promoted more widely in schools. The British Council agreed, saying that “one key aspect of stimulating greater interest in the opportunity for mobility as a university student is to introduce the idea at school and to develop curricula and awareness at school which will lead naturally to an aspiration to mobility during tertiary education”.<sup>185</sup> The University Alliance agreed that prospective students needed to be targeted with more information, especially about the emphasis that employers place on this type of experience. They also suggested using “student ambassadors” to speak about their experiences, promote the benefits of the scheme and provide advice to those considering mobility.

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<sup>181</sup> British Council, NUS, QAA, Scottish Government, University of Salford and Q 116

<sup>182</sup> UK Higher Education International Unit

<sup>183</sup> Scottish Government

<sup>184</sup> NUS. Such a scheme would essentially apply the culture of the Open University—online lectures, tutorials and discussion forums—on a cross-border basis.

<sup>185</sup> British Council

Other witnesses agreed<sup>186</sup> and it was also suggested that the Commission could make grants available for such ventures, as well as encouraging universities to organise promotional Erasmus days and workshops.<sup>187</sup> In this respect, we were pleased to hear that the British Council is developing an online mobility portal for students providing a central repository of information.<sup>188</sup>

96. The Government stated that the Steering Group had examined how greater interest in mobility opportunities could be generated among university students by increasing awareness at school of programmes such as Erasmus, as well as providing more centralised information about mobility opportunities and involving employers in this process.<sup>189</sup>
97. **We consider the provision of more information, as well as promotional activities about the mobility opportunities that are available, by universities and policy makers, to be key in increasing engagement with the Erasmus programme. In this respect, we welcome the British Council’s development of an online information portal for students.**

### Threats to the UK’s competitive position

98. Concerns were raised by our witnesses about the development of divisions and differences between studying in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the EU with some considering that the introduction of higher tuition fees in England would have a negative impact on mobility.<sup>190</sup> The EUA told us that more needed to be done to explain the new system to European partners and “precisely what the new policy means for exchanges and students who wish to come in and students who wish to go out” otherwise the complications may prevent joint degree programmes and other collaborative projects being developed.<sup>191</sup> As students from other Member States—Erasmus or not—have to be treated in the same way as domestic students under EU law, students coming to the UK before 1998 did not have to pay any tuition fees. However, with the successive fee increases since this date, the next generation of students have been faced with a substantially more expensive period of study in English universities. While it is too early to tell for sure whether the new tuition fee arrangements are dissuading foreign students from coming to the United Kingdom in significant numbers, early statistical returns confirm that the number of EU applicants is declining, for whatever reason.<sup>192</sup>
99. This risk is compounded by the recent growth of courses taught in the English Language by Continental universities, particularly at the postgraduate level, which is a feature of the increasingly competitive global market for international students. The NUS remarked that the University of

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<sup>186</sup> Mixed Economy Group of colleges (MEG) and Businet and UK Higher Education International Unit

<sup>187</sup> UK Higher Education International Unit

<sup>188</sup> British Council

<sup>189</sup> BIS

<sup>190</sup> HEFCE, British Academy, Russell Group, million+ and Q 92

<sup>191</sup> Q 117

<sup>192</sup> UCAS, *2012 Applicant Figures*, 30 January 2012, states that the number of EU applicants for full-time undergraduate courses fell by 11.2 per cent year on year. This was flagged up in supplementary evidence from million+.

Maastricht was stepping up its efforts to recruit students from the United Kingdom.<sup>193</sup> This is a good example of a Continental university which is very close to United Kingdom in terms of standards and quality, but which charges significantly lower course fees.<sup>194</sup> Such courses are undoubtedly attractive to British students who lack the necessary language skills it also means that the United Kingdom can no longer guarantee that it will retain its competitive edge in attracting foreign students. While the Minister accepted that universities in the United Kingdom were facing an increasingly competitive challenge from elsewhere in the EU, he generally considered this to be a good thing.<sup>195</sup>

100. **It is too early to tell what the effect of higher tuition fees in England and increased competition from Continental universities will be on the attractiveness of the United Kingdom as a destination for EU, and even domestic, students. We nevertheless urge the Government to be vigilant about this and to engage actively with its partners across the EU in promoting the strengths of the higher education sector in the United Kingdom.**

### Erasmus Masters Degree Mobility Scheme

101. The Commission intends to increase the mobility of postgraduate students, who acquire the kind of advanced skills that are particularly valued by employers, by improving their access to affordable finance through the provision of a Masters-level student loan guarantee facility.<sup>196</sup> They hope to make such a facility available from 2014, so that students who normally face financial constraints can elect to take their Masters degree in another Member State. The Commission is clear that this is an area in which they can add value, particularly as national loans are not typically transferable abroad and commercial loans are commonly not accessible for students from lower income backgrounds.<sup>197</sup>
102. Many of our witnesses supported the Commission's proposal for a loan guarantee facility as a step in the right direction, which could address the lack of funds available in this area and increase mobility.<sup>198</sup> The NUS supported its introduction as a positive way to increase participation but cautioned that: "We would however want guarantees surrounding the rate of interest, length of repayment and the point at which graduates start repayment. A system of loans that has commercial terms and conditions attached would not be acceptable. We strongly believe that there should be significant subsidy from the Commission so that mobility loans do not attract real interest rates. If such a loan system was introduced we would also want there to be appropriate monitoring of access to the loans to ensure that it is supporting a

<sup>193</sup> Q 65. An article by the university's president, Professor Martin Paul—'Moving beyond the Bologna process: Europe as one higher-education space', *Guardian Professional*, 9 November 2011—states that the number of UK students studying there had increased fivefold over the past two years.

<sup>194</sup> In contrast to the maximum annual tuition fee of £9,000 for an undergraduate degree in England the equivalent rate is €1,713 (approximately £1,450) at Maastricht University.

<sup>195</sup> Q 77. UK Higher Education International Unit agreed, Q 10.

<sup>196</sup> The detail of this proposal has yet to be determined but may involve the Commission acting as the guarantor to loans provided by commercial organisations.

<sup>197</sup> COM (2011) 567, p. 12

<sup>198</sup> 1994 Group, British Council, EUA, Engineering Professors' Council, Russell Group, million+, UK Bologna Experts, University of Kent and University of Salford

widening of access”.<sup>199</sup> The NUS also cited the view of the ESU, of which it is a member, which has called for the scheme to be frozen due to their commitment to the principle of free education.<sup>200</sup> Other witnesses agreed but called for more details about the proposed facility before they could consider the merits, some having concerns that it could “cut across” Member State competences.<sup>201</sup> The British Academy thought that the scheme could provide a valuable alternative source of support and encouragement to individuals to pursue postgraduate study and research but considered that the size of support was unlikely to be sufficient.<sup>202</sup> We have already noted concerns about the position of the United Kingdom’s one-year Masters degree in the context of the EHEA.<sup>203</sup>

103. **We endorse the proposed Masters level student loan guarantee facility if it incorporates competitive interest rates and favourable repayment terms. We also call on the Government to be vigilant in ensuring that the UK one-year Masters degree is properly taken into account as the details of the proposed scheme are developed.**

### Revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive

104. The operation of the ECTS does not necessitate the automatic recognition of qualifications. However, in order to facilitate the free movement of certain professionals throughout the European Economic Area,<sup>204</sup> the Professional Qualifications Directive<sup>205</sup> grants automatic recognition to seven professions on the basis of agreed (and binding) minimum training standards, including the requisite bachelor and masters degrees that may be required to practice those professions.<sup>206</sup> On 22 June 2011 the Commission published a Green Paper on the modernisation of the Directive and in response to this we published a report which focused on the operation of the existing Directive in relation to healthcare professionals.<sup>207</sup>
105. On 19 December 2011, the Commission published their proposal to revise the Directive.<sup>208</sup> Among many other provisions, it proposes that the minimum training standards, which were originally formulated in the 1970s and 1990s, should be updated to reflect current practice, alongside other measures to ensure better compliance with the agreed standards. This was in

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<sup>199</sup> Q 57. University of Salford and Russell Group echoed this view.

<sup>200</sup> See ESU, *Statement on the Modernisation Agenda*, 12 November 2011. It states that “education is a right and has to be considered as a public good which citizens pay taxes for. Loans are thus not an acceptable way of financing higher education”.

<sup>201</sup> BIS, UK Higher Education International Unit, Russell Group and Scottish Government

<sup>202</sup> British Academy

<sup>203</sup> See paragraphs 20 and 21

<sup>204</sup> The EEA was established on 1 January 1994 following an agreement between the member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and what became the EU. It allows Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to participate in the EU’s Single Market without becoming Member States of the EU. As a result they are obliged to adopt all EU legislation relating to the Single Market, except regarding agriculture and fisheries.

<sup>205</sup> Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications

<sup>206</sup> They are doctors, dentists, general care nurses, midwives, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons and architects.

<sup>207</sup> European Union Committee, 22nd Report of Session 2010–12, *Safety First: Mobility of Healthcare Professionals in the EU* (HL Paper 201)

<sup>208</sup> 18899/11, COM (2011) 883: *Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System*

accordance with one of our report's recommendations. In terms of the duration of these training periods, the proposal also states that closer alignment will also be sought between the terms of the revised Directive and the ECTS.

106. In the context of our inquiry, the Government told us that they believed that the forthcoming negotiations on the revision of the Directive should take into account Bologna instruments and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>209</sup> and synchronise them with the updated minimum training standards. Otherwise, they were concerned about the risk of creating different sets of frameworks for higher education, which did not take account of labour market inflexibilities.<sup>210</sup>
107. **We endorse the Government's intention to seek closer alignment between the revised Professional Qualifications Directive and the European Qualifications Framework and Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.**

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<sup>209</sup> The Commission developed the EQF, which was introduced in 2008, to act as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across the EU. It encourages Member States to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 onwards carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. The EQF is closely related to, and compatible with, the Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, which was agreed by the Bologna countries in 2005.

<sup>210</sup> BIS. The Government's impact assessment, which accompanied their Explanatory Memorandum on the proposal, also noted that in 2010 over 11,000 professionals from the EEA applied to practise their profession in the United Kingdom, while only 880 British professionals applied to do the same elsewhere in the EEA. It seems that a reluctance to participate in mobility schemes is not restricted to the student population of the United Kingdom.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

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### Chapter 2: The Bologna Process

108. We endorse the voluntary and consensual approach adopted by the Bologna Process and consider that it has resulted in tangible benefits for Europe (paragraph 14).
109. The Commission, and the EU more generally, plays a valuable role in the Bologna Process and adds value to higher education in Europe. However, we believe that it is important to retain clear demarcations between their respective remits and objectives in order to avoid duplication and ensure continuing complementarity (paragraph 16).
110. The familiarity of the Bologna Process in the United Kingdom—such as the three-cycle degree structure—should not make universities complacent about its potential benefits, in terms of encouraging mobility and allowing greater collaboration with Continental universities, and they should endeavour to keep pace with developments in the rest of the European Higher Education Area. It is in the interests of the Government, universities, staff, students, employers and wider civil society for the United Kingdom to continue to be actively engaged in the Bologna Process (paragraph 18).
111. We call on the Government to be more proactive in ensuring that the one-year Masters degree, which is already recognised in theory, is accommodated within the European Higher Education Area in practice (paragraph 21).
112. We regret the fact that the Government's June 2011 White Paper on higher education made no reference at all to the European context, despite the clear importance of initiatives such as the Bologna Process to universities in the United Kingdom. We urge the Government and universities more actively to promote and exploit the actual and potential benefits of the Bologna Process to their students and staff, including the utility of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and the Diploma Supplement. Both of these instruments have obvious benefits but we regret that while they have been fully adopted in Scotland, this is not yet the case in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, despite their adoption by the majority of the 47 Bologna countries (paragraph 24).

### Chapter 3: The EU's contribution of the modernisation of higher Education

113. European universities are currently operating within a very difficult financial climate. This need not mean that the modernisation agenda cannot succeed but it is important for the Commission to be realistic about what can be achieved. The continued availability of funding for European universities from EU programmes is also important in this context (paragraph 26).
114. We reiterate our support for the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy to achieve “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. We believe that the EU can add value in this area, and can support the EU's economic recovery (paragraph 28).
115. Given the increasing need for higher-level skills, higher education has a key role to play. To this end, we believe that the Commission should investigate the

collection of further data linking higher education provision to employability in order to achieve a better match between university programmes and labour market demand, while recognising the more general benefits of studying for a degree for students and employers alike (paragraph 29).

116. We believe that the EU can play an important role in fostering greater collaboration between universities and businesses. Various EU initiatives have yet to prove their worth but have a great deal of potential. These include the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, its Knowledge and Innovation Communities and other initiatives, including the European Innovation Partnerships (paragraph 34).
117. We are disappointed that the Wilson Review did not take adequate account of the role that the EU can play in fostering greater collaboration between universities and businesses in the domestic context. We urge the Government to acknowledge the role that the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, its Knowledge and Innovation Communities and the European Innovation Partnerships can play when taking forward the Review's recommendations (paragraph 36).
118. We support the allocation of a bigger proportion of the budget under the next Multiannual Financial Framework to research, education and innovation, subject to reductions being made in other areas of the budget such as the Common Agricultural Policy, and overall restraint being achieved. Closer alignment with the Structural Funds should also be further developed. We consider that the targeting of resources in this way will result in long-term economic benefits for the EU (paragraph 40).
119. We believe that the development of a European Research Area can achieve real benefits for the United Kingdom and EU. However, much progress remains to be made in increasing the mobility of researchers, including career structures and pension rights. We urge the Government to give particular attention to this area, and to become fully engaged in any relevant proposals brought forward by the Commission, notwithstanding their non-participation in EU immigration measures (paragraph 45).
120. We reiterate our recommendation that the Government should support the allocation of a greater proportion of funds to Horizon 2020 under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. We also call on the Government to develop a dedicated strategy to encourage and facilitate industry's access to these funds (paragraph 49).
121. We also believe that the provision of clear information and guidance to students is important in order to assist them in making an informed choice of university. However, we also appreciate how difficult it can be to evaluate a wider range of university performance indicators in an objective manner, noting the limitations inherent in many of the existing ranking systems (paragraph 56).
122. Therefore, it is important that the Commission is clear about the purpose of U-Multirank, what information will be provided and what methodology will be used. If the perceived deficiencies in most other ranking systems are overcome in relation to this proposal then we could be convinced of the benefits of its introduction. However, until these deficiencies can be overcome, we consider that the Commission should prioritise other activities. In the meantime, rankings such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings may have a valuable contribution to make (paragraph 57).

123. The higher education sector is global in character. Given the Commission's supporting role in higher education policy and the importance of internationalisation to the sector, we see value in the production of a strategy in this area. However, any such strategy must identify, with full justification, those areas where the EU can add value to avoid duplicating the work already being carried out by universities and Member States. Areas where the EU could potentially add value include supporting mobility schemes and encouraging cooperation between European universities (paragraph 60).

#### **Chapter 4: Student mobility**

124. Substantive research into the links between mobility experiences and increased employability is urgently required in order to substantiate the anecdotal evidence. In this vein we endorse the Commission's intention to improve the availability of data on learning mobility and employment outcomes but also urge them to pay more attention to how such data is collected. More information also needs to be made available about the proposed European Tertiary Education Register before its potential to add value can be considered by all concerned (paragraph 66).
125. The Erasmus programme provides benefits to the universities and the students who participate, as well as to the EU as a whole. Not only do students going abroad benefit from their experience, but British universities benefit from the presence of Erasmus students from other countries. We believe that the benefits for students include improved interpersonal skills, language skills, character development, building confidence, increased cultural awareness and enhanced employability (paragraph 69).
126. We welcome the Commission's intention to integrate the existing EU funding programmes for education, training, youth and sport into one unified programme. We note the Government's opposition to the Commission's preferred funding increase for Erasmus for All but reiterate our view that this programme merits a proportionately larger allocation under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (paragraph 71).
127. We note that students in other European countries appear to be more predisposed to participation in the Erasmus programme and mobility schemes more generally. We urge the Government and universities to do more to tackle the barrier to mobility in the United Kingdom (paragraph 75).
128. We also support the notion that each Bologna country should adopt a "mobility strategy" and urge the Minister to support this at the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Bucharest (paragraph 76).
129. We consider the retention of the Erasmus fee waiver scheme by the Government, in some form, to be essential as it provides a substantial incentive for students to participate in the programme, particularly those from lower income backgrounds (paragraph 80).
130. The growing trend of using English as the dominant language in the academic world, as well as in the EU institutions, should not encourage the United Kingdom to be unconcerned about the opportunities and benefits presented by learning and working in another language. The United Kingdom has already fallen behind in language-learning capability. If this is not reversed it will not only threaten its ability to participate fully in EU programmes such as Erasmus but will also severely hamper individuals'

employability and the country's competitiveness within the Single Market and beyond (paragraph 84).

131. As part of their reappraisal of language teaching policy, we recommend that language learning becomes compulsory at both primary and secondary school. Account should also be taken of the need for effective transition arrangements between primary and secondary school in this respect. Students need to be persuaded that they could benefit from Erasmus placements, even if they do not speak the relevant language fluently at the start of their assignments. Universities could also do more to encourage language skills among their students through language centres and extra-curricular courses, with support from the Commission where appropriate (paragraph 85).
132. The social dimension of the Bologna Process and the Erasmus programme is of paramount importance in terms of widening participation in higher education (paragraph 90).
133. We consider that socio-economic and cultural considerations constitute significant barriers to mobility but we acknowledge that these issues are much harder to address than financial and linguistic challenges. In order to inform this matter we urge the Bucharest Ministerial Conference to endorse the further development of the Observatory on the Social Dimension in Higher Education in order to improve data and monitoring in this area. Intervention at an early age to ingrain mobility opportunities could also prove crucial in overcoming this barrier. Improving the flexibility of placements, and the provision of information about them, could also help to achieve wider participation (paragraph 91).
134. We call on the Government and the Commission to investigate the feasibility and potential advantages of introducing more flexible and shorter Erasmus placements, including how any administrative difficulties could be overcome in this respect (paragraph 94).
135. We consider the provision of more information, as well as promotional activities about the mobility opportunities that are available, by universities and policy makers, to be key in increasing engagement with the Erasmus programme. In this respect, we welcome the British Council's development of an online information portal for students (paragraph 97).
136. It is too early to tell what the effect of higher tuition fees in England and increased competition from Continental universities will be on the attractiveness of the United Kingdom as a destination for EU, and even domestic, students. We nevertheless urge the Government to be vigilant about this and to engage actively with its partners across the EU in promoting the strengths of the higher education sector in the United Kingdom (paragraph 100).
137. We endorse the proposed Masters level student loan guarantee facility if it incorporates competitive interest rates and favourable repayment terms. We also call on the Government to be vigilant in ensuring that the UK one-year Masters degree is properly taken into account as the details of the proposed scheme are developed (paragraph 103).
138. We endorse the Government's intention to seek closer alignment between the revised Professional Qualifications Directive and the European Qualifications Framework and Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (paragraph 107).

## APPENDIX 1: SUB-COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICIES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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The Members of the Sub-Committee which conducted this inquiry were:

Viscount Bridgeman  
 Lord Cotter  
 The Earl of Courtown  
 Lord Eames  
 Lord Foulkes of Cumnock  
 Baroness Henig  
 Lord Lexden  
 Baroness Prosser  
 Baroness Scott of Needham Market  
 Lord Skidelsky  
 Lord Whitty  
 Baroness Young of Hornsey (Chairman)

### Declarations of Interests

Viscount Bridgeman  
*Joint President, Reed's School*

Lord Cotter  
*No relevant interests*

The Earl of Courtown  
*No relevant interests*

Lord Eames  
*Graduate, Queen's University, Belfast: LL.B., PhD. Faculty of Law*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Queen's University, Belfast*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Trinity College, Dublin*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Cambridge University*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Lancaster University*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Aberdeen University*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Exeter University*  
*Honorary Doctorate, University of Ulster*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Virginia Theological Seminary*  
*Honorary Doctorate, Yale University*

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock  
*No relevant interests*

Baroness Henig  
*Honorary Fellow, Lancaster University*  
*Board Member and former Chair, Storey Creative Industries Centre, Lancaster (part of a consortium that is in receipt of EU funding)*

Lord Lexden  
*No relevant interests*

Baroness Prosser  
*Honorary degree, London Metropolitan University*  
*Honorary degree, University of East London*

Baroness Scott of Needham Market  
*No relevant interests*

Lord Skidelsky  
*Emeritus Professor of Political Economy, University of Warwick*

Lord Whitty

*No relevant interests*

Baroness Young of Hornsey

*Taught at Middlesex University; was involved in Erasmus programmes in the 1990s and a past member of Board of Governors*

*Associate Research Fellow, Warwick University*

*Visiting Professor, Birkbeck, University of London*

*Emeritus Professor, Middlesex University*

*Past Member of Court of Governors, London School of Economics*

**Members of the European Union Committee present when this report was considered declared the following interests**

Lord Hannay of Chiswick

*Member of Council, University of Kent*

Lord Jopling

*Member of Court, University of York*

Lord Maclennan of Rogart

*Trustee, University of the Highlands and Islands Development Trust*

A full list of registered interests of Members of the House of Lords can be found at

<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF WITNESSES

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Evidence is published online at [www.parliament.uk/hleug](http://www.parliament.uk/hleug) and available for inspection at the Parliamentary Archives (020 7219 5314)

Evidence received by the Committee is listed below in chronological order of oral evidence session and in alphabetical order. Those witnesses with \* gave both oral evidence and written evidence. All other witnesses submitted written evidence only.

### Oral evidence in chronological order

- \* (QQ 1–26) UK Higher Education International Unit
- \* (QQ 27–50) British Council
- \* (QQ 51–69) National Union of Students
- \* (QQ 70–91) Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Science
- \* (QQ 92–107) 1994 Group, million+, Russell Group and University Alliance
- \* (QQ 108–124) European University Association

### Alphabetical list of all witnesses

- \* 1994 Group
- Association of Colleges
- Association of Foreign Lecturers in Italy (ALLSI)
- Birkbeck College
- British Academy
- \* British Council
- Dr Anne Corbett
- \* Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
- Engineering Professors' Council
- \* European University Association (EUA)
- Professor Paul Furlong, Cardiff University
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- \* million+
- Mixed Economy Group of colleges (MEG) and Businet
- \* National Union of Students (NUS)
- Northern Ireland Assembly
- Julia Osborn, University of London
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
- \* Russell Group

The Scottish Government

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

UK Bologna Experts

\* UK Higher Education International Unit

University of Kent

University of Salford

\* University Alliance

## APPENDIX 3: SITE VISIT

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### **The EU Contribution to the Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe Inquiry: visit to the Docklands Campus of the University of East London, 26 January 2012**

Baroness Young of Hornsey, Viscount Bridgeman and Lord Whitty were in attendance, accompanied by Michael Torrance, Clerk to the Committee, and Alistair Dillon, Policy Analyst.

The building and development of the Docklands Campus was, alongside the construction of City Airport, an integral part of the area's regeneration. Its construction was supported by both European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) revenue and capital funding and has also benefited from European Social Fund (ESF) revenue. The legacy from ERDF and ESF remains and has helped the university establish entrepreneurship and enterprise as a key part of their work with students. Their incubation activities and work with SMEs helped the university to secure accreditation as an EU Business Innovation Centre (BIC) and they are currently the only EU BIC in London. The University has also recently developed programmes with the support of the EU Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action programmes, including projects that support the greater inclusion of people with learning difficulties. The University has also recently started participating in the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).

The Committee were met by Professor Patrick McGhee (Vice Chancellor), Selena Bolingbroke (Pro Vice Chancellor for Strategic Planning and External Development), Ray Wilkinson (Director of External and Strategic Development Service), John Lock (Director of UEL 2012 Office), Adrienne Clarke (Director of International Office), Dovile Alsauskaite (UEL student and former Erasmus participant) and Karen Wilton (Knowledge Dock—Conference & Events Executive).

*Context Setting: How UEL has benefited from EU funding and how this funding has helped the University to develop 'Education led Regeneration'.*

Professor McGhee stated that UEL were keen to contribute to the ongoing higher education debates in the UK and EU and noted that, by 2020, one third of all jobs in the EU will hinge on higher level skills. He also acknowledged the important role that the EU had to play in promoting learning mobility. Initiatives that might be particularly helpful were the Masters level student loan guarantee scheme and the new EU sports fund. He was also keen for this agenda to be driven at the grassroots level by institutions such as UEL.

Selena Bolingbroke stated that UEL had employed a long-established institutional focus on transformation and regeneration and wanted to match the ambition of their students. UEL also had a strong commitment to social, economic and civic reform rather than just education. UEL also had a diverse student body not just in terms of ethnicity, age and class. The students' experience was not just about getting a degree but also realising their enterprise, sporting and cultural ambitions. The social and cultural capital and learning mobility of the local students needed to be encouraged, in particular, including through the provision of 'Going Global' bursaries. They also maintained an active and engaged 'student asset base' with alumni encouraged to remain engaged with campus in the long term.

Ray Wilkinson stated that they had a good story of using EU funding, including Structural Funds, during their development. While the funding had now finished, an important legacy of that support continued as the regeneration of the area was very much work in progress, including facilities such as the Knowledge Dock. They considered it to be important to link the local community in with the campus and provide benefits. To this end they maintained a good relationship with the Canary Wharf Company and EU funding, such as investment from the ERDF, was an important part of that process. The Knowledge Dock was not just a centre for education but also a source of private sector employment. It has supported more than 3,000 local businesses and helps approximately 2,500 students to progress towards self-employment.

They achieved BIC status in 2008 and are now linked into a network of 170 other BICs across the EU, which has provided them with a platform to expand to the rest of the European mainland. This has also helped them to develop facilities such as the Centre for Excellence for Women's Entrepreneurship and the Office for Fair Access. EU funds were used to bolster placements for students in local SMEs by offering students bursaries to undertake paid internships—hope to provide up to 300 places a year in due course. EU funding and exposure has provided the laboratory conditions in which projects can be taken forward. ERDF allocations funded the construction of the Knowledge Dock Business Centre and the FabPad served as a local resource for local SMEs involved in the fashion industry.

### *UEL's experience of participating in the Erasmus programme*

Adrienne Clarke stated that some of their international students were very keen on visiting other parts of the EU and thus obtaining a Schengen visa. UEL has recently introduced foreign languages, including French and Spanish, which will support students, and staff, spending a study semester, or shorter period, in France and Spain as well as in other countries where Spanish is spoken. Bursaries were also provided for home students to spend some time abroad for sometimes as little as two weeks. 100 students received such bursaries last year and they hoped that up to 200 students would receive them during the course of this year. UEL as with the rest of the UK was a net recipient of Erasmus students and were both aiming to increase the number of outgoing students and to decrease the number of incoming students in an attempt to achieve balance. However, funding has decreased recently, meaning that students needed access to additional sources of funding. Language and socio-economic factors are also an issue in terms of outgoing students from UEL and some of the local students had never left the local area, beyond perhaps a trip to their ancestral country, and therefore needed encouragement and support in terms of spending a period overseas. The UEL Going Global bursary scheme had helped such students who also found shorter periods overseas to be less daunting than a semester. Study Abroad schemes also took place beyond Erasmus locations to China, the USA, and so on. UEL has also introduced Chinese and Japanese language modules to support the growing interest in studying in these countries. UEL students could also bid for Going Global bursary schemes either individually or in groups, with the students making suggestions for projects or destination countries in consultation with academic advisers.

Dovile Alsaukaite, a Lithuanian national, undertook a semester at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden during 2009 through the Erasmus programme. She stated that this helped her to develop both personally and academically. She not only grew as a person but also met people from many different walks of life and gained academic confidence and new experiences and challenges. It provided her

with a new perspective on the academic angle of her chosen subject of finance. She also developed new interests as a result through becoming immersed in another culture and studying a foreign language, developing an awareness of the cultural differences. It proved to be a great addition to her CV and also demonstrated her adaptability to prospective employers. She received a grant from the EU, which supplemented her existing loans and grants. However, she could not depend on the EU grant to cover essential living costs. It therefore proved essential for her to budget and maintain contingency funds; stretching her finances as far as possible. In conclusion there was nothing to lose and so much to gain from participating in such a programme. Adrienne Clarke stated that even if they only spent two weeks abroad, the students still found it to be an extremely worthwhile experience.

In response to a question from Baroness Young regarding why she put herself forward for the programme and why some of her classmates were more reluctant, she stated that having come to the UK from another country she did not need to be persuaded to go to Sweden. She considered it to be important to select a university in the EU that provided classes in the English language and that as she already spoke a few different languages she already had the confidence to learn another. She considered that some of her classmates who came from the local areas had difficulties in going abroad. Selena Bolingbroke stated that it was sometimes a big step for individuals to come onto a campus and that going abroad may be considered a step too far. However, interest had “gone viral” in some instances with returning students being utilised to encourage others to participate in the scheme. She remarked that while the Borough of Newham was diverse it did not necessarily mean that the local population was international in outlook. London is the most intensely competitive market in Europe and there were cultural as well as economic barriers to participation in such programmes/schemes.

Ray Wilkinson stated that the Erasmus for Entrepreneurs programme had been the least successful UEL initiative. It had involved attempting to encourage entrepreneurs to undertake placements in Member States such as Spain, Portugal and Finland, among others. However, they had experienced difficulties in persuading potential candidates to go partly due to their expectation that they would have to be fluent in the host Member State’s language, which was not a prerequisite. It ended up being one of the only programmes that UEL had ever ended early. By comparison, more successful had been the development of Quicklingo, a student company start-up offering an interpreting service that provided local tongue services to London businesses. They also participated in Erasmus staff exchanges and experienced no difficulty in encouraging staff to participate in this scheme.

In response to a question from Baroness Young about whether UEL’s perspective was global or European, Professor McGhee stated that there were more EU students coming to London than ever before but there were also those living here who already held a passport from another Member State. UEL also collaborated with student unions in host countries regarding social activities. Due to the introduction of higher fee levels they were now able to charge EU students up to £9,000 per annum, up from £3,000 per annum previously, which made them much more attractive to target than they were previously in contrast to non-EU international students.

Selena Bolingbroke stated that the mix of local and international students at UEL provided a very rich mix. However the numbers of EU students coming in was likely to be more limited in future because they were subject to the HEFCE cap on numbers, which specified how many students UEL could recruit from the UK and

the rest of the EU, which operated regardless of the demand for places, which was much higher than before. London was also an attractive location due to its numerous non-educational assets. Professor McGhee added that while students from the local area rated UEL very highly, EU and international students rated them higher still. It was therefore a shame that UK policies were deflecting the huge demand there was internationally for British higher education.

Adrienne Clarke stated that the UK Border Agency was impacting on the number of students applying to the UK as it was not viewed as particularly welcoming. The increased competition from English language courses provided in Continental countries was also an issue in this regard. UEL was attempting to ensure that a better balance was reached between the output and input of Erasmus students. However, they found that dealing with the EU was quite labour intensive in terms of the returns made. More benefits were being achieved through other schemes and in future the Erasmus programme may play less of a role unless its mechanisms were reformed, including the provision of shorter placements.

Ray Wilkinson stated that securing access to EU funding was becoming more bureaucratic, including the requirement under the ERDF for paperwork to be retained for increasing amounts of time because of the increasing amount of time being taken to close down programmes. The requirement that his evidence should be paper based presented obvious storage and cost issues. He remarked that if institutions such as the UEL found the record keeping requirements to be too onerous then how would the voluntary sector find it? He suspected that it was not just Brussels but also the Department for Work and Pensions adding additional requirements, with the Greater London Authority also doing the same lower down the scale. Receiving different advice from different officers at the varying levels regarding Structural Funds was also fairly common. Selena Bolingbroke added that there should really be a common framework for dealing with the available funds throughout the EU. Ray Wilkinson stated that the turnover for businesses based on campus varied. Companies could either access 1, 2 or 3 person business units or share hot-desking facilities. Rent levels charged to companies varied depending on the services and space they wished to use. Whereas UEL had received capital contributions at the outset of its development they received no additional capital funds at present, beyond that provided by the initial outlay.

*Tour of the Knowledge Dock Business Centre, the FabPad fabric print and design centre and the Petchey Enterprise Centre*

The Committee toured the Knowledge Dock Business Centre, witnessed students working in the FabPad centre and saw how the Petchey Enterprise Centre supports local SMEs and student and graduate entrepreneurs working on new enterprises.

31 January 2012

## APPENDIX 4: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

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The EU Social Policies and Consumer Protection Sub-Committee, chaired by Baroness Young of Hornsey, is conducting an Inquiry into the EU's contribution to the modernisation of higher education in Europe as a response to the Commission's recent Communication on the subject.<sup>211</sup> The Committee seeks evidence from anyone with an interest.

Written evidence is sought by **21 November 2011**. Public hearings will be held in November and December 2011. The Committee aims to report to the House, with recommendations, by Easter 2012. The report will receive a response from the Government, and may be debated in the House.

The Commission's Communication was published against the background of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>212</sup>, which emphasises supporting growth and jobs, and their proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020<sup>213</sup>, which supports a significant increase in the budget devoted to investment in education, research and innovation. The Commission believes that the potential of European higher education institutions to fulfil their role in society and contribute to Europe's smart, sustainable and inclusive growth remains underexploited: only 26% of the workforce currently has a higher education qualification.

As the Commission acknowledges, the main responsibility for delivering reforms in higher education rests with Member States and higher education institutions themselves. Nevertheless, the EU has a role<sup>214</sup> in encouraging the work of Member States in boosting mobility, providing funding, encouraging the exchange of best practice and improving analysis. The initiatives outlined by the Commission as the possible EU contribution include:

- The launch of a new “U-Multirank” performance-based ranking and information tool for profiling higher education institutions;
- Analysis of the impact of different funding approaches on the diversification, and efficiency of higher education systems, as well as on student mobility;
- A proposal for a European Masters level student loan guarantee facility;
- A strengthening of synergies between EU and intergovernmental processes (mainly the Bologna Process/European Higher Education Area)
- Support for the internationalisation of higher education;
- The placing of higher education at the centre of innovation, job creation and employability in various ways; and
- A strengthening of the long-term impact and complementarity of EU funding.

The Sub-Committee wishes, through its inquiry, to establish whether the initiatives outlined by the Commission are the most appropriate to fulfil its

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<sup>211</sup> Supporting growth and jobs—an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems, COM (2011) 567, 20 September 2011

<sup>212</sup> Europe 2020: A Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, COM (2010) 2020

<sup>213</sup> A Budget for Europe 2020, COM(2011) 500

<sup>214</sup> By virtue of Article 165, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

supportive role in higher education or whether there are other ways in which the EU might add value in this area.

You need not respond to all of the questions, and we would welcome any views that you may have on aspects of the subject matter that are not covered in the questions.

The inquiry will not address domestic higher education issues, including funding issues and the different student finance methods that operate within the UK. Particular questions to which we invite you to respond are as follows:

#### *Strategic backdrop: Europe 2020*

1. How can EU intervention most effectively help higher education to contribute to the EU's Europe 2020 ambition to boost EU jobs, growth and innovation?

#### *The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area*

2. How can the EU add value to the development and success of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area?

#### *Mobility*

3. How can the mobility of students and researchers be boosted, and how specifically can a more diverse body of students be encouraged on to the Erasmus programme? What are your views on the suggestions made by the Commission to boost mobility, including the proposed student loan guarantee facility for Masters students and the role of the European Research Area to boost mobility of researchers specifically?

#### *Targets and league table*

4. How desirable is the EU's target that, by 2020, 40% of young people should successfully complete higher education or equivalent studies?

5. What is your view of the proposed introduction of a European universities league table—the 'U-Multirank' tool?

#### *Funding instruments*

6. What are your views on the effectiveness of the proposed EU financing arrangements, including funding increases, for higher education under the 2014–2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (Education Europe, Horizon 2020 and Cohesion Policy)?

#### *International dimension*

7. The EU currently engages in the internationalisation of European higher education through programmes such as Tempus. How can this agenda be developed further?

The deadline for written evidence is **Monday 21 November 2011**.

## APPENDIX 5: LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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CIP	Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
Cohesion Policy	Also referred to as regional policy, this refers to EU spending on three Structural Funds: the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund
Council of Europe	Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation of 47 countries, which promotes cooperation in legal standards, human rights, democratic development, the rule of law and culture. It is distinct from the EU and the European Court of Human Rights forms part of it
Devolved Administrations	These are the Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
EURAXESS	‘Researchers in Motion’ is a one-stop shop for researchers seeking to advance their careers and personal development by moving to other countries
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEA	European Economic Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EIPs	European Innovation Partnerships
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERA	European Research Area
ERC	European Research Council
ESF	European Social Fund
Eurostat	The statistical office of the EU
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
KICs	Knowledge and Innovation Communities
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
National Curriculum	The National Curriculum is a framework used by all maintained schools in England to ensure that teaching and learning is balanced and consistent. It sets out the subjects that should be taught; the knowledge, skills and understanding required in each subject; standards or attainment targets in each subject; and how a child’s progress should be assessed and reported. Within the framework of the National Curriculum schools are free to plan and organise teaching and learning in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. Separate National Curriculums apply in Wales and Northern Ireland, while the Curriculum for Excellence applies in Scotland.

OMC	Open Method of Coordination
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Within the EHEA it is a member of the umbrella body for quality assurance agencies—the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education—and also ensures that UK higher education qualifications are aligned with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development
Schengen Area	The Schengen Area consists of 26 European countries, including most EU Member States—except Ireland, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus—and four non-EU countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. All internal border controls have been removed within the Area and a unified Schengen visa is issued to third country nationals travelling to it
SME	Small and medium enterprises
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization