

## Attracting and Retaining International Students in France and in the EU

In the light of increased mobility of students and researchers in the last decade, EMN National Contact Point of France organized the conference about attracting and retaining international students in France and in the EU. Conference was held on 8 November in Paris. Pierre-Antoine Molina, Director General for Foreign Nationals in France (Ministry of Interior), welcomed all the participants and introduced speakers.

First session was dedicated to international experiences, namely from Germany, Netherlands and Estonia. Germany is known as one of the most popular destination for studying. Paula Hoftmeyer-Zlotnik from the German EMN National Contact Point confirmed this by listing the main reasons why students choose Germany: high reputation of the university system, nonexistence of tuition fees at public universities, language, moderate living costs and good labour market conditions. She also mentioned German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), a central portal “Study in Germany” and GATE Germany (consortium for university marketing) as operational tools for internationalization of universities.

Netherlands’ experience is somewhat different since it is a rather small country. Head of Marketing at University of Groningen, Charlotte M’Doe, explained how Dutch universities are facing the problem of “too many” international students, who find Netherlands attractive country for studying because of the low fees, numerous programmes in English and overall favourable environment for students.

Finally, Marion Pajumets from the Estonian EMN National Contact Point talked about Estonian efforts and challenges to attract and retain international students. Since it is a very small country, there are no foreign offices of the universities and the quota for international students is not big. However, few measures exist for attracting students: scholarships, funding of English programmes, advertising Estonia as a nice place to study and live and favourable conditions to work for third country nationals.

In the second session a roundtable was organized to discuss reception policy dedicated to international students in France. The participants of the roundtable were Lionel Ragot, Scientific Advisor at CEPPII (French center for economic research and expertise), Olivier Chiche-Portiche from Campus France which promotes French higher education in the world, Yves Breem from OECD and David Robert from the DG for Foreign Nationals in France (Ministry of Interior). When compared to previously presented examples, the situation in France and the structure of foreign students there, are different. Namely, most of them come from the French speaking countries such as Morocco, Algeria and other African countries. However, France attracts a lot of other third country nationals, for instance, from China, Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. There are 230 agencies in the world that promote French higher education and a lot of specially trained staff who can give information on study opportunities. France is also putting its efforts not only in being an attractive country for studying, but also for staying and gaining first professional experiences by offering favourable conditions for changing status, talent passport etc.

Same as Europe in general, France is a facing ageing population, so many opportunities are being offered to young people such as au-pairing and volunteering opportunities. The main goal of these

measures is to attract talent, reduce the average age of the overall population and boost competitiveness of France.

The Conference was attended by Croatian representatives from the State Office for Croats Abroad, Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy and the EMN National Contact Point of Croatia.