

Student mobility in the Republic of Cyprus

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Chapter III: Student mobility in the Republic of Cyprus (CY)

Nicolai Netz

1 Student mobility data – sources, collectors, availability and quality

1.1 Official statistical sources

1.1.1 Collectors and collection procedures¹

In Cyprus, the official provider of administrative data on foreign students as well as incoming and outgoing students is Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus (*Στατιστική Υπηρεσία Κύπρου*, CYSTAT). CYSTAT is formally integrated into the Ministry of Finance, but enjoys complete autonomy in carrying out its duties. While it was founded in 1950 already, it came to assume its responsibility as a provider of statistical information on a variety of topics – including the mobility of students – only after the independence of Cyprus in 1960. Since 2000 CYSTAT is the institution responsible for reporting data to UOE. The data on foreign students and incoming students are collected through the CYSTAT Annual Survey on Education, during which an electronic questionnaire is sent out to all higher education institutions registered at the Ministry of Education and Culture. The survey cycle usually lasts from January to April of each year. In contrast, data on outgoing students are provided to CYSTAT by the Student Grants Scheme Register, which is located at the Grants and Benefits Services of the Ministry of Finance. Parallel to the data of students enrolled at Cypriot higher education institutions, the Student Grants Scheme Register captures all data on outgoing students with prior residence in Cyprus who receive a grant of the Ministry of Finance whilst being abroad.² A rather comprehensive selection of data on foreign, incoming students as well as outgoing students is published annually in the publicly available series Statistics of Education.³

1.1.2 Quality of official mobility data

Overall, the data on student mobility provided by CYSTAT can be judged as rather comprehensive, clean and valuable for the analysis of genuine ‘diploma’ mobility flows. CYSTAT is able to provide data on both foreign students (as determined by their nationality) and incoming students (as

¹ In order to complement the information that was available in English language via the internet, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of experts on the Cypriot higher education system. The authors would like to thank all experts that participated in the interviews. Special thanks go to Efsthios Michael (Ministry of Education and Culture), Roula Kyriellou-Ioannidou (Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes) and Kyriakos Tsioupanis (Pan-Cypriot Students’ Union) for their support in the realisation of the expert interviews on the ground. Furthermore, we owe special thanks to Demetra Costa (Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus) for her support in gathering and processing the data analysed in this chapter.

² Every Cypriot student with (prior) permanent residence in Cyprus is eligible to apply for the grants scheme of the Ministry of Finance. If a student is eligible, the parents of the student receive the grant as a lump sum payment. The level of the grant depends on the number of children living in a family and on whether a student has to pay tuition fees or not. Together with the application for the grant, each student has to submit a certificate of enrolment in January of each year. In case the institution where the student is enrolled is outside Cyprus, he or she classifies as genuinely *outgoing*. Although their number is negligible according to the Grants Services, *outgoing students* with foreign nationality are captured in the scheme as well, provided that they have (had) a (prior) permanent residence in Cyprus. Thus, also Turkish Cypriots with (prior) permanent residence in the Greek part of Cyprus are eligible to the grant.

³ Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus: *Statistics of Education 2007/2008, 2009*

measured by their country of prior residence).⁴ What is more, the number of Cypriot mobile homecoming students can be quantified. At the same time, CYSTAT collects data on outgoing students enrolled at foreign higher education institutions via the grants scheme described above. The quality of these data depends on the share of outgoing students being captured in the Student Grants Scheme Register. Only if all outgoing students are receiving the grant from the Ministry of Finance, the entire outgoing mobility flow of students is adequately reflected in the data.⁵

The data on foreign, incoming and outgoing students can all be further subdivided by the sex and age of students, their year, level and field of study as well as the type of institution and ISCED level they are enrolled at. The data on foreign and incoming students are collected at both public and private higher education institutions and include study programmes at ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6. Thereby, the totality of Cypriot students and study programmes is covered. However, the analysis of incoming mobility flows over time is still impaired by the fact that reliable data on genuine incoming mobility can only be provided from the academic year 2005/06 onwards. According to CYSTAT, only in that year the newly designed tool to capture students' country of prior residence had been introduced at higher education institutions reporting to CYSTAT all over the country.

The data provided by CYSTAT are largely congruent with the data to be found in the UOE data collection and generally correspond to the UOE data conventions. However, contrary to the UOE data conventions CYSTAT data on incoming and outgoing students include ERASMUS participants and students in other exchange programmes.⁶ Moreover, students going abroad with the grant scheme of the Ministry of Finance do not have to spend more than a year abroad in order to be classified as outgoing students, but are registered as such after having submitted the certificate of enrolment of their institutions abroad to the Grants and Benefits Services in Cyprus. Thus, the data collected via the grant scheme do not enable us to differentiate between 'diploma' and credit mobile students. Still, it is a safe assumption according to the experts interviewed for this study that the majority of students captured through the grant scheme are outgoing diploma and not credit mobile.

1.2 Additional data sources

1.2.1 Collectors and collection procedures

Unlike in other countries, the situation in Cyprus is that the official data are rather comprehensive and therefore allow, as described above, for a rather fine-grained analysis of (diploma) mobility flows, whereas the non-official data sources are both limited to a particular group of students and restricted in their coverage or relevant variables. In fact, the only complement to the official sources is the ERASMUS database maintained by the European Commission.

Cypriot higher education institutions started to take part in the ERASMUS programme in the academic year 1998/99. As in other countries participating in ERASMUS there is a national agency in Cyprus responsible for carrying out the programme on the ground and – among other things – for collecting data on outgoing ERASMUS students. In Cyprus, the institution, that is now called the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes, is in charge of these

⁴ In addition, CYSTAT is planning to collect data on student's country of prior education for the first time in the 2011. Survey on Education.

⁵ For a number of reasons, it is likely that not all *outgoing students* are captured in the Student Grants Scheme Register. For instance, students having exceeded a certain number of study years are not eligible to the grant anymore and are therefore not captured in the register. Currently, it is being discussed to introduce a means test in order to relieve the public budget from the strains created by the financial crisis. In case the grants ceased to be universal, the data collected via the grants scheme would not reflect outgoing student mobility anymore, in that students from wealthy families and with higher incomes would tend to be excluded. However, for the years referred to in this study the number of *outgoing students* not captured in the register is negligible according to the Grants and Benefits Services.

⁶ However, as can be seen in section 2.2, the number of both *incoming* and *outgoing ERASMUS students* is rather low in Cyprus.

duties. Established in 1997 under the auspices of the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour, its purpose from the beginning was to administer and promote all lifelong learning programmes of the European Commission in Cyprus and abroad. Although financed by public funds it is an independently operating private body. For each elapsed academic year, it collects data on outgoing ERASMUS students from all Cypriot higher education institutions participating in the programme, aggregates these data and delivers them to the European Commission. The set of variables considered in this process is further described below.

1.2.2 Quality of additional data on mobility

The ERASMUS data provided by the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes contain information on genuine outgoing mobility flows of ERASMUS students enrolled at ISCED levels 5 and 6. Similarly, the aggregated data of all National Socrates Agencies published by the European Commission allow for an analysis of genuine incoming mobility flows of students enrolling at Cypriot higher education institutions participating in the programme. The ERASMUS data focus on credit mobility and enable us to differentiate incoming and outgoing students by their countries of origin and destination, respectively. In addition, the data contain information on the number of ERASMUS students by their fields of study and on whether a student is mobile for studying purposes or for the sake of an internship.

Still, the ERASMUS data are by definition restricted to programme mobility as well as mobility in the context of internships. Since participation in ERASMUS is currently limited to the EU-27 countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey, the range of mobile students' target countries that are covered in the data is limited as well. Other forms of mobility, such as 'diploma' mobility or any form of self-organised mobility, are not taken into account.

2 Student mobility in Cyprus

2.1 Overview: key figures

Total enrolment and Cypriot students

Although the expansion of the Cypriot higher education system has taken place only in the last three decades, Cyprus has by now a comparatively high number of tertiary education students as measured on a per capita basis. In 2007/08, more than 80% of secondary school leavers enrolled into some forms of higher education programme, either in Cyprus or abroad.⁷

The total number of students enrolled at Cypriot higher education institutions in 2007/08 amounted to 25 688. With 53.0% a narrow majority of these students were enrolled at ISCED level 5A, while 45.6% of students were enrolled at ISCED level 5B; only 1.4% were enrolled at ISCED level 6 (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08). Just one year before, the share of students enrolled at ISCED levels 5A and 6 lay at only 22.4% and 1.6%, respectively, whereas with 76.0% the large majority of students was enrolled at ISCED level 5B (CYSTAT data, reference year 2006/07). This exemplifies how drastic the changes are that the Cypriot higher education system is currently undergoing. To a certain extent, however, the shift from ISCED 5B to 5A education reflected in the figures is also a result of status upgrades of existing institutions.

⁷ EURYDICE Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency: Organisation of the education system in Cyprus 2008/09, 2009.

In 2007/08, there were 3 public and 3 private universities as well as 7 public and 30 private non-university institutions of higher education.⁸ In the past, higher education was primarily offered at colleges focussing on 2-year and 3-year programmes at ISCED 5B level. It was only in 1992, when the University of Cyprus (established in 1989), as the first university in the country, opened its doors to students, that significant number study places at ISCED level 5A were offered within Cyprus. The strong shift from ISCED 5B to 5A education shown above can be explained by two parallel developments. Firstly, the Open University of Cyprus (established in 2002) and the Cyprus University of Technology (established in 2003) accepted a noteworthy number of students in the academic year 2007/08 for the first time.⁹ Secondly, three of the largest private colleges were transformed into private universities in 2007.¹⁰

It is interesting to note that the majority of institutions in Cyprus are private corporations. This is why more than two thirds of students were enrolled at private institutions in 2007/08, while slightly less than one third was enrolled at public institutions (CYSTAT data). However, it is expected that the number of students in public and private institutions will be approximately balanced by 2013 as a result of the strong expansion of teaching capacities currently happening at the Open University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology.¹¹

As visible in Table 1a, the number of students enrolled at higher education institutions in Cyprus increased substantially between 1998/99 and 2007/08 (+136.9%). This growth can be attributed to both an increasing number of Cypriot students and a rise in the number of students with foreign nationality. Apart from the years 1999/00 and 2005/06 the body of Cypriot students increased steadily and doubled over the nine-year period considered here.

Foreign and study abroad students

The growth in the number of foreign students was even more intense (Table 1a). In 2007/08, the body of foreign students was more than four times as large as in the year 1998/99 (+316.8%). In 2004/05, however, it contracted sharply in reference to the previous year (-26.6%). According to the experts interviewed for this study, the drop in numbers was the result of a more strict enforcement of national immigrations laws. The intention behind this step was to reduce the number of students using enrolment into higher education primarily as a means to gain immediate access to the local labour market instead of for the sake of educating themselves.

Together with Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, Cyprus belongs to the group of small countries that in a European comparison, have a particularly high share of foreign students in their overall student

⁸ The three public universities are the University of Cyprus (Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου), the Open University of Cyprus (Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου) and the Cyprus University of Technology (Τεχνολογικό Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου). The private universities are the Frederick University, the European University Cyprus (Ευρωπαϊκό Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου) and the University of Nicosia (Πανεπιστήμιο Λευκωσίας). The seven public non-university institutions of higher education are the Higher Technical Institute (Ανώτερο Τεχνολογικό Ινστιτούτο) (HTI), the Forestry College (Δασικό Κολέγιο), the School of Nursing and Midwifery (Νοσηλευτική Σχολή), the Mediterranean Institute of Management (Μεσογειακό Ινστιτούτο Διεύθυνσης) (MIM), the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus (Ανώτερο Ξενοδοχειακό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου) (HHIC), the Tourist Guides School (Σχολή Ξεναγών) and the Police Academy (Αστυνομική Ακαδημία) (Organisation of the education system in Cyprus 2008/09. op.cit., CYSTAT: Statistics of Education 2007/2008, 2009). The variety of private non-university institutions of higher education shall not be described here.

⁹ Organisation of the education system in Cyprus 2008/09. op.cit.

¹⁰ The Frederick Institute of Technology was transformed into the Frederick University (<http://www.frederick.ac.cy>), the Cyprus College was converted into the European University Cyprus (<http://www.euc.ac.cy>), and the Intercollege became the University of Nicosia (<http://www.unic.ac.cy>). Since the Law 109(I)/2005 enables all private institutions to be transformed into universities, provided that they fulfill the conditions formulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and since a new private university (Neapolis University Cyprus) will start to operate in the academic year 2010/11, the expansion of ISCED 5A level education is likely to continue in the future (Organisation of the education system in Cyprus 2008/09. op.cit). Another development that supports this hypothesis is that currently, some non-university institutions of higher education are either being closed (such as the Higher Technical Institute) or integrated into existing universities (such as the School of Nursing and Midwifery, which will soon be a branch of the Cyprus University of Technology).

¹¹ Organisation of the education system in Cyprus 2008/09. op.cit.

population.¹² Already in 1998/99, 17.2% of students enrolled in Cyprus had a foreign nationality (Table 1b). Until 2003/04, their share had increased to 32.0%, before it fell sharply and then fluctuated until 2007/08, when it reached a new four-year high at 30.2%. Although the annual fluctuations were considerable in the time period under observation, the developments since 2004/05 suggest that both the absolute number and the share of foreign students will further grow in the years to come (Tables 1a and 1b).¹³

It is interesting to note that a remarkably high share of foreign students is enrolled at ISCED level 5B (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08). With 80.1%, this share is even much larger than in the overall student population (45.6%). In contrast, the share of foreign students enrolled at ISCED level 5A is much lower than in the overall student population (19.6% as opposed to 54.4%) (Table 7). This is related both to the type of students who come to Cyprus and to the institutions of higher education these students enrol at.¹⁴

With regard to study abroad students, the situation in Cyprus is highly interesting as well. According to UOE data, there were 22 411 Cypriot students enrolled abroad in the year 2006/07 (Table 1a). Between 2002/03 and 2006/07, their number increased by 32.6%. When the number of study abroad students is related to the size of the body of Cypriot students at national higher education institutions, it turns out that for both years reported in Tables 1a and 1b, there were more Cypriot students enrolled abroad than at home institutions.

Table 1a: Total numbers of all students, Cypriot students, foreign and incoming (genuinely mobile) students at Cypriot higher education institutions and of Cypriot students studying/going abroad, in 1998/99-2007/08

Col. #	ALL students at Cypriot HEIs	Measurements for Cypriot students in Cyprus		Measurements for foreign and incoming students in Cyprus					Measurements for Cypriot study abroad and outgoing students		
		ALL Cypriot students at Cypriot HEIs	Cypriot non-mobile students at Cypriot HEIs (XXX)	ALL foreign students	Foreign non-mobile students (YYX)	ALL incoming students	Foreign incoming students (YYX)	Cypriot incoming students = returners (XXY)	ALL study abroad students (national at foreign HEIs)	Study abroad non-mobile students (XXY)	Outgoing mobile students (XXY)
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2007/08	25 688	17 936	17 915	7 752	596	7 176	7 156	20	*	*	22 530
2006/07	22 227	16 266	16 183	5 961	454	5 590	5 507	83	22 411	1 223	21 188
2005/06	20 587	14 957	14 954	5 630	324	5 309	5 306	3	-	-	20 969
2004/05	20 078	15 177	*	4 901	*	*	*	*	-	-	19 400
2003/04	20 849	14 170	*	6 679	*	*	*	*	-	-	17 631
2002/03	18 272	12 990	*	5 282	*	*	*	*	16 905	531	16 374
2001/02	13 894	10 836	*	3 058	*	*	*	*	*	*	14 882

¹² According to UOE data, Cyprus is the only European country with a share of foreign students above 25% next to Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and the United Kingdom.

¹³ About three quarters of *foreign students* in Cypriot higher education are male (CYSTAT data). With the exception of the year 2004/05, this is the case since 2002/03. Before that year 'only' about 60% of foreign students were male. It can be hypothesised the share of male foreign students rose with the strong influx of apparently predominantly male students from Asia (see in-depth analysis). Interestingly, the majority of Cypriot students is female. Throughout the period in question female students constituted about 60% of all Cypriot students. It is the difference in the compositions of foreign and Cypriot students that causes the gender ratio in the overall student population to be balanced.

¹⁴ Further information on this issue is provided in subsection 2.2.1.

Col. #	ALL students at Cypriot HEIs	Measurements for Cypriot students in Cyprus		Measurements for foreign and incoming students in Cyprus				Measurements for Cypriot study abroad and outgoing students			
		ALL Cypriot students at Cypriot HEIs	Cypriot non-mobile students at Cypriot HEIs (XXX)	ALL foreign students	Foreign non-mobile students (YXX)	ALL incoming students	Foreign incoming students (YYX)	Cypriot incoming students = returners (XYX)	ALL study abroad students (national at foreign HEIs)	Study abroad non-mobile students (XYX)	Outgoing mobile students (XXY)
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2000/01	11 934	9 462	*	2 472	*	*	*	*	*	*	13 650
1999/00	10 414	8 389	*	2 025	*	*	*	*	*	*	12 147
1998/99	10 842	8 982	*	1 860	*	*	*	*	*	*	12 488

Legend for column descriptors: XXX refers to the route of study of the student, i.e. citizenship in country X, prior education in country X, studies in country X

Legend for data:

* = no data;

- = totals excluded because of mixed criteria in the UOE database (nationality and mobility)

Sources: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6 / Col. 9 UOE, ISCED 5-6

Table 1b: Share of Cypriot and foreign students amongst all students at Cypriot higher education institutions and ratio of Cypriot study abroad students to all Cypriot students in Cyprus, in 1998/99-2007/08

Col. #	ALL students at Cypriot HEIs	Measurements for Cypriot students		Measurements for foreign and incoming mobile students in Cyprus				Measurements for Cypriot study abroad and outgoing mobile students			
		ALL Cypriot students at Cypriot HEIs	Cypriot non-mobile students at Cypriot HEIs (XXX)	ALL foreign students	Foreign non-mobile students (YXX)	ALL incoming mobile students	Foreign incoming mobile students (YYX)	Cypriot incoming mobile students = returners (XYX)	Ratio: Cypriot study abroad students : Cypriot students at home	Study abroad non-mobile students (XYX)	Ratio: Outgoing mobile students : Cypriot students at home
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2007/08	100%	69.8%	69.7%	30.2%	2.3%	27.9%	27.9%	0.1%	*	*	0.126
2006/07	100%	73.2%	72.8%	26.8%	2.0%	25.1%	24.8%	0.4%	138:100	7.5%	0.130
2005/06	100%	72.7%	72.6%	27.3%	1.6%	25.8%	25.8%	0.0%	-	-	0.140
2004/05	100%	75.6%	*	24.4%	*	*	*	*	-	-	0.128
2003/04	100%	68.0%	*	32.0%	*	*	*	*	-	-	0.124
2002/03	100%	71.1%	*	28.9%	*	*	*	*	130:100	4.1%	0.124
2001/02	100%	78.0%	*	22.0%	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.137
2000/01	100%	79.3%	*	20.7%	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.144
1999/00	100%	80.6%	*	19.4%	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.145
1998/99	100%	82.8%	*	17.2%	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.139

Legend for column descriptors: XXX refers to the route of study of the student, i.e. citizenship in country X, prior education in country X, studies in country X

Legend for data:

* = no data;

- = totals excluded because of mixed criteria in the UOE database (nationality and mobility)

Sources: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6 / Col. 9: UOE, ISCED 5-6

Incoming (degree-seeking) and outgoing students

As can be seen in Tables 1a and 1b, the absolute number and share of all incoming students is considerable in Cyprus. Since the year 2005/06, their share was constantly above 25%, which broadly corresponds to the findings of the analysis of foreign students. However, the share of foreign students tends to be slightly higher than the share of incoming students for the years where data are available, which shows that foreign students are not an exact proxy for measuring incoming mobility flows.¹⁵ Based on the three years for which data are available, it is difficult to delineate the developments over time. However, the highest share of incoming students (27.9%) was recorded in the last year available via CYSTAT (Table 1b). What is visible, though, is the fact that the share of non-mobile foreign students has increased since 2005/06, which suggests that it is ever less legitimate to use foreign students as a proxy for measuring incoming mobility.

Through the collection of information from students applying to the grant scheme described in section 1.1.1, CYSTAT is able to provide data on outgoing students (Tables 1a and 1b). For the two years where cleaned study abroad data were available, the rate of outgoing students resembles the rate of study abroad students.

In the academic year 2007/08, 22 530 students with prior residency in Cyprus studied abroad. Between 1998/99 and 2007/08, the number of outgoing students increased by 80.4%. This increase has been steady since 1999/00. However, the ratio of outgoing students to Cypriot students in Cyprus has fallen from 139:100 in 1998/99 to 126:100 in 2007/08 – with considerable fluctuations over time. Especially the fall in the rate of outgoing students since 2005/06 can be read as a first indication of the fact that more students start to enrol in the variety of newly created programmes offered by higher education institutions in Cyprus. In fact, the rise in the number of Cypriot students at national institutions was even stronger (99.7%) between 1998/99 and 2007/08 than the increase in outgoing students (80.4%).

At first sight, Cyprus benefits from the large number of Cypriot students being educated abroad. In the year 2007, the public expenditures on students at higher education institutions in Cyprus amounted to €16 095 per capita (CYSTAT data). Inside the country, financing university education proved to be more expensive (€17 772 per student) than maintaining non-university institutions (€13 522 per student). In sharp contrast to that, the total government aid for students enrolling abroad amounted to 'only' €4 463 per student in 2007. Supporting university education abroad was less costly for the Cypriot state (€4 381) than financing non-university education abroad (€6 037).¹⁶ This explains why the Cypriot state has so far supported or rather tolerated that such a large number of students leave the country in order to enjoy university-level education abroad (cf. subsection 2.2.2). In recent years, though, the recognition that the additional costs of offering higher education in Cyprus might be outbalanced by the societal and economic benefits of having a larger number of students educated within the country has driven the expansion of teaching capacities at home.

¹⁵ The distribution of *incoming students* across ISCED levels differs only marginally from the distribution of *foreign students* across ISCED levels. It is still interesting to note that the analysis of *incoming students* confirms the tendency of *foreign students* to be enrolled at ISCED level 5B. In fact, with 83.6% the share of ISCED 5B students is even higher among *incoming* than among *foreign students* (80.1%), while the share of ISCED 5A students is slightly lower (16.2% as opposed to 19.6%). The share of *incoming students* enrolled at ISCED level 6 (0.1%) is almost negligible, as in the case of *foreign students* (0.3%) (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08).

¹⁶ According to CYSTAT, the total public expenditure on students at home institutions as well as the government aid for students studying abroad comprise current and capital expenditures. These expenditures also include "student grants, scholarships from the Cyprus State Scholarship Foundation, the child allowance that the students' families receive and the student loans from the Central Agency for Equal Distribution of Burdens" (Statistics of Education 2007/2008, op.cit., p.279).

Mobility balance

Irrespective of whether foreign students and study abroad students or incoming and outgoing students are juxtaposed, it is visible in Table 2 that the number of (mobile) Cypriot students leaving the country for study purposes is more than three times higher than the number of foreign (mobile) students entering the country for study purposes. The ratios for both kinds of measurements are in fact very similar for the year where data are available. However, as will be elaborated in the following sections, the types of students on either side of the ratios are of an entirely different nature regarding their countries of origin as well as destination, and in terms of the fields of study, types of higher education institutions and levels of programme they are enrolled.

Table 2: Ratios of foreign students in Cyprus to Cypriot study abroad students and of incoming students to outgoing students

	Foreign students (X)	Study abroad students (Y)	Ratio	Incoming students (Z)	Outgoing students (W)	Ratio
Year \ Ratio	Abs.	Abs.	(X:Y)	Abs.	Abs.	(Z:W)
2007/08	7 752	*	*	7 176	22 530	100:314
2006/07	5 961	22 411	100:376	5 590	21 188	100:379
2005/06	5 630	-	*	5 309	20 969	100:395
2004/05	4 901	-	*	*	19 400	*
2003/04	6 679	-	*	*	17 631	*
2002/03	5 282	16 905	100:320	*	16 374	*
2001/02	3 058	*	*	*	14 882	*
2000/01	2 472	*	*	*	13 650	*
1999/00	2 025	*	*	*	12 147	*
1998/99	1 860	*	*	*	12 488	*

Data legend:

- = totals excluded because of mixed criteria in the UOE database (nationality and mobility)

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6 / Col. 3: UOE, ISCED 5-6

2.2 Student mobility trends

2.2.1 Student inflows

Countries of origin and prior residence

The large majority of incoming students to Cyprus – i.e. 73.3% according to CYSTAT data – are coming from Asia (Table 4, reference year 2007/08). More specifically, they are originating from major countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) as well as from China. As Table 3 illustrates, students from Bangladesh constitute the single largest share of incoming students in Cyprus (20.8%), followed by students from India (14.7%) and China (12.8%). With the exception of students from Greece (7.0%), students from the EU-27 are not represented in the top ten countries of origin.

Table 3: Major countries of origin of incoming students (Top 10), in 2007/08

Rank	Country	Abs.	%
1	BD Bangladesh	1 489	20.8%
2	IN India	1 055	14.7%
3	CN China (incl. HK)	916	12.8%
4	PK Pakistan	715	10.0%
5	GR Greece	500	7.0%
6	LK Sri Lanka	408	5.7%
7	NP Nepal	323	4.5%
8	CM Cameroon	246	3.4%
9	RU Russian Federation	186	2.6%
10	UA Ukraine	103	1.4%
Top ten countries		5 941	83.0%
Total incoming students		7 156	

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

Table 4 displays the distribution of foreign students as well as incoming students across their countries of origin and countries of prior residence, respectively (CYSTAT, reference year 2007/08). As has been pointed out above already, the incoming mobility flow of students can be estimated quite adequately based on foreign students' nationality in the case of Cyprus.¹⁷ As Table 4 shows, the majority of students coming from the countries listed are actually genuinely incoming. Overall, 92.3% of foreign students were incoming in the year 2007/08. Interestingly, the difference in size between foreign and incoming students is larger with regard to students coming from Europe 32 countries (73.0%) than with regard to students from other countries and regions (95.5%). The reason behind this phenomenon is that the largest group of foreign students in Cyprus from outside the Europe 32 area – i.e. that of students from Asia – is almost entirely composed of mobile students (98.7%). This is especially visible with regard to Indian (99.8%) and Chinese students (99.0%). In comparison to the large number of students from Asia, the number of students from the Europe 32 countries is rather low. Among the Europe 32 countries, the share of foreign students from Greece is disproportionately high accounting for over 60% of the total foreign students from the region. Besides, 29.5% of the foreign students from Greece are *foreign non-mobile*, meaning that the number of foreign mobile students going to Cyprus from the Europe 32 region is even lower than it seems to be.

Table 4: Foreign and foreign incoming students in Cyprus by countries of origin/prior residence, absolute numbers and percentages, in 2007/08

Countries of origin	All foreign students	Foreign incoming	
	Abs.	Abs.	%
Europe 32 countries			
AT Austria	3	3	100%
BE Belgium	16	15	93.8%
BG Bulgaria	129	104	80.6%
CH Switzerland	1	1	100%

¹⁷ This assertion requires that the number of Cypriot *incoming students* (returners) is negligible. In fact, this is the case in Cyprus, as can be seen in Tables 1a and 1b.

Countries of origin	All foreign students		Foreign incoming	
	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	%
CY Cyprus	:	:	:	:
CZ Czech Republic	7	5	71.4%	
DE Germany	28	21	75.0%	
DK Denmark	4	3	75.0%	
EE Estonia	11	10	90.9%	
ES Spain	16	16	100%	
FI Finland	5	5	100%	
FR France	19	17	89.5%	
GR Greece	708	499	70.5%	
HU Hungary	2	1	50.0%	
IE Ireland	6	4	66.7%	
IS Iceland	0	0		
IT Italy	12	11	91.7%	
LI Liechtenstein	0	0		
LT Lithuania	31	25	80.6%	
LU Luxembourg	0	0		
LV Latvia	13	9	69.2%	
MT Malta	0	0		
NL The Netherlands	0	0		
NO Norway	1	1	100%	
PL Poland	33	29	87.9%	
PT Portugal	2	2	100%	
RO Romania	23	14	60.9%	
SE Sweden	3	3	100%	
SI Slovenia	0	0		
SK Slovakia	17	15	88.2%	
TR Turkey	0	0		
UK United Kingdom	47	17	36.2%	
Total Europe 32 countries	1 137	830	73.0%	
<i>Other countries and regions</i>				
Other European Countries	591	398	67.3%	
... including Russian Federation	300	189	63.0%	
Northern America	19	12	63.2%	
... including United States of America	14	9	64.3%	
Latin America and the Caribbean	23	19	82.6%	
... including Mexico	15	15	100%	
... including Brazil	0	0		
Africa	543	531	97.8%	
Asia	5 313	5 243	98.7%	
... including China	925	916	99.0%	
... including India	1 057	1 055	99.8%	
... including Japan	2	2	100%	
Oceania	3	0	0.0%	
Total other countries & regions	6 492	6 203	95.5%	
Unknown	123	123	100%	
Total students	7 752	7 156	92.3%	

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

Table 5 presents data on incoming ERASMUS students in Cyprus for the period 1998/99-2008/09. It is interesting to see that in year 2007/08, the latest year in which comparative data are available, the total number of ERASMUS students in that year amounted to 'only' 314, while the number of total incoming students in Cyprus lay at 7 156 – and was thus almost 23 times higher (Tables 4 and 5). This fact can be judged as an indication that genuine incoming mobility flows being realised via ERASMUS are of a minor importance for the analysis of student mobility in the case of Cyprus, especially in comparison to the substantial incoming diploma mobility flows from Asia.

In 2008/09, the largest group of ERASMUS students in Cyprus is that of Lithuanian students (14%). Other mentionable groups are those of Polish (13%) and Greek students (12%). However, the absolute numbers of these groups are rather low. Generally, the body of ERASMUS students coming to Cyprus is rather heterogeneous and characterised by the fact that small to very small shares of students come from many different countries participating in the ERASMUS programme. The only Cypriot higher education institution appearing in the top 500 list of institutions in terms of receiving incoming students is the University of Cyprus, which occupied rank 485 in the year 2007/08 (ERASMUS data). In that year, 94 students – or 29.9% of all incoming ERASMUS students– enrolled at the University of Cyprus.

Table 5: Incoming ERASMUS students in Cyprus by country of home institution, in 1998/99, 2002/03, 2006/07 and 2008/09

Year	1998/99		2002/03		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		Increase/ decrease 1998/99 - 2008/09	
	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	%
AT Austria	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	4	1.3%	0	0%	0	*
BE Belgium	0	0%	6	9%	13	6%	18	5.7%	11	3%	11	*
BG Bulgaria	0	0%	0	0%	4	2%	19	6.1%	2	1%	2	*
CY Cyprus - host country												
CZ Czech Republic	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	6	1.9%	4	1%	4	*
DE Germany	1	7%	9	14%	30	14%	18	5.7%	27	7%	26	2 600%
DK Denmark	0	0%	10	16%	4	2%	6	1.9%	4	1%	4	*
EE Estonia	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%	9	2.9%	8	2%	8	*
ES Spain	3	21%	6	9%	34	16%	21	6.7%	36	9%	33	1 100%
FI Finland	4	29%	11	17%	8	4%	22	7.0%	31	8%	27	675%
FR France	2	14%	7	11%	10	5%	15	4.8%	33	8%	31	1 550%
GR Greece	2	14%	2	3%	3	1%	25	8.0%	49	12%	47	2 350%
HU Hungary	0	0%	0	0%	4	2%	3	1.0%	4	1%	4	*
IE Ireland	1	7%	0	0%	3	1%	4	1.3%	0	0%	-1	-100%
IS Iceland	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
IT Italy	1	7%	6	9%	13	6%	19	6.1%	23	6%	22	2 200%
LI Liechtenstein	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0.0%	2	1%	2	*
LT Lithuania	0	0%	0	0%	13	6%	49	15.6%	56	14%	56	*
LU Luxembourg	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*

Year	1998/99		2002/03		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		Increase/ decrease 1998/99 - 2008/09	
Country of home institution	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	%
LV Latvia	0	0%	0	0%	4	2%	11	3.5%	16	4%	16	*
MT Malta	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
NL The Netherlands	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	1.6%	7	2%	7	*
NO Norway	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
PL Poland	0	0%	0	0%	38	18%	30	9.6%	50	13%	50	*
PT Portugal	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	3	1.0%	2	1%	2	*
RO Romania	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0.6%	4	1%	4	*
SE Sweden	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%	1	0.3%	1	0%	1	*
SI Slovenia	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
SK Slovakia	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	7	2.2%	5	1%	5	*
TR Turkey	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
UK United Kingdom	0	0%	6	9%	15	7%	17	5.4%	19	5%	19	*
Total	14	100%	64	100%	211	100%	314	100%	394	100%	380	2 714%

Source: European Commission

Fields of study

Table 6 shows the distribution of all, national, all foreign, foreign non-mobile and foreign incoming students by fields of study (CYSTAT, reference year 2007/08). The ranking order changes for every group of students considered here. Still, in each case the share of students enrolled in the social sciences, business and law is by far the largest. The share of foreign incoming students enrolled in this field of study (76.4%) is significantly higher than the share of Cypriot students (38.7%), which causes the share of all students enrolled in this field to lie at 49.5%. While Cypriot programmes in social sciences, business and law attract the majority of incoming students, the shares of incoming students enrolled in humanities and arts (4.4%), education (1.8%) as well as health and welfare (0.7%) are rather low if compared to the shares of Cypriot students in these fields.

The low share of incoming students studying education is in line with the situation in other European countries. However, it is uncommon that the shares of incoming students in health and welfare and especially in humanities and arts are so low. As regards the field of health and welfare, the experts interviewed for this study pointed to the fact that most programmes in this field are taught in Greek, as graduates staying in the country have to be able to consult their future patients in their mother language. Whether language barriers can explain the low share of incoming students in humanities and arts as well has to be determined by further research. Nevertheless, the fact that foreign non-mobile students enrolled disproportionately frequently (15.8%) in this field suggests that language barrier may have a smaller implication on those who are familiar with the Greek language. With regard to foreign non-mobile students it is also interesting to note that they are more often enrolled in the field of science than Cypriot and incoming students.

Table 6: Distribution of all students, all national, all foreign, foreign non-mobile and foreign incoming students across fields of study, in 2007/08

Rank	Field of study	All students at national HEIs (N=25 688)	All Cypriot students at national HEIs (N=17 936)	Foreign students (N=7 752)	Foreign non-mobile students (N=596)	Foreign incoming students (N=7 156)
1	Social sciences, business and law	49.5%	38.7%	74.4%	51.0%	76.4%
2	Humanities and arts	10.4%	12.6%	5.3%	15.8%	4.4%
3	Science	9.8%	10.9%	7.3%	12.9%	6.8%
4	Education	8.9%	11.8%	2.1%	5.7%	1.8%
5	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	7.7%	10.0%	2.4%	8.2%	1.9%
6	Services	7.1%	6.9%	7.6%	4.0%	7.9%
7	Health & welfare	6.5%	8.9%	0.8%	2.3%	0.7%
8	Agriculture	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

Types of higher education institutions

As visible in Table 7, the majority (69.3%) of Cypriot students in Cyprus is enrolled at universities (CYSTAT, reference year 2007/08). With 64.4%, a comparable share of foreign non-mobile students is studying at universities. Interestingly, the pattern with foreign and foreign incoming students is completely different: Only 16.2% of foreign incoming students come to study at Cypriot universities, whereas the striking majority enrolls at colleges – i.e. the types of institutions referred to in section 2.1 as non-university institutions of higher education.

Table 7: Distribution of all students, all national, all foreign, foreign non-mobile and incoming students across types of higher education institutions, 2007/08

Type of institution	All students at national HEIs (N= 25 688)	All Cypriot students at national HEIs (N=17 936)	Foreign students (N= 7 752)	Foreign non-mobile students (N= 596)	Foreign incoming students (N= 7 156)
University	54.4%	69.3%	19.9%	64.4%	16.2%
College	45.6%	30.7%	80.1%	35.6%	83.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

More specifically, the group of foreign students – and thus arguably also the group of foreign incoming students – enrolls at private colleges. This is known because the CYSTAT data allow to further differentiate the distribution of foreign students across types of institutions by the legal form of the latter (i.e. by public and private bodies). It turns out that 79.7% of foreign students are enrolled at private colleges, while only 0.4% is enrolled at public colleges. At universities, the difference is by far less expressed, but still clearly visible: 11.2% of foreign students study at private institutions and 8.7% study at public institutions. The picture becomes even more interesting when the shares that foreign students make up of the overall student population are calculated for the different types of institutions: At both public and private universities, only approximately every tenth student is a foreign student. At public colleges, only between one or two

in 100 students are foreign students. At private colleges, in contrast, six in ten students have a foreign nationality (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08).

According to the experts interviewed for this study, the explanation for this phenomenon is twofold. Firstly, the share of foreign students at public institutions is so low due to the fact that they require the successful completion of specific entry exams, which many foreign students allegedly have difficulty in passing. Secondly – and more importantly – the public institutions in general teach most of their programmes in Greek. Therefore, foreign students often preferred to enrol at private institutions, which have historically played a much stronger role in offering programmes taught in English language. For the disproportionately low share of foreign students at private universities, we cannot offer an explanation. At any rate, the situation is expected to change in the coming years, because both public and private universities are starting to offer programmes in English to an increasing degree, which will also attract a larger number of foreign (incoming) students.

Levels of programme

Table 8 indicates that there are a few differences regarding the distribution of different types of students across the levels of programmes (bachelor, master, PhD and other programmes¹⁸). The highest shares of national, foreign non-mobile and foreign incoming students are enrolled at the bachelor level. Thereby, the share of Cypriot bachelor students (63.0%) is higher than the share of foreign non-mobile (57.4%) and foreign incoming students (51.5%). The most notable characteristic of foreign and foreign incoming students is that they are far more often enrolled in 2-3 year diplomas at ISCED level 5B (39.3% and 40.3%, respectively) than Cypriot students (23.4%). According to the Statistical Service of Cyprus, these diploma programmes are mainly programmes taught in English language and offered by private colleges. This further explains why such a large share of foreign (incoming) students is enrolled in ISCED 5B level programmes at private colleges.

Regarding ISCED level 6, only 8.1% of incoming students are enrolled in master programmes and only 0.1% is following PhD programmes. According to the experts interviewed for this study, it is a well know pattern that foreign (incoming) students complete a bachelor programme in Cyprus, to then enrol in a master programme in another European country. This practice, however, will most likely diminish with the introduction of new master and PhD programmes taught in English language.

Table 8: Distribution of all students, all national, foreign, foreign non-mobile, and incoming students across levels of programmes, in 2007/08

Type of programme	All students at national HEIs (N= 25 688)	All Cypriot students at national HEIs (N=17 936)	Foreign students (N= 7 752)	Foreign non-mobile students (N= 596)	Foreign incoming students (N= 7 156)
Bachelor	59.6%	63.0%	51.9%	57.4%	51.5%
Master	10.8%	11.7%	8.4%	12.2%	8.1%
PhD	1.4%	1.9%	0.3%	3.2%	0.1%
Other ¹	28.2%	23.4%	39.3%	27.2%	40.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: ¹ 2-3 year diplomas at ISCED level 5B
Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

¹⁸ These other programmes are diplomas at ISCED level 5B lasting for about two to three years.

2.2.2 Student outflows

Countries of destination

Leaving aside Greece and the Russian Federation, there are no congruencies between the top ten countries with the highest share of incoming students in Cyprus and the top ten countries of destination of Cypriot outgoing students (Table 9). The mobility flows underlying this phenomenon are of an entirely different nature than in the case of incoming students: While the majority of incoming students in Cyprus is from Asia, Cypriot outgoing students are to be found in Eastern, Southern and Western European countries as well as in the United States. It stands out that 98.7% of Cypriot outgoing students are enrolled in the ten countries listed in Table 9. The major outgoing mobility flows are thus focused on a very small number of countries. The large majority of Cypriot outgoing students are enrolled in Greece and the United Kingdom alone (90.0%), to which Cyprus has strong political ties historically.¹⁹

The most striking case, however, is that of Greece, where about 60% of outgoing students are enrolled. According to the experts interviewed for this study, Greece is the preferred country of destination of Cypriot students because it is culturally closer to Cyprus than any other country. The cultural factor seems to play an important role especially for the parents of outgoing students. Supposedly, many parents would not allow their children to study in any other foreign country except Greece. For Cypriot students, a further and not negligible advantage of studying in Greece is the common language. In fact, Greece is the only country next to Cyprus where Greek is the official language used in public institutions. Finally, studying at Greek universities is popular among Cypriot students because their programmes are generally tuition-free. In contrast, most higher education institutions in Cyprus, that is to say all private institutions, are charging tuition fees because they are not or only marginally supported by public funds. The tuition fees sometimes amount to considerable sums even in international comparison.

Table 9: Major countries of destination of Cypriot outgoing students (Top 10), in 2007/08

Rank	Country	No.	%
1	GR Greece	13 342	59.2%
2	UK United Kingdom	6 945	30.8%
3	US United States	519	2.3%
4	BG Bulgaria	398	1.8%
5	HU Hungary	304	1.3%
6	FR France	177	0.8%
7	DE Germany	167	0.7%
8	CZ Czech Republic	159	0.7%
9	IT Italy	138	0.6%
10	RU Russian Federation	92	0.4%
Top ten countries		22 241	98.7%
Total outgoing students		22 530	100%

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

¹⁹ If the top ten list of *outgoing students'* countries of destination is compared to the top ten list of *study abroad students*, it turns out that there are only minor differences, i.e. with regard to the ranking order of a few countries. This comparison is based on data for the academic year 2006/07, as EUROSTAT had not yet published the figures on *study abroad students* for the year 2007/08 at the time this study was produced.

As Table 10 shows, the overall number of outgoing students increased by 38% between 2002/03 and 2007/08. This increase resulted mainly from a rise in the number of students going to Europe 32 countries (+50%). The United Kingdom (+4,164 students or +150%) and Greece (+2,745 students or +26% of students) became increasingly popular during the time period in question. There was a longstanding tradition of outgoing Cypriots studying in the United Kingdom. Moreover, with the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004, Cypriot students were not classified as non-Europeans anymore and could therefore pay much lower tuition fees. Arguably, this explains the strong boost in the number of outgoing Cypriots enrolling at the higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. Since administrative and travel barriers were lowered after 2004, Cypriot students also made use of their possibility to study in the Czech Republic, France, Italy and the Netherlands more frequently.

The rise in popularity of these destinations coincided with a sharp fall in the numbers of outgoing students going to the United States (-867 students or -63%) and the Russian Federation (-107 students or -54%). At first glance, the data suggest that the opposite trends regarding the two geographical regions are linked, but further research would be needed to be able to judge whether they are causally determined.

Table 10: Outgoing students by country of destination, 2002/03 as opposed to 2007/08

Country of destination	2002/03	2007/08	Abs. change	% change
<u>Europe 32 countries</u>				
AT Austria	14	16	2	14%
BE Belgium	0	6	6	:
BG Bulgaria	399	398	-1	0%
CH Switzerland	14	11	-3	-21%
CY Cyprus	:	:	:	:
CZ Czech Republic	79	159	80	101%
DE Germany	123	167	44	36%
DK Denmark	2	5	3	150%
EE Estonia	0	1	1	:
ES Spain	12	16	4	33%
FI Finland	1	2	1	100%
FR France	107	177	70	65%
GR Greece	10 597	13 342	2 745	26%
HU Hungary	288	304	16	6%
IE Ireland	18	15	-3	-17%
IS Iceland	0	0	0	:
IT Italy	74	138	64	86%
LI Liechtenstein	0	0	0	:
LT Lithuania	1	1	0	0%
LU Luxembourg	0	0	0	:
LV Latvia	0	3	3	:
MT Malta	4	3	-1	-25%
NL The Netherlands	5	28	23	460%
NO Norway	1	0	-1	-100%

Country of destination	2002/03	2007/08	Abs. change	% change
PL Poland	5	10	5	100%
PT Portugal	0	0	0	:
RO Romania	33	23	-10	-30%
SE Sweden	3	6	3	100%
SI Slovenia	1	0	-1	-100%
SK Slovakia	18	26	8	44%
TR Turkey	0	10	10	:
UK United Kingdom	2 781	6 945	4 164	150%
Total Europe 32 countries	14 580	21 812	7 232	50%
<u>Other countries and regions</u>				
Other European Countries	247	125	-122	-49%
... including Russian Federation	199	92	-107	-54%
Northern America	1 471	556	-915	-62%
... including United States of America	1 386	519	-867	-63%
Latin America and the Caribbean	0	0	0	:
... including Mexico	0	0	0	:
... including Brazil	0	0	0	:
Africa	6	4	-2	-33%
Asia	9	9	0	0%
... including China	0	0	0	:
... including India	0	0	0	:
... including Japan	0	0	0	:
Oceania	61	24	-37	-61%
Total other countries & regions	1 794	718	-1 076	-60%
Unknown	0	0	0	0
Total outgoing students	16 374	22 530	6 156	38%

Source: CYPSTAT, ISCED 5-6

As with incoming ERASMUS students, the number of outgoing ERASMUS students (152 in the year 2007/08) is negligible in comparison to the total of Cypriot students studying at higher education institutions abroad (Tables 10 and 11). Arguably, the number of outgoing ERASMUS students is rather low precisely due to the fact that a large number of Cypriots take up their studies in a foreign country. Cypriot students having a disposition to be mobile for the sake of studying have tended to be diploma mobile in the past, whereas those students enrolling at home institutions have often refrained completely from being mobile.

It will be interesting to observe whether the current expansion of study programmes at Cypriot institutions will cause more students to understand credit mobility through the ERASMUS scheme as a means to strike a balance between very intense forms of mobility (i.e. diploma mobility) and no mobility at all. For the time being, however, the fact that students at private institutions continue to pay tuition fees even whilst being abroad will work as a strong inhibiting factor to outgoing credit mobility.

A second feature of outgoing mobility through ERASMUS, based on the 2007/08 data, is that they go primarily to countries different than the ones chosen by outgoing students captured via the grant scheme. An exception in this respect is Greece, which occupies rank 3 (12.5%) of the preferred countries of Cypriot ERASMUS students. The major countries of destination are Spain (22.4%) and France (15.1%). As with outgoing grant scheme students, there are many countries where no Cypriot student goes via the ERASMUS programme.

Looking at the institutional level, it turns out that University of Cyprus is the only Cypriot institution to appear in the top 500 list of institutions in terms of sending abroad ERASMUS students (rank 436). 109 students – or 71.7% of all outgoing Cypriot ERASMUS students – were enrolled at the University of Cyprus before going abroad. Again, this situation is likely to change in the coming years, as other Cypriot institutions as well are getting more strongly involved in the promotion of ERASMUS mobility.

Table 11: Cypriot students going abroad through the ERASMUS Programme by country of destination, in 1998/99, 2002/03, 2006/07 - 2008/09

Year	1998/99		2002/03		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		Increase/ decrease 1998/99 - 2008/09	
	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	%
AT Austria	1	3%	5	5%	4	3%	8	5.3%	10	6%	9	900%
BE Belgium	3	9%	12	13%	11	9%	4	2.6%	16	10%	13	433%
BG Bulgaria	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
CY Cyprus – home country												
CZ Czech	0	0%	0	0%	3	2%	2	1.3%	4	3%	4	*
DE Germany	9	26%	4	4%	3	2%	5	3.3%	7	4%	-2	-22%
DK Denmark	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	3	2%	3	*
EE Estonia	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1.3%	1	1%	1	*
ES Spain	1	3%	6	7%	12	9%	34	22.4%	15	10%	14	1400%
FI Finland	2	6%	16	18%	10	8%	11	7.2%	2	1%	0	0%
FR France	5	14%	12	13%	10	8%	23	15.1%	13	8%	8	160%
GR Greece	5	14%	22	24%	28	22%	19	12.5%	45	29%	40	800%
HU Hungary	0	0%	0	0%	6	5%	1	0.7%	0	0%	0	*
IE Ireland	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
IS Iceland	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
IT Italy	3	9%	2	2%	12	9%	12	7.9%	8	5%	5	167%
LI Liechtenstein	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
LT Lithuania	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	2.0%	9	6%	9	*
LU Luxembourg	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
LV Latvia	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
MT Malta	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
NL Netherlands	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	4	3%	4	*
NO Norway	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
PL Poland	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.7%	0	0%	0	*
PT Portugal	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	4	2.6%	0	0%	0	*

Year	1998/99		2002/03		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		Increase/ decrease 1998/99 - 2008/09	
	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	%
RO Romania	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.7%	0	0%	0	*
SE Sweden	1	3%	2	2%	6	5%	4	2.6%	5	3%	4	400%
SI Slovenia	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
SK Slovakia	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	*
TR Turkey	0	0%	0	0%	7	5%	6	3.9%	5	3%	5	*
UK United Kingdom	5	14%	10	11%	16	12%	12	7.9%	10	6%	5	100%
Total	35	100%	91	100%	129	100%	152	100%	157	100%	122	348%

Source: European Commission

Fields of study

Table 12 shows the distribution of Cypriot and outgoing students by the fields of study they are enrolled in (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08). The preferred disciplines for outgoing students to enrol in are the social sciences, business and law (28.1%). Compared to Cypriot students remaining in Cyprus (38.7%) and especially compared to the large share of foreign incoming students enrolled in this field (76.4%), a percentage of 28.1% can be judged as rather low. It is in the fields of science (16.3% as opposed to 10.9%) as well as engineering, manufacturing and construction (16.1% as against 10.0%) that significantly more Cypriot students prefer studying abroad to enrolling at home. To a minor extent, this holds true for the fields of humanities and arts (15.7% versus 12.6%), health and welfare (11.3% versus 8.9%) and agriculture (2.7% versus 0.2%) as well. The strong outflow of students choosing these fields could be understood as a form of vertical mobility resulting from an undersupply of study places in Cyprus. However, from a considerable number of new programmes in these fields have been created since the year 2007/08, it is likely that in the future, Cypriot students will to a larger extent decide to enrol at home institutions.

Table 12: Distribution of national, foreign incoming and outgoing students across fields of study, 2007/08

Rank	Field of study	All Cypriot students at national HEIs (N= 17 936)	Foreign incoming students (N=7 156)	Outgoing (N= 22 530)
1	Social sciences, business and law	38.7%	76.4%	28.1%
2	Humanities and arts	12.6%	4.4%	15.7%
3	Science	10.9%	6.8%	16.3%
4	Education	11.8%	1.8%	6.9%
5	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	10.0%	1.9%	16.1%
6	Services	6.9%	7.9%	2.8%
7	Health & welfare	8.9%	0.7%	11.3%
8	Agriculture	0.2%	0.1%	2.7%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

Types of higher education institutions

As Table 13 shows, the large majority of foreign incoming students in Cyprus (83.8%) enrolls at colleges (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08). Interestingly, the situation is completely different with Cypriot students, regardless of whether they are enrolled at home institutions or abroad. A rather high share of Cypriot students (69.3%) is enrolled at universities. This proportion is even higher as regards outgoing students. In fact, 92.9% of outgoing students enrol at universities, while only 7.1% opt for college education. This phenomenon is a classic example of vertical outgoing mobility. The figures suggest that many Cypriot students leave the country because they can more easily enrol in institutions at university level abroad than at home. Although the vertical outgoing mobility flows will arguably continue to persist for a number of years, their magnitude will abate due to the considerable number of new programmes created at Cypriot universities in recent years.

Table 13: Distribution of all national, foreign incoming and outgoing students across types of institutions, 2007/08

Type of institution	All Cypriot students at national HEIs (N= 17 936)	Foreign incoming students (N= 7 156)	Outgoing (N= 22 530)
University	69.3%	16.2%	92.9%
College	30.7%	83.8%	7.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

Levels of programme

The data presented in Table 14 are evidence in favour of the hypotheses formulated with regard to the preferred fields of study and types of higher education institutions of outgoing students: Studying abroad is clearly seen as a means to enrol in institutions at ISCED level 5A or 6. As can be seen in Table 14, outgoing students enrol to a much lesser extent in 2-3 year diploma programmes at ISCED level 5B (7.1%) than Cypriot students at home institutions (23.4%). Instead, they enrol disproportionately frequently in bachelor (82.6%) and PhD programmes (2.3%).²⁰

The fact that such a large share of outgoing Cypriots is leaving already before or during the bachelor phase suggests that they are willing to complete their entire study phase abroad. In contrast, mobility for the sake of completing a master programme abroad after having graduated from a bachelor programme in Cyprus does not (yet) seem to be a widespread phenomenon. Again, the current expansion of the Cypriot higher education system is expected to change these tendencies in the coming years. The experts interviewed for this study hypothesised that in future, larger shares of Cypriot students and foreign incoming students will enrol for a PhD in Cyprus, as not only the public universities, but also the private universities are currently developing new PhD programmes. Private institutions were not allowed to offer PhD programmes in the past.

²⁰ At all levels of programme, there is an interesting difference between male and female students. The latter are on average between 1.6 and 1.8 years younger at the time of their outgoing mobility phase. With approximately 1.8 years, the age difference is most expressed at the bachelor stage: While women are on average 19.9 years old, men have an average age of 21.7 years. The age difference can be explained by the fact that many male Cypriot students serve in the army before entering higher education. The military service is mandatory in the Republic of Cyprus and usually lasts for 25 months. At the Master stage, the age difference slightly diminishes: With an average age of 23.1 years, female students are about 1.6 years younger than their male fellows. At the PhD stage, female students are approximately 1.7 years younger, with an average age of 25.7 years (CYSTAT data, reference year 2007/08).

Table 14: Distribution of all national, foreign incoming and outgoing students across levels of programme, in 2007/08

Type of programme	All Cypriot students at national HEIs (N= 17 936)	Foreign incoming students (N= 7 156)	Outgoing (N= 22 530)
Bachelor	63.0%	51.5%	82.6%
Master	11.8%	8.1%	8.1%
PhD	1.9%	0.1%	2.3%
Other ¹	23.4%	40.3%	7.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

¹2-3 year diplomas at ISCED level 5B

Source: CYSTAT, ISCED 5-6

3 Summary assessment of student mobility in Cyprus

The issue of student mobility is of major importance for the Cypriot higher education system, as both incoming and outgoing mobility flows of students have been of a considerable magnitude in recent years. However, there are fundamental differences with regard to the different directions and different types of mobility, respectively.

- As measured by the sheer number of students entering and leaving the country, diploma mobility plays a far more important role than credit mobility. In this respect, the analysis has shown that outgoing diploma mobility outbalances the incoming mobility flows. Over the past years, the number of outgoing students was constantly more than three times higher than the number of incoming students. Next to this finding, it has turned out that the groups of incoming and outgoing diploma mobile students are of an entirely different nature.
- Generally speaking, incoming diploma mobile students tend to come to Cyprus from Asian countries with the objective of enrolling in bachelor programmes or 2-3 year diploma programmes at ISCED level 5B that are offered in the field of social sciences, business and law. They are primarily studying at private non-university institutions of higher education. According to the experts interviewed for this study, the primary goal of a notable share of these students has in the past not been to study but to gain access to the European labour market more easily. In contrast, the majority of outgoing diploma mobile students tends to go to European countries to which they have cultural or historical ties, i.e. mainly Greece and the UK. They tend to opt for university programmes at ISCED levels 5A and 6 in the fields of science as well as engineering, manufacturing and construction more frequently than Cypriot students at home institutions. Rather than making intercultural experiences in the first place, it can be hypothesised that the main function of outgoing diploma mobility for Cypriot students is to gain access to fields, levels and institutions of higher education they cannot or hardly access in Cyprus (vertical mobility).
- Not only is credit mobility of a minor importance in comparison to diploma mobility flows. Also – leaving aside the case of Greece – the countries of origin and destination of diploma and credit mobile students differ. Most incoming credit mobile students are from Lithuania as well as Poland and most outgoing credit mobile students go to Spain and France. Unlike diploma mobility, the incoming flows are more than two times as intense as the outgoing flows in the case of credit mobility. However, the results of the credit mobility analysis have

to be read with caution, given that the ERASMUS data are the only available proxy for measuring all credit mobility flows.

- Whilst this picture of student mobility might seem particular in an international comparison, it is likely to change in the coming years. The strong expansion of the Cypriot higher education system observed since the early nineties is continuing at an unabated pace. A considerable number of study programmes at ISCED level 5A and 6 – and a large share of those taught in English language – is currently being introduced. The newly founded institutions are expanding their teaching capacities; at the same time, another large university will soon open its doors to students (cf. subsection 2.1). The limited supply of study places at ISCED level 5A and 6 in Cyprus is unlikely to remain the principal reason for outgoing mobility for very much longer.
- Nevertheless, it would arguably be wrong to conclude that student mobility flows from and to Cyprus will come to resemble those that are observed in mainland Europe. Firstly, the experts interviewed for this study indicated that the Ministry of Education and Culture is not planning to expand substantially the teaching capacities in all fields in the medium term; thus for studying certain disciplines, Cypriot students will have to continue to be outgoing diploma mobile. Secondly, studying abroad for a whole degree has become a tradition in Cyprus, and might simply for that reason remain attractive to (future) students. It seems unlikely that all these students will settle for temporary credit mobility, especially as students at private institutions usually continue to pay tuition fees whilst abroad and might therefore refrain from being mobile at all. Finally, it is not yet clear for how long the current expansion of teaching capacities will continue. As the analysis has revealed, study places at home institutions are far more expensive than financing the large-scale outgoing diploma mobility of Cypriot students.
- The level of detail to which prospective developments can be analysed will not least depend on the availability and quality of the data on student mobility. The previous sections have illustrated that the potential for analysis of presumably diploma mobility flows in Cyprus is exceptional in an international comparison, but that the potential to examine credit mobility flows is limited. As far as other study-related activities are concerned, there are no data available at the moment. Since other forms of mobility than diploma mobility are expected to play a more significant role in the future and since the validity of the outgoing mobility data collected via the grant scheme is compromised by the support no longer being universal, it would be worthwhile to develop and introduce new monitoring tools. Otherwise, the interesting developments to be expected in the next years can hardly be traced.