



EUROPEAN
STUDENT
CARD
INITIATIVE



erasmus
without paper



Survey analysis: your views on EWP

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EAC-2020-OP-0008-Lot1 - Framework service contract to develop, implement and support the European Student Card Initiative.



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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the key goals of the European Student Card Initiative (ESCI) is to decrease the administrative workload surrounding the management of Erasmus+ mobilities. The interoperability gained by joining the Erasmus Without Paper (EWP) Network and exchanging the data with any other Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) holders, is slowly but surely becoming the reality. In 2022 the first two Erasmus+ processes, namely Learning Agreements (LAs) and Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) are to be exchanged solely in digital format via the EWP network.

This survey was designed to draw an overview of the use and implementation of EWP in European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and to test its success among its users. It provides useful insights on the state of play of EWP in HEIs' core international activities, their struggles and successes in reaching fully functional digital Erasmus+ processes, and their remarks on the future of the digitalisation roadmap. It also allows us to assess the level of digitalisation of current Erasmus+ processes and the tools used for such processes.

The data collection took place from 21/03/2022 to 22/04/2022 and resulted in acquiring feedback from up to 700 participants that started the survey and completed at least the first set of questions. 419 of them completed the full survey. For the analysis below, we considered all answers received for each of the questions. The sample size for the questions will thus vary between 300 and 700.

The report first dwells on the profile of participating institutions and individuals. Afterwards, it highlights the current state of play of EWP and the mobility processes that it can handle in European HEIs (as of today). It also tries to single out obstacles that HEIs are facing in the deployment of EWP at the institutional level. Next, it zooms out to discuss the overall experience of HEIs with EWP. Later, the report investigates how information about EWP spreads among its users and how dissemination of information could be improved. In an attempt to go deeper in the analysis, the report also attempts to map out HEIs' practices when it comes to mobility processes that are not yet part of EWP. Lastly, it looks at HEIs' preferences regarding the roadmap for further digitalising Erasmus+ processes.



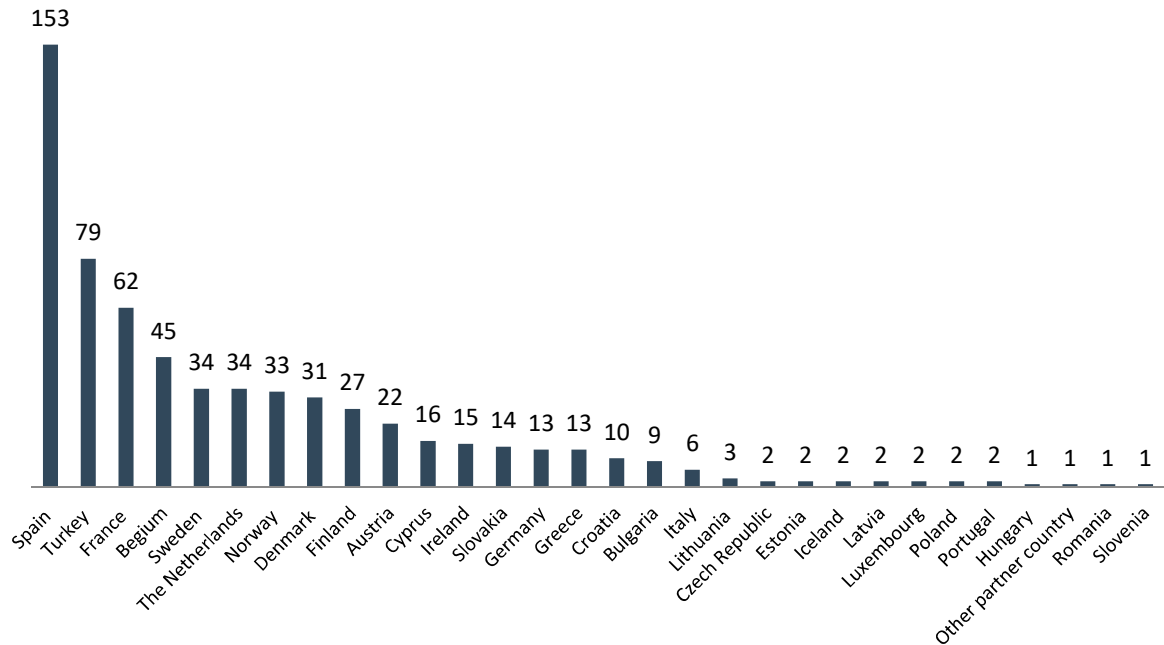


2.PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

2.1 Higher Education Institutions' profile

The participants are part of HEIs originating from 30 countries, out of which one is an Erasmus+ partner country and 29 are either EU Member States or Erasmus+ programme countries, hence holding an ECHE. Spain (153), Turkey (79), France (62), Belgium (45) and Sweden (34) provided the highest number of participants in the survey.

Figure 1: Countries of HEIs that participated in the survey

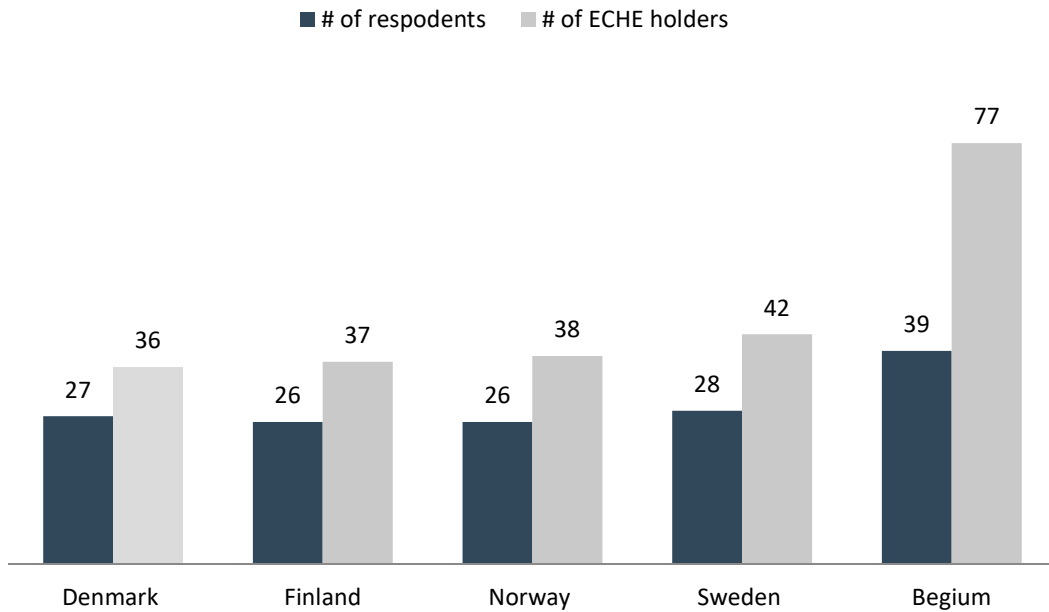


Total number of answers to the question "Country": 637

Data was cleaned and duplicates were singled out and removed to get a realistic estimation of the participation in terms of ECHE holders. For five countries more than half of all ECHE holders answered the survey, as is shown in **Figure 2**. These countries are Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Belgium. Other countries with up to 40% of ECHE-holders represented were Slovakia, Cyprus, The Netherlands and Ireland.



Figure 2: Top 5 respondents that are most-representative of the ECHE holders of their country



Total number of answers to the question “Name of your institution” and “Country” after cleaning the data: 558

Table 1 illustrates the profile of respondents' respective HEIs in terms of total students' enrolment. More than half of HEIs in this survey are universities that have enrolment ranging from 1 to 5.000 students. Thus, this report and the data on which it is based mostly reflect the situation of EWP in smaller universities.

Table 1: Size of the responding HEIs, sorted by range

Size range in terms of total enrolment	#
1-1000	211
1001-5000	125
5001-25000	155
25001-50000	84
50001-...	19

Total number of answers to the question “Approximate number of students enrolled”: 598

Table 2 shows the distribution of the number of Erasmus exchange students - incoming and outgoing. A similar trend as in table 1 can be found, with most respondents noting a smaller number of outgoing and incoming students. For both types of mobility, the answer with the most responses is 1-50 students.



Table 2: Size of the Erasmus+ population of responding HEIs, sorted by range

Approximate number of outgoing Erasmus exchange students prior to Covid (credit mobility)	#	Approximate number of incoming Erasmus exchange students prior to Covid (credit mobility)	#
1-50	223	1-50	227
51-100	73	51-100	59
101-250	102	101-250	80
251-500	83	251-500	82
501-...	84	501-...	69

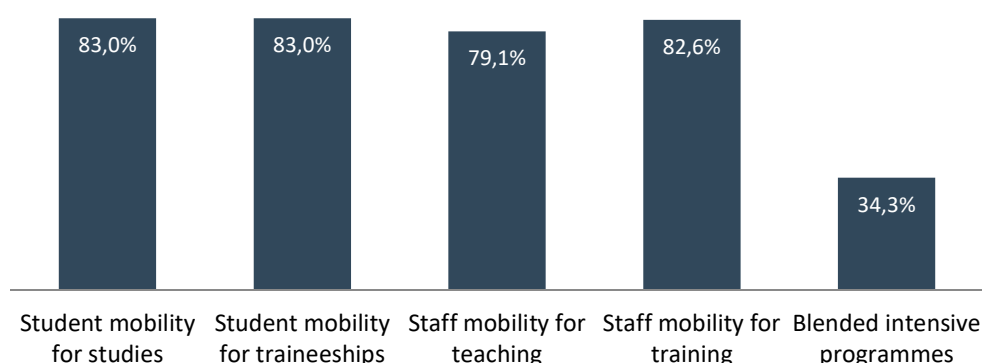
Total number of answers to the question “Approximate number of outgoing Erasmus exchange students prior to Covid (credit mobility)”: 565

Total number of answers to the question “Approximate number of incoming Erasmus exchange students prior to Covid (credit mobility)”: 517

Based on these descriptive features indicated above, it can be concluded that the sample of this survey is not representative for the whole community of ECHER holders. However, it can still provide useful insights on the state of play at a large sample of HEIs, both in terms of current processes as well as their main obstacles in implementing EWP and its components.

The survey also asked the type of international activities that responding HEIs are carrying out. Around 80 percent of them perform student mobility for studies (83%), traineeships (83%), and staff mobility for teaching (79,1%) or training (82,6%). 34,3 percent of the respondents mentioned implementing blended intensive programs. As the latter is a new action under the Erasmus Programme, it is expected that in future Erasmus calls, more HEIs will implement this activity as well. Overall, 32,5 percent of all the HEIs in the survey are currently implementing all types of mobility activities mentioned in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Types of mobility activities implemented in interviewed HEIs



Total number of answers to the question “What type of mobility activities do you implement at your institution?”: 683

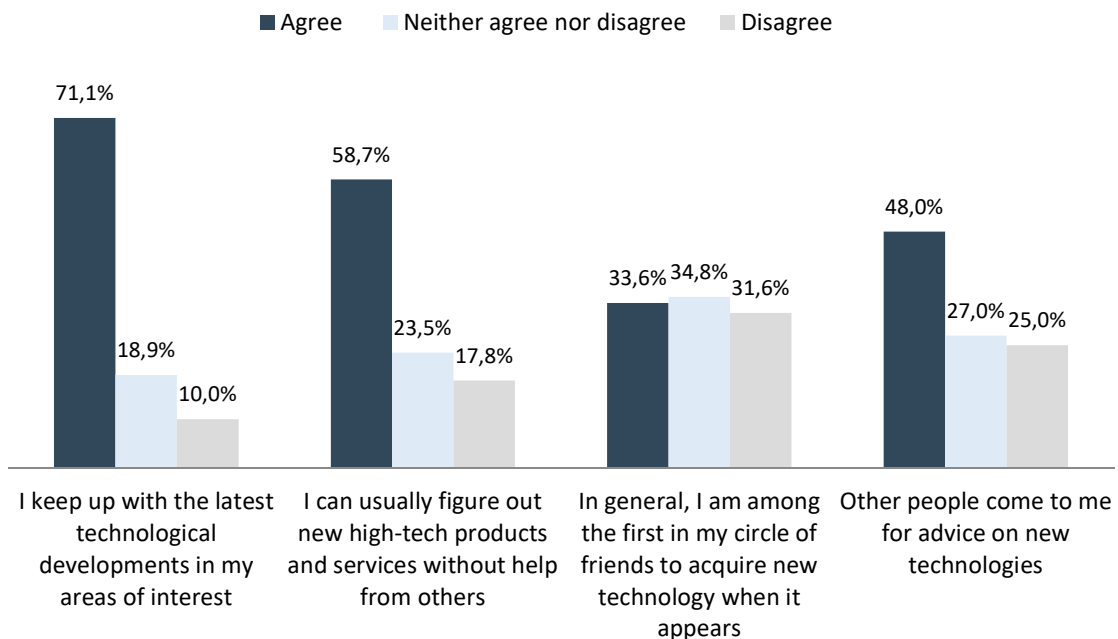


2.2 Respondents' characteristics

Regarding the profile of respondents, 74 percent of them are working at the central level, while 22 percent are working at the faculty or department level. Most respondents are directly involved with the mobility process, as 85 percent work at the international relations office (IRO) of their HEI. The other participants are working as IT-staff (2%), teaching staff (1,7%) or other occupations, such as advisers or college principals, etc.

When asked about their IT skills and knowledge in **Figure 4**, 71,1 percent said they keep up with the latest technological developments in their areas of interest, 58,7 percent said they can figure out new high-tech products and services on their own and 48 percent believe they can provide advice on new technologies to acquaintances.

Figure 4: Proclaimed IT knowledge of the respondents



Total answers to the four affirmations: ranging from 405 to 416



3. CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS ON EWP IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Erasmus+ administrative processes in the digital format via EWP

The first step in the ESCI roadmap is to exchange the Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) and Learning Agreements (LAs) through Erasmus Without Paper by the end of 2022. In the course of 2023, HEIs are expected to also support student nominations and transcripts of records related to Erasmus+ student mobility. This section looks at the current state of play of EWP for these processes.

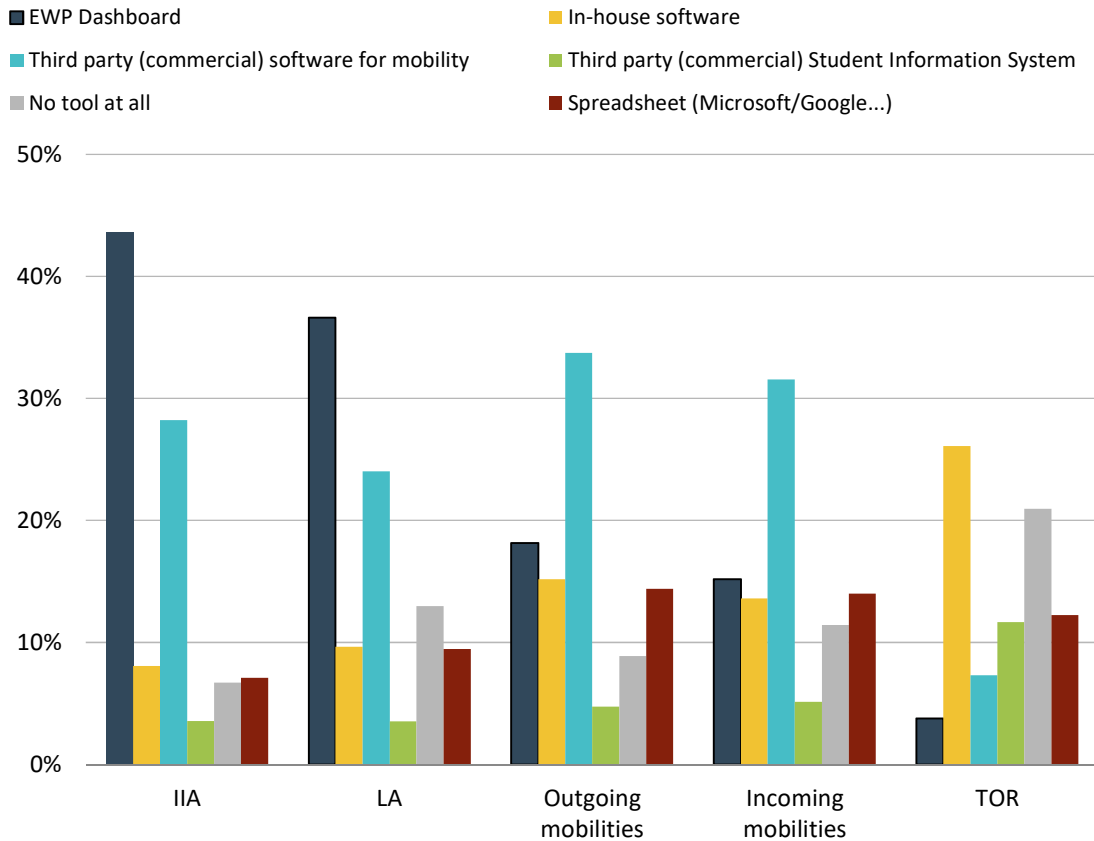
As **Figure 5** suggests, the EWP Dashboard is currently by far the most used tool to exchange IIAs and LAs between two HEIs. Indeed, 43,6 percent of HEIs in the survey use the Dashboard for the IIAs and 36,6 percent for LAs. In contrast, Transcripts Of Records (ToRs) are most commonly managed through an in-house system (26,1%).

The sample in **Figure 5** deviates from official numbers gathered by the EWP+ consortium via the EWP registry and the EWP dashboard. According to those number (stemming from June 2022) the percentage of EWP Dashboard users is even higher: about 77 percent of HEIs connected via EWP for IIAs enabled the use of the IIA module via the EWP Dashboard (1.893 out of 2.454) and 82 percent (1.776 out of 2.163) of HEIs were connected for LAs via EWP Dashboard.





Figure 5: Types of tools used for Erasmus+ mobility processes



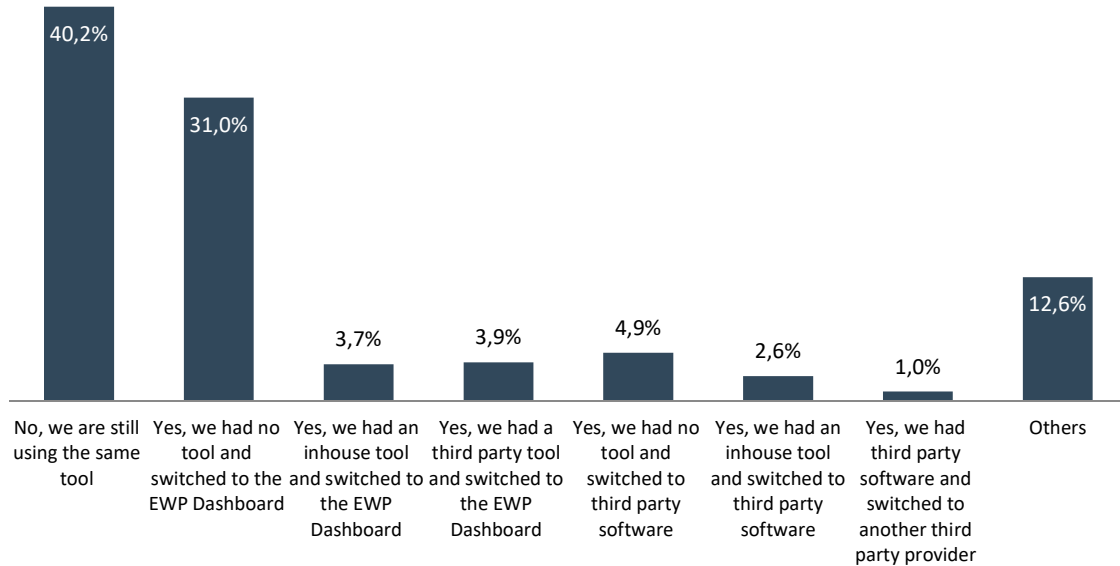
**Total number of answers to the matrix question “What tool(s) do you use to manage the following processes?”:
683**

More than half of the 414 respondents (51,2%) indicate they need to use several tools to manage EWP-relevant processes. When asked if they had to switch tools to use EWP (**Figure 6**), about 75 percent of HEIs did not have to switch tools. HEIs mostly still use the same tool (40,2%), or they did not have any tool prior to start using the Dashboard (31%), and some said they did not have any tool but are now using a third-party software (4,9%).

However, 10,2 percent had to give up on their usual tool to get a new one that was compatible with EWP. About 3,9 percent switched to Dashboard from a third-party tool and 3,7 percent from their in-house system. Furthermore, 1 percent had third party software and switched to another third-party provider, 2,6 percent had an in-house tool and switched to third party software.



Figure 6: Switching tool to participate in EWP?



**Total number of answers to the matrix question “Did you have to switch tools to be able to participate in EWP”:
507**

HEIs could also provide open answers to the question “Did you have to switch tools in order to be able to participate in EWP?”. Some of the HEIs in the survey are currently:

- either in the testing phase, in the connecting phase or adapting their usual tool to EWP (22);
- using more than one tool since it has been implemented (18);
- using their own tool or did not have to switch tools (7).

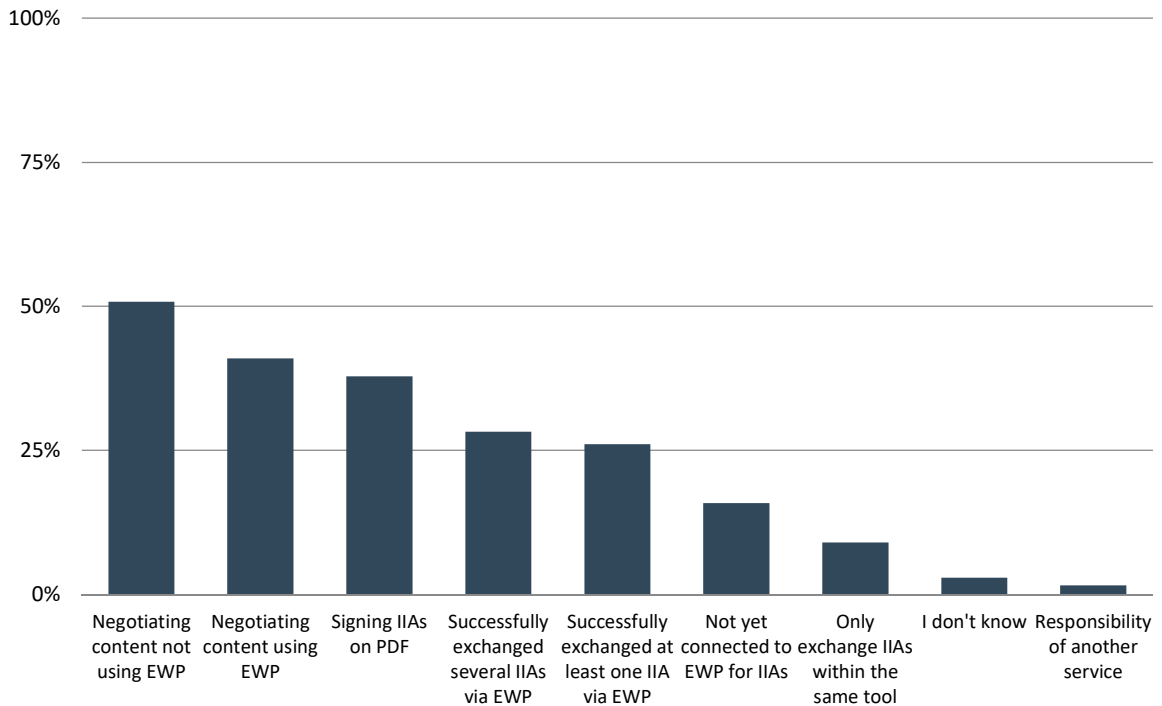
3.1.1 Inter-Institutional Agreements

Figure 7.a shows that 50,8 percent of the HEIs in the survey negotiate agreements with their partners without using EWP. It is surprising to see that many HEIs are still negotiating agreements outside the context of EWP. It seems to imply that HEIs did not only postpone the actual usage of EWP but also the preparatory processes. However, experience also shows that if both partners agree to renew an existing agreement, once they exchange it in a digital manner often some details seem to be different on both sides, leading to another round of negotiations. Around 41 percent of HEIs are currently negotiating the content of IIAs with partners through EWP, another 37,8 percent are using PDFs to sign them. 28,2 percent have already exchanged several IIAs in a digital manner.

About 16 percent indicate that they are not yet connected to EWP when it comes to IIAs and 9 percent only exchange IIAs within the same tool/provider. Since HEIs could select multiple answers to this

question, they may be using EWP for IIAs with some partners while still using other means of information exchange with others.

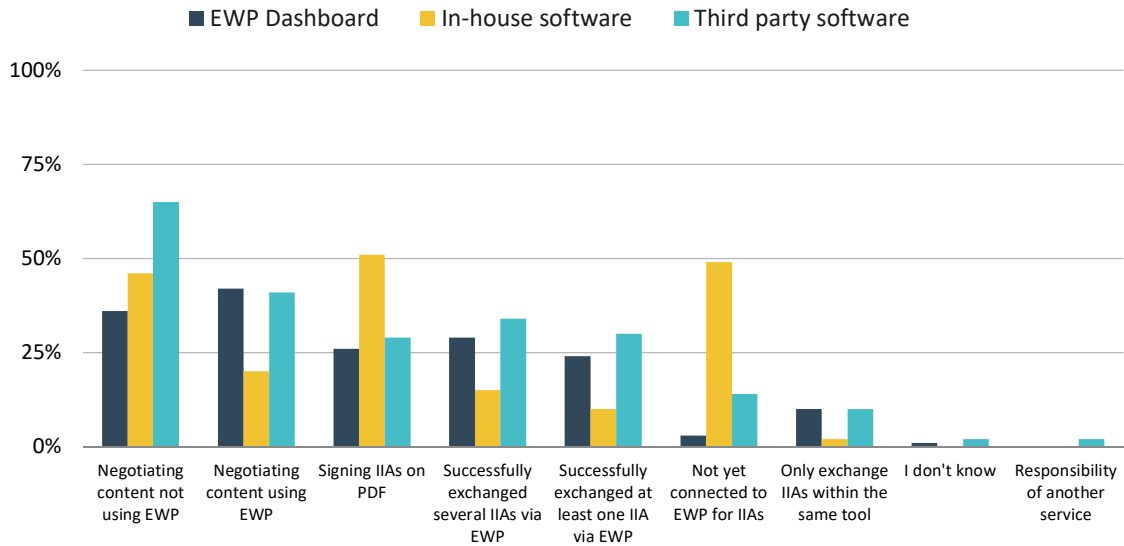
Figure 7.a: Status of IIAs and EWP in HEIs



Total number of answers to the question “What is the status of IIAs & EWP at your institution”: 510

When differentiating the IIA status by the three different options of connecting to the EWP network (via the EWP Dashboard, in-house or third-party systems), it is clear that third-party software and in-house users more often negotiate the content of IIAs not using EWP compared to EWP Dashboard users. In-house users have some ground to cover before they can successfully exchange IIAs in a digital manner (Figure 7.b).

Figure 8.b.: Status of IIAs and EWP in HEIs differentiated for EWP Dashboard, in-house & Third-party systems



A total of 73 respondents left an open comment. The most frequent answers are categorised in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Status of IIAs & EWP

Topic	Frequency
HEI is facing technical issues	32
HEI is migrating to, integrating in, adapting to, testing EWP	15
HEI must use two different systems	11

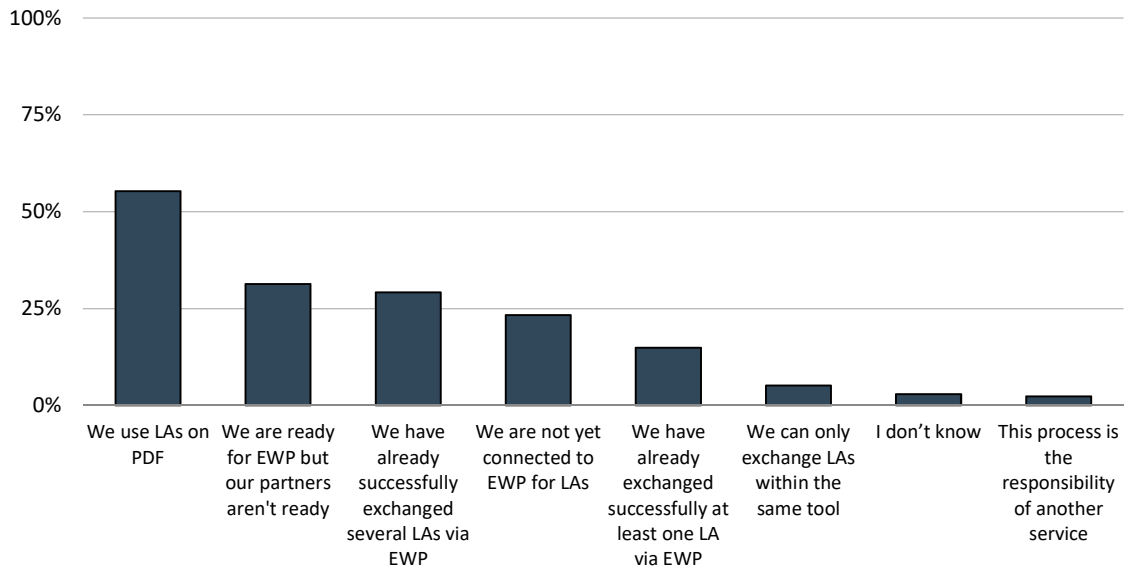
Besides the open remarks mentioned above, some HEIs also emphasised their enthusiasm about digitalisation of mobility processes.

3.1.2 Learning Agreements

Figure 8.a indicates that 55,3 percent of the responding HEIs use LAs on PDF, a third (29,2%) has already exchanged several LAs via EWP. In contrast, 23,3 percent are not yet connected to EWP for LAs, a third (31,4%) are ready to exchange LAs but cannot do it since their partners are not yet ready, and 5,1 percent can only exchange LAs with the same tool/provider.



Figure 9.a: Status of LAs and EWP in HEIs

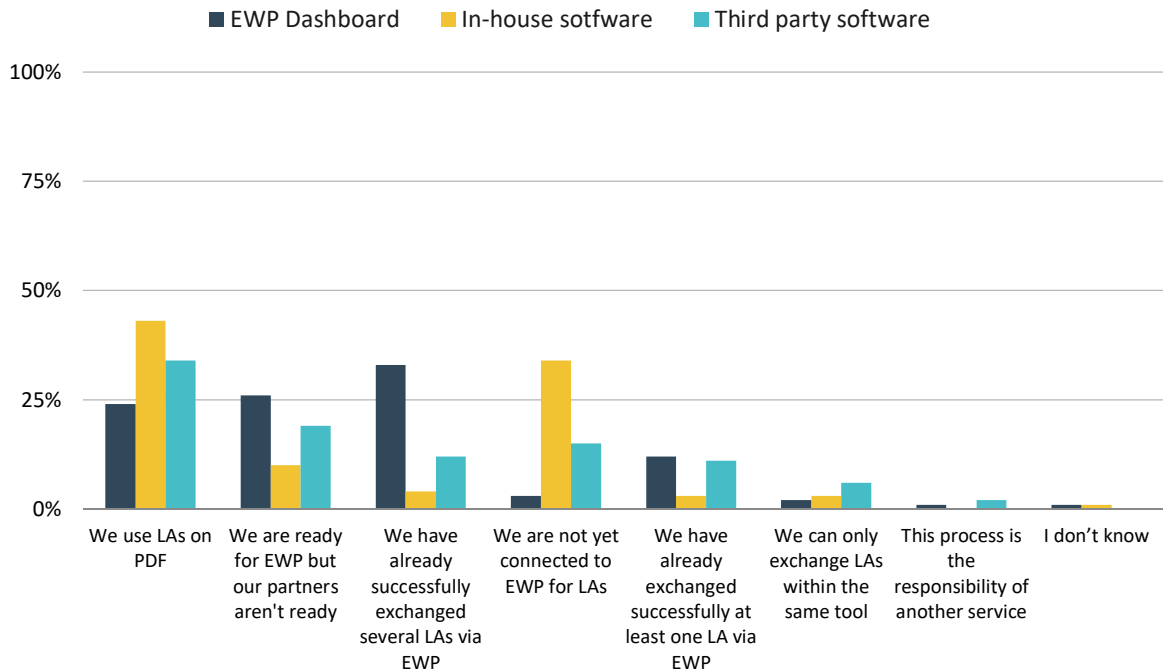


Total number of answers to the question “What is the status of LAs & EWP at your institution”: 510

When the responses are analysed per system, it appears that EWP Dashboard users have a bigger success rate in terms of signing LAs. The ground-breaking work from consecutive OLA projects seems a logical explanation for this. Just as for IIAs, in-house users are lagging behind in the implementation process.



Figure 10.b: Status of LAs and EWP in HEIs differentiated for EWP Dashboard, in-house & Third-party systems



HEIs who had further remarks could leave an open comment. 91 respondents shared their thoughts, the most common issues are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Status of IIAs & EWP

Topic	Frequency
HEI is migrating to, integrating in, adapting to, testing EWP	27
HEI is facing technical problems	18
HEI must use two different systems	15

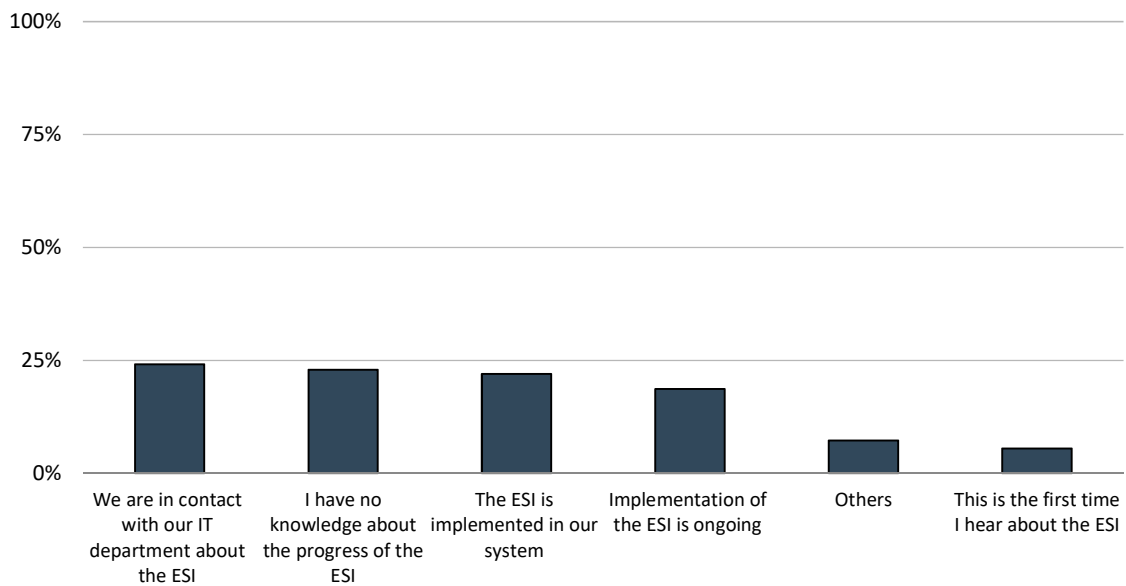
3.1.3 European Student Identifier

The European Student Identifier (ESI) is currently being deployed by many HEIs. About 22 percent of the respondents indicated ESI is already implemented in their system. For 42 percent of them, the process has been at least initiated: the implementation is ongoing (18,2%) or the IT department has been contacted (24,1%). In contrast, 22,9 percent of the respondents do not know about the progress of ESI and 5,5 percent say it is the first time they heard about it.



Official numbers about the deployment of ESI from May 2022 indicate that 2.145 out of 3.430 HEIs registered via MyAcademicID. Authentication data from HEIs whose students do not use the Erasmus+ App or the Online Learning Agreement Manager does not “travel through” the MyAcademicID proxy. We expect HEIs relying on third-party providers for EWP data exchange to potentially be underrepresented in this universe.

Figure 11: Status of the ESI implementation



Total number of answers to the question “What is the status of implementation of the European Student Identifier (ESI) at your HEI?”: 510

Furthermore, 42 respondents stated that their HEI had neither implemented the ESI, nor initiated the process. To the open question “What is the status of implementation of the European Student Identifier (ESI) at your HEI?”, some of these HEIs left a comment:

- It is not on the agenda of the institution/office (4);
- There is a lack of resources (money, guidance, staff...) (4);
- There are technical issues (2).

3.2 Obstacles encountered by HEIs

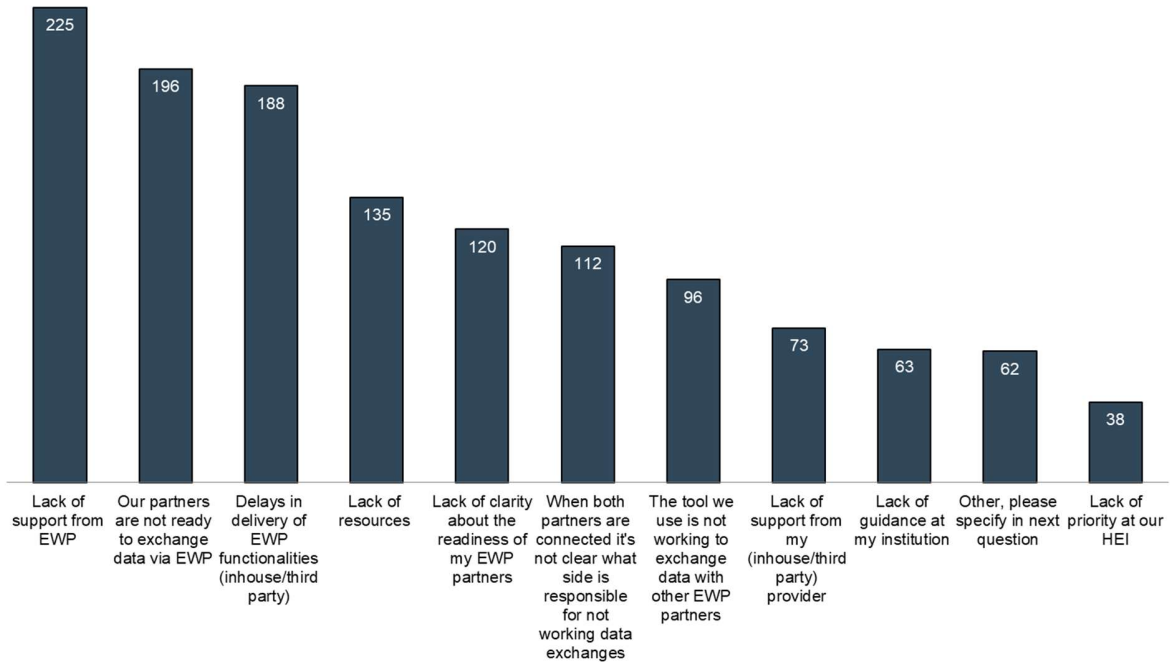
Identifying the difficulties HEIs are facing while they are implementing EWP is of critical importance to ensure they benefit from the initiative. Beside the challenges reported above, **Figure 10.a** shows what HEIs ranked as the top 3 most hampering difficulties. “Lack of support from EWP” was ranked first, second or third by 225 participants, while “having partners that are not ready to use EWP” was in the top-3 for





196 HEIs. This is closely followed by “the delays in delivery of EWP functionalities (in-house/third party)” as a top-3 obstacle by 188 HEIs. It is interesting to see that very few colleagues indicate a lack of priority at their HEI as an important obstacle.

Figure 12.a: Number of votes given to each obstacle as being in the top-3 most hampering obstacles



Total average number of answers to the question “In your opinion, what are the 3 biggest obstacles for you to implement EWP?”: 436

A lack of support from EWP is seen as the most important obstacle across all user groups (Dashboard, 3PP, in-house). For EWP Dashboard users, the second biggest obstacle is “the lack of readiness from partners”, while third-party users indicate “delays in delivery of EWP functionalities” as their second biggest obstacle. For in-house users a “lack of resources” is clearly a critical issue that is less prominent for the other groups.



Figure 130.b: Top-3 most hampering obstacles: percentage calculated on total number of votes for each of the items differentiated for EWP Dashboard, in-house & Third-party systems

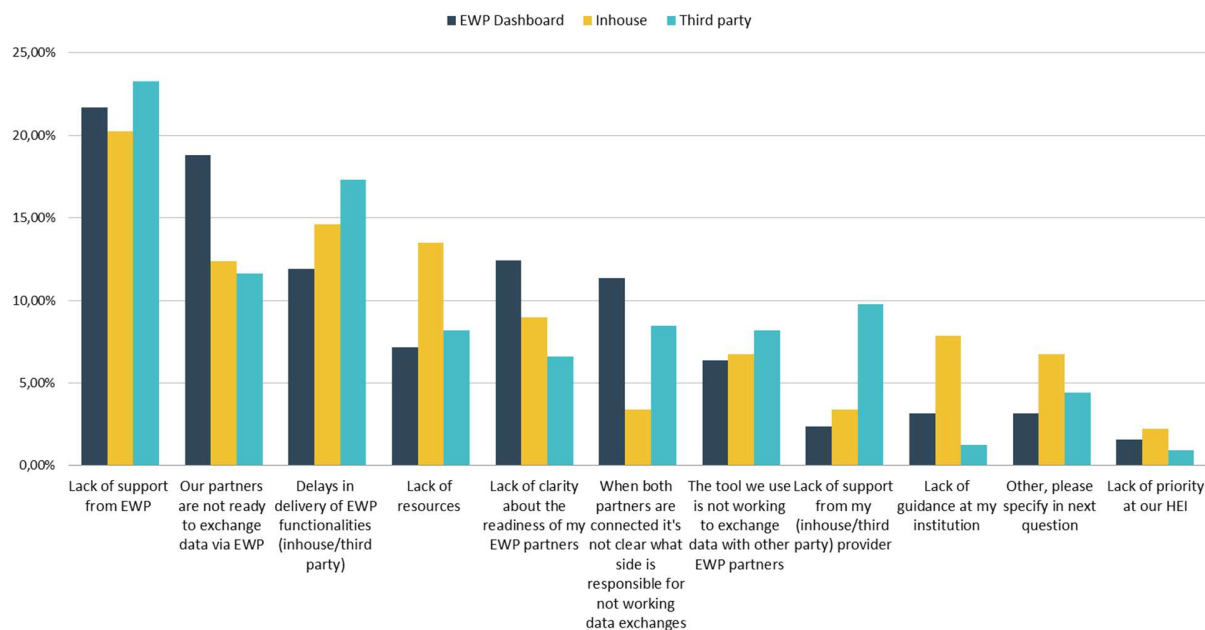


Table 5 shows the topics that were addressed in the open answer to the question “Please specify other obstacles” that followed the ranking of the biggest 3 obstacles.

Table 5: Other obstacles given by HEIs

Topic	Frequency
Functionalities: missing, lagging, not fit for purposes, not matching HEIs needs, unfinished	44
Technical issues, system errors	41
Time and resources consuming, increased workload (to implement or use)	29
Difficult to use, not user friendly, confusing, frustrating, outdated (project or application)	27
Lack of information, guidance, training, support, answers, detailed guide, communication	25
Lack of internal resources	19
Implementation of the third-party tool/the in-house tool is ongoing, will be soon, is in the testing phase	12



4. OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH EWP

The survey asked participants about the general feeling and experience of EWP and ESI. A total of 198 respondents indicated multiple sentiments. 27 HEIs mentioned that they are either lacking the internal resources to properly implement the project or that the latter was too resource-consuming. For 21 of them, the lack of information, guidance (such as a detailed step-by-step guide) and training has been raised as an impeding factor.

Another remark mentioned by 18 HEIs, is that the project was complex, confusing or chaotic. It is difficult to understand and follow the latest developments and upcoming steps, though they invest diverse resources in EWP.

A total of ten HEIs pointed out the missing or lagging functionalities and nine HEIs have the impression that they must use a tool that is unfinished, not fit-for-purpose or that does not match the HEIs' needs.

According to five HEIs, the roadmap and deadlines should be readjusted to match the reality of the progress of the project. At the same time, one respondent said that changes were happening too quickly. Finally, three respondents find that HEIs should be more involved in the process of redesigning the roadmap.

The reliability of the data exchanged on EWP was questioned by four HEIs. They claim that IIAs often disappear, or the data changed overnight. They also mentioned that OLAs could disappear from the platform without notification. Additionally, the EWP platform has been said to be not user friendly by two HEIs.

Regardless of these mixed results, four HEIs reiterated their enthusiasm for the digitalisation process.



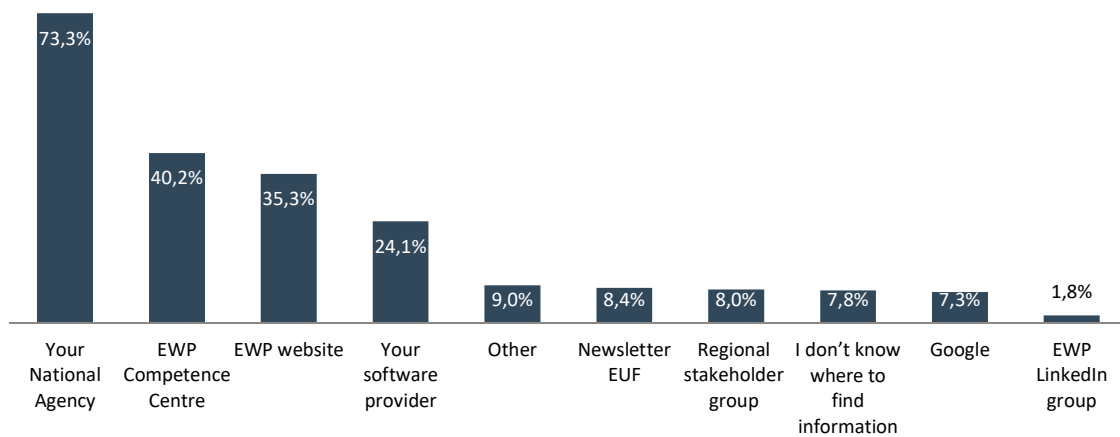


5.FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT EWP AND GETTING FAMILIAR WITH DIGITALISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Given the remarks from HEIs, it is crucial to understand how and where our community gets information about the Initiative.

73,3 percent of the respondents reported that the National Agency is their provider of information. Just over 40 percent said the EWP Competence Centre is also important in that regard and 35,3 percent voted for the EWP Website.

Figure 14: Most important sources of information about EWP and its components



Total number of answers to the question “What is your most important source of information for finding information about EWP and its components?”: 490

Open remarks suggested other means to get information:

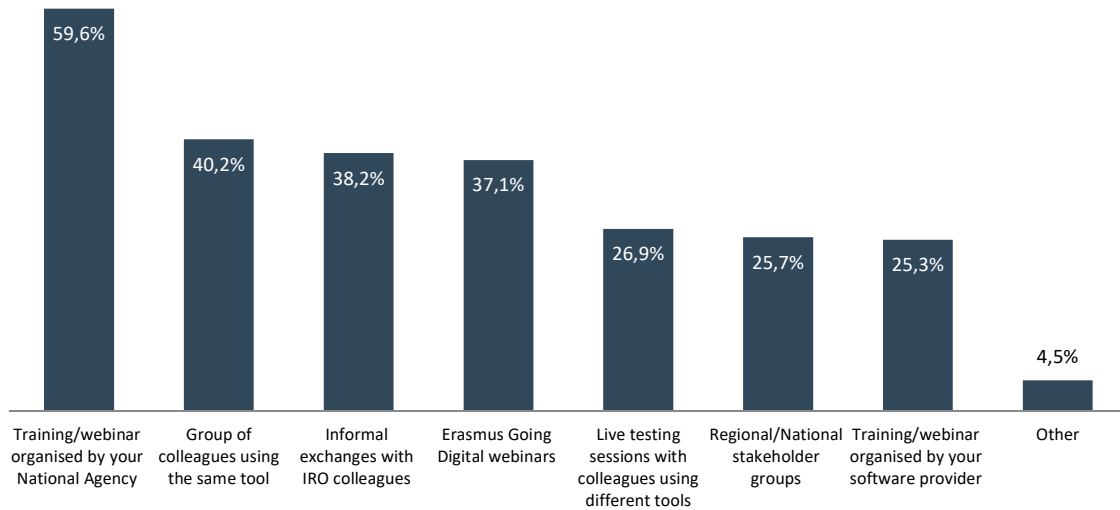
- Gathering information from colleagues in IROs or IT departments in their own HEI or in counterpart HEIs (13)
- Commercial tools (4)
- GitHub (4)
- Slack Group dedicated to the project (4)
- YouTube videos (3)

The National Agency plays a key role with 59,6 percent of respondents highlighting their contribution to HEIs in making progress with EWP implementation. Other useful ways to gain skills and knowledge related to EWP are forming groups with colleagues using the same third-party software (40,2%) and



informal exchanges with IRO colleagues (38,2%). The webinar series “Erasmus Going Digital” is ranked fourth with 37,1 percent of HEIs stating it is a useful tool to make progress with EWP.

Figure 15: Most useful format to make progress in the implementation of EWP



Total number of answers to the question “What is the most useful format to help you make progress in EWP-implementation?”: 490



6. MOBILITY PROCESSES THAT ARE NOT YET PART OF EWP

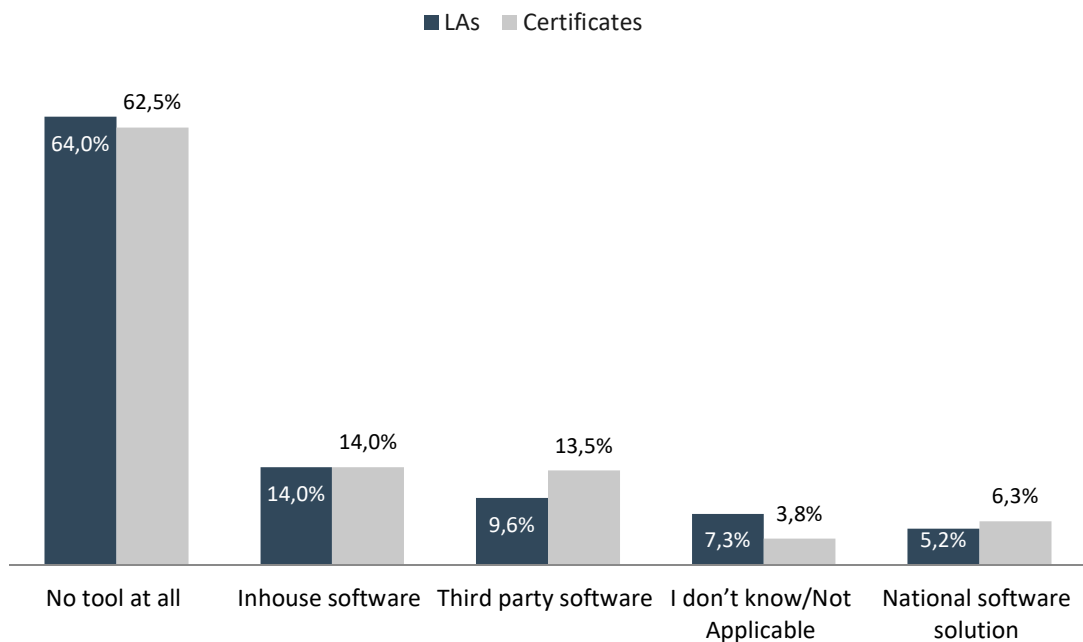
HEIs were also asked to provide information on the way they manage mobility documents and processes that are not (yet) universally handled on the EWP network.

6.1 Processes related to traineeships

184 out of the 368 HEIs said that at least 70 percent of the Erasmus+ Traineeship mobilities concern non-ECHE holders (e.g., enterprise, public body, NGO, foundation, research institute...).

When it comes to Erasmus+ Traineeships related processes, two-thirds of the interviewed HEIs do not use any tool at all (64% for LAs and 62,5% for Certificates). Another 14 percent of the participants use an in-house software for LAs and Certificates, while 9,6 percent (LAs) and 13,5 (Certificates) use a third-party software. Less than 7 percent of the respondents use a national solution for these processes.

Figure 16: Tool used to manage Erasmus+ Traineeships processes



Total number of answers to the question “What tool(s) do you use to manage the following processes related to Erasmus+ Traineeships? [LAs]”: 386

Total number of answers to the question “What tool(s) do you use to manage the following processes related to Erasmus+ Traineeships? [Certificates]”: 400





6.2 Multilateral agreements

Multilateral agreements are used by 53 percent of the respondents, as **Table 6** shows, that is 235 HEIs in this survey.

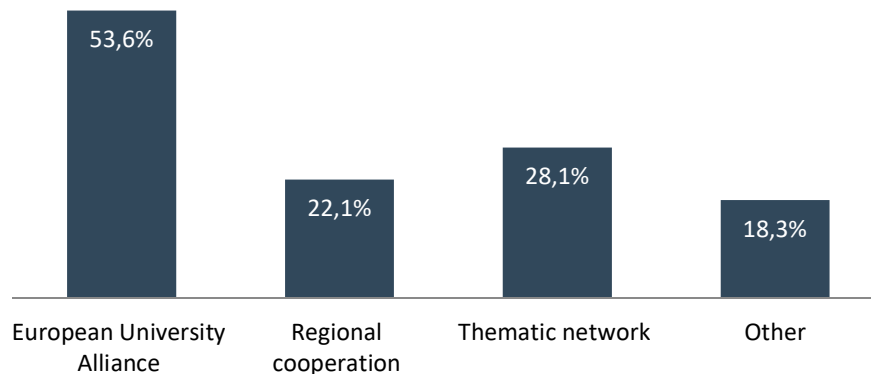
Table 6: Use of multilateral agreements by HEIs

Use of multilateral agreements	%
Applicable	53%
Not applicable	47%

Total number of answers to the question “In what context do you use multilateral agreements?”: 443

As **Figure 14** suggests, 53,6 percent of the analysed HEIs that use multilateral agreements, use them for the purpose of committing to a European Alliance, 22,1 percent use them for regional cooperation, 28,1 percent for thematic networks and 18,3 percent use them in other cases.

Figure 17: Contexts in which HEIs use multilateral agreements



Total number of applicable answers to the question “In what context do you use multilateral agreements?”: 235

Other cooperation formats for which our set of responding HEIs use multilateral agreements for are:

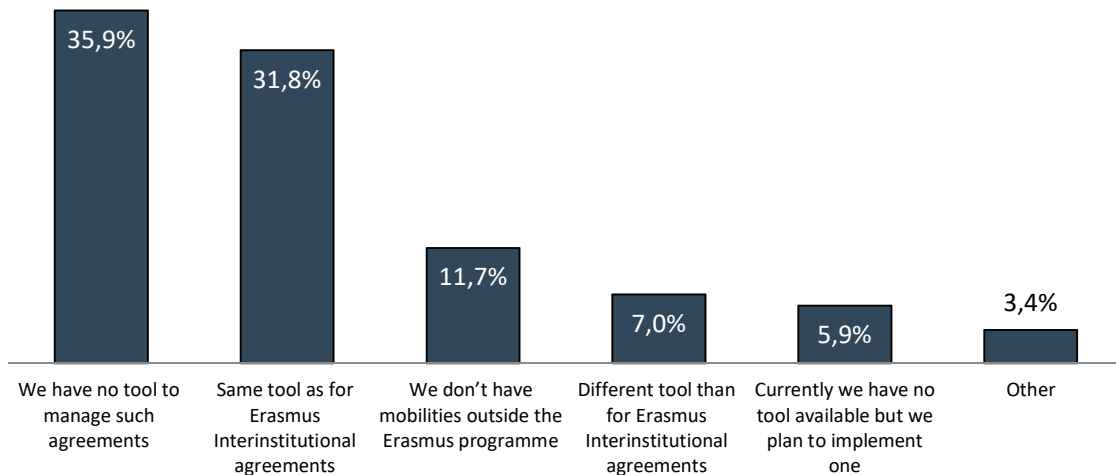
- BIPS (9)
- The Nordlys or Nordplus networks (5)
- International mobilities (4)
- Erasmus Mundus/double degrees (4)
- Other projects (2)



6.3 Processes related to cooperation with HEIs in Erasmus partner countries

Regarding processes for mobilities with HEIs in Erasmus partner countries (non-ECHE holders), 35,9 percent of HEIs indicate they have no tool to manage IIAs while 31,8 percent are currently using the same tool for Erasmus as for non-Erasmus agreements. Only around 12 percent of the responding HEIs do not have mobilities outside the Erasmus programme.

Figure 18.a: Tools used to manage IIAs with Erasmus partner country HEIs

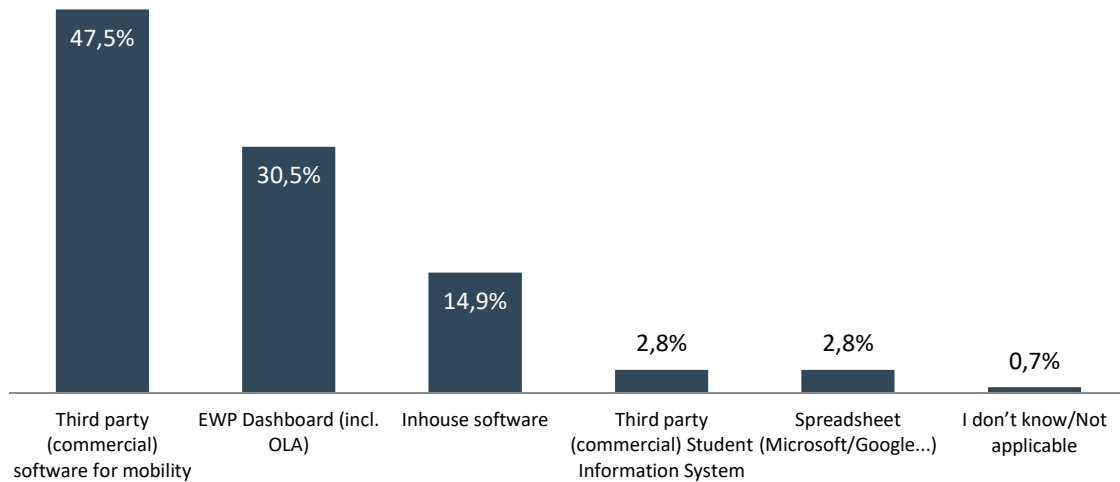


Total number of answers to the question “How do you internally manage IIAs with HEI in Erasmus partner countries (so called international mobility)?”: 443

Among the HEIs that reported using the same tool for IIAs with both Erasmus partner countries and Erasmus countries, almost half (47,5%) reported using third-party software for mobility, while 30,5 percent are using the EWP Dashboard and 14,9 percent deal with IIAs on an in-house system. The fact that 30,5 percent indicated they use the EWP Dashboard for managing IIAs with HEIs in partner countries (the ‘international mobility’), means that respondents might not have understood this question as such functionality is currently not available in the EWP Dashboard.



Figure 19.b.: Tools used to manage IIAs for respondents that indicated “Same tool as for Erasmus Interinstitutional agreements” in figure 15.a



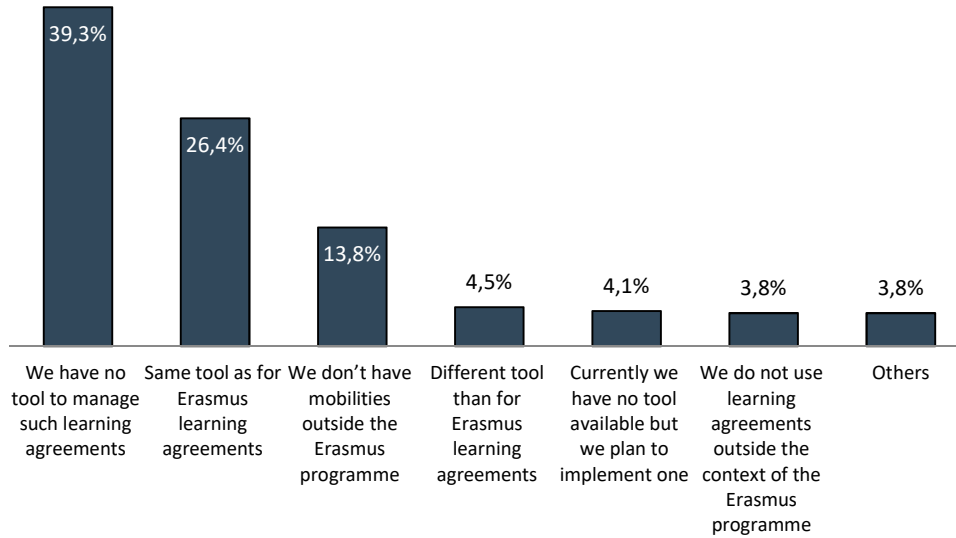
Total number of answers to the question “How do you internally manage IIAs with HEI in Erasmus partner countries (so called international mobility)? [Same tool as for Erasmus Interinstitutional agreements]”: 141

As of today, 39,3 percent of European HEIs are not using any tool to manage LAs for International mobility. Just over one-in-four (26,4%) of HEIs use the same tool as for Erasmus+ LAs, 4,5 percent use a different than for Erasmus LAs and 4,1 percent intend on implementing a tool.





Figure 20.a: Tools used to manage LAs with Erasmus partner country HEIs



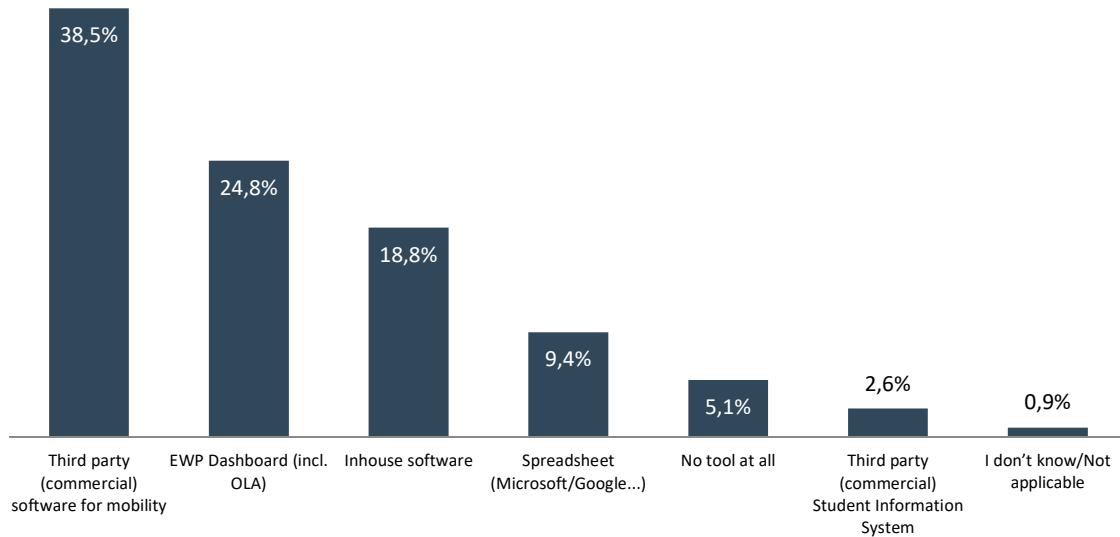
Total number of answers to the question “How do you internally manage LAs with HEI in Erasmus partner countries (so called international mobility)?”: 443

Among the 26,4 percent of HEIs that use the same tool for LAs with HEIs in Erasmus partner countries and with HEIs in Erasmus countries, 38,5 percent of them are using a third party (commercial) software for mobility to deal LAs with Erasmus partner country HEIs, while 18,8 percent use an in-house software and 9,4 percent relies on a form of spreadsheet. Just like for the Figure 22.b. again, 24,8 percent indicated they use the EWP dashboard while such a functionality is not available.





Figure 21.b: Tools used to manage LAs for respondents that indicated “Same tool as for Erasmus Learning Agreements” in figure 16.a



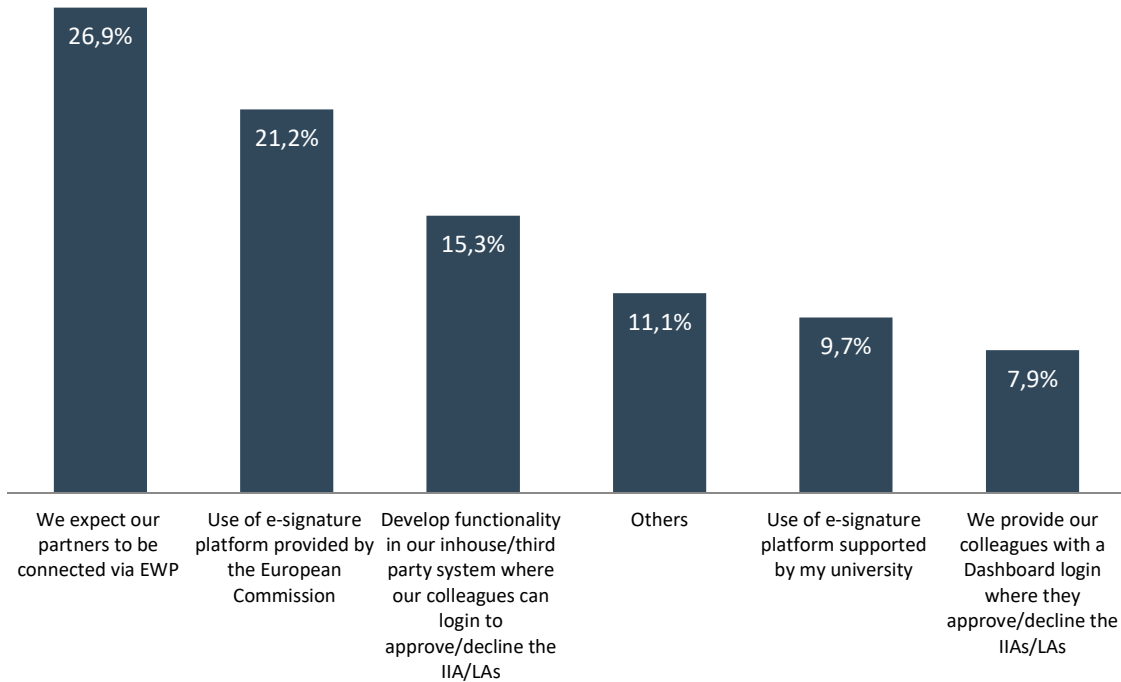
Total number of answers to the question “How do you internally manage LAs with HEI in Erasmus partner countries (so called international mobility)? [Same tool as for Erasmus LAs]”: 117

When asked what kind of tool should be developed to manage LAs and IIAs with HEIs in Erasmus partner countries, 26,9 percent stated that they expect all international partners to also use EWP. Another 21,2 percent is interested in the development of an e-signature platform provided by the European Commission, while 15,3 percent would like to develop functionalities in their in-house or third-party system. 7,9 percent of them prefer to provide their colleagues with some kind of Dashboard access that the partner can use to decline or approve IIAs and LAs. It goes without saying that all the options put forward are merely theoretical options that need to be further investigated.





Figure 22: How management of IIAs and LAs with Erasmus partner countries should happen in the future



Total number of answers to the question “How would you envisage interacting with HEI in Erasmus partner countries (so called international mobility) for digital signing IIAs & LAs in the future?”: 443

Analysed HEIs could also give open answers to the question “How would you envisage interacting with HEI in Erasmus partner countries (so called international mobility) for digital signing IIAs & LAs in the future?”. The following answers were submitted:

- Paper-based forms (12);
- Digitalisation of these processes should not be made mandatory as not all HEIs in the world have the capacity (3).

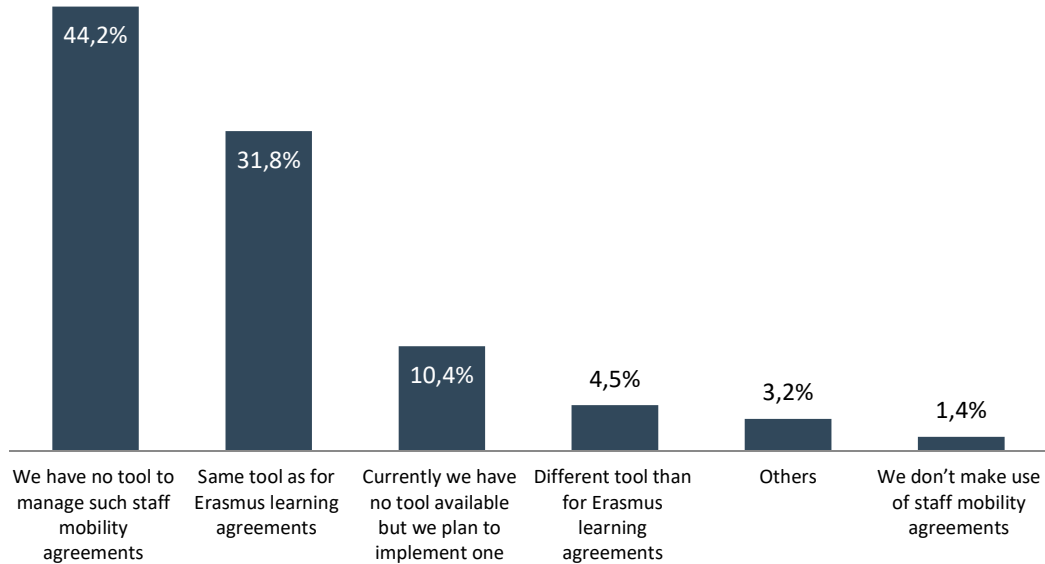
6.4 Processes related to staff mobility

Figure 18.a shows how HEIs in the survey manage staff mobility agreements: 44,2 percent of them do not have a tool at all, 31,8 percent use the same tool as for LAs, 10,4 percent are currently thinking about developing a tool and 4,5 percent use a different tool than for Erasmus LAs. A small 1,4% of HEIs do not use staff mobility agreements. Finally, from free remarks it was noted that 10 respondents left a comment to answer this question and said they were using paper-based forms for staff mobility agreements.





Figure 23.a: Management of staff mobility agreements



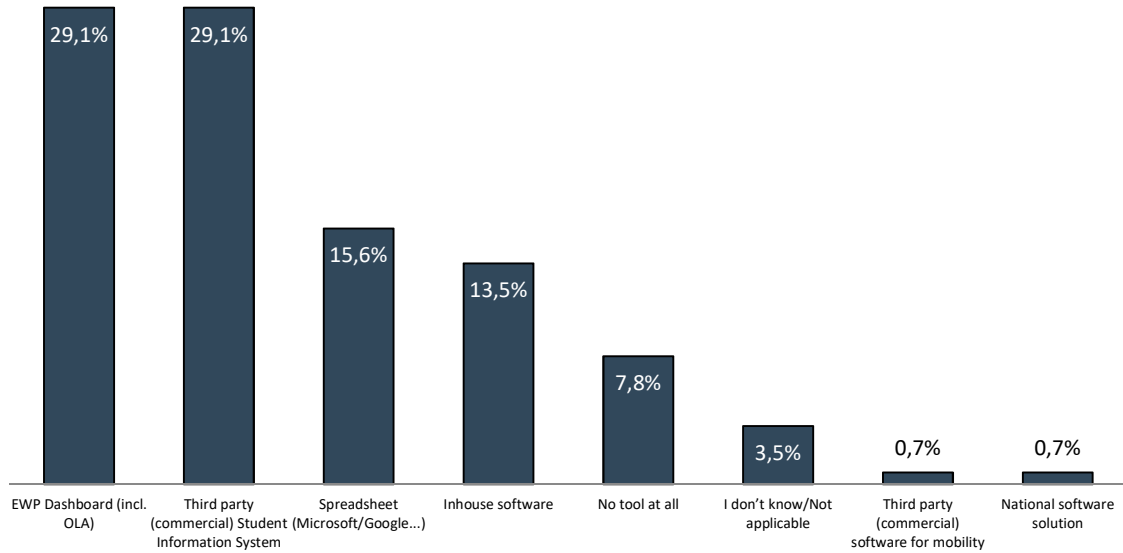
Total number of answers to the question “How do you manage staff mobility agreements?”: 443

According to Figure 18.b, among the share of HEIs that use the same tool to manage both staff mobility agreements and Erasmus LAs, 29,1 percent use the EWP Dashboard, 29,1 percent use a third-party provider, 15,6 percent use a type of spreadsheet, 13,5 percent use an in-house software and another 7,8 percent are not using any tool at all.





Figure 24.b: Tools used to manage staff mobility agreements for respondents that indicated “Same tool as for Erasmus Learning Agreements” in figure 18.a



Total number of answers to the question “How do you manage staff mobility agreement? [Same tool as for Erasmus LAs]”: 141

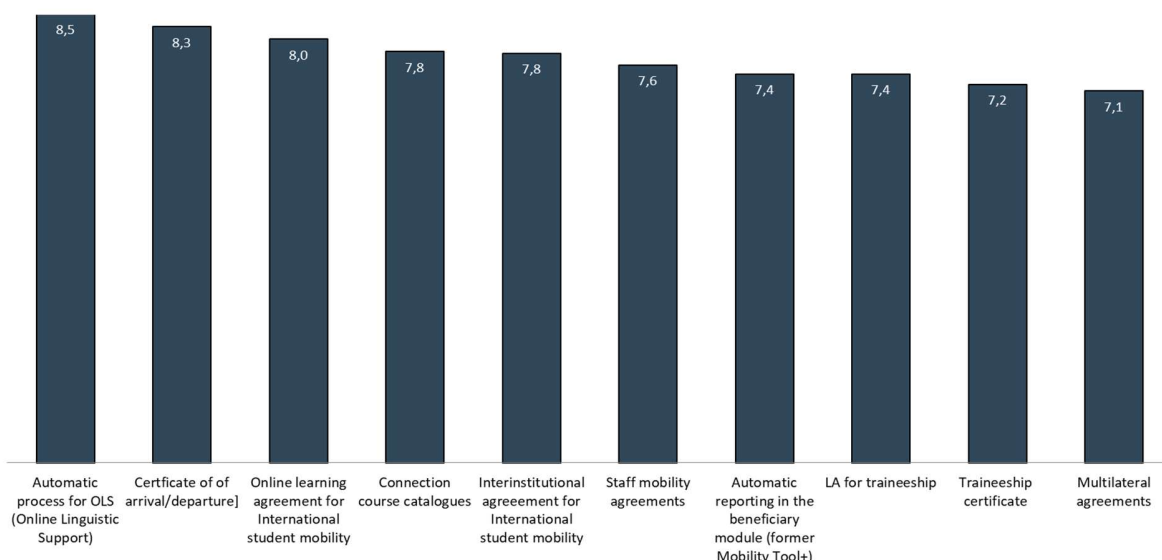


7. FURTHER DIGITALISATION ACCORDING TO HEIS' NEEDS

To further develop the digitalization roadmap in a way that aligns with the needs of HEIs, respondents were asked which processes they would prioritise in the digitisation process.

They received a list of Erasmus+-related processes where they could indicate the usefulness of its digitisation on a scale from 1 (not useful) to 10 (very useful). In the **Figure 19** each of the processes is listed with the average score given by participants. An automatic process for enabling access to the Online Linguistic Support is the process that received the highest score (8,5 out of 10). Then comes the certificate of arrival and departure with an average score of 8,3 and the online learning agreement for international student mobility (average of 8,0). Overall respondents consider digitalisation for all steps to be relevant leading to an average grade above 7,0 for all processes.

Figure 25: Processes that HEIs find useful to digitalise



Total number of answers to the question “Please give a score from 1 (not useful) to 10 (very useful) on how useful you consider the full digitalisation of the following processes” : from 392 to 422

Analysed HEIs were also given the opportunity to openly state their wishes regarding the future of the digitalisation roadmap. 65 respondents left an open comment. The most often received answers can be categorised as:

- Current digitised processes need to be first consolidated and boosted before moving to other processes (19);
- Erasmus+ grant agreements as well as grant payment (12).



8. CONCLUSION

The interoperability enabled by EWP, within the European Commission's European Student Card Initiative, is meant to relieve HEIs and their staff in the day-to-day management of mobility-related processes. Since its launch, EWP has strived to make the best use of existing digital tools to substitute paper-based Erasmus+ processes in HEIs. The present report seeks to understand and discuss HEIs' current experience with EWP at the institutional level. Depending on the question, between 300 and 700 HEIs participated in the survey, representing 29 Erasmus+ programme countries.

Most respondents (336 out of 594, that is, 56,6%) are part of smaller to medium HEIs, as they have a total number of enrolled students below five thousand. Nevertheless, these HEIs are integrated in the European and global sphere of higher education and well internationalised. Indeed, 80 percent of them implement at least one kind of student or staff mobility. Likewise, respondents are homogeneous: most are working at the central level and for the International Relations Office. A great share reports being at ease with recent technologies and their developments. Most keep up with the latest developments of new technologies and can therefore grasp the regular advancements that are made in the framework of EWP.

By the end of 2022, all HEIs are expected to enable the digital exchange and approval of IIAs and Las via EWP. Hence, the report sought to analyse the current state of play among the end users. The EWP Dashboard is fairly used in HEIs to deal with LAs (36,6%) and IIAs (43,6%) though the results of the survey contrast with the wide use that is noticeable from data of HEIs connected on EWP in June 2022 (respectively 82% and 77% of HEIs connected via EWP for both these processes). HEIs mostly still use the same tool (40,2%), or they did not have any tool prior to start using the Dashboard (31%). However, half the respondents are using several tools to manage all EWP processes and 10 percent had to give up on their usual tool to get a new one that was compatible with EWP. This suggests a quite important learning and transition cost for HEIs. This was often referred to as a difficulty later in the survey.

Surprisingly, half of the HEIs in the survey are not yet using EWP in the process of establishing agreements. In contrast, one third of the respondents signalled they already exchanged several IIAs through EWP. A similar conclusion can be drawn about LAs: half of the HEIs use PDF while a third has already exchanged several LAs via EWP. This may be due to the obstacles and difficulties that the report seeks to identify. The most mentioned criticism is that respondents experience a lack of support from EWP. Other cited reasons for lagging behind, are delays in delivery of functionalities or partners not being ready. A fair number of HEIs mention failing or missing functionalities, technical issues and system errors as well as the resource-avidity of the entire process, implying a workload that can be heavy on HEIs that call themselves "rather small".

Regarding dissemination of information, the National Agencies are the main communication intermediary reaching HEIs, followed by the EWP Competence Centre and website of the project. These channels could be further reinforced, and communication strategies boosted to provide the optimal quantity, quality and type of information to the beneficiaries. The formats that are most enjoyed by EWP implementers are training and webinars and informal networking with colleagues within and outside the institution. It seems that the flow and exchange of skills is effective among HEIs' staff's cohorts and professionals.





The survey also looked at how HEIs deal with mobility types that are currently not (yet) available in the EWP network. In most situations, a large proportion of HEIs do not use a tool at all. This is the case for Erasmus+ Traineeships related processes (66%), staff mobility agreements (50%) and LAs and IIAs with HEIs in Erasmus partner countries (33%). When asked how they would want to manage these types of mobility, almost 1/3 respondents expect HEIs in Erasmus partner countries to use the EWP network to manage LAs and IIAs. Though there is potential for EWP to spread to Erasmus+ Traineeships related processes and processes with HEIs in Erasmus partner countries, respondents were clear about what processes they deem most useful to go digital: an automatic process for enabling access to the Online Linguistic Support (8,5 out of 10), the certificate of arrival and departure (8,3) and the online learning agreement for international student mobility (average of 8,0). Respondents consider digitalisation for all steps to be relevant leading to an average grade above 7,0 for all processes.

Overall, respondents recognise the digitalisation of the mobility process as a compelling advancement in higher education. However, there is a clear call for reducing system errors and technical debt. They express the need for more support towards HEIs that have less internal resources, increased transparency and better information-sharing with clear step-by-step guidance. As a result, HEIs believe that EWP needs to strengthen its current features, before moving on to complementary ones.

In order to accomplish this, and ensure no one is left behind, The EWP+ consortium collaborates with a wide range of essential partners (National Agencies, providers of third party software, IRO user groups) to lay the technical foundation for the further digitalisation of the Erasmus+ administrative processes.

The digitalisation of the Erasmus administration is one of the main innovative elements of the current Erasmus+ Programme. To ensure no one is left behind, the results of this survey will be taken into account by the EWP+ Consortium, and reinforce future actions to tackle the considerable difficulties experienced by many end-users.

