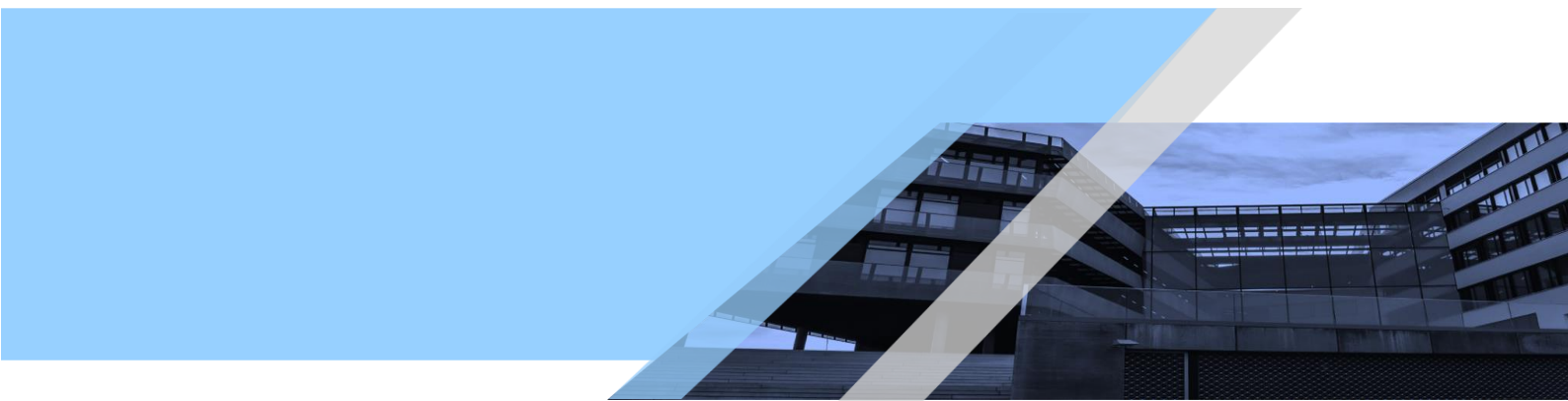




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**Students' Mobility Capacity Building in Higher Education in Ukraine and Serbia / MILETUS**



# Analysis of students' needs, wishes, and requirements related to virtual mobility

Author: Ivana Filipović Malada  
Contributing authors: Jelena Filipović, Zoran Nikolić

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## Introduction

This report informs on needs, wishes, and requirements for virtual mobility of students. Virtual mobility is defined as a set of ICT supported activities that realize or facilitate international, collaborative experiences in a context of teaching and/or learning. The definition implies that virtual mobility has potentials to strengthen internationalization process, enable collaborative learning and help intercultural dialogue. In view of that, several aspects of virtual mobility are addressed in the report.

First, the report provides an overview of the efforts in the domain of internationalization made up to now by partner institutions from higher education (hereinafter: HEIs) involved in MILETUS project, coming from Serbia and Ukraine. Namely, there are four Ukrainian partner universities involved: NaUKMA, MNAU, NUA and EENU, and three Serbian ones: UNI, UNS and SU. All of them have achieved significant results related to the establishment of global partnerships and cooperation worldwide, and they are very dedicated to making even greater progress in the future. Even though they have not addressed virtual mobility specifically, they have participated in many initiatives that could be considered a part of virtual mobility.

The second part deals with the institutional setting for the introduction and development of mobility. Ukraine and Serbia have already adopted numerous policies that support and promote academic mobility, and they have been successfully translated into practice. However, there are several more milestones to reach in order to comprehend academic mobility as a vital and unavoidable part of the academic custom in these two countries. In line with that, pedagogical, organizational and cultural barriers are reflected in the report and conclusions are drawn.

This report is based on the survey which was conducted as a part of MILETUS project. The research included 255 respondents, coming from seven partner HEIs from Serbia and Ukraine. Sample involved approximately equal number of participants from each of the two countries. Due to missing data, one questionnaire is considered to be invalid. The questionnaire included 23 questions, striving to provide students' feedback on all issues relevant for virtual mobility, such as: its place in institutional regulations, the extent to which students are aware of and familiar with virtual mobility, its contribution to internationalization, its relation with physical mobility, capacities of institutions to enhance the level of virtual mobility, etc.

## Internationalization and mobility strategies at MILETUS universities

In order to define students' needs, wishes, and requirements related to virtual mobility, we conducted the research which included 255 students coming from all partner universities. The research was online-based, consisting of 23 questions (the questionnaire is provided in the Annex of this report). The platform was open for students' access within the period of one month, and they were encouraged to answer the questionnaire through various communication channels.

To begin with, all partner universities involved in MILETUS project are highly committed to the process of internationalization of their HEIs and strive to demonstrate it both through legal and practical activities. In the domain of regulative, one of the main documents which establishes the baseline for further actions, is the strategy. Therefore, the existence of the relevant strategies first needs to be determined, as well as the degree up to which the interested parties are aware of and familiar with the subject document. In the following tables (1 and 2), students' answers regarding their familiarity with the strategies on internationalization and mobility at the respective HEI are presented.

**Table 1.** Has your institution already adopted an internationalization strategy?

Name of your University	No	Yes	Do not know	Total
EENU	0	38	9	47
MNAU	1	9	0	10
NaUKMA	2	37	18	57
NUA	0	7	4	11
SU	0	27	9	36
UNI	0	6	4	10
UNS	3	38	42	83
Total	6	162	86	254

It is observable that two-thirds of students are very well aware of the Internationalization strategy at their institution, which is especially positive given the fact that most of them have come into force quite recently. For example, the University of Novi Sad Internationalisation strategy<sup>1</sup> was adopted in July 2016.

The content of this Strategy (provided below) offers insight in the complexity and multidimensionality of the internationalization:

1. *Defining the concept and meaning of internationalisation*
2. *Strategic orientations of the University of Novi Sad*
3. *Strategic objectives of the University of Novi Sad*
  - 3.1. *In the domain of science*
  - 3.2. *In the domain of higher education*
  - 3.3. *In the domain of knowledge and technology transfer*
4. *Strategic positioning*
  - 4.1. *Regional positioning*
  - 4.2. *Positioning in Europe*
  - 4.3. *Global positioning*
5. *International cooperation*
  - 5.1. *Priorities*
  - 5.2. *Bilateral agreements on cooperation*
  - 5.3. *Strategic partnerships*
  - 5.4. *Multilateral agreements on cooperation*
  - 5.5. *Networking with foreign institutions, international organisations and associations*
  - 5.6. *Participation in mobility programmes of the European Union*
  - 5.7. *Participation in mobility programs of states, international organisations and associations, outside of the European Union*
6. *Action plan for the internationalisation of the University of Novi Sad*
7. *Centre for internationalisation of the University of Novi Sad*
8. *Office for international relations and internationalisation of the University of Novi Sad*

It is also important to notice that, in order to ensure effective translation of the strategic goals into practice, administrative issues and bodies are particularly significant to be regulated.

<sup>1</sup> University of Novi Sad Internationalisation strategy, [http://www.uns.ac.rs/index.php/en/component/jdownloads/send/55-university-acts/262-uns\\_internationalisation\\_strategy](http://www.uns.ac.rs/index.php/en/component/jdownloads/send/55-university-acts/262-uns_internationalisation_strategy)

**Table 2.** Has your institution already adopted an academic mobility strategy?

Name of your university	No	Yes	Do not know	Total
EENU	1	30	16	47
MNAU	0	10	0	10
NaUKMA	1	53	3	57
NUA	2	6	3	11
SU	0	28	8	36
UNI	0	6	4	10
UNS	0	59	24	83
Total	4	192	58	254

As expected, even larger number of respondents – three-quarters of them, are familiar with the academic mobility strategy of their institution. For instance, all respondents for MNAU recognized the efforts of their HEI related to mobility strategy. It is not surprising if one knows that, in the “International cooperation” section of the MNAU website, the mobility is emphasized, stating at the beginning<sup>2</sup>:

*Admission of foreigners to study is carried out by Mykolayiv National Agrarian University under license number 034687 Series AD from May 22, 2012*

*MNAU accepts foreigners without restrictions based on race, political, religious or other beliefs, sex, ethnic or social origin, property status, place of residence, language of communication etc.*

After that, detailed practical instructions for admission of foreign students are provided, facilitating efforts of any incoming student. It can be concluded that students actively follow the changes in the fields they are interested in, and having considered the replies to both of these questions, both mobility and internationalization activities are very highly ranked on their agenda.

**Table 3.** Does internationalization strategy of your institution introduce virtual mobility?

Name of your University	No	Yes	Do not know	Total
EENU	8	15	24	47
MNAU	0	3	7	10
NaUKMA	15	6	36	57
NUA	0	4	7	11
SU	2	13	21	36
UNI	2	1	7	10
UNS	7	2	74	83
Total	34	44	176	254

<sup>2</sup> ADMISSION RULES OF MYKOLAYIV NATIONAL AGRARIAN UNIVERSITY, <http://int.mnau.edu.ua/en/index.html#ixzz4ltlMwsA4>

However, having said that, it should be noted that students are still not familiar with the concept of virtual mobility and that it needs to be more popularized. Actually, 70% of respondents do not know answer to the above-written question (Table 3). It is notable that students from NaUKMA are rather sure that their HEI did not include virtual mobility in their Strategy, while students from SU are quite convinced that their University did take this aspect into account. Nevertheless, the strategic document - SU internationalization strategy (Five-year period 2014 – 2019)<sup>3</sup>, does not specify it in the exact manner, stating the following:

*Based on the framework of the Strategy, our vision and our mission to contribute to the society in a responsible manner, we have established three core internationalization objectives for the period 2015 – 2019:*

- *to establish ourselves as the leading Serbian University in terms of international cooperation*
- *to become one of the leaders of Higher Education (HE) Internationalization on Balkans*
- *to be respectable contributor to the Internationalization efforts in HE in Europe and wider*

*In order to meet the aforementioned internationalization objectives, we have developed five strategic long-term programmes:*

1. *Programme standardization based on the international norms and requirements*
2. *Development and deployment of student mobility programmes*
3. *Development and deployment of staff mobility programmes*
4. *Development and deployment of joint degree / double degree programmes*
5. *Participation in joint educational / research projects*

*We have based our strategy on our positive experiences within the domain of international cooperation as well as on the best international practices related to internationalization. Our focus shall be higher education institutions located in West Balkan countries as well as the leading educational institutions in European Community and wider.*

## Capacities for virtual mobility

ICT-based virtual mobility or web-based learning is a growing aspect of internationalization, which could be utilized positively to contribute to the enhancement of the low research capacity and academic productivity in Serbia and Ukraine. After setting the institutional factors, mostly reflected in the adoption of relevant policies and strategies, it is also important to assess institutional capacities to include virtual mobility in the teaching environment.

Academic community has always been challenged to incorporate new technologies into its methods. However, the future role of the University will be defined not only in terms of its ability to access new channels of information exchange, but also to give teachers freedom and time to create content that is easy to integrate in the new digital learning environment. Initiatives such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), provided by some of the leading universities globally, speak in favor of the relevance of learning and knowledge-sharing in the virtual space.

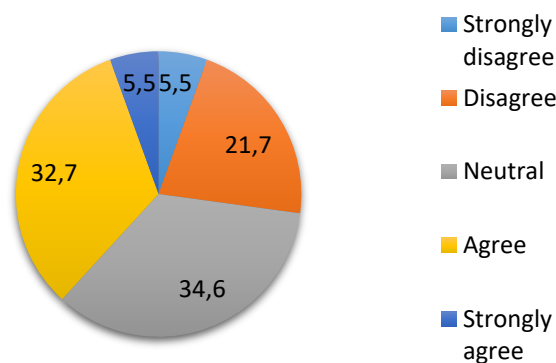
However, certain challenges should also be kept in mind<sup>4</sup>. For example, European universities have adopted different pedagogical models: self-assessment, competence development, problem-based

<sup>3</sup> Tempus Project SIPUS (2016) "Strengthening of Internationalisation Policies at Universities in Serbia" Overview of main results, <http://www.gointernational.uns.ac.rs/index.php/60-sipus-overview-of-main-results>

<sup>4</sup> Schreurs, B., Verjans, S., & Van Petegem, W. (2006, November). Towards Sustainable Virtual Mobility in Higher Education Institutions. In EADTU Annual Conference

learning, etc. Moreover, virtual mobility also adds a new dimension to the ways of assessment. Designing assessments and assessment methods for computer delivery is a specialist skill that combines imagination with sound pedagogical principles and knowledge of the capabilities of the assessment system. A well-organized e-competence development for teachers is needed. Finally, students as well need training when they participate in a virtual mobility initiative. Students need trainings to be structured and self-organized, keeping timeline and meeting deadlines.

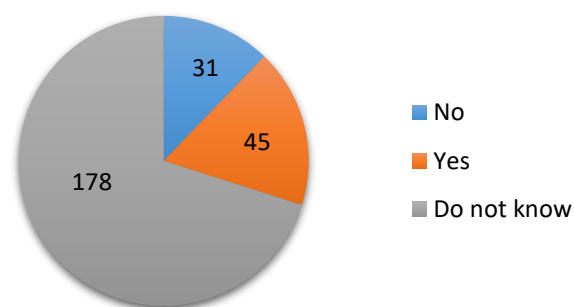
The findings from our survey, presented in Figure 1, prove that students agree with this statement. Both students and university staff should be trained in new competencies. Modern society needs people with multicultural and intercultural awareness.



**Figure 1.** Do the students have to possess special skills and competencies to participate in virtual mobility? (in %)

In line with this, participants in the survey were asked if their institution has already adopted and further developed its pedagogical models in order to change delivery content and learning tools appropriate for virtual mobility. Only 32 respondents gave specific answer to this question, while 222 of them opted for “I don’t know”. Only two of them claimed that their institution had not developed any materials of a kind, while 30 of them stated that their HEIs had done that.

Further investigations are needed to establish what students and institutions perceive to be the obstacles to the delivery of the effective online courses and participation in the virtual mobility. In this research, we shed a light on pedagogical aspects, but it should be born in mind that both technological and organizational aspects cannot be neglected. First, it is of crucial importance that institutions interested in the virtual mobility possess modern ICT, compatible with other HEIs and in some way standardized worldwide. Organizational aspects mostly pertain to credit transfer practices, programs accreditation and quality assurance. It would be also significant to provide unanimous framework for the protection of the intellectual property rights.



**Figure 2.** Has your institution already implemented any form of virtual mobility?



It is visible from Figure 2 that students were much more aware of whether their institution had already participated in some sort of virtual mobility. Even though the majority of them have not been able to provide answer to this question, 30% of them believed to know this information. Similar like in the previous cases, they were more prone to think that their institution was involved in the virtual mobility (45 respondents), than that it was not (31).

## Learning opportunities

One of the most prominent benefits of the virtual mobility must be the ability to extend knowledge in the fields that are not available at domestic HEIs. It can include online courses on some very specific scientific topic not widely taught, lectures of some institution renown for some academic field, or generally classes on some topics with a fresh new approach.

According to one research<sup>5</sup>, carried out in the 2012-2014 period, over 25 million people from around the world have enrolled in MOOCs offered by Coursera, EdX, and other platforms. Initially appraised as a revolution in higher education access, expectations have been tempered as research revealed that only a small percentage of these millions was completing the courses, approximately 80% already had at least a bachelor's degree, nearly 60% were employed full-time, and 60% came from developed countries (defined as members of the OECD).

Findings suggest that people from developing countries more frequently report benefits from taking MOOCs and, also in developing countries, people with lower socioeconomic status and with less education are more likely to report benefits. It appears that MOOCs are tangibly helping people who take the time and effort to complete courses. Overall, research demonstrates that among learners who complete courses, MOOCs do have a real impact: 72% of survey respondents reported career benefits and 61% reported educational benefits.

Furthermore, the same research revealed that approximately half (47%) of education seekers are students in a traditional academic setting. Among these traditional students, 94% report some educational benefits from taking a MOOC. The most common educational benefits are gaining knowledge essential to their field of study (76.6%) and deciding on a field of study (40.3%). Among these traditional students, the findings are consistent across region, education, and socioeconomic status.

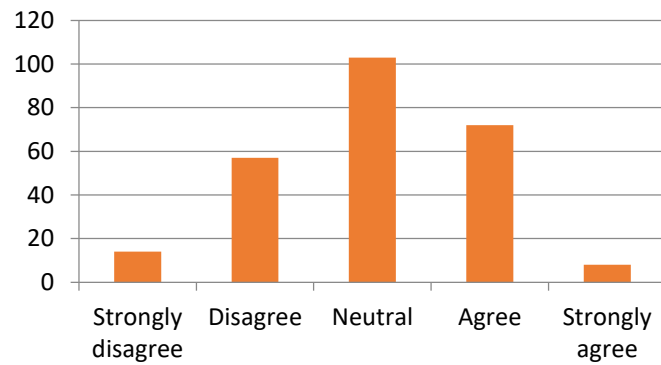
Among the education seekers who are not in a traditional academic setting, disadvantaged populations are more likely to report educational benefits. Education seekers from developing countries were more likely to report educational benefits; those with low socioeconomic status were more likely to report benefits than those with higher status; and those without a postgraduate degree were more likely to report benefits than those with one.

From the previous citations it is clear that virtual mobility mostly helps students coming from developing countries, with some kind of deprivations. It could be stated that MILETUS partners with their activities address the exact target group as it is described herein. However, in order to understand better students' thoughts on this matter, they were asked about specific aspects of virtual mobility and their answers are provided in the charts below.

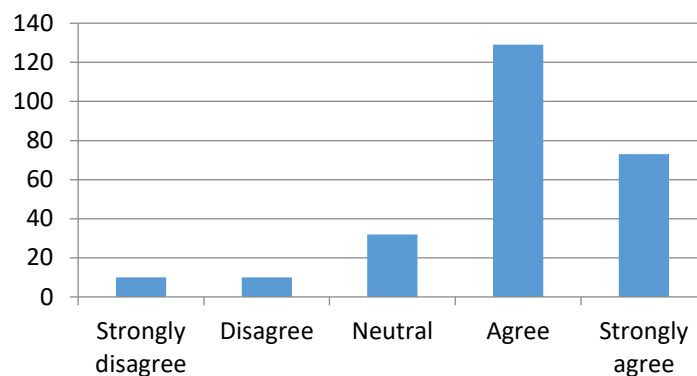
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<sup>5</sup> Zhenghao, C., Alcorn, B., Christensen, G., Eriksson, N., Koller, D., Emanuel, EJ (2015) Who's benefiting from MOOCs, and why?, Harvard Business Review, <https://hbr.org/2015/09/whos-benefiting-from-moocs-and-why>

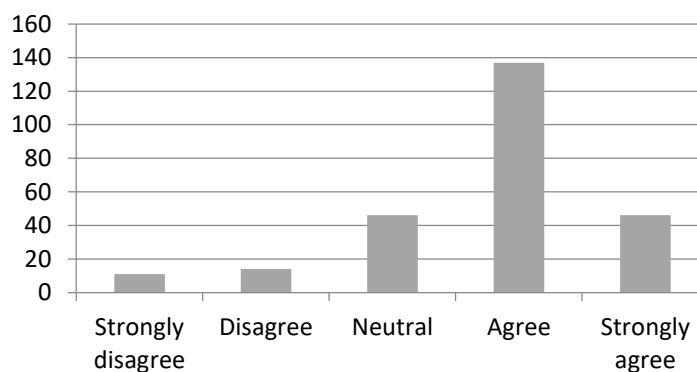




**Figure 3.** Are the virtual mobility courses already well-known learning opportunity?



**Figure 4.** May virtual mobility provide students with opportunities for taking complementary courses which are not available at their home institution?



**Figure 5.** May virtual mobility students, attending courses from different institutions and studying and working collaboratively within diverse international group, gain special knowledge, skills and competences?

Our analysis supports findings of the previous research mentioned above, emphasizing that Serbian and Ukrainian students highly appraise the possibilities that virtual mobility provides them with in terms of broadening their academic horizons, unlocking potentials for advanced and new knowledge, and skills acquisition.

## Organizational dimension

The most prominent characteristic of virtual mobility is for sure the fact that one does not need to go to some specific place, but is able to approach studying process from any wanted ITC station. Having that assumption in mind, we aimed to investigate the extent to which Serbian and Ukrainian students value this dimension of virtual mobility. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** May virtual mobility provide students who are not able to travel extensively with opportunities to benefit from internationalization?

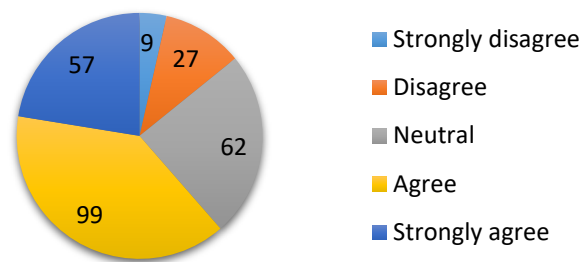
Name of your university	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
EENU	0	0	8	25	14	47
MNAU	0	1	0	4	5	10
NaUKMA	2	3	10	29	13	57
NUA	0	0	2	7	2	11
SU	5	2	6	14	9	36
UNI	0	0	1	6	3	10
UNS	3	3	17	46	14	83
Total	10	9	44	131	60	254

Even though this hypothesis could be considered approved since only less than 10% of respondents do not acknowledge the subject value of the virtual mobility, it is noticeable that almost 20% of SU students disagree with this notion. The explanation could be that they observe some other obstacles to internationalization to be more distinguished, such as language barriers, low level of ICT equipment, incompatibility of study programs, etc.

In terms of legal conditions for mobility in general, recognition of credits represents one of the main features for its successful implementation. Despite the fact that Bologna process helped a lot in the domain of standardization of educational programs at EU HEIs, enabling them to be comparable among themselves, there is still a lot of room for improvement. For example, students from both Ukraine and Serbia face limitations with regard to the acknowledgement of their efforts made at study programs abroad.

In Ukraine, the share of students who do not get any recognition of credits seems to be relatively high. Further disadvantages of the system pertain to solutions related to credits granting and diploma supplements. As for Serbia, in fact, significant drawback pertains to the fact that only 6% of Serbian students gain credits for study-related activities abroad. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Serbia issues Diploma Supplements only upon request, which is opposite to the usual practice of most countries. The amount of the fee charged thereof varies between 50 and 100 euros. The body responsible for monitoring the manner in which higher education institutions use Diploma Supplement in Serbia is inspectorate<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Implementation Report,  
[https://media.ehea.info/file/2015\\_Yerevan/73/3/2015\\_Implementation\\_report\\_20.05.2015\\_613733.pdf](https://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/73/3/2015_Implementation_report_20.05.2015_613733.pdf)



**Figure 6.** Should virtual mobility students obtain ECTS credits and their academic recognition at home university in similar way as students participating in physical mobility?

Almost two-thirds (61.4%) of survey participants agree that students who take part in virtual mobility should be treated in the same manner as those who embark on physical mobility. Relatively high number of neutral responses might indicate that further explanation of the concept of virtual mobility, as well as its promotion among the target group, should be offered to students in both Ukraine and Serbia.

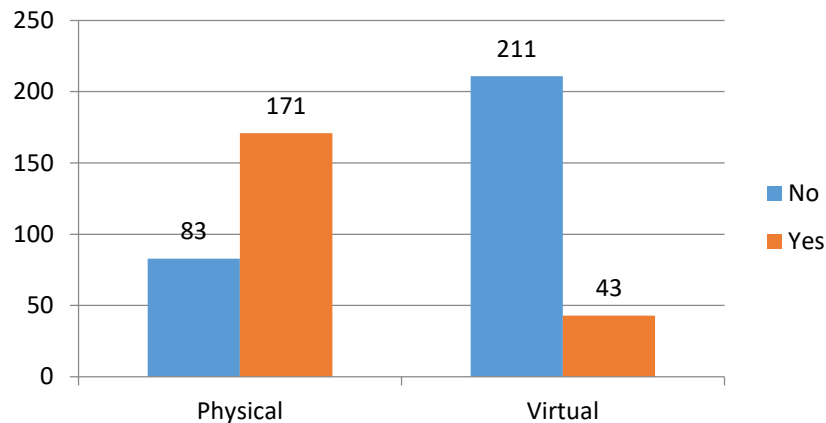
Continuous efforts of MILETUS partners made in this regard are being attested every day. One of many good examples<sup>7</sup> is the project of credit mobility between NUA and University of Dąbrowa Górnicza from Poland. The implementation of the previously mentioned project, supported by the Erasmus+ program, started this academic year (2016/2017), and the exchange of staff responsible for international cooperation took place within its activities. The visit of NUA's representative to the University of Dąbrowa Górnicza was combined with participation in the International Staff Week at the host university. Thanks to such combination, an opportunity arose to learn more about partner universities and to discuss areas of cooperation development and joint projects, in addition to establishing new contacts with colleagues from France, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Georgia, Spain, Portugal and Turkey.

## Physical and virtual mobility

Given that virtual mobility is a modern concept, in an attempt to understand it better, one can ask whether it is an alternative or complement to physical mobility<sup>8</sup>. Both concepts boast some advantages compared to each other, but significant finding would be to establish whether they deliver some synergy if applied simultaneously.

<sup>7</sup> ERASMUS+ project of credit mobility: realization, [http://www.nua.kharkov.ua/eng/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6739:erasmus-project-of-credit-mobility-realization&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=55](http://www.nua.kharkov.ua/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6739:erasmus-project-of-credit-mobility-realization&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=55)

<sup>8</sup> Op de Beeck, I., & Van Petegem, W. (2013, January). Virtual mobility: An alternative or complement to physical mobility?. In ERACON 2011 & 2012 Dual Year Proceedings (pp. 151-160).



**Figure 7.** Do you have any experience in physical/virtual mobility?

Previously presented data show that neither Serbian nor Ukrainian students are considered to be active communities with regard to international physical mobility. While it holds for virtual mobility in our sample, the same cannot be claimed for the physical one, given that 67% of respondents experienced certain form of physical mobility. One of the prerequisites for filling out the questionnaire in this survey was to know English language, which may influence the target group of respondents.

**Table 5.** Relationship between participation in physical mobility and attitude toward its relationship with virtual mobility

Do you have any experience in physical mobility?	May virtual mobility be a complement to physical mobility?					Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
No	2	7	26	36	12	83
Yes	19	29	29	80	14	171
Total	21	36	55	116	26	254

The result of chi-square statistic = 15.598 ( $p=0.004$ ) indicates correlation between these two variables. More detailed inspection of the results suggests that respondents who have already had experience with physical mobility are more prone to believe in the benefits of complementarity with virtual mobility.

**Table 6.** Relationship between participating in physical mobility and attitude toward the possibility of its replacement by virtual mobility

Do you have any experience in physical mobility?	May virtual mobility completely replace physical mobility?					Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
No	13	31	24	12	3	83
Yes	76	55	22	15	3	171
Total	89	86	46	27	6	254

On the contrary, people who took part in physical mobility doubted strongly that these programs can be replaced by the virtual ones, unlike their peers who have not had such an experience (chi-

square=24.121,  $p=0.000$ ). This finding reveals that in certain scientific disciplines physical attendance is still inevitable.

**Table 7.** Relationship between participating in virtual mobility and attitude toward its relationship with physical mobility

Do you have any experience in virtual mobility?	May virtual mobility be a complement to physical mobility?					Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
No	21	32	50	90	18	211
Yes	0	4	5	26	8	43
Total	21	36	55	116	26	254

**Table 8.** Relationship between participating in virtual mobility and attitude toward the possibility of its replacement by physical mobility

Do you have any experience in virtual mobility?	May virtual mobility completely replace physical mobility?					Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
N	80	72	39	15	5	211
Y	9	14	7	12	1	43
T	89	86	46	27	6	254

Similar to the previous cases, persons who have prior experience with virtual mobility strongly believe that these two forms of mobility are rather compatible (chi-square=13.572,  $p=0.009$ ) than rival (chi-square=17.598,  $p=0.001$ ).

## Collaboration in the international context

One of the goals of every mobility is to increase collaboration among exchanging parties and to strengthen the capacities for further joint programs. As it is correctly stated on the website of UNI<sup>9</sup>: *Promoting the mobility of academic staff has become increasingly important in European higher education policy. Academic mobility is usually considered an element of human resources development and an aspect of the quality improvement of higher education and research at national higher education institutions. Thereby, mobility and internationalization are the key aspects of Bologna process as pointed out in the “Mobility Strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education” adopted by European Higher Education Area ministries.*

<sup>9</sup> International cooperation, <https://www.ni.ac.rs/en/international-cooperation>

**Table 9.** Contribution of virtual mobility to international cooperation

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
May virtual mobility allow students to exchange their knowledge and improve their intercultural competences?	13	24	26	134	57
May virtual mobility activities enable collaborative learning?	9	29	56	116	44
May virtual mobility promote impact of internationalization on Higher Education Institutions?	12	24	49	126	43
May virtual mobility promote the possibilities for cooperation and competition between institutions?	9	15	48	134	48
Is virtual mobility a good way for collaboration of people from different background and cultures, working and studying together, creating a virtual community?	18	22	35	124	55
May virtual mobility promote international communication and development of communication skills?	13	25	39	115	62

Respondents' answers presented in Table 9 reveal that students share the opinion that virtual mobility has positive effects on:

- collaborative learning
- institution's brand and reputation
- better ranking and cooperation among institutions
- communication skills

However, participants in the survey are fairly reluctant in their estimations on how significant the role of virtual mobility in the enhancement of multicultural dialogue is, and how important it is in the process of internationalization of HEIs. It is also observable that rather high share of the respondents from the sample has clearly defined judgments on contribution of virtual mobility to certain aspects of internationalization, reflected in the small number of neutral responses, while some other dimensions still need to be explained and illuminated.



## Conclusions

With the aim to better understand possibilities for the implementation of virtual mobility in Serbia and Ukraine, we first needed to estimate current situation. Findings revealed that in Serbia nearly all mobility students are from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia, while the outward mobility rate of Serbia is 5.2% with the top three destinations being Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria and Hungary, each accounting for less than 16%. Similarly, in the context of the international exchange of students, students from Ukraine hosted in Germany largely outnumber German students enrolled in that country.

Furthermore, it is recognized also that due to lack of financial means, a significant number of agreements signed by the institutions cannot be fully actualized. A very small number of institutions send their future staff (usually current PhD students) for mobility according to the plan in order to implement research not feasible in Serbia or Ukraine at the international higher education institutions. Additionally, the institutions rarely publish international calls for positions, and a small number of foreign teachers participate in dissertation committees for defending doctoral theses.

Previous findings also suggest that people from developing countries more frequently report benefits from taking MOOCs, as the sort of virtual mobility and ICT-based learning. Education seekers from developing countries were more likely to report educational benefits, and those without a postgraduate degree were more likely to report benefits than those who possess one. Hence, it is clear that virtual mobility helps mostly students coming from developing countries, which is in accordance with MILETUS community.

Our research established that students are very well aware of both Internationalization and Mobility strategy at their respective institutions, which is especially positive given that most of them have come into force quite recently. However, it should be emphasized that students are still not familiar with the concept of virtual mobility and that this form of mobility needs to be more popularized. Our analysis places special emphasis on the results showing that Serbian and Ukrainian students highly appraise the possibilities that virtual mobility provides them with in terms of broadening their academic horizons and unlocking potentials for knowledge acquisition.

Respondents who have already had experience with either physical or virtual mobility are more prone to believe in the benefits of complementary implementation of these two forms of mobility. On the contrary, those who took part in physical mobility doubt strongly that these programs can be replaced by the virtual ones, unlike their peers who have not had such experience. Nevertheless, majority of them believe that students who take part in virtual mobility should be treated in the same manner as the ones who embark on physical mobility. This is especially relevant in terms of ECTS credits certification, credit transfer practices, accreditation of programs and quality assurance.

Students share the opinion that virtual mobility has positive effects on collaborative learning, brand and reputation of the institution, better ranking and cooperation among institutions and enhancement of communication skills. However, participants in the survey are rather hesitant in their estimations on how significant the role of virtual mobility in the improvement of multicultural dialogue is, as well as in the process of internationalization of HEIs.



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## Annex 1 - Research instrument: Questionnaire

1. Name of your university
2. Name of your faculty
3. Has your institution already adopted an internationalization strategy?
4. Has your institution already adopted an academic mobility strategy?
5. Does internationalization strategy of your institution introduce virtual mobility?
6. Has your institution already implemented any form of virtual mobility?
7. Has your institution already adopted and further developed its pedagogical models in order to change delivery content and learning tools appropriate for virtual mobility?
8. Do you have any experience in physical mobility?
9. Do you have any experience in virtual mobility?
10. May virtual mobility be a complement to physical mobility?
11. May virtual mobility completely replace physical mobility?
12. May virtual mobility provide students who are not able to travel extensively with opportunities to benefit from internationalization?
13. May virtual mobility provide students with opportunities for taking complementary courses which are not available at their home institution?
14. Are the virtual mobility courses already well-known learning opportunity?
15. Do the students have to possess special skills and competencies to participate in virtual mobility?
16. Should virtual mobility students obtain ECTS credits and their academic recognition at home university in similar way as students participating in physical mobility?
17. May virtual mobility allow students to exchange their knowledge and improve their intercultural competences?
18. May virtual mobility activities enable collaborative learning?
19. May virtual mobility promote impact of internationalization on Higher Education Institutions?
20. May virtual mobility promote the possibilities for cooperation and competition between institutions?
21. Is virtual mobility a good way for collaboration of people from different background and cultures, working and studying together, creating a virtual community?
22. May virtual mobility promote international communication and development of communication skills?
23. May virtual mobility students, attending courses from different institutions and studying and working collaboratively within diverse international group, gain special knowledge, skills and competences?