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The feasibility of a European graduate study

Results and recommendations of the EUROGRADUATE feasibility study

Final Seminar of the EUROGRADUATE feasibility study

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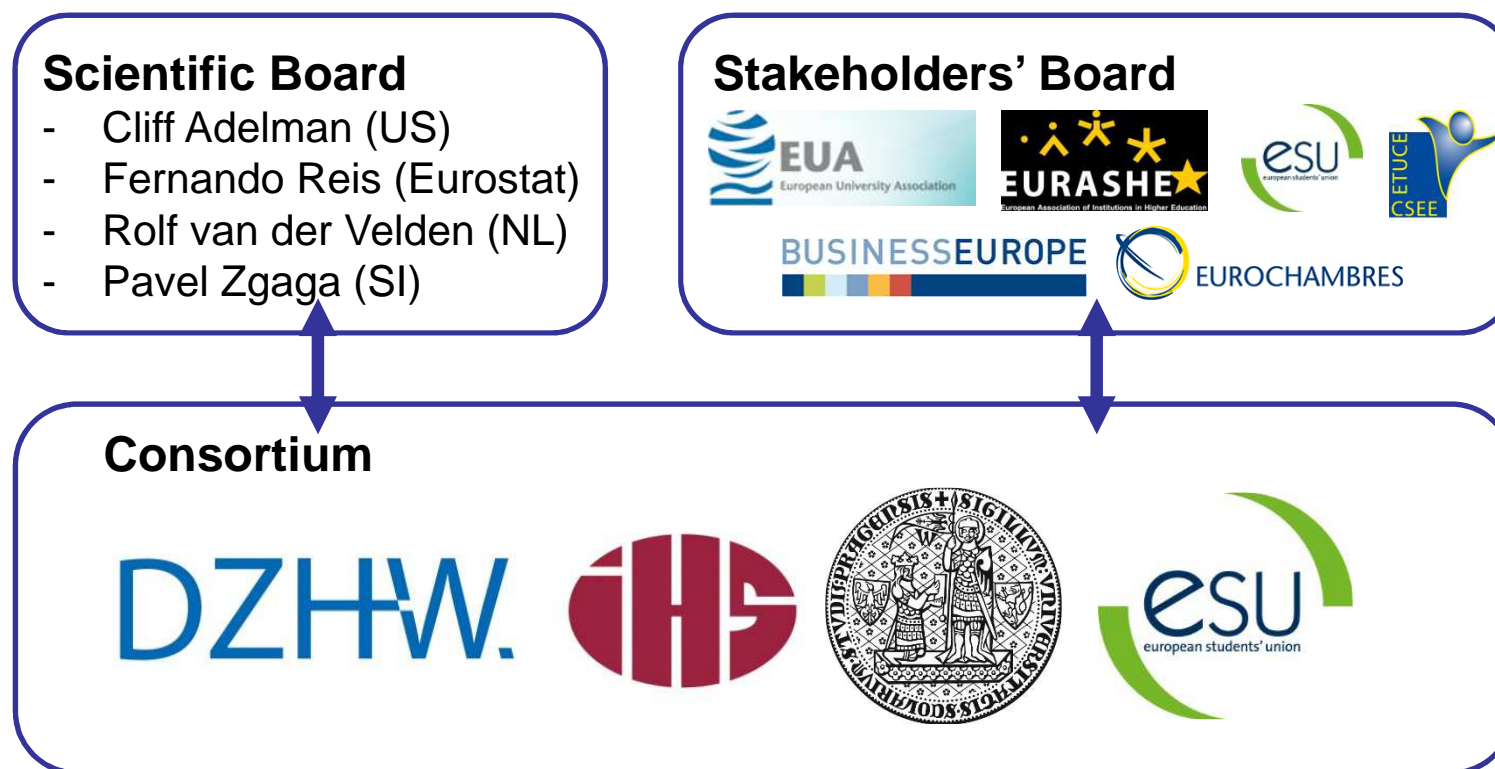


Lifelong
Learning
Programme

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Project organisation



Funding: Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU



Reasons for the EUROGRADUATE project

- Strong & continuing attention to HE graduates, e.g. for...
 - ... a successful transition to the labour market and employability throughout working lives
 - *alleviate (youth) unemployment*
 - ... developing creativity, entrepreneurship & innovation skills
 - *boost innovation capacities of societies*
- Perception of insufficient data & lack of transparency on HE grads (e.g. EUA Trends 2015; Yerevan Communiqué 2015)

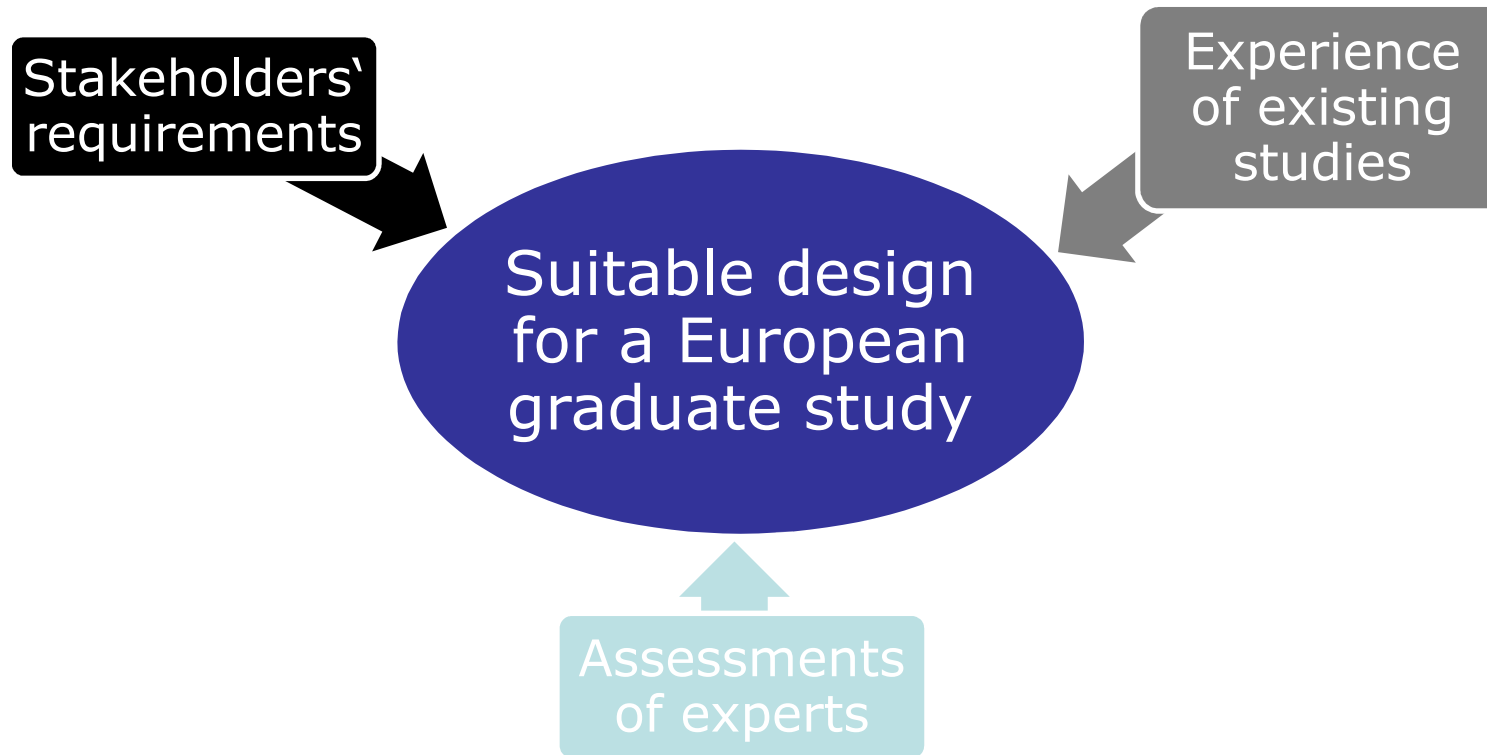
Research questions

Would a sustainable European graduate study be feasible?

- 1) Is there sufficient *demand*? What would be the *added value* to current data?
- 2) Which *information* would the study need to provide in the view of the stakeholders?
- 3) What *design* would best fulfil stakeholders' requirements?
- 4) How could it be *set up & organised*?
- 5) Would that design & organisation be *feasible*?

Methods of the feasibility study

- Inductive approach



- Guided by feasibility considerations throughout
- Discussed against TELOS criteria
- No pilot study

Methods of the feasibility study

1. EUROGRADUATE surveys in EU+EFTA countries:

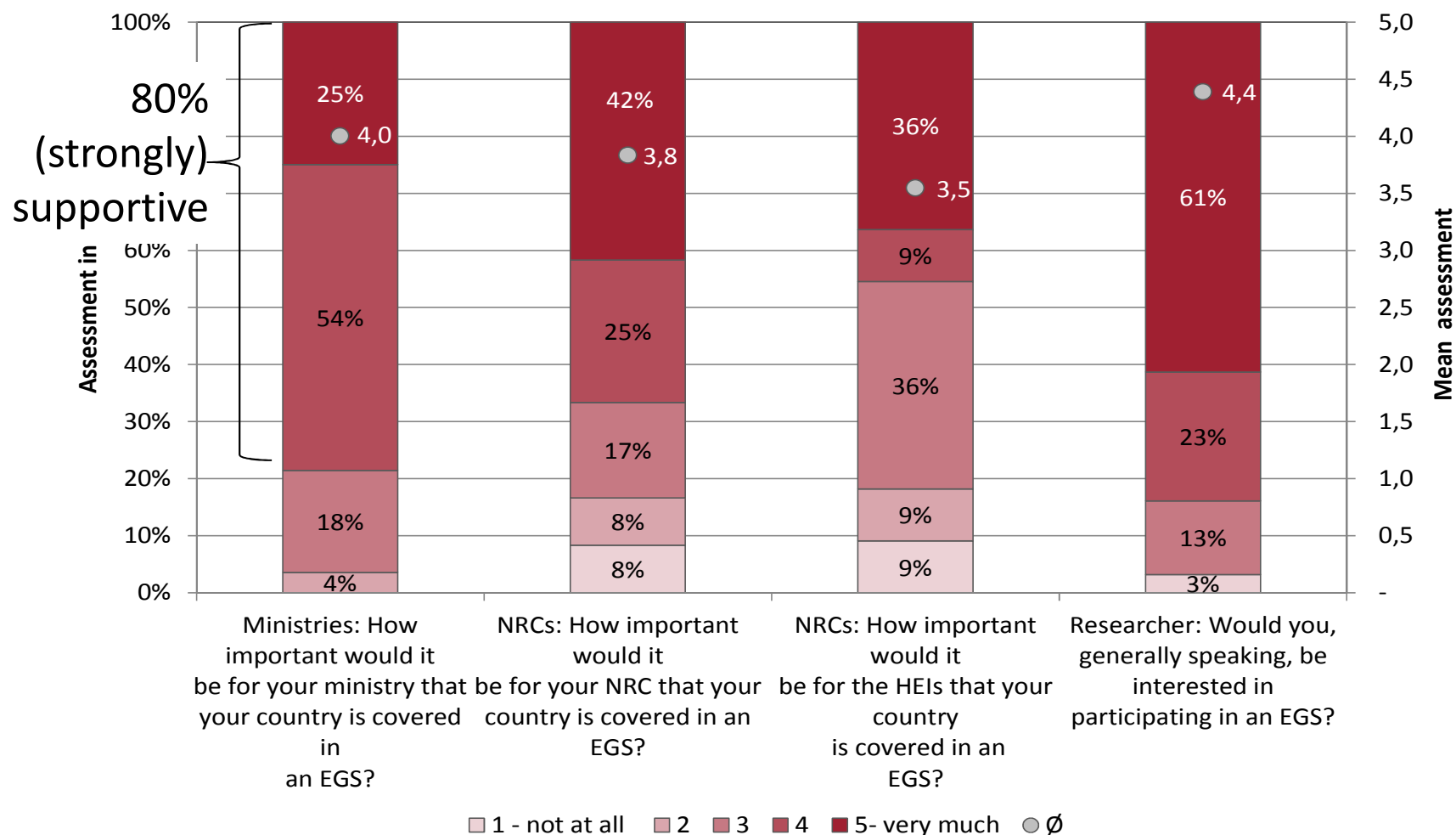
Target group	Contacted	Resp. rate	N
National ministries (+ reg. BE & UK)	36	72%	26
National rectors' conferences	43	28%	12
National research groups	48	69%	33

2. Expert interviews with representatives of: EC, EUA, EURASHE, ESU, ETUCE, BUSINESSEUROPE, EUROCHAMBRES, & OECD
3. Expert interviews with researchers of international projects: ESS, EUROSTUDENT, PIAAC, PISA, REFLEX, TIMSS, & U-Multirank
4. Analyses of existing international data sets (focus on EU-LFS, ESS, & PIAAC)

Assessment of existing data sources

- Eight international data sets analysed, three in more depth: EU-LFS, PIAAC, ESS
 - Data sets either very limited due to **low numbers of HE grads** in sample or regarding the **information** available or **both**
 - PIAAC rich on information but numbers of HE grads hardly allow more differentiated analyses
 - EU-LFS has larger numbers of HE grads but very limited regarding available information
 - **Detailed information on HE missing** in all international data sets
- **Lack of comparative, comprehensive, & regular data on HE graduates**

Demand for a European graduate study



Source: EUROGRADUATE. $n=28$ (ministries), $n=12$ (NRCs, first question), $n=11$ (NRCs, second question); researchers $n=31$.

Contents of a European graduate study

Topics	Minist.	NRCs	Res.
Transition to labour market	4,6	4,4	4,8
Generating & sustaining employability	4,5	4,0	4,4
Skills mismatch	4,4	3,5	4,3
Competencies during studies	4,3	3,8	4,0
Quality of HE	4,0	3,9	4,0
Returns to education	3,9	3,6	3,9
Mobility of graduates	3,9	3,8	3,5
Equity	3,8	3,8	4,1
Competencies after graduation	3,8	3,3	3,9
Mobility during studies	3,4	3,4	3,4
Comparison of individual HEIs	3,1	2,5	2,3

Source: EUROGRADUATE. Mean values on 5-point scale (1="strongly disagree", 5="strongly agree").
Q: "[...] Which topics or political issues should a European graduate study contribute to?"

Recommendations: Information & content

- 4 core research topics
 - Transition to labour market
 - Generating & sustaining employability
 - Quality of HE, competencies acquired, and skills mismatch
 - International mobility
- Focus/additional topics per repetition of study

Characteristics of a European graduate study

Characteristic	Minist.	NRCs	Res.
Done on a regular basis	4,5	4,3	4,5
Results relevant to HE policies & steering	4,4	3,4	4,4
Covering mid- & longterm developments	4,2	4,1	4,6
Provide in-depth analyses	4,1	3,8	4,0
Provide aggregate-level indicators	3,9	3,8	3,9
Provide micro level data for research	3,5	3,5	4,1
Allow comparing regions	3,4	3,1	3,9
Allow comparing HEIs	3,2	3,0	2,6
Short-term developments sufficient	2,8	3,3	2,1

Source: EUROGRADUATE. Mean values on 5-point scale (1="strongly disagree", 5="strongly agree").

Q: "[...] Which qualities should a European graduate study have?"

Recommendations: Information & content

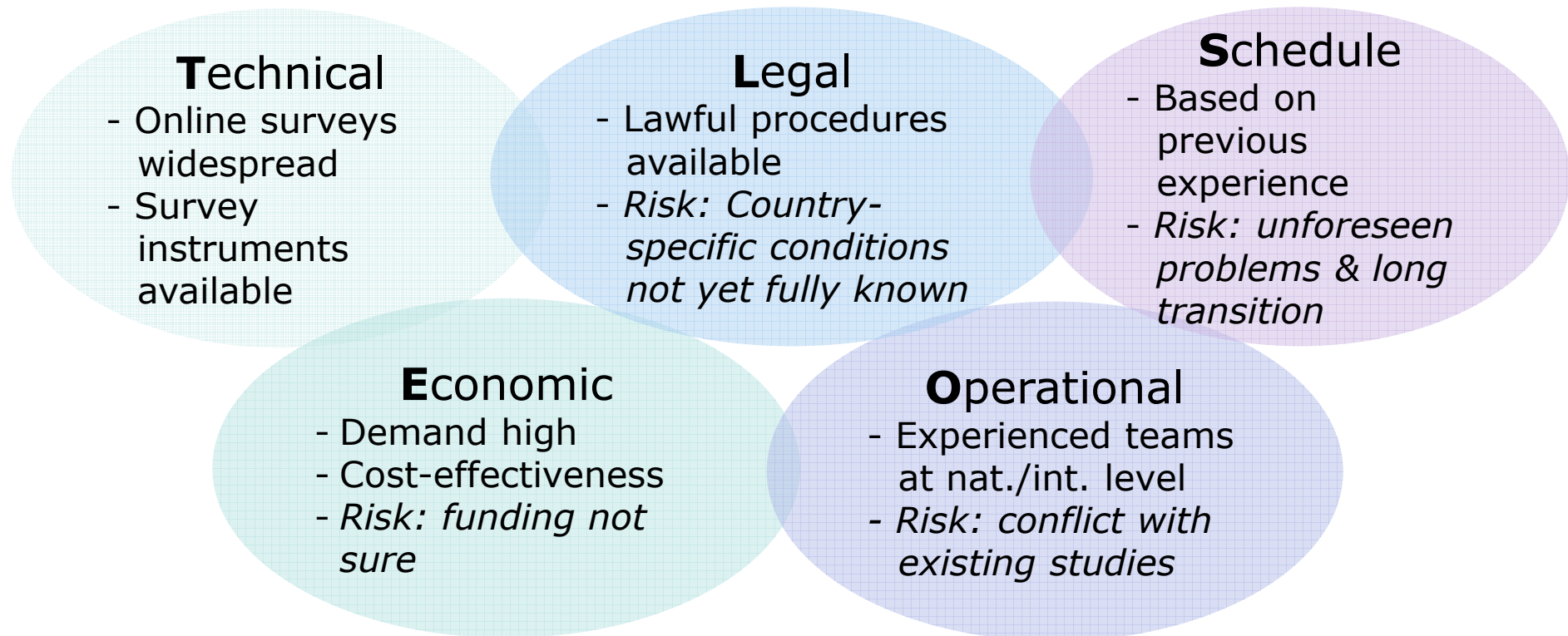
- Regular information
 - Repetition every 4 years
- Level of reporting: national/system level
- Option of regional/institutional breakdowns
- Long- & short-term perspective
 - Panel study covering early transition & career trajectories
- Monitoring & in-depth analyses required
 - Provide aggregate & individual level data

Recommendations: Data collection

- Method: online survey
- Centralised survey
- Avoid different methods of data collection in participating countries
- Allow for differences in methods of contacting & reminding graduates if necessary

Feasibility, risk factors, & measures

- Demand for a European graduate study is high
- Possible to derive coherent design matching stakeholders' requirements



→ preparatory project for smooth transition

Feasibility, risk factors, & measures

- Preparatory project as next step
 - Develop **tools needed on central level** (central online survey tool, core questionnaire, guidelines)
 - Explore for each **country conditions** for running the survey (availability of contact information, data protection regulations)
 - **Direct collaboration** with ministries & research teams in the respective country
 - Decisions for participation can be taken on **elaborated tools & procedures**
 - Timely & **smooth transition** to full study
 - **Avoid unforeseen problems** in delivering the full study

Uses, expected outputs & added value

- Monitoring
 - Comparative report on core topics (transition, employability, mobility, innovation, etc.)
 - Regular up-to-date information for use by decision makers, stakeholders, & researchers
- Analyses
 - Focussed reports on specific topics by consortium & external users
 - Analyses of country differences & peer learning
- Data capacities
 - Micro-level data set available as scientific use file
 - Build capacities in countries without studies
 - Improve quality & availability of data on graduates

Next steps of EUROGRADUATE & beyond

- Further develop research proposal for preparatory project & full study
- Explore funding options for preparatory project
- Keep promoting the project among stakeholders
- Keep idea of a European graduate study alive via the EUROGRADUATE info network

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