

Chapter I

MUNDUS STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE

Katarzyna Hadaś

It is the best thing that has ever happened to me and I think many people like me will think the same. God bless the whole programme to achieve its aim for humanity. (32 M Ghana Masters of Applied Ethics).

1. INFORMATION CHANNELS ABOUT ERASMUS MUNDUS

Mundus students were asked how they had learned about the Erasmus Mundus programme, their Masters programme and about the Erasmus Mundus scholarship. The most frequently stated sources of information were the internet, personal contacts, media, the headquarters of international organizations and programmes, and home institutions.

Internet

First it was the Internet which helped the majority of students to learn about the Mundus offer. The largest part of students surveyed obtained information by using internet search, looking for basics on the web and for details by email contacts. The case of a Canadian teacher can serve as an example: “I knew that I wanted to go back to school to complete my Masters, and I had thoroughly enjoyed studying in England for teacher’s college. I went onto the website that I had used to apply to schools that were abroad to see what my options were. I emailed two universities in London to see what the possibilities were of working and completing a Masters part time in the evenings. Roehampton got back to me and asked me what my areas of interest were. When I mentioned Special Education, they immediately told me about the new Erasmus Mundus programme. I applied 2 days later” (**Canada 26 F Special Education Needs**)”.

Not only web searching but also mailing list servers, managing centralised mailing lists for groups of users, were mentioned in questionnaires: “I work in a list-serv of rock art and the people from the Masters Programme in Portugal sent the information to this site and I could see the programme; I publicised for all people in this list-serv” (**Colombia 39 F Quaternary and Prehistory**); “From mailing list. In Indonesia, we have mailing list (in Yahoo Groups), specialising to give information for scholarships from all around the world. The website for this mailing list is www.milisbeasiswa.com”; “I got to know it through one of the yahoo groups where people share information about studies stuff” (**Pakistan M 26 Computational Logic**).

Personal contacts

Various categories of contacts both at home country and in the EU were pointed out as the source of information. It sometimes happened through professional contacts as in the two following examples: “Through the Prin-

cipal of one of the schools where I conduct a Workshop for teachers of the Deaf, Tamilnadu”; “Through the head of the language department, Goethe Institute, Accra, Ghana“. A Japanese student got to know about her Masters programme itself, not knowing that it also has a status of Erasmus Mundus Masters Course: “To be accurate, I did not know about the Erasmus Mundus. I heard about the Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management Masters in the laboratory in Kyoto University since I had been studying in a field similar to Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management. After getting involved in Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management, I learnt that this course is one of the Erasmus Mundus programmes (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**).

Others learned about Mundus in a non-official way: “From a friend that studied at the University of Aveiro in Portugal”; “My mother told me everything; she is an economist in Taiwan”. “One of my colleagues studied at Gent University” – relates a student from Bangladesh currently studying at Rural Development Masters – “he informed me that there is a good MSc programme with scholarship and I can apply for this, so I applied for this course as well as for Erasmus Mundus Scholarship. Luckily I have been selected and now I am here”. An American professional in international relations and community health who spent 6 months in Geneva during her “junior year abroad” studying international relations had a chance to make friends in Europe and one of them guided her towards to the EC website and the details of the Erasmus Mundus application. A friend studying at The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm also informed his peer in Pakistan: “I came to know about this programme from my friend in Europe – a Masters student here – who told me about the study environment and standards of this university. Then from a European Commission website I got further information about scholarship and mobility. Then I found this programme about nuclear fusion science of great interest to me, keeping in view my previous education. So I decided to come here” (**Pakistan Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**). Four students pointed as a source of information “friends previously enrolled in the Erasmus Mundus programme’ or “friends who had won the same scholarship”. Some were informed by colleagues who had already studied in Europe: “I came to know of this programme through one of my friends. He told me about the excellent quality of European education and about the scholarship”. Scientific contacts between non-European higher education institutions and EU universities involved in the Mundus consortia – “I’ve been in touch with professors of the university before” – stated an Indonesian Bachelor of Computer Science familiar with Computational Logic in University Nova de Lisbon.

Some were informed by teachers – a student from Ecuador enrolled at Masters in Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology wrote:

“From my lecturer, who has connections with the University of Pavia”, another student was forwarded an email from his professor detailing application information.

Media

Two Nepalese students got to know about Mundus through a newspaper advert in Nepal, *The Kathmandu Post*. Now they study at MA LLL – European Master’s in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management and MSPME – Masters in Strategic Project Management. The latter relates his case like this: “Had the information of Erasmus Mundus Scholarship not published in the local newspaper I would have missed the opportunity. And, the web information of European Commission in Nepal as well as Erasmus Mundus programme and MSPME itself was very important to make a decision and process through”. An Indian student claim to learn it “from Mr. Tony Blair’s visit to my country a couple of year’s back”. Euronews TV-channel was stated as a source of information by students from Senegal and from Ukraine.

International organizations

Some learnt about the EM Programme from local offices or websites of organisations from EU member states in their home countries, e.g. organisations like the British Council (3 students), through a German Foundation working in Cambodia (1 student) and from Edufrance in Thailand (1 student). One teacher from Swaziland, studying at Special Education Needs Masters, got to know about the programme through the Ministry of Education in her country, another one through an e-mail message given to Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO where he was “on deputation from Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education at Bangladesh Ministry of Education”. A brochure about the programme and courses it provides were sent to the Organisation (not specified) for which worked a student from Uganda, studying currently at Rural Development Masters.

Spreading information by French embassies in Cambodia and Macedonia made two students Mundus scholarship holders. Nevertheless they both mentioned personal contacts in these embassies: “I was informed while I was working in the south eastern European university “Max Van Der Stoel” in Macedonia; a colleague of mine who is working in the French embassy in Macedonia gave me the document where I read some important information about Mundus Masters” (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**); “I have learnt the Erasmus Mundus programme when I was trying to apply for a scholarship from the French embassy in 2005. I have been informed about the programme which I am pursuing (Agris Mundus) via my French colleague at work” (**Cambodia Agris Mundus**).

Programme promotion activities

It was a satisfaction for our project team to find among surveyed Mundus students those individuals whom our team had contacted personally through

promotional activities of our Action 4 project and who listed: “conference about Erasmus Mundus at Poznan university in February 2005” (**Ivory Coast 27 M Quaternary and Prehistory**) and “Mundus Programme seminar held in Peking University by some European scholars and students, which I luckily attended” (**China M Global Studies**). There were also other events promoting this programme which luckily reached our respondents attention as we found such comments: “from a friend who got the information from a seminar” (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**) and “the meeting with some professors who visited China” (**China Algebra Geometry and Number Theory**).

Home institutions

Home universities were the source of information in 5 cases. Two persons “knew it from the faculty’s notice board” or “from a poster put up in my department’s notice board”. Others were notified by international services, as was this Colombian: “I learned about the Erasmus Mundus programme and its scholarships from an International Affairs person at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. I then checked the information on the web and found the Masters in Applied Ethics programme”.

Some students got to know about Mundus simply by chance while some were searching for a long time for such an opportunity. The most thrilling story of good luck and blind fortune interaction leading to a successful application is described by a student from Ghana who wrote an essay on his Mundus experience at tropEd – European Master of Science Programme in International Health. The essays are located in Chapter III.

2. REASONS TO CHOOSE STUDYING IN EUROPE

One of the project goals was to get to know why Mundus students chose to study in Europe in general, at a particular university and at their selected Masters programme. Answers to these three questions and others opinions, attitudes and beliefs found in other parts of the questionnaire showed a variety of reasons. Several motivations were noted such as a desire to gain knowledge valued in itself or needed for future Ph.D. studies and for professional development, the wish to transfer the knowledge gained in Europe to home country, hope for career development both in the European Union or at home, perception of Europe as a marvellous continent in general, attraction of European culture or belief in the high quality of European education, and last but not least – the scholarship offered by Mundus. Every one of these motives were of a diversified nature and dimensions which will be investigated and explained in this section.

a) Searching for knowledge itself or for future studies and professional practice purposes

Mundus candidates were looking first of all for expertise useful to their current or future professional practice, but also for knowledge as a value in itself and as a contribution to their personal growth.

For current or future professional practice

Here are three examples from EM SEN students' feedback: "As the Project Manager of an Organization called Deaf Child India, I organize workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers of the Deaf and also for regular teachers in Inclusive Schools in Tamilnadu, South India. Hence I wanted to improve my knowledge in SEN. I was also curious to learn the factors influencing successful inclusion in the West, so that I can disseminate whatever I learnt to those teachers whom I deal with" (**India 58 F Special Education Needs**); "When it comes to teaching in a mainstream classroom in Canada, you will always encounter students with special education needs within your classroom. This is why I wanted to further my own knowledge, understanding and experience with special needs students, as it would make me a better classroom practitioner" (**Canada Special Education Needs**), "The programme was very unique in that it provides an opportunity for one to explore different systems of education from a practical point of view. It is a very rich programme which allows comparison of education systems and policies" (**Swaziland F Special Education Needs**). A future lawyer does not imagine not studying European law: "UE is the first world's market, and for everyone who wants to be a lawyer, as I do, it is necessary to learn European law practice" (**Cameroon F European Legal Practice**). The Nepalese after BSc in Forestry and M.B.A. found the course "very suitable to enhance technical capacity and upgrade managerial know-how" (**Nepal 35 M European Forestry**). A 23-year old American who "would like to work in an NGO or some international institution dealing with global contemporary issues" is on the beginning of his path of accumulating knowledge capital. He finds this way, furthermore, very fortunate and interesting: "Always have been looking for such an experience, always wanted to live in Europe and school would be paid for! To further my familiarity with the content and the easy accessibility from the USA. I wanted to learn about the education system and European perspective on globalization. The political structure and make-up of the European Union is very interesting and still very much developing. This is why I have chosen to study in Europe and gain a better understanding of international relations and how the future of the European Union will play out and possibly create a model for future political structures" (**USA Global Studies**).

For the joy of studying and general personal growth

The desire to go deeply into the topic and the very joy of studying has driven two other young Americans: „because of my interest in Global Stud-

ies, also because it is an uncommon discipline. The topic, global studies, sounds very interesting and must be a novel field of studies for me”; “This Masters programme was labelled as an extension of my undergrad course and because I enjoyed my undergraduate programme so much, I thought that this would be enjoyable”. An Indian technologist wishes to study nanoscience and nanotechnology because “it’s the most advanced and most exciting field in physics” (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

Understanding of the world’s East-West junctions and divergences and experiencing it personally fascinates this Indonesian philosopher: “I pursue the study of philosophy, especially regarding ethics, in Europe in order to broaden my knowledge and understanding about the Western philosophies/ethics; also, in my own way, I would like to see these experiences and knowledge I got here in how they can fit with those other different values shifted up and maintained in many communities such as Asian communities” (**Indonesia 41 M Applied Ethics**).

Those who applied for Mundus grants joined it with hopes for general, personal, social and academic development, having international experience and meeting with people from all over the world, possibilities to build up friendships and professional contacts in an intercultural context as well as experiencing completely new ways of thinking and acting: „First, I have a strong motivation to take up further study and eagerness to widen my perspectives both in academic and in social relationships. Second, because I think it’s a good chance to study abroad, and in the paper that I read was assured that Erasmus Mundus will provide a very good programme for students” (**Indonesia F Quaternary and Prehistory**), “EMIN, gives the freedom of acquiring knowledge of both Policy Measures within the Economics Structures and Management studies. Moreover through the highly varied and market updated electives, I can furnish my degree perspectives to any point I want” (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**).

b) Motivation to transfer knowledge and skills to home countries

Such a willingness of Mundus professionals was revealed from analysis of their answers to questions about plans after completing and reasons to undertake studies in Europe. Many, asked about their plans, declared returning home after Masters completion with the aim of contributing to development of knowledge or new areas of competence, effectiveness and modernization of their home services and policy, economic growth or improvement of the quality of life in their countries. Such a plan of exploiting the new know-how that is generated in European higher education institutions and applying it “to make a difference somewhere in Africa, Latin America or Asia” some students had already had before coming to Europe. It must be highlighted that expertise and skilled people are needed in disfavoured regions and the brain drain is definitely not the intention of the

Erasmus Mundus Programme. This makes the existence of contributors to transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries the most valuable outcome of this European initiative.

One of them – a Thai student – did not specify areas of planned transfer but described his inspiration as “the challenge to study in the developed country in order to gain knowledge as much as I can to improve the developing countries, particularly Thailand” (**Thailand 27 M Agris Mundus**). Others specified how they would like to contribute to their homeland. One of the four Namibians selected hopes for application of the acquired knowledge of livestock production in his home country upon completion of studies: “Europe is surely a different environment as opposed to my home country, technologically well advanced etc., socio-culturally different as well with a high degree of multilingualism. Therefore it is for these reasons that I chose to study in Europe. In addition to that, I am presented with a good opportunity of acquiring complex and scientific know-how needed to boost the overall development of my country and many other African countries” (**Namibia 30 M Agris Mundus**). One of the Pakistani students has been interested in applied ethics and especially in bioethics, since this subject is not taught in his country. He chose Masters of Applied Ethics in order to introduce the bioethical legal system in his country: “I have been interested in the application of philosophy to live situations; in my country only theoretical philosophy is taught. I was interested in applied ethics and especially in bioethics, which is not taught as a discipline in Pakistan. I think there is a dire need of bio ethicists in Pakistan and a need to formulate a bio ethical legal system in order to keep check on the medical practices. Paternalism has given authority to medical professionals, which they are misusing. These are a few of the reasons I opted for this Masters's programme. I needed funding also for my studies, that is why I selected Erasmus Mundus programme” (**Pakistan F Applied Ethics**).

After analysing the motives and plans stated by our respondents one can also hope that forestry sector of developing countries will acquire some skilled specialists as well as their educational institutions will get some highly qualified teachers – multipliers who will educate others. In all probability the following six Mundus students, whose comments are presented below, being in the age of 29 to 43 years old, having practice at home complemented by expertise gained during studies at prestigious European universities will considerably support their home institutions – after coming back with EM Masters degrees: “I have been working in Nicaragua Rural Development since I was graduated, so that I can enhance my knowledge and experience in order to work better in my countries agriculture development” (**Nicaragua M Rural Development**); “The European academic network like SILVA network has been developing a more attractive and competitive European forestry education to international scenario especially for

underdeveloped countries. Being a forestry practitioner in Nepal, I thought I needed to explore myself to contribute to the proper management of forest resources to improve the local livelihoods, for which an M.Sc. European Forestry would help me greatly to become more effective and influential in the conservation arena” (**Nepal European Forestry**); “European countries are doing much more in the forestry sector. But, in developing countries forest protection and the livelihood of the people is only one theme of forest management. So, I would like to learn how we could manage our forest as a productive forest commercially in a sustainable manner” (**Nepal European Forestry**); “I have been interested in Computational Logic since I was an undergraduate student, and after graduating I worked a couple of years as a teaching assistant in this area. Therefore the programme was perfect for me. CL course will bring me much knowledge that I need for my future work as a lecturer in Hanoi University of Technology” (**Vietnam 25 M Computational Logic**); “I want to gain knowledge in prehistory in general, and want to use this knowledge to pass on to other students in Cambodia because the study of prehistory has just begun in my country in the real sense” (**Cambodia Quaternary and Prehistory**). “The Government of Bangladesh is on its way to begin inclusive education in some of its primary schools. Being with the government, my belief in life-long learning and my desire to develop my knowledge on inclusive education made me choose this study. MA in SEN is not offered in my country. There are only a handful of graduates in special education in my country and I felt the need to get this degree for my professional development, to be able to contribute to this field of education and also to my country” (**Bangladesh Special Education Needs**).

One of the respondents cited his motivation letter sent with his application, emphasizing his interest in deepening his computer science knowledge and skills and the will to contribute to better perspectives of his country and nation: “I would like to collaborate with active people with strong skills in theoretical and applied computer science, I believe that my education gives me the opportunity to learn and an actively cooperate and make contributions with my knowledge in this area. I actually know that the educational level at my country is not as strong as in Europe or the United States of America education; however I would be pleased to learn from effective people, I believe this experience will help change that perspective of my country. I also would like to have a wide and deep view about ways to represent and use knowledge to develop constructive projects that supports learning and constructive collaboration between people. I have been working in social and educational projects; I know that computer science can be applied to develop constructive projects” (...) This programme will develop strong skills in me to help other people to formalize and understand concepts. I know that If I enrol in this programme I will give my best, it represents a great opportunity that

could be given to other person, and it's a lack of respect to not take advantage of it" (**Mexico 25 M Computational Logic**).

c) Coming to Europe because of quality

The quality of European higher education, renown of education/research in a particular EU country or scientific field, quality of research, excellence of university, possibility of choosing universities within the consortia – these were the main motivations of students looking for excellence, which they could not find at their HEIs.

Quality of European higher education

An important incentive was the advantage of European universities, generally perceived as high-quality institutions, providing greater opportunities and more internationally recognized programmes and degrees. This is how it is seen by a Jordanian archeologist and Serbian IT specialist: "I chose Europe because of its reputation and the quality of the universities and the way of teaching and getting information. It is a good chance to have a comprehensive and very good studies from very good universities" (**Jordan 23 M Quaternary and Prehistory**); "Europe offers cutting edge knowledge in the IT field, and that knowledge and diploma/degree from top European Universities offers a competitive advantage in finding a job in a related field of study" (**Serbia 26 M Computational Logic**).

International environment at partner universities of Rural Development Masters is an asset underlined by students from Nicaragua and Ukraine: "I always wanted to be in Europe, due to the fact of its higher education programmes' quality, which is well known worldwide, the environment study is multicultural and multifunctional, so that you can learn a little bit of everything, as well as meet people from everywhere"; "This is the greatest opportunity to study in the best Universities of Europe, obtaining experience of European Professors and contacting with the students from all over the world".

Renown of country or field

The special reputation of a particular EU country or institution in the scientific world in general or in a chosen field motivated two students of EMMS: "People often held high regard of European – such as German – high technology and details-oriented culture. I would like to see this myself" (**Malaysia F Materials Science**); "I believe in European quality and tradition of study. I talked with some professors in Brazil and all of them said that TUHH is great" (**Brazil M Materials Science**). A Lebanese student who is studying wine management wrote: "Europe is well known in wine making, that is why I decided to go to Europe for experience and its excellence". Not only the good reputation of European higher education around the world but also its financial affordability was taken into consideration: "Many countries in Europe offer free education so this is the best possibility in terms of money as well" (**Pakistan M 26 Computational Logic**).

Quality of research

Academic quality of education and the scope of research or availability of research and practice in a field not existing in their home countries is what many underlined when referring to gains from being Mundus students: “I chose to study in Europe because a lot of work in archaeology, especially in prehistory, is going on in Europe and I wanted to study about it”; “As I am studying Forestry, Europe is known as premier in Forestry education, so I choose it”; “European education has a very long history and is the source of world education. Here is much advanced research in our field. More advance science, application and technology support. I wanted to broaden my knowledge and experiences from leading universities as well as to get exposure to modern technology”; “Since I did a bachelor in physics, I was naturally interested in doing my Masters. I was guided by some people that Europe is better for pure sciences. The infrastructure for nanoscience and nanotechnology is pretty good in Europe. The participating universities in the Erasmus Nano programme have a particularly strong reputation in this field”.

Quality of university

The quality of particular universities involved in the consortia was also essential. How did the applicants made themselves sure about the quality of a prospective host institution? Some trusted information from friends: “Good words from friends. They praise the university as high as Einstein (they studied here before)” (**Malaysia F Materials Science**); “I heard that the education system of Europe is very nice, and if I get a chance to study in Europe then I can visit easily the EU countries, I can learn many things through study in Europe which is not possible from Japan or Australia or New Zealand etc” (**Bangladesh Rural Development**) while some also referred to official rankings: “The first thing I did was to run a search for Masters courses that I am interested in, and then looking up the institutions that offer these courses. Finally, I was interested in the ranking of these institutions” (**Ghana 27 M International Health**).

Many answers had a general nature like “the universities participating were very good”; “because of the ancient tradition of European universities”; “top research group and a big possibilities in search texts”. The consortium quality and the particular offer of Ghent and Humboldt universities were important for a Malaysian student of Rural Development who explains why he chose Europe in the following way: “To gain experience from a developed country like most of EU countries. To have a different aspect of approach in teaching style” (...) Both universities have their own unique credibility such as agricultural economics for Ghent and natural resources management for Humboldt, besides offering English medium courses. This programme has its unique identity with the mobility options, 4 main universities with another 3 satellite universities, very intensive case study pro-

gramme that gave us real experience in rural development as the core objective" (**Malaysia 27 F Rural Development**). An African student appreciates the quality of Wageningen University: "It is a prestigious University with academic excellence which has trained a lot of people from developing countries. This is an interdisciplinary programme with the aim to broaden one's scope" (**Ghana 26 F Agris Mundus**).

Many students praised their host institutions for the quality of educational services offered. For example the offer of Technical University of Vienna was attractive for a Russian student of Computational Logic due to "high level of education, possibility to study in English and learn other languages, good availability of educational material" and the one of Ferrara due to "facilities and services that it contains and the qualified teachers" to a Jordanian student of Masters in Quaternary and Prehistory. Many more comments appreciating the excellence of higher education institutions involved in the Mundus consortia can be found in Chapter II, here are presented only a few examples of candidates' awareness of their future hosts' qualities and unique features preceding their decisions: "In four universities of ALGANT programme, Padova and Paris-sud are good at number theory, so I choose these two universities" (**China Algebra Geometry and Number Theory**); "UNL is one of five universities which provides a CL course. I chose TUD and UNL for my 2 years because I met the professors from there before in the summer school in Vietnam. I found that they are very kind, that's why I wanted to study there" (**Vietnam Computational Logic**); "I wanted to have a first – world – university exposure. Computational Logic at TU Dresden is quite a mature field. Other partner universities also have quite good active research groups in the field of computational logic. So for CL Dresden is the best place in Europe. Probably this is the only organised Masters programme in the field of CL in the whole world. So for people with interest in CL this was a very obvious choice" (**Pakistan 26 M Computational Logic**); "KU Leuven has been pretty well known for their reputation in nanotechnology. I have already attended one of the seminars presented by Prof Sensen from ESAT department of KU Leuven regarding low voltage analogue circuit organized by IEM in Malaysia" (**Malaysia Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); "Chalmers has very good infrastructure for experimental research in the field of Nanoscience and nanotechnology. Delft is rated as one of the best institutes for nano research" (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); Delft is ranked as one of the best Universities in Europe and has one of the most diverse cultural and educational mix among students" (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**); "Joensuu University is very strong in the forestry field and in China many professors and researchers even studied and visited it" (**China European Forestry**).

The quality of chosen university was crucial for a Pakistani economist; a place offered at other university with a Fulbright grant did not come up to his aspirations: "I applied for Fulbright. But at the end the universities that were assigned to me by the Fulbright Committee were not of my choice. When I got accepted by EMIN, I had to resign from admission at LSE, Carnegie Mellon University, Cass Business School (City University), University College London and Imperial College London" (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**). The quality of the host institution – Heriot-Watt University, although considered as "one of the best universities for project management in the UK", was not so important as course profile and studying in Great Britain: "frankly, the university comes in as a second priority, after the course and region per se" (**Malaysia 28 F Strategic Project Management**).

Possibility of choosing universities within consortia

The possibility of choosing universities within the consortium, however, was not available to all candidates. Many answered: "I did not have a choice to choose the university" (**India 24 M Aeronautics and Space Technology**); "The specificity of Universities was not up to choice but were rather assigned with the focus track of study within the tropEd Masters programme" and "I didn't chose universities by myself. I was assigned to go to these universities as I am taking a particular study track" (**the USA 25 F International Health**). The lack of opportunity to decide to which host university a student would like to go among Masters consortium partners was a reason for complain: "I choose another university. UPM was my third/fourth choice – says BSc in Computer Science and Engineering from Bangladesh and adds later, judging computational logic at Universidad Politecnica de Madrid: "the quality of education here is below my expectation. It is good. But it could be more good". In other cases the delegation made by Masters authorities proved to be surprisingly satisfying: "It was not me who choose Italy as my first destination. However I am happy now, I really like this country and the people here. I think Italy is a country full of mystery and passion and it is a place where a lot of great persons were born and grew up. I hope I could know Italy during these two years" – confess Chinese students "delegated" (as he identified himself) to study Quaternary and Prehistory at Ferrara University. But many went directly where they wanted: "On the one hand, I wanted to live in the countries I lived (Italy and Spain). On the other hand, the University in Bolzano was brand new and the services for the students were excellent" (**Argentina 27 F Computational Logic**); "UNL's first year programme covers most ground in the field of my interest (in Computational Logic's), Professors reputation (members of CENTRIA) and as an additional bonus Lisbon and Portugal are places I wanted to visit for a long time (great climate, surrounding...)" (**Serbia Computational Logic**); "I chose Vienna because it is especially rich in the history of international relations. It accommodates for instance a UN office, and a lot of peace

treaties were signed here. The LSE is known for its scholar prestige and academic excellence. I wanted a chance to study in such a university and acquire the best education for my time. And Wroclaw is not my choice because I had never heard of this city” (**Cambodia Global Studies**). Sometimes the excellence of the whole consortium made the issue of choosing a university inapplicable: “It’s Europe and the programme contents – that did matter. I didn’t care for a particular university. Besides, TUD and TUW are both superb places” (**Russia Computational Logic**). Some students expressed their appreciation and pride of learning in a group of prestigious universities: “I really like this course because it is set up so that it is taught across three European universities. I felt that I would gain even more – getting the various perspectives from the three universities from three very different countries” (**Canada Special Education Needs**); “The six universities are in the consortium so I am honoured to be a part of such an internationally recognized consortium” (**Guyana European Forestry**); “Universities in the consortium of this programme are well known (...) it is a well organized programme. It provides very high academic training” (**Cambodia Agris Mundus**). Some Latin American students, if given such a choice were choosing as the first host Spain or Portugal: “I chose this university only because of the language” (**Argentina F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**).

*d) Personal career development oriented motives
Strengthening professional capacity*

Working graduated specialists from third countries were searching for additional professional training, enhancing prospects for their current career development. Only a handful changed their line of work or study like this Malaysian engineer: “I have to study hard to follow the level of the course as I was in engineering previously but now it is more to science” (**Malaysia M Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**). The majority emphasized that the selected Masters specialisation is relevant to their background and previous educational/professional experience makes their profiles eligible for the requirements: “It is an interesting programme since I have more than ten years working experience in the same field as the programme” (**Vietnam 33 M Strategic Project Management**). “I have a degree in electronic engineering, and some work experience on silicon validation and analogue integrated circuit design. I find that nanoscience and nanotechnology is very important for future career development and this course offers a great insight of the future science and technology that we couldn’t find in most of the Masters programmes in other universities” (**Malaysia Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**). “This Masters’s programme is in direct tandem with my professional and academic background” – utters the holder of BSc. in Community Nutrition and PgDip in Community Development obtained at Trent-in-Ghana programme (A one year study abroad programme of Trent University Canada) – “I have been interested in, and studying and

working in healthcare for the past 7 years so I simply wanted to proceed along the same career” (**Ghana International Health**). A Moroccan student listed three factors: distance from his country, scholarship and relevance to his past and future plans: “The proposed Masters in this university meets my expectations for an international career. There are complementarities between this Masters and the Masters I got from my previous university (Masters in horticulture)” (**Morocco 31 M Agris Mundus**).

Those who has not yet worked considered the elected Masters specialization as a contribution to future career – “I’ve chosen to study Masters of Lifelong Learning because I think it’ll be useful for my work as a vocational training officer” (**Thailand F Lifelong Learning**).

A question of professional career in Europe

Although the quality of EMMCs was estimated high, students were still concerned about its impact of their future. Rather few students – like a Bangladeshi engineer cited below – were sure about the possibility of pursuing their professional career in Europe after completion of studies: “Better international exposure and better career prospects of European higher education attracted me with hoping to find new opportunities as I would like to develop my career as an energy researcher. European universities are famous for advanced research in this area, so I chose Europe (...) there are many research institutes and universities here that can employ us for further research” (**Bangladesh Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**). His countrymen wished to start the job career in Europe believing that “now-a-days Europe is the best place for higher study and also have job opportunity in different fields” (**Bangladesh Computational Logic**). An African student had a plan to take advantage of these chances given by European labour market: “I will further increase my forestry knowledge on an international level with the prospects of having an international career in Forestry throughout Europe” (**Guyana European Forestry**). At the other extreme were numerous respondents conscious about very limited posts available for non-Europeans at vocation of higher level and responding appropriately their aspirations and professional grounding. Some of them expressed their disappointment and discontent while discovering that high quality education is the sole offer – there is not (yet) a Ph.D. or job offer included in the Mundus package. These comments can be found in Chapter II, presenting expectations and suggestions for programme changes, improvements or modifications given by programme beneficiaries in sections 4 and 5. Here it is worth citing just the words of one Russian holder of MSc in Computer Science: “The EU spend so much money to teach MS students and to prepare high quality specialists... And now (because of the citizenship) many of these young people go to the US... What a waste of money.”. When he was asked about plans he wrote: “to get a European Ph.D. degree and go to the North America”. If he does as he

plans – it will be really a waste of his skills and knowledge capital for Europe or his country.

About 10% of students, conversely, intended to look for career progress at their homeland rather than in Europe. A Bangladeshi 32 year old specialist in agricultural economics (MSc) who – when asked about plans – declares coming back home, explains his motives like this: “This is the International Masters programme in Rural development, my background is also related in this field, the courses are very interesting and important. Through this programme there is a great opportunity to interact among the students from many third world and developed countries. So it will be helpful to learn multidimensional aspects, also rural development is multidimensional concepts. Through this I think I can build my future career with a strong base” (**Bangladesh Rural Development**). A Ukrainian specialist in law from Lvov sees his chance in that fact that “the UE is a neighbour of Ukraine now, so there are many business contacts, so knowing the UE law is indispensable for my legal practice” (**Ukraine M European Legal Practice**); “I had an intention that it would be better for me and for my career in my country if I get a degree from Europe in Forestry. Actually this reason encouraged me to take study in Europe” explains a Bangladeshi possessor of his domestic MSc in forestry and Australian diploma of business management.

e) Europe as an attractive place to live and study

A Colombian student who studied in Linköping and now stays at Utrecht University presented various kinds of reasons when giving the following answers to our three questions: “why in Europe? – because it allowed me to study at two different universities, I was in Europe, the application procedure was not complicated, and offered a scholarship. At Linköping University – because it is highly interdisciplinary, informal and high-tech and because Utrecht University was not in the Scandinavian region, so I would get the chance of once more experiencing continental Europe (and less cold in winter). At this Masters – because of the possibility of experiencing more than one culture, the sensibility of such cultures to the issue (Applied Ethics), the somewhat familiarity with the daily life, and the nearness of friends” (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics**).

Attractiveness of European culture was mingled with many motives. However, in many cases the location of chosen Masters course in Europe was not a primary but a secondary reason: “Firstly, I didn't apply for this scholarship as it is in Europe in particular” – explains one of the Bangladeshi citizens – “I chose it because the study track seems to me very attractive. It's a brilliant idea to design a Masters course based on Health research method – the track I am taking now. Secondly, Europe is well known because it has a history in offering better intellectual education and I always wanted to visit Europe because of its intellectual tradition” (**Bangladesh M International Health**).

The following quotations illustrate non-scientific or non-educational reasons for choosing Europe in particular which included: interest in European culture, seeing it as a place of new, intercultural exposure, place of better life and a place more attractive than other destinations – for example the US. Motives far from his research interest – linguistic appeal combined with a curiosity to see natural spectacles – were found in the case of a Chinese chemical engineer: “I liked to study French and I wanted to experience the special natural phenomena in Nordic countries such as Aurora” (**China M Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**) and in the case of Taiwanese zoologist who chose Europe because of “the culture, the language and the landscape” (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**).

Many students manifested special interest in a particular European country because of its cultural, historical and linguistic environment or in European culture as a whole. Students of Masters in humanistic and social science Masters more comprehensively described such reasons, stating their interests and fascinations like literature, history, language of various EU countries or less specified reasons like the ones stated by one of the Chinese: “Nordic countries are full of creative thought”. “I’ve loved the French culture for long” – writes another Chinese who has a BA in French literature obtained from the French department at Nanjing University and admits to having “quite a lot of contacts with the French people who have come to work in China for stage or part-time job”. Then she adds: “In the same time the European culture attracts me because it is much more fascinating compared to American culture. Besides I love travel too and I appreciate the tradition of ‘education in the voyage’ which exists since XVIII century”. Choosing Perpignan University for her was natural: “because it is in France, that is easier for me to better understand the French culture and the society. What’s more, I’m thinking of going on the study later and that should be in France (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**)”. “First of all, I am very interested in the history and present of Europe, which is the original place of modernity, industrialization, modern science and technology. Second,” – continues another Chinese student – “the quality of higher education in Europe is pretty good. Third, I studied the European Union and European Integration in Peking University, which needs some personal experience and a ‘feeling’ of Europe as well as access to library resources on this issue. I have chosen the University of Leipzig with its nearly 600 years’ history as it is one of the oldest universities in Europe. It is famous for Leibniz, Goethe, Lessing, Nietzsche, Pufendorf, Schuman, Wagner, Bloch, Durkheim as well as Chancellor Merkel. Famous Chinese scholars such as Lin Yutang, Cai Yuanpei and Gu Hongming also had experience of studying in the university” (**China M Global Studies**).

Even some students at Masters in natural science or technology and engineering showed their primary reasons concerned with European culture

– like the two women studying Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management: “I was more interested in the culture and the life in Europe than the other countries and happy to be in Europe. But, to be honest, I might have gone to Canada or the USA if I would have a scholarship there” (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); “For me what is important is not just the academic experience it is also the cultural experience and this is something you certainly have in Europe” (**Colombia F 24 Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**). More emphatic was a physicist from Nanjing: “I’m a fan of European culture” – she just wrote (**China F Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

Desire for intercultural exposure

The wish to “try” a different educational system, to travel, to meet different people – such answers were added to scientific, social or other specific motivations by a number of students showing their desire to experience new circumstances while studying. “Exchanging experience and socialisation with EU and Non-EU students around the world” was one of the reasons listed together with “academic quality of education, challenging with new experience, high academic institution, specialisation relevant to my previous experience and the teaching language is in English” as benefits expected in Denmark and France by a Cambodian Agris Mundus student. A Malaysian manager expressed a desire to investigate Europe again and more, after a previous stay motivated a Malaysian manager: “I love Europe as a country and its culture. Six months spent in Eastern Europe from the end of 2001 till 2003 is not sufficient for me. I want to learn more about European culture, education system, people and the way of life” (**Malaysia 28 F Masters in Strategic Project Management**).

Some respondents seemed to be oriented towards experiencing intercultural exposure: “I think there is a lot to be said when it comes to combining living and studying abroad. I really enjoy experiencing new cultures, and you learn a lot more by actually living in a country as opposed to just travelling through it”. Another student adds: “I would like to experience the difference in culture and the education system between Asia and Europe. Also, I would like to meet other international students from different countries. Europe offers a different multicultural experience”. Family roots in this context were mentioned only once: “All my great-grandparents were European and I wanted to know their countries. Also, I thought I would like the lifestyle in Europe, and I did” (**Argentina Computational Logic**).

Similarly, neither educational nor scientific aspects, but rather travelling and sightseeing, were taken into consideration by students from Ecuador and Indonesia: “Something that also convinced me is the class schedule. We have one week breaks every so often, which allows for travel. It’s particularly special for me since I have relatives I can visit here in Europe” (**Ecuador Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology**) and

“it’s a great opportunity to study in more than one country, it’s an added value in experiences and variable of knowledge” (**Indonesia European Forestry**). Understanding and changing the world for the better were the motivations of a Turkish student: “In my opinion, Germany is the leading country in the European Union. Also there is a too much pre-judgment about Turkish people. I want to see the reasons for both of them. To observe the real reaction of the people living in European countries towards outlanders. I have an interest in creating new things. I always wanted to find something to change the world (not for profit but for people). This area is such a good choice for this era” (**Turkey 25 M Computational Logic**).

The European Union offer perceived as better than that of the United States of America

For some students Europe was attractive as opposed to the US – such a conviction was often based on previous visits in Europe and in North America. The intention to “experience Europe’s alternative to Globalization, to acquire another perspective on Globalisation and to master at least one European language” (**Malaysia 27 M Global Studies**) induced a Malaysian graduated from international strategy and diplomacy Masters to refuse a Fulbright Scholarship in the US and to come to Germany and Austria. A Taiwanese woman – who had been in the United States as a child for two years and one year of middle school and then went to Europe as an adult where she studied French for 3 weeks in Paris and travelled around Helsinki, North of Germany, Frankfurt and Berlin – sees it as follows: “I have wanted to study in France since I was in senior high, first because I didn’t want to study in America anymore, and second, France is a country which also has outstanding achievements on many scientific domains and one of the few countries which dares to stand against America on many international issues” (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**).

“It is a very good opportunity to study advanced mathematics, and the style of mathematics in Europe is totally different from that in the U.S., but I think I prefer the one in Europe” (**China Algebra, Geometry and Number Theory**). The latter opinion is even more significant considering that many Chinese are oriented to study in the USA. A Chinese Ph.D. candidate wrote: “The most important reason is that European countries have a long history as well as a culture which is totally different from China’s”. He thinks that not only him but most Chinese students would like to know Europe. European combination of heritage and modernity attracted Brazilian specialist in Computer Science: “Europe has a fascinating culture mixed with all the new technologies. And all investments in education and good universities also attracts. I had good recommendations to study here and an old desire to live in Italy. This programme allows me to have a good formation and integration with the European culture (since I will live in different countries)” (**Brazil M 23 Computational Logic**).

Europe considered a good place to live

Finally, Europe was considered a good place to live. Its daily life style and culture attracted a Columbian psychologist: "The European culture is much more developed. More organised, safer. There are more possibilities to study, to make something of your life. There are more opportunities for young people. It's incredible that there are a lot of young people not interested in studying a career, they are happy with just a high school degree. (..) What I like in Europe are the facilities of communication between the countries. Also the quantity of cultural events. In Europe it is much easier to make a living". She also saw perspectives for her personal growth while studying in Europe: "It is the opportunity to grow professionally and personally. It is the way to do something with my life. Something important. Also, it is the beginning to knowing the world, the different cultures. And to take some of the learning to my country... make the difference" (**Colombia 26 F Work, Organisational and Personnel Psychology**). There was also noted a unique, contrary opinion about European reality, based on observation during studies presented by a Turkish student in Germany: "In Turkey, the family is more connected. In the EU I saw individual lifestyle which causes big gaps in society. However much it seems, the EU is not wealthy. I saw a lot of people who suffer from poverty. Moreover, people who are not accepted by society are showing their anger by rejecting all the public rules. Lastly, I haven't seen anyone who has a purpose in his life. They live for themselves and don't think about the future" (**Turkey 25 M Computational Logic**).

A Columbian psychologist sees perspectives of her personal growth while studying in Europe: "It is the opportunity to grow professionally and personally. It is the way to do something with my life. Something important. Also, it is the beginning to knowing the world, the different cultures. And to take some of the learning to my country... make the difference" (**Colombia 26 F Work, Organisational and Personnel Psychology**). The reversed culture gain is proposed by the Jordanian alumni of the Queen Rania Institute of Tourism and Culture at Hashemite University: "I hope to see cooperation with our Universities to give a chance for European students to learn about our culture" (**Jordan M Quaternary and Prehistory**). Such a wish could have been realised within action 3 consortia – if his home institution had been chosen as a third country partner. But nothing stands in the way to making it real through his efforts after returning as a Mundus Masters graduate.

f) High scholarship as an incentive to study at Mundus courses

As 99% percent of students admitted that they would not be able to study in Europe without a Mundus grant, there is no doubt that the generous scholarship was a decisive factor in the majority of cases. Many listed scholarship together with other assets of the Mundus offer: "Very good and flexible choice of courses. Good academic quality. Funding eliminates all material concerns and so allows one to concentrate on study" (**Ukraine M European Legal**

Practice); “I had my doubts, but the scholarship and the opportunity to travel convinced me” (**Ecuador Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology**); “Because of the opportunity granted by the EC scholarship which gives me the opportunity to study and live in Europe for an extended period of time” (...) Especially when taking into consideration how expensive Masters programmes are in the US. It is a wonderful opportunity, not only financially, but also in experience” (**USA International Health**); “The general fact is that I could not afford to pay for a Masters programme without a scholarship and hence I readily accepted this scholarship. Importantly also, certificates from Europe are highly valued in my country and so I did not hesitate in taking up the scholarship” (**Ghana International Health**). Presumably for many it was more important than all other attributes of Europe and European education – “I wouldn’t mind studying anywhere if I get 1500 euro per month and free education!!!!” – sincerely confesses a Nepalese studying Nuclear Fusion at KTH, having an Australian B.Sc. in medical radiations – a degree for which he had to pay by himself.

Some students, however, deny the importance of financial support in the decision making process. A Pakistani sets forth a rule: “A normal student can be attracted only for the sake of the scholarship but a good student is attracted by both the scholarship and a good level of studies” (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**) and asserts that it also worked in his case. Asked about other alternatives a Malaysian student stressed: “I would not apply to a programme in which I am not interested in, even though it has a scholarship” (**Malaysia 28 F Strategic Project Management**).

g) Alternatives to the Mundus offer

Choosing Mundus before other possibilities abroad or in the home country

Almost one sixth of the respondents had some other alternatives. Some had experienced many attempts before finally being accepted by Mundus: “I applied for many scholarships. i.e. DAAD, USAID, UN and many other small grants provided by a university” – such intensity in looking for support for studies had a thirty-five year old Nepalese, already holding a MSc in Forestry and M.B.A. degrees.

Being offered other alternatives abroad and considering Mundus as a priority was reported by a few students: “Actually, I had also applied to study Masters course in Finland. Since Finland has no tuition fee and education is better, my application was in progress. But, later I was able to get an Erasmus Mundus Scholarship” (**Nepal 25 M Masters in Strategic Project Management**); “Yes I wanted to go to Bari in Italy, I prepared my document but I didn’t send it because I was waiting to have answers from this Masters. There are many scholarships given to my faculty each year from CIHEAM” (**Lebanon M Vintage**); “I was accepted elsewhere in Sweden, Mexico and USA. I was offered a scholarship at another university” – reports a talented

Mexican engineer who decided to choose EMM-Nano Masters convinced that "Delft is easily one of the top universities in the world for my subject of studies (nanoscience). Chalmers is a very friendly university with a good programme" (**Mexico Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**). His two Asian peers, similarly, preferred the EU offer: "I was granted NUFFIC scholarship from the Netherlands government to study Masters in Natural Resource Management in ITC, the Netherlands" (**Nepal European Forestry**); "I've got a Fulbright Scholarship in the United States of America" (**Malaysia Global Studies**).

Others, questioned if they have applied for other scholarships, reported considering alternatives available at home country or region: "Yes, I did have many other alternatives, I got an offer in the University of Manitoba, Canada as well as the UK Columbia University Masters in biomedical engineering (**Mexico 25 F Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); Yes, I got some other scholarships, but I declined them to choose this one. For example, the Japanese government scholarship, Singaporean scholarship, Australian scholarship (**Vietnam 23 M Computational Logic**); "Direct Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering (Material Science), National University of Singapore (Placement gained with double scholarship, however, I finally chose EMMS)", (**Malaysia F Materials Science**); "My alternative was to continue my study in dentistry in Georgia, but I didn't apply for any scholarship (**Georgia F Quaternary and Prehistory**); "Yes, I could have stayed and done my Masters in Canada at Carleton University" (**Canada Space Technology**); "Yes, in my country (Tanzania), I applied for MSc sponsor, but it was difficult to get it, since it is a developing country, it does not have enough resources to satisfy all students" (**Tanzania European Forestry**). "Yes, I could have got a good job" – answers an Indian nono- specialist and adds, when asked about plans: "Want to have a job. Its hard to get one in the EU because of the labour laws. So I feel cheated after getting an education here and finding a job somewhere else" (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

A Mundus student from Nepal finds this European Masters' offer an interesting opportunity although the same at Ph.D. level would be more suitable for him: "Yes, I was also nominated for the Asian Development Bank Joint Japan Government Scholarship Programme to study Masters in International Relations at the International University of Japan (IUJ) but being an Asian, I was more interested in exploring Europe than confining myself to only one Asian country – in Japan. However, given my educational qualifications such as Masters's degree in political science with a very high academic achievement, a further MPhil or Ph.D. would have been more suitable for me. But through my involvement in educational policy and programmes at the national level, MA LLL is still relevant for me. If there was a programme on this in Europe in a respectable institute I would still prefer to study Ph.D. in public administration, specialising in educational administration and management" (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**).

In these cases where other alternatives offered to students were without scholarships or with lower grants, Mundus financial aspects were decisive: “I got accepted to Stanford University but wasn’t granted a scholarship; “Yes. I had gained admission into a UK university. I could not get a scholarship”; “Direct Ph.D. in Operation Management, University of Nottingham (Nottingham University Business School) – placement gained, without funding”; “I had got an admission in the university of Leeds to do Nanoscience. I got a small scholarship from the department”; “Got Admission in Ph.D. at the University of York (UK) but could not guarantee funding”. “I was nominated for NFP scholarship from my government department” – recalls a Pakistani student who studies ethics in Linköping and Utrecht – and the latter was the place he wanted to study – “They gave a list of institutions to get admission before applying for scholarship. I found Utrecht University on the list so I applied for admission. I got admission but unfortunately Utrecht University did not get the funding for NFP for the year 2006-7. Then I applied for the Erasmus Mundus scholarship” (**Pakistan F Applied Ethics**).

Many attempts finally led two other students to Mundus: “I applied for the Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Programme (JJ/WBGSP) but I was not successful. I also applied for the Ford Foundation Scholarship but did not receive a reply as at the time I left my home country (their selection date had passed). Additionally, I applied to individual universities that offer limited scholarships to students from developing countries but again these were too competitive. Perhaps one reason is because most other scholarships consider the years of experience and this could sometimes be a disadvantage for young applicants” (**Ghana International Health**); I’ve applied but was not successful for the Commonwealth Scholarship and British Chevening Scholarship. However, I’m successful in getting offers from University of Southampton, UK and University of Edinburgh, Scotland” (**Malaysia Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

An Australian holder of Bachelor in civil and structural engineering and Bachelor in physics and theoretical physics counted “the culture and opportunities this experience could offer” as “too good to refuse”. So she did not look for other alternatives and went to Patras in Greece, to continue later at the University of Pavia, Italy. She is sure that it was a good choice, moreover that “in Australia, not so many people have Masters degrees as in Europe or the US” which will increase her chances in the labour market (**Australia 23 F Masters of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology**).

The Mundus course in a particular discipline as the only option in the educational market

For some students the Masters for which they have been classified was the only programme among existing EMMC’s or even the only one in Europe suitable for their profile: “There wasn’t any possibility to continue my

studies in prehistory after the four years of Bachelor in my country”; “This Masters Programme offers knowledge that is not offered in my country, and represents a field of IT that interest me the most as well as being very challenging. EMCL programme exactly suited my research interests”; “Specifically because I wished to study International Health and it was the only programme associated with the EM scholarship that granted this degree”.

A Ukrainian who was already at a summer school in Helsinki and made several tourist trips to Eastern Europe (to Poland and Hungary), asked for his reasons – answered: “No definite reason. Probably, a combination of previous experiences”. But later he comes to the conclusion that “European universities seem to be the only alternative to Northern American Universities in CS. This is the only programme for pure mathematics that I know of, so I have no choice!” (**Ukraine M Computational Logic**). Mundus appeared to be the only and the best possibility in terms of scientific reasons for a Canadian who once “had thoroughly enjoyed studying in England for teacher’s college” and then got three bachelor degrees in Canada: “This course sounded ideal for me. It was the only one that I applied to. If I hadn’t been accepted for this year I would have tried to gain more experience and apply again for the following year” (**Canada Special Education Needs**).

Some students confessed to not being determined to take up studies in Europe: “I didn’t apply to other scholarships. I was working by that time. I was not sure that I wanted to live abroad” while others – oppositely – found the opportunities given by the Mundus grant as a solution to their crucial problems: “While frustrated at home (Cameroon), I was extensively searching for possible scholarships in the internet” (**Cameroon 30 M European Forestry**); “I thought it was a good opportunity, to have access to a good education, and a good experience of living outside my country, and Europe, in my opinion, as well as the United States, was one of the better places to get this good education. The economic situation in my country, I think, helped me to take the decision too. Only if I would have found a good job in my country, I think, would I have stayed there” (**Argentina 27 F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**).

Completing the subject of alternative choices, it is worth mentioning three students, who were also accepted at other EMMCs at the same time and had a chance to choose one: “I was also selected for some other course apart from the one I am doing now but it was also Erasmus Mundus” (**Nepal M 28 Masters in Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); I got two grants from the Erasmus Mundus Programme. Another one is Material Science for Energy Storage and Conversion. Its mobility scheme is Toulouse (France), Warsaw (Poland) and Cordoba (Spain)” (**Thailand 25 M Molecular Nano- and Biophotonics for Telecommunications and Biotechnologies**); “I was accepted for the GEM” (Masters of Science course

in Geo-information Science for Environmental Modelling and Management) programme as well” (**Canada 24 F EuroAqua**).

A Mexican specialist in computer systems engineering answering all three questions about reasons to undertake studies – in Europe in general, at a particular university and at their selected Masters programme – manifested his religious fervour: “It was the will of God (...) It was the will of God (...) It was the will of God” (**Mexico 25 M Computational Logic**). In the above analysis reasons presented for studying at the Mundus courses illustrated the greatly diversified nature of students’ motivations. They ranged from searching for the very joy of studying and general personal growth to looking for specialised know-how for future studies and professional practice purposes. From the motivation to transfer knowledge and skills to home countries to the dreams of a professional career in Europe. From coming to Europe because of the quality or scientific renown of the country, field of research or particular university to considering Europe as attractive for its cultural richness or just a good place to live.

In the next section I analyse problems emerging before coming to Europe and those that students encountered during studies.

3. PROBLEMS REPORTED BY MUNDUS STUDENTS

Before coming to analysis of various kinds of problems reported by Mundus students it is worth presenting a few comments about their way of describing problems and their attitude to them. For some respondents daily life problems were unnerving and burdensome enough to write about them in detail. An illustration of the range of problems can be found in the case of a Colombian, studying Applied Ethics at Linköping University and Utrecht University, listing inconveniences faced at this second place of study: “In Linköping I felt completely integrated. Because the information people provided was accurate and pertinent, people were very helpful, I shared a corridor with many Swedish students, the neighbourhood and the room were nice and safe, and the rent was not too expensive. In Utrecht I do not feel so integrated. Because of the high rent for not-such-a-good apartment (in not such-a-good-neighbourhood), the unavailability of specific instructions about household chores (garbage, heating, fire alarms), the inaction of the house keepers to respond to household maintenance beyond our responsibility (in the terms of their own contract), the inability to pay with the Swedish debit card and the international credit card in many stores, the inability to pay with money at the university campus, and going back and forth between the registry office and the foreign police until they solved their differences (...) The move from Sweden to the Netherlands was not an easy one, since the airline refused to take my baggage. Some problems with the living quarters (already described) have also popped

up. Difficulties with the use of the copying machines, for which there was no training. The unavailability of some key books. English not as my mother language" (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics**). On the other hand reading other comments, even brief, even not very comprehensive, one can imagine considerable problems, fatigue born of relocation and the challenge of studying: „Arranging the travelling to different institutions; searching for appropriate accommodation and lack of time to digest all the messages in class" (**China F International Health**). The following four comments present different approach to things troubling students – showing attitude perceiving difficulties and inconveniencies as something unavoidable while studying abroad: "I don't see that I have faced any problem worth mentioning here. Some bureaucratic procedures to extend the stay, some adjustment with local people without knowing the local language" (**Pakistan M 26 Computational Logic**); "I think no problems so far, they were just difficulties" (**Jordan Quaternary and Pre-history**); "Everything is good. There are small things, which I would not like to complain about. Anyway it is inevitable to have some small difficulties. When ones are solved, others arise" (**Russia Computational Logic**); "Nothing else except tiredness due to the long flight" (**Ethiopia Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**).

A Turkish student had to struggle with a range of various problems: "Culture difference, pre-judgements, acceptance by the society, depression, getting used to European food, family problems in my country and some personal problems". Subsequently, asked about coping with study requirements and the level of its difficulty, he confessed: "I can say it is easy but it depends on my concentration, I did nothing in the last semester so I didn't graduate, but it is not because of the difficulty of courses" (**Turkey 25 M Computational Logic**). This is the only case of failure among about 250 surveyed students. All others, even when encountering serious problems, did not give up or fail their study.

Problems reported by our respondents can be categorized into academic and social. In the first context there were noted: not responding to academic demands of EMMCs, lack of appropriate background from previous education and/or professional practice due to outmoded scientific and pedagogical practice in their home countries, the challenges of learning in foreign languages, gaps between assumed knowledge and the actual curriculum, problems arising from different methods of studying and the impossibility to assimilate the required content in a limited time (complaints of too much work, too little time and inappropriate time schedule). In the social context students reported problems concerning acceptance/integration of international students within local societies, religious/cultural differences, suffering from loneliness, adapting to climate and food, travelling between universities of consortia and financial matters. The special and distinct, third category form those problems which were caused by procedures of obtain-

ing visas and residence permissions. Detailed analysis of such problems can be found in this chapter, in-depth description of some others problems is presented also in essays “*My Mundus experience*” in Chapter III.

a) Academic difficulties

Expecting and appreciating a high-level of teaching, demands and difficulties

Being a Mundus student means investing a lot of time and working hard, but it was the challenge that many students expected and accepted: “I think the level of the course is just right for the Masters programme. There are times when I really feel I am under pressure and over-working, not getting enough sleep etc., but I think it all is preparing us for the real world” (**Ghana International Health**); “It’s a little hard compared to the Indian system. But I am confident I can cope. Otherwise I would not have come. It’s really exciting and challenging to study here” (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); “I wouldn’t say that it is rather difficult or easy, it is a Masters course and it is something that takes your energy with studies, but it is interesting, so I don’t feel it difficult if it interests me and gives pleasure while studying” (**Georgia F Quaternary and Prehistory**).

Students were asked if they coped with the demands and if they felt well prepared for the level of the course. Several found themselves well prepared with their previous education: “I feel prepared for the level of the course and I cope with the demands; I would not say it is too difficult but it is certainly not too easy” (**Mexico F Crossways in European Humanities**); “I feel that I am prepared. The education system in my home country is pretty tough and I think, comparatively, the European system is much easier on students” (**India 23 M Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); “I feel really prepared for this Masters, and my graduation in Brazil, at UFSCar, contributed a lot to that. Brazilian universities, mainly the ones from São Paulo, have an excellent level. Teachers are very well prepared. Our universities are recognised worldwide. The level is good of the Masters I’m studying now, it is the level I expected from a Masters programme” (**Brazil F 23 Quaternary and Prehistory**); “The course is adequate. I feel I am well prepared for the level. With the knowledge gained in the previous study and working experiences, it is not too difficult for me. The challenge is to improve my speed of reading the English articles and my skill of writing in English. In London, we were given the course (academic writing) for that. I found it is very useful” (**China F International Health**).

Students appreciated the appropriateness of the level, as did a Colombian psychologist who considered the level as exactly suiting her “I have to study more because of the language, but the level is good for me, not very difficult for me to give up, but not so easy for me to get bored” (**Colombia 26 F Work, Organizational and Personnel**) and a Singaporean bachelor

of applied science: "I personally think that it is just right as this course is very specialised and we are always in touch with the applications and so there is always a different level of understandings required and hence I would say that it is a very well balanced course so far" (**Singapore F Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**). Subjectively perceived effortless-ness and ease were considered as unsatisfying features of the study programmes: "I thought I will be able to study in a very high level. So far the level was very low. It is too easy" (**Israel 29 M Computational Logic**).

Lack of appropriate background from previous education and / or professional practice

Difficulties caused by irrelevant background or not enough breadth and interdisciplinarity of previous studies were noted in the following cases: "It is somehow more chemistry than mathematics. I am not so good at chemistry so I have to study more. Some courses are new. Some students have a good background in chemistry as they have studied chemistry before" (**Iran Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**); "I feel I was not well prepared so sometimes I have to work much harder than other students..." (**Namibia 30 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); "Since it is an interdisciplinary programme, it is very hard to be well prepared regarding all the courses of a different field" (**Taiwan 26 M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**).

An Australian engineer who has a bachelor of engineering (civil and structural) and a bachelor of science (physics and theoretical physics) noted that admission requirements of his Masters does not guarantee equalling: "I think I would struggle with the courses if I did not have my additional science background and just my engineering degree, even though that is all that is required for this course" (**Australia Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology**).

Students from Masters programmes in natural science or technological and engineering disciplines, in particular, observed their unequal knowledge from previous studies. Specific subjects caused difficulties, described in the following students' remarks: 1) Biology and bio-chemical subjects at Nanoscience and Nanotechnology: "For certain a subject I've not enough basic background in to follow the lecture. It is a bit difficult, as in the nanoscience and nanotechnology course, we are required to study different disciplines related to „nano". For an electronic engineering student, we have to study biochemical subjects as well, and this is difficult for us as we don't have basic and sufficient time to prepare because the lectures go very fast" (**Malaysia Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); "I don't feel prepared at all. I have a bachelor in Physics but I'm just taking postgraduate courses in Biology, which is a field completely new for me" (**Mexico M 24 Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); 2) Physics at MONABIPHOT" the worst were the

courses in physics, which I never studied before. I could barely understand anything” (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); 3) Economy at Rural Development: “Sometimes, when the student has a background in chemistry or biology, the course of Microeconomics is quite difficult to follow, especially because we, as Masters students of Rural Development, are supposed to meet such a level” (**Ukraine F Rural Development**); 4) Environmental engineering at Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management: “The different background from the Masters programme. I was in Mechanical Engineering and now I am doing Civil/ Environmental Engineering which I need to put double effort in to follow the syllabus. It is tough and very stressful for me. I tried to follow the schedule and the syllabus that is arranged. Somehow it is too tough for me to cope with” (**Malaysia 24 M Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management University of Newcastle**); 5) Basics at M.E.S.C.: “I have to study hard to follow the level of the course as I was in engineering previously but now it is more to science” (**Malaysia M Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**).

Humanistic and social science disciplines were relatively rarely a nuisance for students. Even having BA social work from Thammasat University and MA translation studies from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, as well as MA in gender studies from University of Sussex (Brighton, UK) a Thai student realised how difficult the content of her Masters is: “Before coming, with my qualification and academic background, I felt I was prepared for the course. But after having been through the programme for approximately three months, I find the course difficult” (**Thailand F Lifelong Learning**). Some of her peers needed to put in much time and effort to cope with the demands: “So far, so good. But it does take a good deal of effort to cope with the demands. I felt prepared for the programme, but after a while it was clear its scope was much broader than I had expected and that I had no particular preparation for it” (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics**); “According to my study background before, the EM Masters course here is really difficult, my preparation is not enough, I need to study very hard after class” (**China M Quaternary end Prehistory**).

Overcoming gaps and shortcomings with the help of staff and other students

Some admitted that studying in Europe proved to be a bit more difficult than they had expected due to not being well prepared, but things became easy with the passage of time or through the help of professors and colleagues: “Very intense, but I got used to it. I really like it. Now here in Lisbon, things are more relaxed and I have to take fewer courses and focus mainly on the thesis” (**Mexico Computational Logic**); “It is quite difficult for me as I have very little knowledge about the main core of the Programme but with the help of friends and a lecturer I am able to cope with the courses”

(Malaysia M 27 Rural Development). Those who had a break after bachelor studies, like a thirty year old Namibian specialist in agriculture, found difficult coming back again to learning: “A lot of time is required for studies though and recalling much of the technical work done at B-degree level after almost five years of being away from formal studies is demanding” **(Namibia 30 M Agris Mundus);** “I felt like I didn’t have much background in the issues of development, but I have kept up with the materials and now feel very qualified. So yes, I feel like I have been able to stay with the rest of the class” **(USA 24 M Agris Mundus);** “Regarding studies – I found that basic knowledge I had before starting this Masters is not complete (there are many gaps) due to not up to date studying programmes back at my country. I think that due to uncompleted knowledge from my country this programme is a bit difficult, but not that much because professors see this problem and help us really well in addressing this matter. With their support it only takes a little more studying, but it’s worth it because of all the great skills we are learning now” **(Serbia Computational Logic).**

Studying is difficult but mutual help and solidarity among students described by a Mexican student is an inspiring example to follow: “It is good, but too much material in a short time, it could be done better given the same material but in more time. I have to tell you that me and my student peers organised all together for helping each other, always helping the weak in order that everybody passes their lectures with a good grade, even a person not involved in EM but in their university”. The author of this words, who plans to become a priest, commented described above overcoming gaps with the help of staff and other students in such a way: “Without team collaboration we wouldn’t manage to finish the Masters degree because the level is strong. Everybody worked, everybody understood, and everybody gives this for the glory of God and to serve and love the others” **(Mexico 25 M Computational Logic).**

Problems of another nature faced a philosopher from Ghana, studying at Linköping and Utrecht University: “I was not used to I C T and was told I could be in difficulty if am not used to it” **(32 M Ghana Applied Ethics).** The following confession concerning language incompetence leads us to the next set of academic problems: “Actually I don’t understand everything because of the language, so I don’t actually know if it is easy or difficult. But in terms of the level of the course, I think, I am doing Ok. My brain is still in one piece” (the Philippines M Vintage).

Language problems

Studying in local, less spoken, languages brought frequent difficulties, in much fewer cases skills of English were insufficient. Limited proficiency in the language of the destination country were underlined by those who went to Italy and were supposed to study in the local language or to communicate in German: “One problem I faced and am facing is that half of the

instruction is in Italian, its difficult for me to follow, after the language course I can speak and follow a little bit of Italian but its not sufficient to understand the lectures” (**Cambodia Prehistory and Quaternary**); “I had a language communication problem during registration at the foreign office in Berlin and to communicate for the first few weeks upon arrival in Germany because I could not speak German” (**Malaysia M 27 Rural Development**). A significant number of students complained of insufficient local language training – these criticisms can be found in Chapter II, dedicated to programme assessment. English, being a contemporary lingua franca, presented also difficulties to some learners – a Sudanese student of Computational Logic, with very low English skills, visible in the way he has filled in the questionnaire, was aware of this weakness and worried about the need to “adapt to talk in English all the time, and adapt to study that much!!”. Three Asian students expressed their uncertainty and shortcomings in the command of English: “My English level, is sometimes not enough I have to repeat to make others understand what I said” (**China 24 M Algebra, Geometry and Number Theory**); “I am facing a communication problem. Though I know English very well I am still unable to understand these peoples accent clearly” (**India M 26 Sustainable Development in Ireland**); „Furthermore, our class in next semester are not taught in English, so we have to practice the local language not only for living but for understanding in a class” (**Thailand M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**). A Malaysian woman lacked more sophisticated skills in English, indispensable not for understanding study content but for academic writing purposes: “the most difficult is adapting to the English language for the first month i.e. to write academically as English is not my first language, although we do communicate in English almost everyday in the business communication in the home country (...) I must admit that practice makes perfect and I am trying to work on this to improve myself” (**Malaysia 28 F Strategic Project Management**).

Too much work, too little time, inappropriate time schedule

Two Chinese students find their studies very demanding, requiring sacrifices, however possible to cope with: “The main problem is the intensity of the courses. I have to learn very hard to catch up with the courses, partly because this is a multidisciplinary programme. I am not familiar with all the courses, so I need extra effort to study” (**China F Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); “Life goes on even if I may be annoyed when life is boring and tiring (too much to read) here. I have tried to enjoy, in my way, life and study” (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**). Work and time-load required to get along with studies of huge content and limited duration were subjects of one of the frequent complaints in the surveyed group: “The programme schedule takes the whole day most of the time, in this way it is impossible

to find time in order to take extra University courses, like foreign language, for example. Sometimes I do not feel well prepared for the level of the course, however I am doing my best in order to manage with it, lot of assignments and not much time to do it" (**Nicaragua M Rural Development**); "Courses are very important also they are difficult, difficult in a sense that time is not enough in terms of course contents. So it's not too easy. From the beginning we have to study more and more" (**Bangladesh M Rural Development**); "The first two months was really challenging but after having read and started writing my assignments I felt a lot more comfortable. The demands are high of course – writing assignments and also working on the dissertation within a short period of time" (**Swaziland F Special Education Needs**).

Different teaching methods and organization of education

"I still have problems adjusting to the Danish ways of teaching and learning and the fear of not being able to pass the examination" confesses a Thai student registered at Lifelong Learning Masters. Some signalled only the existence of dissimilarities: "Because of the differences from country to country concerning the method, quality of study, there sometimes appear some difficulties with study. I have studied for five years in Ukraine and in a certain way it's different from the European universities" (**Ukraine F Rural Development**). Others specified the matter of difference. Few next examples show problems arising from dissimilar or unknown to students systems of control of performance and assessment of students' achievements, from offered to students possibilities of choosing subjects and creating one's own path and profile of specialisation as well as from problematic familiarisation with the freedom and self-dependence of the learning process: "I'm not very used to the European system where you don't have homework at all and your whole grade depends only on the final examination" (**Mexico M 24 Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); "It was difficult in the beginning, because the system of education differs from the Russian one. We do not choose subjects, for example. Study is difficult, but it is what I had expected and wanted. I think I manage quite well" (**Russia Computational Logic**); "A difference in the quality of education. Being in Nepal, there was a lack of teaching and learning materials. And, after studying for one year, there was one three hours final exam to decide the future. We do depend more on books than anything else. However, I believe I am doing ok (still need to work hard) and being able to cope" (**Nepal 25 M Strategic Project Management**); "I tried my best to come up to the scope and level of the course. Yes, I find difficulties because I came from a different educational system, where teachers make students understand everything. Here I have to understand all by myself and have to make comments on articles, which have never been a practice in my country". The author of the latter citation, holding already two Masters in philosophy, in spite of difficulties, appreciates high-level of

demands and all the novelty in this challenge: “I like this system and I am trying to build this quality in myself. I would, and actually I have, sent emails to my students and my colleagues in Pakistan to apply and forward this message to all other students. One of the main reasons is that I love the teaching and learning method here. Another important reason is that I want my country to keep pace with developed countries” (**Pakistan F Applied Ethics**).

Not only a different study content but also assessment scale or organisation of teaching process made difficulties: “The course was different from what I practiced before I am trying to cope with it by taking the help of faculty people. They are really helpful (...) the grading is different from what I studied in all my previous study years. It is really hard” (...) The course that I take is a bit hard. A lot of practice should be done before the exam” (**India 22 F Economics and Management of Network Industries**). “Getting along with the study with the difference of language. Understanding the ways of working... most of all” – enumerates Colombian student – “the administrative way... the matriculation process, the exams, notes, documents etc” (**Colombia 26 F Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology**).

b) Social problems

Problems of a social kind will just be touched on here, but will be given more place in the next section of this chapter – “Mundus students’ perception of their social life”. One can find there a broader scope of social life as seen and experienced by Mundus students in terms of integration of international individuals in local societies, suffering from loneliness and nostalgia but also adapting to climate as well as coping with practical matters connected with relocation and financial problems. Questioned about the main problems that have arisen before his arrival to the EU, one of the Chinese students leads us to one more theme: “The social environment of the European Union countries and discrimination” (**China M Quaternary and Prehistory**) which corroborates a Colombian woman’s remark, responding to the same question as follows: “I think the racist situation, especially when arriving in Spain” (**Colombia F 24 Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**). Living in a foreign country students encounter barriers to getting to know and being involved and accepted into local society. According to a Thai Student: “The problem arising from this is the integration into real Danish culture” (**Thailand F Lifelong Learning**). The comments expressed above are very brief which makes it impossible to get an in-depth insight into their nature. Conversely – another of our respondents met with hostility from other migrants – which he remembers and describes in detail: “On a Monday afternoon, Sep 4, 2006, I was shopping at FAKTA. A woman wearing a scarf on her head was waiting for her turn to pay the bill. I was

collecting my belongings in the plastic bag and was about to leave the scene when a little child blocked the narrow passage leading outside the shop. I gently touched the child and gestured him to leave the way as lovingly as I used to do for other kids ...the child smilingly hurried out to his mother. But the woman with the scarf on her head thundered something in Danish I did not understand. After a mere two weeks in Denmark I had barely learnt any Danish. But the woman with the scarf threw some angry remarks at me. I suddenly turned to her and said, 'I don't understand what you are trying to say'. She thundered under her veil and seemed to know some broken English. She went on saying only one thing: 'I don't like people to touch my son'. This was my first week in Denmark and I hardly knew any culture or national identity here. Most Danes, I have found in the last couple of weeks, were very friendly and polite. On a number of occasions when I missed the road in the downtown, I asked a passer-by and they showed me the way. Danes smile more than any other people but this woman, who seemed to be an immigrant, was all the more different" (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**).

A feeling of solitude and missing those left at home was reported by several students. Here are some cases of men around their thirties who left their spouses and / or families in their home countries: "The worst feature is to stay a whole year away from my family" (**Pakistan 35 M Special Education Needs**); "I left my family in my country. That gave me little bit of family tension" (**Nepal 29 M Masters in European Forestry**); "I am a married person so it was difficult for me to leave my family in my country. I would like to bring my wife here if possible" (**Cambodia 33 M Quaternary and Pre-history**); "I have no problems although I missed my family so much. I wished they were with me until my study is over" (**Nepal 34 M Lifelong Learning**). Some Mundus students, though, managed to bring relatives with them: "I had a problem with accommodation when I first arrived and now in the second year I am facing a problem with the accommodation of my family in Italy" (**Bangladesh 28 M Computational Logic**).

Adjusting to climate was mentioned by those who came from "hot countries" like Swaziland: "very cold and very lonely"; Guyana: "The weather (especially the winter) and big cities"; Ethiopia: "The European climate. It is common to have a temperature below zero Celsius. However, so far it is good. The worst may come soon, though"; Mexico: "Getting used to the weather is difficult" and Colombia: "Sometimes the weather is difficult, we do not have seasons in Colombia, so the winter is a little difficult for us".

Travelling between universities of the consortia

The possibility of studying in two EU countries that was to be, in the intention of Programme designers, one of its crucial benefits, indeed was appreciated by majority of students as enriching and attractive, offering possibilities to broaden the horizons and acquire additional language skills. However, there were persons for whom travelling to and between consor-

tium universities was a nuisance to such an extent that they would prefer to study in only one country. Here are some examples revealing discontent to mobility caused both by visa procedure and relocation troubles: “Moving, finding new accommodation and repacking for second/ third country is problematic and I will not learn as much as I want about each countries culture” **(Thailand 24 F Masters in Strategic Project Management)**; “I had to travel a lot, so settling down in different countries takes so much from me. Again, I spend so much on flights” **(Nigeria European Forestry)**; “Moving to another city in every six months with all my belongings. The flight companies usually accept only 20kg freely and since we did not know where we would live in the next location, we could not send the part of our luggage by post” **(Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management)**; “Getting adjusted to life in a new place twice. When I was settled in Greece, I had to come to Italy” **(Ecuador Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology)**; “It is difficult to take lots of books with me, because the air company said that for me the limit was at most 30 kg of luggage!” **(China Algebra Geometry and Number Theory)**;

Some consortia did not offer sufficient help in finding an apartment or the housing proposed was not satisfactory and the need to deal with such a situation was perceived as complicated and troublesome: “Finding a place to live in the city of Cordoba was difficult due to the fact that I had no idea how things work for foreign students here. On the other hand, if you do not have an address, there is no possibility to ask for the residence card” **(Nicaragua M Rural Development)**; “I had some difficulty to find an apartment in the country where I could not speak the language well enough. Once my roommate had trouble with another roommate and I was involved. We had to get out of the house and troubles with the agency. But the student office in the university helped us” **(Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management)**;

Shifting universities means crossing borders and this was - each time - an unpleasant or even humiliating experience for a Bangladeshi anthropologist: “I don’t have any problem regarding my Masters course. But as I am a Bangladeshi and travelling to different countries to take my courses, several times I had to face harassment from immigration in different airports. But none from my track has this problem. I don’t know what the problem is with immigration if I have a Bangladeshi passport. Every single time when I go from one place to another I become so upset because of this. I asked myself: ‘Do I need to change my nationality to be equally treated?’” **(Bangladesh M International Health)**.

Financial troubles

To the question “Would you be able to study in the European Union without the offer of a Mundus scholarship?” we only got three answers other than “no”. “...Never in this life” given by an Indian and “Yes” by a Jordanian

student – both studying at Masters of Quaternary and prehistory and “if I were work here – yes, otherwise – no, because the Masters fees are expensive” – this comment from a Macedonian at Crossways in European Humanities.

Certainly a significant Mundus scholarship made our respondents' life better, nevertheless, only a few students expressed appreciation and satisfaction with the amount received as clearly as a Russian students learning Computational Logic at TU Dresden and TU Vienna: “My scholarship allows me to concentrate on studies and not on earning money for living. Having enough time renders all other difficulties minor for me” (**Russia M Computational Logic**) and his fellow countryman studying at EMMS in Hamburg: “I do feel at home in Germany. The financial support gives freedom and the feeling of security in a foreign society” (**Russia M Materials Science**).

On the other hand some financial aspects such as insufficient amount of grant, delays in scholarship transfers and travel expenses were the subject of complaints in the part of the questionnaire, where we asked students to write about problems: “The scholarship money is not enough because in Italy a lot of tax is deducted and also the residence is very costly for Mundus students, we get only 1134 euro per month and we spend 600 euro for our stay” (**Cambodia Quaternary and Prehistory**); “The one major problem has been the lack of resources for essays/academic work in Holland. A lot of the costs of finding appropriate materials has come out of my own pocket, and this has been frustrating” (**Canada Special Education Needs**); “Scholarship was always delayed. Bureaucratic procedures as to residence permits took too much time. There were not enough resources for studying at one of the universities. Mobility is also a challenge because it requires excellent adaptability and self management skills” (**Ukraine M Crossways in European Humanities**); “It is with the delayed scholarship. Experiences with other scholarships have shown me that it is a standard procedure for the organiser to provide some initial assistance at pre-departure e.g. financial help in terms of pre-departure preparations as well as help with the payment of the air ticket for first time and final travel in the programme. This should have come in addition to the monthly scholarship given to scholars” (**Malaysia Global Studies**). Delays in transferring scholarship to students accounts: “The other problem was that the scholarship was a little bit late so we had some difficulties in everyday life but it all went well in the end” (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**); “Transportation costs. We were told to cover our transportation by ourselves and it was tough to manage that” (**Ethiopia Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); “To pre-finance the travel expenses and to pay two or three months of rental deposit in advance” (**Malaysia M 27 Rural Development**); “Initially I faced financial problems. I had to obtain a Bank Account in Europe before I could receive my stipend. The money I brought from Ghana was not enough and this ran out in no time. I couldn't pay my

room rent and I had to rely on the administrators in my institution to speak to the accommodation people” (**Ghana International Health**).

Money problems comprised high air fares from students’ countries to Europe, visa expenses, problems to survive in cases where the scholarship was delayed, high tuition fees, residence costs, purchase of books and winter cloths etc. Within this research students were not asked about the amount of grant received nor of study fee paid; we only asked “*How much money do you spend for your monthly living costs?*” They gave amounts ranging from 300 to 1600 Euro what illustrates both differences in individual needs and in costs of living in various EU countries. Some students gave details like a Swaziland citizen studying special education needs: “Accommodation – initially it was 344 euros but now it’s 300 euros. Food is about 200 euros. I had to spend about 100 euros for winter clothing. For travelling 200 euros”. Some interesting differentiations were noticed – like in the answers given by two Chinese female students who were studying at the same university within MONABIPHOT Masters and were living in the same place, who declared spending significantly different amounts: of 1200 and 800 Euro monthly. Many students, initially enthused about a grant sum of 21 000 Euro per year, were quickly disappointed realising how high were the costs of travels, living and studying (fees) in some countries. Financial issues were not of special concern of the presented study, however this matter together with the cases of self-paying students (non grantees) could be investigated in the future. The number of such cases, however, is not large among third country students and in this study only a few self-paying students were noted; who clearly declared that they did not get the Erasmus Mundus scholarship – one from Australia at Applied Ethics, two from the US at Agris Mundus and Global Studies and three at ELPIS Masters from Burkina Faso, the Republic of Korea and Cameroon. Nonetheless, the three latter gave interesting suggestions concerning self-paying students presented in Chapter II.

A Ukrainian student studying Quaternary and Prehistory at the University of Ferrara wrote in three different places in the questionnaires (in sections devoted to investigating students’ problems and suggestions of improvements) the following expressions “I have no money to survive (...) Extremely expensive accommodation (...) I do not like taxes at my scholarship” illustrating that it was a very problematic matter for him. Referring to problems before arrival, an Australian, not-granted student, stated “finding the money to come over and study” as “very difficult” (**Australia 26 M Applied Ethics**).

The list of social problems that Mundus students encounter supplement the following three of a different and unique nature: “My own university was not willing to send me for this course” (**Pakistan M Special Education Needs**); “The problem to get desired food is also the biggest problem” (**Pakistan Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); “The main problem I face is the food. The food here is really different and as I am from

India I can't eat much of it" (**India 22 F Economics and Management of Network Industries**); "The problem is not regarding my study. I am trying to bring my wife here. I don't know whether she will get a visa or not" (**Bangladesh Computational Logic**). The last citation leads us to the third category of problems – those caused in the processes of obtaining visas and residence permissions.

Visas and residence permissions

A lot of complaints were noted in this matter and they will be presented in the following order: long issuing procedure of visa or study permit, humiliating treatment while trying to get a visa or residence permit, obscure or complicated procedures, perceived as "special and strict requirements" and "barriers" for non-EU nationals, lack of embassies of some EU Member States in Mundus candidates' home countries or lack of information about the Programme there and the high costs of the whole process.

Long issuing procedures of visas or study permits' were very often the subject of dissatisfaction: "Getting my two visa's (Dutch & Czech) was a real problem. I wasn't sure I would make it for the Programme until the last week!" (**India Special Education Needs**); "Applying for the visa takes a long time... If my professor didn't intervene, I probably would have come late for the programme" (**Indonesia Computational Logic**); "My visa took a long time to process" (**USA Agris Mundus**); "I wouldn't necessarily say I had a visa problem considering what some of my colleagues went through. But in any case there were a lot of delays and bureaucracy in the visa process. The good thing for me is that I was only one day late for the Programme which I think is not too bad" (**Ghana International Health**); "The visa process was a bit delayed so I had to pack my things in a hurry as there was no time" (**22 F Economics and Management of Network Industries**); "The visa procedures are so tough. So, you can't be fully confident even after receiving the scholarship. And, even if you are issued a visa they are issued for a limited time only. If you see the cases of our group, the visa period lasts from six months to more than two years. The one having a lesser period has to face hassles to renew the visa to continue studying" (**Nepal 25 M Strategic Project Management**); "The main problem was the Study Permit application to Sweden. Though everything was done on time and all the required papers were sent, it took them two and a half months to make a decision, causing me to arrive three weeks after the Programme had started" (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics**). Too short visa validation, residence permit required and the whole impression of mess was a nuisance for an Australian citizen: "My visa for Greece was only issued for three months while I will be here for five months, so I must apply for a residence permit. The problem is that no one really seems to know what is required for this, and everything is very haphazard" (**Australia Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology**).

Four students' delayed arrival was caused by visas issued very late: "Visa process delayed my arrival into the Programme for more than two weeks" (**Ghana 32 M Applied Ethics, Linköping University, Sweden**); "I arrived three weeks late due to a visa problem and that made me find it difficult to settle down" (**Nigeria 28 M Applied Ethics, Linköping University, Sweden**); "I got my visa late so I missed out on the welcome programme. The visa wasn't issued on time despite submitting all the documents" (**Nepal M 28 Masters in Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics, KTH, Sweden**); "Visa problem. I missed the orientation programme because the visa procedure took too long" (**Morocco 31 M Agris Mundus, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark**).

It used to happen that the generally satisfactory impression of studying abroad was spoiled by the memory of humiliating treatment in the process of getting a visa: "As for the academic programme there are actually no negative features at all. The only problem for me was the procedure in obtaining the visa, I could even say it was humiliating. But I have to say that my home university (University of Bergamo) with the kind intervention of the international relation office helped me a lot" (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**). "The Portuguese consulate makes life very difficult for students who intend to come here" – claims Brazilian student – "even having all the papers provided by my hosting institution in order and the guarantee of being a scholarship grantee, I had to travel to the capital city of my state five times to fill in useless papers. I have even been forced by this consulate to buy health insurance which I DID NOT need because as an Erasmus Mundus student I have one and that costs me a month salary". She draws more general conclusion from her personal experience: "This kind of treatment can prevent students from Brazil from coming to the Masters. I do think the Programme should take action and both investigate how students are treated by the Portuguese consulate and inform candidates of their rights" (**Brazil F Quaternary and Prehistory**).

Many students' comments give testimony of extremely obscure or complicated procedures and special or strict requirements concerning European visas for international students. "The necessity of finding long-term accommodation PRIOR to applying for an Austrian visa is also an issue if you travel the first time, and from a non-EU country. Austrian legislature concerning foreigners is too strict from my point of view" (**Russia Computational Logic**); "Visa! In China the embassy is quite strict concerning the official documents. On the papers of the Programme that I received by mail, there is even no electrical manual signature, so that it can be a "false document" for the embassy" (I should have to look for those responsible who were on vacation to write a letter of confirmation). From that I had the idea that the Programme did not seem so official and that's why I feel a bit

afraid about the social appreciation of the programme, in France or in China” (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**).

Perceived as exclusive, administrative and legal barriers in receiving visas, created for non-EU nationals who had been after all granted with the EU scholarship, sufficient for living in the EU countries, astonished a number of students: “When trying to get the Portuguese student visa I did a lot of paperwork and was almost force to go back to Mexico to apply for it” (**Mexico Computational Logic, to Italy and Portugal**); “The worst problem was about getting a visa. I got it after starting my class and I was two weeks late. Also I had to go another country for this visa. I had to go to India three times for it and for coming to India, I had to take three Indian visas which was not easy. The Spanish Embassy had made my sufferings more. After submitting the documents, they told me to come after fifteen days. I went after one month. Again they told me to come after ten days. In this way I had to go there several times! I had to go to another country. There had no way to know the visa status. The phone number of visa section never worked. From outside the embassy, It is not possible to phone there. Later they gave me the embassy phone number to phone on Monday and Thursday for enquiry. On Monday, I had to phone and on Tuesday they informed me of the status. However, after some days did not even, they answer the phone. I had almost taken the decision not to come here but rather to go to Hong Kong, as I had another scholarship there” (**Bangladesh Computational Logic, to Spain**); “A lot of procedures to go through when applying for the student visa. In Malaysia, we can only apply for the visa two weeks before the departure date, which is a pretty small time-window. If there were any problem with some of the documents, then we’ll miss the flight and have to reschedule. The official acceptance to the Programme arrived too late, creating multiple conflicts with other university deadlines and with the visa” (**Malaysia Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, to Sweden**); “Getting through the visa procedure was very arduous. I guess they can be pretty choosy in letting in. I had almost given up hope of getting the visa and was delayed in joining my programme. In spite of the fact that I have been to a European country before (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, to Sweden**).

The lack of embassy in the home country of future Mundus students caused additional inconveniences in a few cases: “Applying for a Czech visa was the greatest problem because we do not have a Czech Embassy in our country and need to get it from India” (**Bangladesh F Special Education Needs**); “I had a problem in procuring my visa because there is no Italian embassy in my country” (**Cambodia Prehistory and Quaternary Studies**); “Visa problem because Cambodian students have to go to Bangkok, Thailand, to apply for a resident permit from the Austrian Embassy there (**Cambodia Global Studies**); “The Visitors Visa problems were quite

difficult to solve. In Georgia there is not Portuguese embassy and I had to go to Moscow and to go to Moscow I also need the Russian Visa, and there it takes quite a lot of time and nerves to get the final Portuguese Visa” **(Georgia F Quaternary and Prehistory)**.

Another problem with visas was their expensiveness emphasized by two students: “It was very hard and very expensive to get a visa to Spain although I had all the letters from the Programme and from the university” **(Israel Computational Logic)**; “Getting a visa was very difficult as I had to travel for more than a week (up and down) to get it. I still did not succeed. It was more expensive than I expected (including transport and stay in hotels). Once again I was asked to pay the visa fee in the Czech embassy in the Netherlands. A big amount was collected by the embassy in my home country for translation of the invitation letter sent from the Czech Republic and some other fees which nobody could explain. I had to pay for a long term visa for all the three countries which again made the expenditure soar” **(India Special Education Needs)**.

Many Mundus students wondered why they could not get a Schengen visa, which would facilitate their mobility between universities, granted within one, joint EU Programme: “Why can’t we have the ‘Schengen’ Visa? Every time we want to go out from Portugal to the European Union (for study purpose or travel), we have to go to the embassy to ask for a Visa and every time we spent a lot of time and money to prepare the documents and to apply for the Visa (because Mação-Lisbon is quite far / more less two and a half hours by train from another village near Mação). Is this only for Portugal or for all European countries (without the Schengen Visa)?” **(Indonesia F Quaternary and Prehistory)**; “Every time I had to go to any other Shengen Country I had to get a new visa from that country, because my Visa was National Portuguese and I had the right to only stay in Portugal” **(Georgia F Quaternary and Prehistory)**.

Students were also astonished by the fact that EU countries embassies in their regions had no idea of the Programme, especially at its’ initial phase: “On the other hand what makes me feel uncomfortable was the visa procedures in the EU embassy in my country, it was so difficult to get it, they have no idea what the Erasmus Mundus Programme means” **(Nicaragua M Rural Development)**; “Getting a visa at that time (2004) was a problem. It was difficult for the embassies to understand the Erasmus Mundus programme, so it took me four months to get the right answer” **(Morocco European Forestry)**; “I had a lot of problems to get visas. I waited for months for both countries (Spain and Italy). However, I think that now it is easier for new students because the Programme is well known. Nobody knew it in Argentina two years ago” **(Argentina Computational Logic)**;

In the great majority of complaints about visa procedure found in students’ responses some affirmative opinions were the exception and con-

cerned particular embassies, or these positive impressions were caused only by privileged conditions of crossing the EU borders, belonging to particular nationals: "British VISA/ Italian VISA – as they didn't give any favour for us. It is quite difficult to get a visa as long as there are constraints. However, the Embassy of Sweden in Thailand worked differently. Staff were kind and they tried to help me in order to get visa before leaving Thailand. I am very impressed" (**Thailand 24 F Strategic Project Management**); "I didn't really encounter any problems before my arrival as I didn't need visas for Holland or the Czech Republic. This definitely made things easier" (**Canada 26 F Special Education Needs**).

To complete the issue of visas it is worth presenting the case of a Nepalese who, exceptionally, was satisfied with the service of the Royal Danish Embassy in Kathmandu, but then experienced a very painful incident in The British Embassy in Copenhagen, which he describes like this: "I had absolutely no problems before arrival. I am very pleased with the visa service at the Royal Danish Embassy in Kathmandu, which issued me a visa despite their tight business schedule without having to wait longer. That helped me to catch my introductory classes on time. One of the problems was booking the flight ticket. This was caused by a slight delay in announcing the scholarship results and dispatching them" (...) "However, I want to mention here a bitter experience with the British Embassy in Copenhagen when one of its officers named Neale Jones, during a visa interview, asked me to show huge properties such as a house in Copenhagen to qualify for the UK visa. I then realised that the apartment where I lived paying 4,000 DKK per month was not enough of a condition to support the case of my mere visitors visa to the UK. A British Embassy official in Copenhagen denied me a tourist visa on the basis of my facial colour in the questionnaire. This incident has left me thoroughly angry towards the British, the former colonial plunderers. What can be so irritating than being rejected for a tourist visa just because you are a dark-skinned man? Those British who come to plunder my country are shown such great hospitality by our people that the entire world knows of this. Our ancestors and forefathers had died fighting on the side of Great Britain. Be it in the First World War, II World War, and the Falkland war or in the various colonial wars, the British used Nepali Gurkha in the forefront of the battlefield. Thousands of Nepalese have died for the cause of Britain, then a colonial power. For nothing, our ancestors have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the mighty colonial British Empire. And now, these Britishers are showing this attitude to us. I have no words here to express my anger and hatred towards the British. In your publication, I expect you to publish this issue with priority. I request that you publish the name of one the British official named Neale Jones of the British Embassy in Copenhagen, who bluntly rejected my plea for tourist visa in at Christmas. In an email in which

she replied to me she said I had no right to make an appeal. She further said I own no property or a job in Denmark to be eligible to fly to the UK. Though I showed her my passport, my press card from Nepal, Bank statement, letter from the editor of The Kathmandu Post, where I was working as a senior journalist, she refused point-blank. She did one thing: She curiously looked at my face and photo, which was darker than hers. Perhaps, this blunt visa officer had not travelled to Asia or Africa where there are many darker faces. I can't express how irritating this was to me. I can't express in words how humiliated I felt. I keep talking about this even today whenever I meet dark skinned people. I ask them to be careful of these whites. From this single incident, I can imagine how difficult it is for people with a darker complexion and immigrants from Asia and Africa to live in Europe. The British not only looted my money (700 DKK) in the name of a visa fee but also humiliated me by not issuing a mere tourist visa just to visit England. I am angry simply because I know how much hospitality and respect we had shown to these British when they come to my country. We fed these bloody British people with food and drink freely in our homes out of our tradition though we had little for ourselves. The bloody British should be repentant for this treacherous act. I still remember how I helped a British woman who came to Nepal as a tourist in a difficult situation. There are many instances where we have shown utmost respect and hospitality. And now, with this single incident in Copenhagen, I begin to realise that we were mistaken to give so much hospitality to foreigners. We should treat them with a tit-for-tat!! (Nepal) I have mentioned my experience, such as how a British Visa officer in Copenhagen looks at the colour of the skin to decide a visa as this must be interesting for you to show how Asians are treated in Europe" (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**).

The academic and social difficulties presented above should be known to all non-EU students who want to come to study at EMMCs. They should be prepared for highly demanding studies, much time and work-load required, different teaching methods and organisation of education, be aware about language problems and possible inappropriateness of their previous educational/ professional background. Mundus programmes' organisers must also inform potential candidates about issues connected with acceptance and integration of international individuals into local societies, adapting to climate and food, difficulties arising from travelling between universities of the consortia, possible financial troubles as well as visa and residence permission procedures. Such an awareness of possible problems certainly will not block international candidates' will to study in the EU. It will only help them be prepared for a variety of difficulties and troubles and will be of assistance in matching up their expectations with the reality awaiting them in Europe.

4. MUNDUS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR SOCIAL LIFE

The following questions were designed to get a picture of students' social life: 1) *How do you assess the life at the university and your interactions with local and other international students? Do you have friends at university? Is it difficult or easy to get into contact / friendship with European students? Do you participate in any university group (sport, choir etc.)?* 2) *Do you have contacts/ friends outside University, e.g. do you participate in any extra-university group (sport, choir, church etc.)?* 3) *Do you feel integrated / accepted? Why / why not?* In the response the importance of a satisfying social life during studies abroad was expressed by the prevailing majority of respondents. Only one student from South Africa did not expect acceptance or integration, stating to be interested only in educational aspects of studying at her Masters: "I do not feel accepted, I did not expect to be, I came here to study and get the education and I am getting that and it is sufficient for me. In South Africa race relations are different. I feel that people in Germany have difficulty in coming to terms with my race or even my culture. This is not to say that I am discriminated against. However I do not feel that they would ever be able to interact with me without enquiring about my race and my family origins" (**South Africa F Global Studies**).

Barriers blocking successful interactions, integration and social inclusion in a foreign country or even – what was desired by some students – immersion into the local culture were as follows: insufficient language skills, lack of time to devote to social contacts, too short a time of stay in one country and rotation of institutions every semester. Participation in extracurricular events organized by host institutions was of special interest to this study. The results showed diverse students' perception of the preparation to host international students at institutions engaged in EMMCs – from a full range of integration activities and very rich sport and cultural offer to a very modest one or the lack of information about proposals available for students.

a) Barriers blocking successful interaction Language skills versus integration

Language is the most important factor influencing the quality of social relations and possibilities of social inclusion in a foreign country. Numerous students were aware of this interdependence: "I feel accepted but don't really know if I am integrated in society because I still don't understand the language and culture" (**Nepal M 28 Masters in Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics, in Sweden**); "It is not easy to make friends with European students because of the language" (**China F Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies, in France**); "I can only manage to communicate foreign national students. We

are not acquainted with local Spanish students. Maybe this is because of the language problem” (**Bangladesh Computational Logic, in Spain**); “No, I do not feel integrated, not yet. I feel I need to mix-up more with the locals to be able to integrate or be accepted properly into the Danish society. As I mentioned above, it is primarily due to language difficulties” (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**). A Ukrainian student of International MSc of Rural Development compares her current stay in the Wageningen University of the Netherlands and the first semester spent in Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany, in terms of the influence of language ability on social relations: “Here in the Netherlands it’s possible to contact university students, make friends, take part in different activities, taking into consideration time and language constraints. In Germany German speaking skills are needed. In Berlin we were quite a big group of international students, which made our stay there nicer, we were a group of friends! But some students didn’t have a lot of contact with other students, I guess, because of the language” (**Ukraine F Rural Development**).

It seems that French, Italian and Portuguese societies, including students, are seen – more than others – as those that do not have widespread knowledge of English or are rather unwilling to communicate in this language: “I think all local people here are friendly but our problem is we can not understand them. All because they can’t speak English well and we also can’t speak the local language well” (**Thailand M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); “I have no problem to interact with all of them as we can communicate in English. However this is just limited to my classmates. I have difficulties to communicate to a student out of my class as they do not really speak English well and I am not able to speak French. Anyhow most of them are very friendly and it is no problem for me to stay here” (**Malaysia M Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**); “With international students it is easy to interact, however, with the local students it is not easy because most of the local people don’t know English and in my case I don’t know Italian. For this reason it is not easy”; (**Ethiopia M Quaternary and Prehistory**); “I found it rather difficult to make friends with Portuguese students as not many of them are willing to communicate in English” (**Indonesia Computational Logic**).

However due to efforts to get closer coming from both sides, the integration is made possible gradually, which can be noticed in answers to the question *Do you feel integrated / accepted?*: “In principle ‘yes’ due to the help of academic staff, other students and the benevolence of people” – answers a Russian student in Spain – “But to feel myself more accepted I will need to learn the local language to a sufficient level. To have a slightly bigger group of students – we are only three, maybe a few more students from other countries and also local students – would be better. But ... I don’t

know, because to be only three has also great advantages" (**Russia M 23 Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); "I think everyone is trying to be integrated and people are trying to integrate with me. The only problem is the communication. If I could know French better, I would be more accepted" (**China F Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**). With the passage of time students try to manage and surmount language problems: "Until now, I have no problem to interact either with European students or the local people. I have some friends who are colleagues and also I make friends with some local people. Even though sometimes it's hard to communicate because most of them don't speak English, but I have to make an effort to communicate (by using Spanish-Portuguese language)" (**Indonesia F Quaternary and Prehistory**).

Time issues

Taking part in lectures, classes and other compulsory activities as well as self-study work can be so time consuming that as a result Mundus students are too busy to devote any time to social contacts: "No. There's hardly any time for that. I would say that studies are quite demanding. I invest my free time into mastering my German language" (**Russia M Materials Science**); "Since the first semester is short and the courses are intense, I do not participate in any university group. I hope things can improve in the second year" (**China F Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); "Life at the university is limited very much by the amount of work that is required at the LSE. Though I do find some time to discuss with international students, that time is not more than about one hour per week. When I do discuss with them though, I find that it is very easy to make friends and initiate plans to get together in the future. The only extra curricular activity I participate in at the LSE are the public lectures given each night" (**USA Global Studies**); "Unfortunately the course is so challenging that one has no time for social mixing!" (**Lesotho M 33 Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management Newcastle**); "Yes it is easy to interact, but the problem is no time for social issues, the curriculum is very bulky" (**Ethiopia M Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); "The study is pretty busy and we are travelling to three different institutions therefore I do not have much time to interact with local/ other international students except for those who are in the same class. I make new friends in the class. I find no difficulties in getting into contact/ friendship with European students. They are very nice people and helpful. I do not participate in any university group due to the lack of time" (**China International Health**).

Some students who were to study in three countries claimed that rotation of institutions makes it impossible to immerse into the local culture and population: "I feel integrated though it is not very easy to integrate in a group

if the period of stay is short as in the case of Crossways' students who stay for one semester at each university" (**Mexico F Crossways in European Humanities**); "I think that most of the problems we faced were in the first month of this programme when we were still struggling to understand the culture and fit in. Also, we did not know each other and everyone was living by themselves – things are better now" (**Ghana International Health – Institute of Child Health, UCL London; Institute of International Health and Development, QMUC Edinburgh; University of Copenhagen**). According to some students a longer stay or changing the place of study in the company of co-nationals makes things easier: "It's not too difficult when we are already settled, maybe in the second year it will be easier when we are really settled" (**Indonesia European Forestry**); "I feel integrated for as much as one can be in staying in one place for only a short duration of time. When you travel with a specific core group, it makes settling in easier because you at least had a nuclear group with which to get acclimatised" (**USA International Health**);

There were also barriers other than language and time, pointed out by our respondents – one student considers financial matters as a substantial barrier while studying in Finland: "Normally it cost something to be socialised in any localities and I am not in the position to afford such expenses" (**Nepal European Forestry**). Another student – a computer specialist – gave surprising but telling answer when he referred to... remote communication in the part of the questionnaire where we asked: *Is it difficult or easy to get into contact/friendship with European students?*: "The only thing that made it sometimes difficult in communication is the quality of the wireless network here. It's not very good, especially on foggy or rainy days" (**Vietnam Computational Logic**).

Participation in extracurricular activities

Extracurricular events organized by host institutions or local communities can be a good way to strengthen cross-cultural and social relations, but some respondents did not use this opportunity, showing various attitudes to such an offer, presented in the following examples: "I do not participate in any additional organised social events"; "I did not take part in any student group as I don't have time"; "I did not participate in any extra university group. Social and academic life at University was too time consuming for that, but I don't regret it"; "I haven't participated in the extra-university group yet. But I am trying to get involved, as local people are offering it"; "I don't participate in any group because am not good at attending club meetings".

The most frequent reason causing resignation from participation in extracurricular activities, pointed out by many respondents, was a lack of time: "They have two big groups in sport and other things, they are very good, however I'm too busy with my courses so I have not joined any of them"

(Vietnam 23 M Computational Logic); “No, I don’t participate in any university group. The weight and expectation of each courses here is quite heavy so that I have to concentrate on them” **(Indonesia 23 M Computational Logic, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)**; “There’s not much problem interacting with local and other international students. I would really like to participate in the evening sports, but due to the Erasmus Programme, I have to go for evening Dutch classes three days a week. So I missed the interesting sports on those days, I will find chances to join in the next semester” **(Malaysia 26 F Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, KU Leuven, Belgium)**; “Göteborg is a friendly city for overseas student, the course is demanding, so until now I have no time to attend a Swedish course. Every student in the university is friendly, it is easy to develop good relationships with other students. But the course is too busy for me to join any group” **(China Nanoscience and Nanotechnology)**.

A Colombian student pointed out the lack of information about cultural offers available for students: “I think that there are a lot of activities for us to participate in, but we don’t know about them!!!, I would like to go to the theatre, movies, conferences, etc. maybe with a low price for students” **(Colombia 26 F Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology)**.

Many students underlined the rich sport and cultural offer prepared for them at host institutions, which they will willingly took advantage of: “I have a lot of local community friends and national and international friends, also I am always participating in academic and non academic activities” **(Jordan Quaternary and Prehistory, Ferrara University)**; “Life in the university is very friendly and interesting. It’s really not that difficult to make friends. One of the best ways to meet more people is to participate in sport. TUHH university gives a big range of different activities. I’m sure that everyone can find something they like here” **(Russia F Materials Science)**; “The sport offered outside University is really good, and gives a variety of choices. In Vienna I attended several language courses and sport activities. In Bolzano I am confined to the University and the Student Dorm” **(Macedonia Computational Logic, TUW Free University of Bozen Bolzano)**; “We have many international students in our dormitory, we will have some activities, in the form of parties, sight seeing, cooking, etc. I get to make some friends through these activities. It is not so hard to get into contact with European students” **(China F Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan)**. A Macedonian woman recollected her extracurricular activities, seeing a correlation between the possibility to attend additional, organised by the host university, activities and the integration into local student groups: “It is different in each country: in France I participated in a theatre play directed by Prof. Urkowitz (Mundus professor from New York university)...and thanks to that experience I had a lot of friends in

Perpignan but in Bergamo there is a very little communication between us and the Italian students, but of course it is a question of cultural identity and personal choice”. Asked later if she felt integrated / accepted (and why or why not) she answered: “As for the personal integration I could say that although I felt well integrated both in France and Italy, I will be always a foreigner. But it’s normal” (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**).

Availability of sport and leisure activities

Especially popular among students were sport and leisure interests and practicing them was an opportunity for getting to know local and international peers and making friends: “I am in a hiking group, and I go to different bars and cafes to meet people” (**USA 24 M Agris Mundus**); “One of the first things that I did when I arrived in Holland was join a gym. I have met a lot of people through this outlet. I also enjoy live music, so I have met people through various functions promoting this as well” (**Canada Special Education Needs, Roehampton University, Fontys OSO, Charles University**); “I have been consistent in joining the gyms of the different institutions that I attend” (**Ghana Euro MSc. International Health**); “From my experience so far this depends entirely on the individual. It has been very easy for me to make friends – both from the class and outside. I visit the gym and swimming pool regularly and I met a lot of people there. Also, we go out to the pubs for drinks over weekends and its lovely” (**Ghana International Health**); “I participate in the rock climbing group” (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); “I had lot of fun (volleyball- Sauna – swimming pool) no problem at all.. but I think mostly related somehow to University” (**Morocco 33 M MSc European Forestry, Jonesuu University**); “In TUD I participated in sports and the orchestra. In TUW in sports as well” (**Russia Computational Logic, TU Dresden, TU Wien**); “They are people with whom we are doing sports together. I also met local people who are learning Russian, and help me with the German language” (**Russia Computational Logic, Technical University of Vienna**); “Sports twice a week and going out with my flatmates and other colleagues once in a while is always fun and an insight on how they live here in Europe in general” (**the Philippines F Global Studies**); “Life at both universities is good. No problem to interact with other local and international students. I have a lot of friends from the other European countries as well. I have joined some sport activities in the sport centre for fun” (**Malaysia Rural Development, Ghent & Humboldt Universities**). Sometimes participation in sport activities was offered, but under difficult conditions: “I thought that I could participate more in sport activities but the administrative procedure for sport was so long that I gave up” (**Iran 24 F Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion, Universite de Provence in Marseille**); “Since the time of my stay here is just a semester and there

are difficulties in language, I just participate in one English drama club. I have no access to the sport facilities here as they required me to have some vaccination that I am not able to prove I have" (**Malaysia M Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**). One Indian student, who had a specific interest in chess, could not find peers for his hobby and referred also to general barriers to cultural interaction that he had experienced: "It was hard to meet people at first. Also, due to the language barrier it is hard to find out about extra-curricular activities. I am a chess player but no one plays chess here. and I feel sorry that the Dutch students don't mingle so easily with Asians. a thin wall always exists between Asians and Europeans which makes me uncomfortable at times" (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, TU Delft**). Another chess player – a Malaysian female, also could not play her favourite sport but she admits that there are other kinds of extracurricular activities easily available at her host university: "I wanted to join a chess club at AIESEC but apparently the university is lacking in these two clubs. Nevertheless, there are many trips and activities at the Chaplaincy catering to international students like us" (**Malaysia 28 F Masters in Strategic Project Management Heriot-Watt University**).

Attending events organized by religious communities

Churches of various beliefs and religious organisations were listed, alone or among other activities, as the second most frequent places of Mundus students' extracurricular activities and a source of their external, non-university, contacts. They were places to make a friend or have some leisure at usually open house events organized by religious communities: "I am going to church every Sunday, visiting and eating with a French family or meeting with other Lebanese students in the city" (**Lebanon M Vintage**); "I go to local free Christian churches and have contacts with friends from the churches. I feel integrated. We have the same belief in God and it is like a big family wherever I go" (**China F International Health**); "I mostly went to the Mosque for Friday prayer and there I met with a few people. I met a few Indian guys in the Open Market and they helped me in many things. Yes, pubs are also place to make friendships" (**Pakistan M Special Education Needs**); "Yes, I do have friends outside of the university which makes my stay in Leipzig more pleasurable. I met them through my church" (**South Africa F Global Studies**); "I feel very integrated and accepted by my classmates, but I do not feel completely accepted by French students, perhaps the language barrier prevents good communication. I found the people that I met in one of the churches of Cachan very polite and friendly and that makes me feel very happy" (**Mexico M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); "I have friends at the church. I joined a bible study as well. I also have been invited by a Swedish dance group to join them learning Swedish dance in January 2007. Unfortunately, I will move to Utrecht on the 1st of February 2007, so I have very

little time to join this group” (**Indonesia 41 M Applied Ethics**); “I have contacts with Salesian Catholic people, priests, young men. Opus Dei, Catholic priests and young students. Catechumenal Way, also catholic people, I went to a meeting in Rome for all Italian students I was chosen among all students in my residence to go as a representative of the student residence where I was staying, amazing meeting, I meet a lot of Italian 800 students that love God, and enjoy life and give everything to love others” (**Mexico 25 M Computational Logic**).

c) Successful students’ social relations

On reading the questionnaires the project team was positively surprised by how many students were very satisfied, reporting to have rich social contacts and expressing this state with enthusiastic opinions about human relations and the quality of their life in Europe: “I was always dreaming about the EU and I’m studying here now!!! And I enjoy this very nice country” (**Sudan Computational Logic**); “I realise that we all come from different cultures but living on campus with international students was an amazing experience for me. I did make some good friends” (**India Special Education Needs**); “Life is great here, everybody here has been very friendly and helpful. So far, my expectations are really on track” (**Nigeria 25 F European Forestry**); “University life is very interesting and I have interaction with local and international students I have not found any difficulty with making friends with local or international students. I believe human beings have the same nature everywhere. I don’t find, and have not found, any difficulty in interaction with any European student” (**Pakistan F Applied Ethics, Linköping and Utrecht**); “It is easy to get into friendship with local and other international students. I am happy now. Life here is so good! I make lots of friends from all over the world!” (**China Algebra, Geometry and Number Theory, Padova University**).

Intensity and breadth of social relations

In several cases students reported having wide and diversified circles of acquaintances and cementing relations on amicable and cordial terms with many co-national, international and local people. “It is very easy to get into friendship with European students. I have so many EU friends in Cork. The life I am having in Europe is unimaginable. Apart from study, all facilities are available. I have so many contacts with other people outside university. So far I didn’t participate in any group programme. But I am looking forward to doing it. I see the people here are very helpful and polite” (**India M 26 Agris Mundus**); “In my particular experience I made very good friends in Bolzano. Actually I visited many of them during the last six months; I’ve been in Italy, Spain, Germany and France. At the moment, I do not hang around with Portuguese people, but with Spanish and English speaking students; they’re from Spain and the other Mundus students from

Indonesia, Serbia, Macedonia, etc. I believe I need the language courses to speed-up the integration process with local students here” (**Mexico 27 M Computational Logic**); “All the Erasmus Mundus students have a very good relationship among them, they also have many friends among the local people and other European students. I have sympatric relationships with everyone, a lot of student-friends (European or not), easy contact, I have been invited me to a football match, coffee, pizza... Almost everyday I get to make new friends at the university, at my student hotel or in a shop... I used to play football with some classmates during the weekend” (**Ivory Coast 27 M Quaternary and Prehistory, University of Ferrara**); “The life here is very good, I got on very well with the students around me, they're so nice and friendly. I make many friends in the University, both international students and those in EU countries” (**China 23 M Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “Life at university is so interesting for me, I always meet different people here, I also have a lot of friends from different countries, as well from Spain, people here is very friendly, which makes me feel at home most of the time. I really feel integrated, I always share with fellows from another countries as well as academic staff, not only issues concerning with the course, but also in extra-university activities” (**Nicaragua 32 M Rural Development**); “I have found a very nice atmosphere in the Erasmus Mundus group since my arrival to ENS de Cachan and I have many international friends and only a couple of French friends, maybe because the French students do not have enough knowledge of French or because my French is still poor. Concerning European students, there are only students from Poland in my programme and I have very good friendship with them because I found them very open minded. Normally I like to sing in a choir but I didn't find any in the University” (**Mexico M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); “Most of my European friends are from the university and the EMCL programme. Some of them are Economics students from Germany and Design students from Portugal. I do not participate in any group, but living in student accommodation gives me the opportunity of keep in touch with students from many different countries. Yes. I made some Italian, Albanian, German and Portuguese friends. We go out together and study together too” (**Brazil M 23 Computational Logic, Free University of Bolzano**); “Here in Delft, apart from studies, I am also engaged in other social and physical activities, I hold events occasionally here in my department with my fellow students... which include multi-cultural parties, birthday celebrations and other social events in the common room of Hostel here. I also have arranged two friendly matches of Football between my faculty and the other Masters faculty (Not to mention, we won both of them!) Moreover I am also working with some of my other class colleagues on a community for the welfare of my faculty

students ... but this is just getting started and is in the very early stage. I also registered myself on the Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association (<http://www.erasmusmundus-alumni.eu/>), but I am not confirmed yet by the site's Administrator. I play Tennis, Basketball, Football here. Also, I don't know whether you are the right person to ask this question but I wanted to ask that if I want to represent EMIN in the upcoming Erasmus Mundus Students Seminar, what are the pre-requisites for that?" (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**). It happened that all the above citations come from questionnaires filled in by male respondents, however, our study did not intend to seek out gender influence on the intensity of social relations.

Oppositely to presented above intensity and breadth of social relations, experience of having international contacts only in class or only limited to relations within the same Masters and the same dormitory was reported rarely, for instance in the following two comments: "The interaction is mainly confined within the student's of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Since the classes were taught in English, there were no local students participating in our classes. It not easy to get into contact with other European students if you don't participate in extra-curriculum activities" (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); "My life at the university restricts itself to studying, and so do my interactions with other local and other international students. My friends at the university are three Applied Ethics students who are on pretty much the same study route; my „corridor" neighbours are also my friends. I find it difficult to get into contact/friendship with European students, so it may be a trait of my personality. But Europeans are more reserved, so more difficult to approach" (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics Linköping University and Utrecht University**).

Factors which facilitate international social relations

Undertaking common activities strengthens human relations as can be noticed in the following respondents' comments: "I hardly face any problems with getting along with any European students. I am doing my Applied Period in the Netherlands and I am living in the Dutch students' accommodation now. We take turns to cook once a week. For instance, I will cook my Malaysian dish for them and they will cook theirs for me to try. We also share our point of views in our culture, have daily chats, etc" (**Malaysia 23 F European Forestry**); "We are preparing an exposition about ethnographic research of the people from this region, also we are organising a place, which we will call "Casa Mundus" (**Colombia F Quaternary and Prehistory**); "I have built up friendship with some guys who helped me to settle in quickly and comfortably" (**Ethiopia M 26 Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**). Other factors making social relations easier and closer, mentioned by Mundus students, were 1) being in the same situa-

tion: "I have a lot of friends at both universities (TUD and FUB). Most of them are international students. It is very easy to communicate with them. They are far away from home and motivated to get in touch" (**Russia 24 M Computational Logic**) or 2) natural curiosity towards representatives of different cultures and a desire to explore it: "Yes, I feel that I am accepted probably because I can communicate well in English and understand them well. Everyone is interested in knowing so much about each other and about the diverse cultures, so that there is always an interesting discussion that can go on for hours" (**Guyana 27 M European Forestry**).

Cultural similarity (perceived by Americans seeing the UK as very like the US), impressions of common spirit (felt by Canadian of European roots) or the opposite, quite dissimilar social relations patterns (experienced by non-western civilization representatives), complete the spectrum of factors of attraction between locals and foreigners as mentioned by our respondents: "It is easy to be integrated into a society that is very similar to the U.S. I speak the language fluently and the social institutions of England are much like the U.S. I feel integrated very much because of this" (**USA 23 M Global Studies, London School of Economics**); "Yes, I feel very accepted here. My Mom is from Holland, so I am half Dutch. Even though I have not spent a lot of time here, I really feel that the European way of life agrees with me and that I belong (**Canada 26 F Special Education Needs Roehampton University, Fontys OSO, Charles University**); "Life at university is extremely good. It is very different from what I am used to seeing in my home country where everything is strictly governed by norms. I have friends in university both locals and international students. Its pretty easy to communicate and talk to them" (**India 23 M Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, Chalmers, Sweden**); "The life here is totally new to me. However I like it, especially as I could get more information of other countries from other international students. It seems that it is easy to get into contact with European students even though we have different backgrounds" (**Malaysia 27 M Global Studies, Leipzig Universit, Vienna University**).

Interactions with the local community

When asked why they feel integrated/accepted (and/or why not), Mundus students frequently underlined kindness, benevolence, hearty welcome and the positive bias of local people: "The population of Mação is kind. When it comes to the Masters, I feel well, because the teachers are very good not only academically speaking, but also as people. In Ferrara, which is bigger than Mação, I am feeling completely integrated" (**Brazil F 23 Quaternary and Prehistory**); "I definitely feel integrated and accepted, initially I had a fear that I would feel completely lost with the European students but now I don't think like that because I have, and also they have, a good rapport with me. The same thing applies to the professors" (**Cambodia 33 M Quaternary and Prehistory, University of Ferrara**); "The life here at UNL

in Caparica is very quiet and appropriate for studying. The people at the residence are very kind. My international friends in my course also stay in the residence and we have a good relationship. With other students from Europe, I found that they are very kind and funny :)“ **(Vietnam 25 M Computational Logic, UNL)**; “I have cordial relations with European students and other international students as well. A friendly atmosphere exists within the University Community. I feel accepted because my contributions are always welcome and the response from lecturers and students alike is always positive” **(Ghana 26 F Agris Mundus, Wageningen University)**; “I had the some international friends (not Erasmus Mundus student). The staff and people in Scotland are quite nice. I had the opportunity to have dinner with a Scottish family which is a good experience. Food/clothes/manners etc are different. But I didn't see any problems. Now I am in love with Scotland. I never thought before that Scotland is the most wonderful place compared to other countries that I have gone to (USA/Japan/Australia/other EU countries)” **(Thailand 24 F Strategic Project Management, HWU/Polimi/Umea)**.

Such hospitality, sincerity and a cheerful welcome made some students feel at home: “I feel very much like at home here. Lots of friends and also the administrators at the institutes have been very supportive” **(Ghana 27 M International Health, UK and Denmark)**; “I haven't experienced any strange feelings of exclusion from any activities on account of the fact that I am a foreigner or whatever. About friends, I realised that it is generally very easy to make friends. Colleagues here are very friendly, compassionate and supportive. Basically you don't experience any feeling of being a foreigner or a non-European if you are with them” **(Namibia 30 M Agris Mundus)**; “Yes surely, because I feel one with the European students and they don't even treat me as a person from a different continent” **(India 24 F Quaternary and Prehistory, University of Ferrara Italy)**; “The life at the university is nice. All the local and other international students are friendly” **(China F Materials Science)**; „I just felt a bit home-sick for the first three weeks, then everything became normal for me. I really feel at home in Europe. I really like the mobility in the European States” **(Mexico 27 M Computational Logic)**; “I feel at home, both in Utrecht and Linköping. People are so welcoming and open to taking part in their activities (especially churching and cultural)” **(Indonesia 41 M Applied Ethics)**.

The ease of forming and the durability of the existence of relationships among international students was pointed out by a Canadian: “Living at Stappegoorweg for a majority of the Programme has been excellent. There are a number of international students who live here, who either study at the academic university, at Fontys, or at the local Rock Academy. I was living with three girls from my programme, but it would have also been nice to have a chance to live with other people as well since we already spend

quite a bit of time with people from our course. Friendships are easily established here, and even when people return to their home countries, they are easily maintained" (**Canada 26 F Special Education Needs**).

d) Difficulties in contacts with European students and local community

Some students have less enthusiastic memories and remarks than those cited above. Few of them reported mixing only with other international students: "I have good interaction with the foreign students in my batch but still I couldn't make many German friends in University" (**Sri Lanka 25 M Aeronautics and Space Technology, Technical University of Munich, Germany**) or mainly with fellow countrymen or at least students from the same world region: "Most of the local and international students are very friendly especially those who pursue the Erasmus Mundus programme. Thus, I have many friends at the university. Outside university I have contacts with only Cambodian students who won the scholarship and are enrolled at European universities" (**Cambodia M 26 Agris Mundus, Denmark, France**); "Right now I have several friends from a Spanish university. I can't say the same about a German university, despite already being in this country for three months. However, it may change in the future. But it appeared, that Ukrainians have quite active communities in both countries so I am not alone" (**Ukraine 24 M Computational Logic, Universidad de Politecnica de Madrid and TU Dresden**); "Life at university is good but due to tough study I hardly get any time to search for local friends. Also Swedes take less initiative and want to work alone. I have friends at university from my region and not a single local friend. Other activities in university are usually related to the interests of locals. language is a problem too" (**Pakistan Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics, KTH, Stockholm**); "I am interacting with other people from Asian countries that live near my place and also with Malaysian Embassy staff who like travelling together in Europe, playing bowling and conducting a gathering party among us" (**Malaysia M 27 Rural Development, Ghent and Humboldt**).

A distinct group – of only a few students – is formed by those who clearly express not feeling comfortable among Europeans because their behaviour reveals biases or hostility: "I don't feel integrated in Germany. All the people that I met have pre-judgements about the Muslim and Turkish people, even they haven't met one before. It is hard to change their way of thinking because they believe they are objective, which obviously isn't true" (**Turkey 25 M Computational Logic at Technische Universitat Dresden**); "No, I do not feel that I am being integrated and accepted. There is always a distance from the European people and in some countries it is more. The attitude towards the third country students is not always positive. Europeans have a feeling of superiority and underestimate others" (**India 27 M European Forestry at University of Joensuu**); "Accepted in France, yes.

In the UK, no. Maybe because the city is very small and I felt some kind of discrimination for the Asian and African students from the city. It is not always in the a specific form, like words or violence, but you feel that you are not treated as a friendly member” (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management at University of Newcastle upon Tyne**). A student at Masters in Applied Ethics sees the ignorance in European society and prejudice formed by it’s media: “Sometimes I feel some problems because I am here and can understand European culture but people here have never experienced nor have they a true picture of other cultures. Sometimes it seems that I have come from a place which no-one knows. I am getting experience of these cultures but they have just learnt from media projection about other cultures. And media is of course one sided” (**F Pakistan Applied Ethics at Linkoping and Utrecht**);

Another phenomenon observed in a group of investigated students was a tendency to finding difficulties that discouraged them from contacts with Europeans and looking for similarities that attract them towards groups of common origin and culture. A Nigerian student who stated that he “got on well with European students and felt well accepted” at the same time underlines differences between human relations specific for African and European societies: “BUT there is a great difference in culture between Africa and Europe. In Africa there is more affection for your neighbour and the community life is more lively than here in Europe. In Africa people care about you and how you feel but here in Europe nobody seems to care, unless in extreme cases” (**Nigeria 26 M Applied Ethics**). A Pakistani possessor of Bachelor in Computer Science made some observations in the Netherlands and France, and thinks that they should be made known to candidates: “When I see other students from international backgrounds in University, there is always mostly one thing in common in all of them. They make the group (or are friends) with only the same ethnic group (Asian group, Chinese group...) What is important is how I allow myself to integrate with the European people, and which I exactly did. It was my first experience in the European country and I didn’t feel any problem in integrating with them. The problem starts when I become assertive and I narrow my social circumference to only those people who are no different than me. By the way, the Dutch are very helpful and friendly. I think when the Erasmus Mundus students are selected, they should be especially told about these points, I think it would be very helpful” (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**). A similar point was made by an Australian who thinks that Mundus non-EU students mainly “group with other international students who are similarly positioned” (**Australia 26 M Applied Ethics**).

Some students had limited contacts with locals or describe them as “easier said than done”. A Brazilian found some local colleagues but states that this is “due to my internship (in 2002) and due to my wife’s German course” (**Brazil M Materials Science**). Another Latino American student found maybe more

than a colleague...: "Yes. I met a very nice Portuguese girl through a friend of a friend... related to Mundus. She's local and is helping me to move out of the residence halls..." (**Mexico Computational Logic**) but this is the only one person up to now. A Chinese student had contacts only with European classmates: "I am satisfied with the local life. I have some friends at the university, but only from the same academic direction. It is difficult to get into friendship with European students in other subjects" (**China 23 M Algebra Geometry and Number Theory**). Cordial contacts with host country nationals, but only those met before in his home country was declared by a Nepalese: "Yes, I have local Danish colleagues who I met in my country. Now they are living in Copenhagen and its suburbs. Some of them invite me for dinner and have been extremely hospitable. Karsten Jensen now in Copenhagen, was chief technical advisor to Education Sector Advisory Team (EAST) at the Ministry of Education in Nepal. We had been good friends back in Nepal. The family invites me for dinner at the weekends. Gert Meinecke, former Danish ambassador to my country is now in the Foreign Ministry. We have been in touch" (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**). A Chinese student very interested in French culture finds that it's important but difficult to socialise with the local community: "Well I should say that this tiny university (the city too) has an identity which is paradoxical, which is not so 'French' but international. The department is ok but I don't like the university. The city is not so energetic, not so ideal for the practical or professional experience. Not so much to admire from the society. Yes, I have made friends here, to make contact is not difficult but we should understand well the culture (for example they are quite "individual"), and the language is very important as the base of communication. Anyway, communication with the local people is important and interesting" (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**).

e) Reasons for difficulties in socialising with Europeans

Why did Mundus students experience difficulties in contacts with local students? From analysis of answers to various questions in the questionnaire, four kinds of reasons were extracted. They arised from just the separation (not existence of European at the course or dormitory), one's personality and character features (not allowing them to get closer and integrate), lack of an offer of integrating and other social events and activities (making life boring and lonely) and last but not least – because of local people's unwillingness to make contact or even hostility and prejudiced attitudes towards non-European individuals (real or perceived as such by respondents).

Mundus international students isolated from local students at the course

It happened that Mundus international students were isolated from local students at some courses. In consequence of such impossibility of contacts in the class the quality of extracurricular relations was also influenced. The

comments which follow will enlighten how such a situation is perceived at those Masters courses where Mundus students were separated from European students: “I had very good relationships with the local students in the first semester and with the European students in the same course. They were always helpful in my life and invited me to their house. But in the UK we did not communicate so much with the British students, in lectures we were often separated from the local students and did not have so much time to participate in other activities. But the people who stayed in the university accommodation seemed to have some communication with the local British students (...). I wish the international students were not segregated from the local students. There is a clear divide that is hard to cross” (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); “Excellent interaction with international students but very difficult to get into contact with European students as there are very few in the programme” (**Lesotho M 33 Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); “We don’t have much chance to communicate with local students, since no local students have chosen the courses for the Erasmus Mundus students. I have some friends living in the same dormitory as me” (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**); “The hostel life and university environment here in Edinburgh is pretty good. The environment is good for study with easy access to town. Talking about European students, it would have been better if we had the opportunity to study along with EU students however we all are non European students on the course” (**Nepal 25 M Strategic Project Management**); “Our programme is somewhat isolated from other programmes of the UPM, so most of my contact is with classmates. This is fine, because I really like my classmates, but I feel removed from the normal life of the university. Integration is hard, because I’m with my classmates all day and they are almost all Latin American. But, on the one hand they can’t integrate me into Spanish culture, and on the other hand I feel left out sometimes not being a native Spanish speaker. That said, everyone in the Programme is very nice and accepting. It’s just harder to integrate into Spanish society at large” (**USA 24 M Agris Mundus**); “I think it is not difficult to get into contact or friendship with students, except with Spanish students. I have classmates from other European countries and I made some friends. In general, foreign students are not integrated with the Spanish students” (**Argentina F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “Life at the university is good and quite leisurely. This flexibility has been useful for me to go to the library, read books and work on essays. What has been the worst thing, contrary to my wishes, is that there are very few international students and the local students do not much meddle with others such much as with the MA: LLL group. Frankly speaking I have no local friend at the university though I have a dozen other international students as my friends” (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**).

Individual features, character, temperament versus wide and easily established intercultural contacts

Another factor determining the feeling of acceptance and integration is one's personality and temperament: "You feel integrated when you have a closer friend from that country but I think it is a matter of personality and common sharing." (**Morocco 33 M European Forestry**); "I cannot say that it is too difficult to have contact with European students because it depends on each student. With some students, we became friends from the first meeting while others don't say good morning even when they know me very well" (**Lebanon M Vintage**).

A preference to being alone rather than with others, estrangement from the world, voluntary exile, an introverted character certainly does not facilitate social mixing. Very few students experienced loneliness because of shyness: "I like to join some group of different interests, but sometimes I was shamed by my poor French speaking (...) Most of time I feel good, but sometimes I feel a little lost and unaccepted, I don't know why" (**Argentina M Quaternary and Prehistory**); "I feel integrated... but at times isolated... I am not sure if that is my own hallucination though" (**India 22 M Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

The majority presented an extrovert and open orientation which helped make their social life very interesting and the whole stay perceived as "great" and "wonderful": "Life is great here at TU Delft, – if and only IF – you are a bit social and know how to combine you studies with your communal life (...) I think being an Erasmus Mundus Student, I was kept as a VIP. I didn't have any problem especially when I compare myself with my fellow students (...) If you think about personality and social problems, not at all ... as I hooked up with an Erasmus Mundus Vietnamese girl of my same programme, during the first two weeks J" (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**); "My entire living in both the Netherlands and Sweden is wonderful. I like my time here. I have many friends, not only international students but also local students. It is quite easy for me to engage with those people, even those not students – like people at the churches, cultural activities (pub, choirs, dancing groups, etc.). Perhaps because I like to socialise myself among new people. I plan to visit a school here in Linköping for such a cultural visit; I would introduce my country's culture and people to the pupils" (**Indonesia 41 M Applied Ethics at Linköpings University and Utrecht University**); "The life here, at TU Delft, is wonderful; I can meet students and some professionals from different countries in different kinds of activities. I am happy everyday" (**China 21 F Economics and Management of Network Industries, TU Delft**).

The following examples of expressions reveal individuals characterised by naturalness, extraversion, readiness to enjoyment, valuing close interpersonal bonds, seeking out and taking pleasure in exciting, stimulating situa-

tions: “Yes, I feel very happy because I like people in general and they like me” (**Mexico 27 M Computational Logic**); “Being with students from different nations has been a very wonderful experience. Life is great here” (**Nigeria 25 F European Forestry**); “Not hard! it is quite easy to be in interaction and in contact. Somehow the beginning seems unnatural, but later on everything goes fine, both in the courses and in general” (**Nepal 30 M European Forestry**); “I think student life is a very enjoyable time for every student whether is in own national institution or foreign institution. Belgium is a developed country, so here there are so many facilities (e.g., internet, restaurant, rent a bicycle etc) that we are enjoying. Of course there is an interaction among the students from different countries, it’s very important and interesting. Yes, I have friends at university. No, it’s not so difficult to get into friendship with EU students. We are attending class with so many students; sometimes we have to present our assignment, group discussions, we go to visit some places together etc. So I feel integrated here” (**Bangladesh 32 M Rural Development**); “My interactions with the international student community are quite good and I enjoy the atmosphere of studying with a variety of students from different countries. I don’t think it’s difficult to get in touch with the local students. I feel I am at ease when I move around with people and go to places with them. I have not yet had an experience which has made me feel that I am not integrated with the place” (**India 21 M Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); “I am a member in a tasting club in the school, I participate in all the activities, for example, I did many presentations concerning my country also I prepared Lebanese dishes many times; I have many friends from the entire world...” (**Lebanon 23 M Vintage**); “I do have friends in ESA. It is easy to get into contact with European students. Yes, I feel integrated, I live happily every day” (**China 26 F Vintage**); “At both universities staff and students have been more than kind, nice and available. We’ve made a very nice company of fellow CL students. For me it’s quite easy and comfortable to communicate with natives as well” (**Russia 25 M Computational Logic**); “My life in the university is quite good and I got quite a few chances to interact with local and international students. I have some friends here. Most of the European students are friendly and warm, so it is not difficult to make acquaintance and friends in the university” (**China 25 M Global Studies**). Besides expressing happiness and satisfaction, enjoying the richness and variety of activities at the place of studying and living, even such casual behaviour: “people here are very kind to me, especially nice is the feeling when I cross the road and a car stops to wait for me” (**Vietnam 25 M Computational Logic**) awakes positive feelings about the locals.

Lack of social events and activities, too little time, cultural differences

So much depends upon personal nature and interests but there are also “hard” hindrances to being integrated with locals. Language as a barrier in participation in some events and occasions, boring life, lack of an offer of

activities devoted to various leisure interests or age difference – these were circumstances in which some members of the investigated group found themselves: “There is no life at the university, not much connection with the environment as this place is in the outskirts of the city and not very interconnected to any enjoyable place. Only a few friends. Very limited time and choice for extra-curricular activities. A language problem as I did not know French. Definitely not integrated with the local environment as there are no supporting activities. The European students are reserved” (**India M Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**); “The social scene at the university is not very impressive. I have friends outside of the university but the university itself has not been that conducive to forging friendships and getting involved (**United States 22 F Global Studies, London School of Economics**); “Living circumstances are good. But interaction with the locals and international students is poor. I have friends at university. But I don’t participate in the university groups or activities (**India 25 M Hydroinformatics and Water Management, Universidad de Politecnica Catalonia**); “I want to participate in university activity but the place where I study isn’t in the university; I study in the museum of prehistory. My colleagues are eleven persons. I only participate in work for the museum, to make a guiding (trying to use my average Portuguese), following a drawing course (lithics), and will help the museum to organise some documents. Here in Mação, I couldn’t have the things that support my hobbies (swimming, scuba-diving, singing, playing instrument, adventure team, etc). But they have it in another city. It’s a pity that in the winter and spring season we don’t have any swimming pool” (**Indonesia F Quaternary and Prehistory**); “We spent most of the time in Fontys and unfortunately there were no opportunities to get into contact with European students. There are no activities at all. Fontys has Dutch students only. It would have been really nice to meet other students. We had contact with some Dutch students who were helping us with the Dutch language and they also organised social events but this was really for a short time (...) I don’t feel integrated here in Holland, the relations are only work related, nothing more. No social activities, I feel people just keep to themselves. It can be very lonely sometimes” (**Swaziland F Special Education Needs**).

A Mexican woman asserts that when the stay in one country is short (limited to one semester) there is not enough time for making friendly relationships. Such a programme schedule needs special attention from the course organisers on how to increase Mundus students’ participation in events organised on campus or in the local community: “Interaction with local students is more difficult than with international students because one usually needs more than one semester to integrate and establish friendly relationships. However European students are generally approachable and outgoing. The only university activity I participate in at the University of

Bergamo is the “tandem project” that promotes linguistic exchange between Italian and foreign students. I have friends outside university but most of them I have met through university-related events (parties, trips, etc)” **(Mexico F Crossways in European Humanities)**. Other obstacles lay in the dissimilarity in age: “I feel accepted in the university but not so integrated, I feel more comfortable with the people I met outside the university, for example in this philosophy institution, but I think it’s only due to my age, because most of the students are four or five years younger” **(Argentina 27 F F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering)**.

Contacts can be perceived as difficult when it comes to deeper relation – complains a Thai gender studies specialist: “I think it is very difficult to make friends with the Danish students, except for brief chats” **(Thailand 28 F Lifelong Learning)** or because of cultural differences – as noticed by some other students: “The students in my institution are very open and very friendly, I like talking with them, but sometimes I found it a little difficult to go deeply into a topic because of the cultural and historical difference” **(China M Quaternary and Prehistory)**; “The biggest difficulty is that my German is not good enough to make contact with the local students freely. I have some friends at university. It’s not difficult but not easy to get into friendship with European students because of the difference of our cultural background” **(China F Materials Science)**; “Well, I find myself only partly integrated in the society because, after all, we have differences in culture” **(Malaysia M 23 Agris Mundus)**. Intercultural relations, respectable and satisfactory for both sides, require skills which possesses – in her opinion – a Namibian female: “Yes I feel accepted, because I come from a multicultural country, I understand the European culture more than the other countries” **(Namibia F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management)**.

Local students not interested in contacts with international students, or having an unfriendly bias

As concerns the last group of cases some students are convinced that the locals are not interested in contact with them: “Sometimes it is really difficult to integrate with the local people because they have their own friends and it is difficult to accept a stranger inside their group” **(Brazil M Materials Science)**; “I feel integrated with the other students but not with the Portuguese people. They are closed and they tend to not like Brazilian people, for a lot of reasons” **(Brazil F Crossways in European Humanities)**; “With the students of the Programme all is ok, but with the other students of the campus UPM – Agronomos – not at all, because we are Latin American students, I guess.. the perception from the UE people of the immigration. Sometimes I feel that is the perception in general” **(Nicaragua 28 M Agris Mundus)**; “Some do interact, but some always seems busy for other non academic issues, yes it is difficult to easily contact local EU local students” **(Ghana 32 M Applied Ethics, Linköping & Utrecht)**; “I did sports outside the uni-

versities, but I didn't make many friends. The main reason is the language. Not so many people wish to speak English in Dresden. The situation is better in Bolzano, but still it is quite problematic to communicate with locals. Honestly, I am not really motivated to search for friends outside the universities, for I have enough friends that are students" (**Russia Computational Logic, TU Dresden, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano**); "I found EU students, in my experience, a bit reserved and they basically prefer their own friends" (**Nepal 25 M Strategic Project Management**).

Within this study students were not asked explicitly about discrimination issues, but only if they feel accepted/integrated (or not). In the response one of the Malaysian students wrote: "Not integrated in the political sense but I certainly feel welcome and accepted. I don't have any experiences of being discriminated against due to my ethnicity, nationality, or religious background be it at the university or outside the university" (**Malaysia 27 M Global Studies, Leipzig Universitet, Vienna University**). It is significant that few students complained of experiencing discrimination or noting racist behaviour towards them when answering this question in the questionnaire. A student from Cameroon articulated his disappointment: "No good contacts (sometimes a lot of discrimination). Some friends but mostly non-Europeans. Still very far from integration. Colour makes a very big difference. Strange, that in this era people still discriminate" but later referring to this perception he wrote: „No problem with my problem. Everything is well organised and personal problems are paid great attention" (**Cameroon 30 M European Forestry at Joensuu Finland and Wageningen Netherlands**). "I am almost integrated as it's difficult to forget my foreign status – relates another African student – "Integrated at the university very well but not in the community. There are a lot of problems of racism" (**Senegal F Quaternary and Prehistory, University of Ferrara**). A Japanese woman experienced different treatment and emerged with a feeling of acceptance in two countries: "In France, yes. In UK, no. Maybe because the city is very small and I felt some kind of discrimination for the Asian and African students from the city. It is not always in the specific form like words or violence but you feel that you are not accepted as a friendly individual" (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**). A Bangladeshi woman sees symptoms of discrimination beyond social relations: "I do not feel accepted to the fullest extent because international students do not get the same facilities as Dutch students (for e.g. free bus and train travel). I feel discriminated against in Europe, but when I was in Australia on AusAid Scholarship, all International students received the same facilities as Australian students" (**Bangladesh F Special Education Needs**).

Neither were Mundus students asked about differences in the reception and attitude of people in different countries, nevertheless some reported such distinctions, when asked if they felt accepted/ integrated or not. In the

response six students referred to Germans and one to Dutch representatives, stating rather unflattering opinions and remarks about these nations. Those who studied in Germany shared stereotypical impressions about unfriendliness, coldness and reserve towards foreigners from this nations representatives, however, at the same time, they were aware that other factors – like lack of German language competence as well as few occasions to interact and short stay in the country caused their troubles in contacts with Germans: “German students are not opened to friendship. I just have no German friends. I wish to participate in TUMI group activities. I don’t speak German, it is clearly a big difference and I think is also the reason why is it difficult to integrate with German people” (**Colombia 24 M Aeronautics, TU München**); “It was not very difficult to integrate with local European students in Spain where I studied for my first year. Here in Germany it seems a bit difficult. In Spain I really felt integrated because local students were very nice and they wanted to mix with us, to know more about our culture. Off course we also were interested to know more about them. Here in Germany I am not feeling very well integrated probably because we have little chance to interact with local students” (**Pakistan M 26 Computational Logic, TU Dresden**); “Right now I have several friends from the Spanish university. I can’t say the same about the German university, despite already being in this country for three months. However it may change in future” (**Ukraine 24 M Computational Logic, Universidad de Politecnica de Madrid, TU Dresden**); “The Germans are reserved in many ways thus it takes a little bit more time to establish contact with them. Nevertheless as one acquires the language skills, it should be easier and fun. The Austrians are friendlier but still the difficulty may arise when one does not have some elementary German language proficiency. The opportunity of making new friends – on a really personal level – increase with better German language proficiency” (**Malaysia 27 M Global Studies, Leipzig Universit Vienna University**); “I don’t feel the need to feel integrated or accepted at school I feel integrated within the University but in Germany I feel like a foreigner. I don’t believe Leipzig is familiar with non-German people so there is still a barrier between foreign residents and Germans” (**USA 22 M Global Studies, Universität Leipzig and The London School of Economics**); “Yes, in the UE to the extent that I feel at home with non-UE students and no, in the sense that the German students are not very friendly” (**Ghana F European Legal Practice**). The Dutch experience was disappointing for one Colombian: “In general, Europeans are more organised, caring for other people (in daily life), trusting (and trustworthy) and helpful. Some minor problems can arise: deadline managing and lateness, for example. I believe that the European identity is that of humanism, solidarity and responsibility. Thus, I feel that the Netherlands has some catching up to do. I would recommend Erasmus Mundus Masters to a fellow student, given all the

good reasons already jotted down. And if I knew anyone interested in Applied Ethics, I would also recommend changing the second country to a different one from the Netherlands" (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics, Linköping University and Utrecht University**).

The above presented analysis shows the variety of both problems and benefits awaiting non-EU individuals in terms of social life while studying at EMMCs. Experience of the investigated group indicates that there is an urgent need to inform prospective Mundus candidates and starting Mundus students about the real conditions of life in European countries, about social relations' patterns and possible barriers blocking successful intercultural relations in general and reasons for difficulties in socialising, particularly with the Europeans. The candidates should be made aware of all this in order to provide future Mundus students with adequate expectations and facilitate their entire positive experience in Europe.

5. MUNDUS CANDIDATES' EXPECTATIONS, AND THEIR REALISATION

Only one student from Lebanon had very limited expectations and explained it like this: "I didn't expect much because I know Europe very well because all my teachers studied in Europe" (**Lebanon M Vintage**). Another exceptional attitude to expectations was presented by a Turkish student: "Nothing, because if I expect something and if I find it then I would like to stay, if not I will have a bad opinion about Europe" (**Turkey 25 M Computational Logic**). All others came to Europe with many hopes and full of expectation, similar to the case of the variety of expectation brought to Denmark by a Moroccan student: "To have an internationally recognised diploma; – To improve my linguistic abilities; – To meet and know different people from different cultures and backgrounds; – To visit new places and countries. I think all of these expectations will be fulfilled" (**Morocco 31 M Agris Mundus**).

During the analysis of Mundus students' answers to the question: *What were your main expectations when you decided to study in Europe? Have they been fulfilled so far?* various students visions and beliefs of the impact of the Mundus Programme, studying and living in Europe and obtaining a European education were identified and will be presented below. Among them the reader will find expectations ranging from non-educational gains to professionally oriented development, plans varying from getting a Masters degree and continuing training at Ph.D. level to targeting rather for finding work in the territory of the EU, as well as expectations and hopes totally fulfilled and those that brought disappointments.

Non-educational expectations

Many students listed – among others or solely – expectations of a non-educational nature, demonstrating that they had been interested in getting to know the culture and language and experiencing human relations in a cross-cultural and international dimension. The following quotations illustrate how they anticipate that the Mundus experience will develop or enrich them in a cultural and social sense: “Obviously my expectations are just to discover Europe and gain some experiences not necessarily academic but personal ones from Europe. Part of it has been achieved but part of it remains unachieved and that may require me to stay a little bit longer here in Europe” (**Malaysia 27 M Global Studies**); “My expectation of having a good experience, of living outside my country and meeting people from different countries, is being fulfilled so far” (**Argentina F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “My projects of travelling a lot, improving my languages and knowledge and making friends have been fulfilled” (**Brazil F Crossways in European Humanities**); „My expectations were mainly to learn new languages, be integrated into the lifestyle of people, of nationalities. Understand more of European cultures, travel and see different parts of Europe. To experience mobility. Yes, they are being fulfilled one by one” (**Singapore F Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**); “I had some expectations to study in Europe like to know the local culture, to know different countries and peoples. All of them are fulfilled until this moment” (**Brazil M Materials Science**); “Learning UE law, improving German, French, getting acquainted with German, French culture and higher education patterns, meeting new people establishing academic and professional contacts” (**Ukraine M European Legal Practice**); “Study in two different countries and in fact it was actually the more interesting part of my stay here. I wanted to meet people from many countries, wanted to learn the European higher education system, I wanted to travel. So far, all have been met” (**Pakistan M 26 Computational Logic**); “My main expectations were to feel a country different from mine, to get good opportunities to study an interesting field, to know people from different countries and to understand them. Everything is more or less fulfilled” (**Russia M 23 Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); “I expected to gain a more international view, learn to be independent, improve language skill and so on. Right now, I should say I got what I expected” (**China 25 F European Forestry**).

Obtaining high-quality education

The main goal of the majority of students was to get highly developed knowledge and be submitted to modern and technologically advanced teaching and learning methods. The wish even to “experience” and “feel” advanced and high-level culture, people and society development in Europe was a kind of endeavour of a student coming from Nepal: “My main expectations to study in Europe was to not only to take a degree certificate from

reputed European Universities and seek a better job in my country but to experience the culture of the well-established democratic nations which were entering into a more sophisticated era of knowledge. I have not been able to fulfil those dreams yet. However, I am slowly beginning to feel it" (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**). Generally formulated educational expectations are expressed in the following three quotations: "My main expectation was to get a very high quality education and also to have the opportunity to live in several European countries. At the moment I am getting high quality education living in my first EU country" (**Colombia F 24 Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management Universidad, Politecnica de Catalunya**); "My first expectation is the knowledge here. And I also want to improve my communicating skill in an international environment and learn about European culture. Because I have just been here for not so long, so they haven't been fulfilled much. But I think I will get much pleasure from my expectations" (**Vietnam 25 M Computational Logic, UNL**); "To learn, study, understand and enjoy high quality education offered by European institutions. I can say 80% of what I was expected was fulfilled so far" (**Morocco 33 M MSc European Forestry, Jonesuu University**) These expectation appeared together with more specified wishes concerning the content of the curricula: "My expectation is to gain more knowledge from different teaching styles and approaches, to visit some interesting places and learn several good examples of policies, management skills, and others systems of Rural Development in European countries. They have been fulfilled already" (**Malaysia M 27 Rural Development, Ghent and Humboldt**); "I wanted to gain knowledge in prehistory and not just to add to my CV one more degree. My expectations were scientific research, good curriculum to learn, visit sites, do laboratory work, to see the latest infrastructure in analyzing and studying because in my country its still developing and so it would be an opportunity for me to see and learn all these and I think my expectations are being fulfilled so far" (**Cambodia Quaternary and Prehistory, University of Ferrara, Italy**).

Unfulfilled educational expectations

Students were, on occasion, disappointed by the scope of resources available, the contents of the study programmes and curricular materials' orientation: "My main expectations are to widen my knowledge in archaeology, also I want to know another culture (different from mine), and to visit some archaeological sites and museums in Europe or Africa. But I only visit some sites in Portugal (Tras Os Montes, Region of Mação), some heritages in Lisbon, Sintra, Porto, Coimbra, Braga, Tomar, and Abrantes, and some museums in Germany and Barcelona. I never go to other European countries, even less to Africa...!!!" (**Indonesia F Quaternary and Prehistory**); "As I mentioned before, my greater expectation from the course was to gain more practical experience and less theory. So far I have found the course to be

more focused on theories and principles leading to ‘what’ rather than on ‘how’. Once we finish the course the need is more practical skills rather than theory. I do not think we have opportunities for practical exposure, except for a very few” (**Nepal 25 M Strategic Project Management**).

Another reason for disappointment was also the impossibility of acquiring local language skills: “I am disappointed I haven’t learned any new languages” (**Mexico Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**) or the collapse of plans to continue a professional career when realizing competition in the European labour market and understanding its political and economical realities. Sometimes pre-sojourn images of desired outcomes came partly true, for example only at one university, while the reality found at other institutions of a consortium running EMMC was unsatisfactory: “My expectations are not really fulfilled. I’m very surprised that it is so hard to get a job in Europe for a non-European citizens. Employers (in both academy and industry) pay too much attention to your nationality... I’m especially surprised that it is almost impossible to get citizenship in the EU” (**Russia Computational Logic**).

Two students of Crossways in Humanities were disappointed to see the same or an even bigger level of bureaucracy: “I thought that administration and bureaucracy would be more efficient and organised than in Macedonia but unfortunately I was wrong” (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**); “I thought that everything would be well organised and that there would be less bureaucracy or, at least, a more efficient one” (**Brazil F Crossways in European Humanities**).

Sometimes pre-sojourn images of desired outcomes came partly true, for example only at one university, while the reality found at other institutions of a consortium running EMMC was unsatisfactory: “I would have enjoyed attending well organised courses with a high level of content and correspondingly high standards for passing them. But what made life difficult at the UPM was poor organisation, badly presented material and unclear evaluation requirements” (**Argentina 27 F Computational Logic Free University of Bolzano and Universidad Politécnica de Madrid**) or it happened that some particularly desired interests were not fulfilled: “I expected more practical knowledge, to study the implementation of SEN policies. Except for the opportunity to visit inclusive schools with deaf children, all my other expectations in the acquisition of knowledge in SEN are fulfilled” (**India 58 F Special Education Needs**); “I did expect to learn about special education systems in the three countries. I also expected school visits to observe things for myself, however, due to lack of time we did not HAVE too many school visits in the UK” (**India 24 F Special Education Needs, Roehampton University**).

Occasionally the assessment of the teaching level as “a little below expectations” was left without details or justification: “The quality of the lectures is a little below my expectations. But it is ok” (**Ethiopia 24 M Nuclear Fusion**

Science and Engineering Physics, University Henri Poincaré, Nancy; “The quality of education here is below my expectation. It is good. But it could be better” (**Bangladesh Computational Logic, Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, Spain**) in more cases the drawbacks and stumbling blocks were specified: “Partially, I received enough experience and language practice. But I would like my programme to be more practically oriented” (**Ukraine Computational Logic**); “The courses and material seems to be very basic and not very challenging but nonetheless interesting at times” (**Canada Aeronautics and Space Technology, TUM**); “The pedagogic quality of lectures is undermined by some evaluation strategies: for example, having to write about something different every time, without having the chance to develop an idea over time. The balance between lectures and self-initiated study is heavily weighed to lectures, since their preparation demands a lot. Local language training has not been available up to the present time” (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics, Linköping University and Utrecht University**). A self-paying student from Australia, who expressed his dissatisfaction with both the academic level AND the administrative service concluded: “I expected a good education which has thus far not been the case” (**Australia 26 M Applied Ethics, Linköping University**).

Conversely, there were numerous examples of totally fulfilled plans and beliefs: “My expectations have been fulfilling every day of my stay here!” (**Ukraine F Rural Development**); “My expectations were exactly what this is. A highly philosophical and historical perspective on Globalisation and that is what I’m getting. As for integration within the city, I feel that I have exceeded my initial expectations” (**USA 24 M Global Studies**); “Yes, they have been fulfilled and they’re being fulfilled. I feel quite strong at the moment in Semantic Web oriented topics; I have realised I had learned so much during the last fourteen months” (**Mexico Computational Logic**); “My expectations have been fulfilled I am receiving a world class education and this is why I came to study in Europe” (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**).

One can find more data about both realised or unfulfilled expectations in Chapter II, where the assessment of EMMCs in students’ perceptions is presented.

Professional development

Prospects of his professional development are still a main concern for a Cambodian student holding a domestic MA in Cultural Studies and willing to go back home to find work or pursue a doctoral programme: “I really expected to learn new things from Europe. Some of them have been fulfilled, except for the career prospect that is still obscure” (**Cambodia 26 M Global Studies**). His peers from other courses seem to be on a more optimistic path to obtaining skills required for maintaining a specific career goal. Satisfying training – proper to keep up to date with changing technology and practices

in her profession – is received by a Malaysian electrical-electronics engineer: “My main expectation are being fulfilled so far – to meet different highly knowledgeable people, regarding both the technical capability and insightful view in future technologies and also soft skills in handling and confronting different issues” (**Malaysia 26 F Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**). A desire for achieving excellence in the teaching profession was clearly rooted in expectations towards Mundus course hold by a teacher from Swaziland: “I wanted to expand my knowledge and horizons on current trends in special education, research skills – Yes, I have gained a lot of information through lecturers, discussions with colleagues, self study and my study skills have improved. To see inclusion in practice – I have not seen much inclusion in practice only on paper but I have seen some efforts towards inclusion in practice” (**Swaziland F Special Education Needs**). Expecting innovative content and methods of teaching what will result in high-quality professional development and the possibility to transmit the knowledge gained in the EU to countrymen is visible in comments of two Bangladeshi students: “I wanted to get a good education. As well as I wanted to develop my skills and knowledge which will be helpful to my country where I will develop my career” (**Bangladesh 30 M European Forestry**); “I expect that by completing this Masters course, I can learn many subjects which are very much related with my field/work, and after coming back to my country I will teach the students effectively with the modern method of teaching which I will learn from a European country. Also my English language will be improved through this course. Now I have completed one semester, I think that after completing four semesters, my expectations will be fulfilled. Also another expectation was to get a Ph.D. scholarship after completing this Masters course. I am studying to meet my expectations” (**Bangladesh M Rural Development**). The conviction that the European Union can offer education not available in the home country, and better opportunities to develop networks for future professional contacts, motivated a Serbian with a B.Sc in Computer Science: “I expected to acquire knowledge not offered in my country, along with social and academic skills from living abroad and studying at a good university in a multicultural environment as well as knowing the people presently and in future relevant to my field of interest. All this adds up to a competitive edge in finding a good and interesting job after studies. So far all of my expectations in this matter are either fulfilled or are in that process” (**Serbia 26 M Computational Logic**).

Attaining a Masters degree and continuation of training at Ph.D. level

To get a Masters degree and continue training at Ph.D. level was another priority for many students. The diploma accomplishment accompanied other goals in the following two cases: “I wanted to receive an MA degree conducted by three European countries on a course fulfilling my professional needs and knowledge development. I also wanted to tour Europe because travelling is my hobby” (**Bangladesh F Special Education Needs**): “First,

gain a good Masters degree, then *Experience Europe* and make new friends. I'm on the way to completing the Masters and I am highly optimistic that I will fulfil my expectations" (**Ghana 27 M International Health**). About one-fourth of those surveyed had in their plans doctoral programmes and would welcome wholeheartedly such an opportunity granted by the European Union, which has found its expression in suggestions presented in the last passage of Chapter II – *Students' suggestions concerning development of the whole programme*. Here will be cited only two examples illustrating this expectation: "My expectations were to get a higher degree, if possible to do Ph.D. in a field related to my country. But it seems difficult because I have found European researchers have less interest in exploring hidden parts in other areas of the world and conduct research outside Europe" (**Nepal European Forestry**); "I wanted to enter a top research group and be a Ph.D. student there. So my expectations are, up to now, half completed" (**China 27 M Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

Work in Europe

A Chinese student had in mind – and regardless of obstacles still expects – work in Europe or in his country but in cooperation with European countries, based on his studies profile: "To get more ideas of the European human modes, and try to make the profession between Europe and China in the cultural exchanges after the studies (considering that China has more and more contacts with Europe). As to the first expectation, it's being fulfilled; the second one, I should try it myself. That's just the problem to be in Perpignan, there are not so many occasions to try or even to discover the profession, even to assist in how the activities go on; there are not so many influential activities" (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**). Two Nepalese intended to find jobs in Europe: "Expectations never fulfilled at 100%, the only thing is how much we want???. But for me I have always been trying my best to fulfil my expectations. But frankly I like to work in Europe and later I want to apply the learning in my country Nepal" (**Nepal 29 M European Forestry**); "I imagined having a good score and starting work in Europe, I am yet to be fulfilled about the work, but I have good grades" (**Nepal 30 M European Forestry**). Their two Indian peers have a similar concern: "To have international exposure and get a good job in Europe. International experience – yes... Job – no" (**India 24 M Aeronautics and Space Technology**); "I had expected a great time and good studies and mostly its been good. The only problem is to find a job" (**India 22 M Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**).

One Pakistani met with groundless-but-well-founded stereotypes about studying abroad in Europe prior to his relocation: "I was actually unsure. From the past alumni of Erasmus Students, I was told about these things,

(seriously): – good studies, – bad weather, – somewhat assertive European people, – extreme language problem, – homesickness, – loneliness, – Less social life, – blah blah blah, – good scholarship. Now what I think is quite the opposite: – Very diverse cultural and educational experience, adaptive weather, friendly people, I am learning Dutch, the Monthly Scholarship money is less than I thought (:()), 19500 Euros is only the tuition fees. So, above are the expectations which are given to prospective students. That's why I think alumni relations, campaigns and a proper website is so important" (**Pakistan 23 M Economics and Management of Network Industries**). This citation show that students' expectations and fears prior to moving to Europe to study at EMMCs were sometimes formed by incomplete or inadequate, heard opinions or fragmented information on the Internet. There is a need to provide Mundus candidates with in-depth and many-sided testimonies of their peers who have already studied at Mundus courses. This publication and it's on-line version should be accompanied by a CD/ on-line guide, prepared with the participation of Mundus students, also presenting alumni testimonies. These informational materials should be popularized by the Mundus Alumni Association and the European Commission.

6. MAIN FEARS BEFORE COMING TO STUDY AT THE MUNDUS PROGRAMME

Answers to the question formulated as follows: *What were your main fears before coming to study at the Mundus programme?* revealed a wide spectrum of anxieties and concerns, as can be seen in the case of a Colombian woman: "Being away from my family. I feel alone. The different language. Not knowing what I was going to find... was my academic basis good? And the question... and then what?" (**Colombia 26 F Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology**). There were exceptional cases where students reported no fears, suppressed seemingly by excitement and enthusiasm accompanying a prospective voyage or only little worries prior to arrival: "None. Studying in France was my dream. There was nothing to be afraid of"; "I wasn't afraid at all. Maybe I was just worried about being far from my family and friends for too long"; "I did not have so much anxiety about living abroad"; "Hardly any – I was looking forward to it very much"; "No fear. Take it as it comes to you!" A Macedonian woman asserted: "I had no fears at all; this Masters was a huge challenge for me. I could say that this is a golden opportunity for me especially because I felt awarded with the scholarship for all I've done so I was, moreover, excited and happy and proud of myself. It is an excellent programme!". She felt lucky moreover realising next that "Macedonia now has become a country candidate for the EU enlargement so the students from Macedonia will not be able to partici-

pate on Mundus programmes with scholarships” (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**). “Because I was already in Europe, I think that I did not have any fears” – stated a Mexican who was an exchange student at TU of Hamburg for one year (**Mexico M Materials Science**). By means of the relevant experience – of having travelling abroad extensively, including the European Union countries, fears have been eliminated from a Serbian student’s mind: “Since I have travelled a lot I am familiar with living far from home (well not for this long a period of course, but I knew that living and studying abroad won’t be a problem, especially in countries of the EU)” (**Serbia 26 M Computational Logic**). But in the case of his Indonesian course fellow who studied abroad in New Zealand for two years in high school and then visited Poland “as a chaperone for high school students participating in an international Olympiad” the previous experience did not prevent worries that “I couldn’t arrive on time, that I couldn’t catch up with the required level of the programme, that I couldn’t communicate well with people... And – how to arrive at the dorm in a totally different place? (**Indonesia 23 M Computational Logic**).

Future professional career

The changing of a professional track or uncertain recognition of the education and diploma from the Mundus Programme in future worried a few students: “Mainly there were no fears, for me there was one, that I changed the profession” (**Georgia F Quaternary and Prehistory**); “I am not sure about the advantages for the job market as it seems that few people are aware of the nature of the programme” (**Ukraine M Crossways in European Humanities**); “It may be a great boon, or it may not be recognised by many people. I have so little prior experience that I don’t really know if it will help. That is a major preoccupation for me – if I am able to work in what I love after getting this degree” (**USA 24 M Agris Mundus**); “My main fears were about the opportunities and possibilities after achieving the Mundus programme” (**Morocco 31 M Agris Mundus**); “The programme is good but what will happen after the two years Masters? The European universities don’t manage to follow this great initiative of the European Commission, because there don’t seem to be any opportunities after the Erasmus Mundus programme” (**Burkina Faso M European Legal Practice**). “What will be my future with an MSc in *European Forestry* in my country – asks a 30 year old botanist from Cameroon – and after that he suggests to “change the title of the programme. Maybe something like «MSc in Forestry» or «MSc in International Forestry» because what we do is far beyond European Forestry only” making it clear that – in his opinion – the inaccurate title may hinder the proper recognition of his qualification.

A Japanese woman foresees impeded career progress in her country: “Since Japan has a very specific system in terms of getting jobs, I was afraid that I could not get a job immediately in Japan after graduation of this

European course. It is true. After finishing this course, if I would like to get a normal job I have to be a student again in a Japanese university. Because it is required to be a student (not graduate) when they search for a job and the companies take a new graduate only in April not in any other period” (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**). Other cases in point were problems in finding a job in the EU: “A job. And it is still remains a concern. I heard that for Non-EU nationals it’s very difficult to get a job because of the labour laws” (**India Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**) or a general preoccupation with the limited use of the studies due to the course’s inappropriate design: “I worried that the courses will be cut by the voyage i.e.: not much relations between the contents of course in the different universities, and the social appreciation and admission of the Programme i.e.: not so many advantages for professional life after the studies” (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**).

Academic accomplishment

Frequently another kind of fear was concerned with success in coping with studies. Students worried about their previously assimilated knowledge or the appropriateness of practical skills – whether it would be enough to cope with the requirements: “I didn’t know if I could keep up with the classes in other languages. I was worried if this degree would be relevant afterwards when I was looking for a job. I was also worried that my lack of professional experience would mean I couldn’t make the most of classes, and that I might not have the knowledge base to keep up with things” (**USA 24 M Agris Mundus**); “I wasn’t sure at the start of this course whether or not I was prepared for Masters level work, but I have managed my time wisely and have stayed on top of things. I feel that I am working well and am achieving success as a result (...) My main fears before coming to study were that I wouldn’t be academically ready for the work that I was about to undertake” (**Canada Special Education Needs**); “My main fear was not having the necessary previous knowledge about material science and engineering, because my first degree has no relation to engineering” (**Argentina F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “I come from a country where the education system is very poor. My knowledge is limited, therefore before coming to study in Europe I worry about following the courses, because I have a very poor background of French language, they were the main fears” (**Cambodia Quaternary and Prehistory**); “Not being able to handle the stress, since I know that being an international student requires more effort due to language barriers and the background of how European teaching differs from the Asian way of teaching” (**Thailand F Lifelong Learning**).

Different systems of education in Europe and in Nepal caused anxiety to one student but it proved to be in vain: “Yes, I had fear, especially in harmo-

nising the way we learned in the academic field and the way that has been existing here in Europe. But after coming here I am completely fearless and ready to compete with other students” (**Nepal European Forestry**). Worries of an academic nature also included those relating to the language of instruction: “I knew that the problem for me would be to follow the lessons. Until now I was able to understand and communication in French but it is not sufficient to understand courses which are mostly scientific works” (**Cambodia M Quaternary and Prehistory**); “I was not sure I could survive in such a new environment, especially the language aspect – poor English. I have to learn French quickly for the second year of study. It’s not so difficult but I must work hard” (**China M Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “I feared to use my English, to talk with people from other countries and live in a country where I can’t speak the local language” (**Brazil M Materials Science**).

Everyday matters

Stressing circumstances like daily life fatigue and tiredness, dietary problems/ eating habits, striking or unusual situations to confront and challenges of a new and independent life, problematic travel when changing the country of studies, and finally – isolation, exclusion or loneliness – all that, combined or separate was foreseen by Mundus students and created a set of adjustment worries. Here are examples: “Language. Weather and food. Culture shock (in every sense). Competition. Far away from family and friends (home sickness)” (**Indonesia Quaternary and Prehistory**); “Basic issues with resettling in new cities and having to find accommodation, getting around to new places, etc” (**USA 25 F International Health**); “When I was leaving Russia, I did not know what I will face, which difficulties/problems I might have. How to behave. How to talk to people/strangers” (**Russia 23 F Computational Logic**); “Only what is concerned with moving to another country for a long time when everything is not so familiar to you as at home. Other language, other life” (**Russia M 23 Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); “My main concern was how my university would be and what my apartment looks like and how am I going to cook food for myself when I have never cooked before. These were not only fears but my more bottom-line concerns. One of the fears – cooking food – turned into a nightmare when one afternoon I spilled food (rice and curry) in my kitchen. It took the whole day for me to clean it” (**Nepal M Lifelong Learning**); “The food, I think. I was afraid that I couldn’t get acquainted with the food here. But now I am going to get familiar with it, except “potatoes mixed with milk” (**Vietnam M Computational Logic UNL**); “Challenge of being in such a developed world. The mere fact that I did not know anybody in Europe before, especially in Italy where I am today. Being away from home and family for two years, the first time in my life. Nostalgia etc” (**Namibia 30 M Agris Mundus**).

Climate was an important concern for students from “hot” countries: “I was a little bit afraid about the cold weather (because some of my colleagues told me that the weather is very cold sometimes snow showers) and the education system (if it would be hard!!) but after coming here I think that it is not a problem” (**Bangladesh M Rural Development**); “The weather – because I’m coming from a tropical country” (**Indonesia Computational Logic**); “I was worried about my ability to adjust with the learning style of Europe universities; especially how to write a good essay that has ‘something meaningful’ in it. Also, I have a small fear of the weather, especially in Sweden as people say during winter it could reach minus twenty degrees” (**Indonesia 41 M Applied Ethics**).

Visa and residence permit perturbations were described in details in one of the previous passages (section 3 of this chapter), containing students answers to questions about problems. In addition to this some students, when asked about pre-sojourn fears admitted that they worried that after efforts to get admission to their Masters programme and getting hold of the scholarship they would be refused when applying for a visa: “Administrative procedure for application to University (gathering of all required documents) and for a visa of the destination country, because that process takes too much time and money back in my country, or in other words is very inefficient – not to mention that because of all this there was a constant fear that you won’t make it on time” (**Serbia Computational Logic**). Other formal and organisational issues also worried candidates: “That I won’t be able to fulfil academic requirements. That there will be some pitfalls with scholarship or other organisational issues. The main fear was to get through problems with the visa/ residence permit and accommodation for my wife” (**Russia Computational Logic**); “My programme needs us to travel from one country to another, so I just worried about travelling with the heavy luggage on my own” (**China 25 F European Forestry**).

Financial problems were portrayed in the previous section of this chapter (presenting students’ answers to the question “*What problems have you faced during your Masters studies so far?*”). However, some respondents already while being Mundus candidates worried about money, no matter where they came from or on what financial conditions – like the American student who informed us of having “no fears, just excitement” but due to being allocated to the London School of Economics added: “... my only worry was having enough money for London!” (**USA Global Studies**) or concerns of one Cambodian with a grant and one non-grantee Cameroonian student: “My main fear was about the scholarship because I thought it would not have been enough for the survival in all these expensive countries” (**Cambodia Global Studies**); “The cost of the programme, because I decided to take part as a self-paying student. And today my fears have come true; it is difficult to follow this programme without a scholarship. The staff members of

Erasmus Mundus programme should set up some help for students without a Scholarship" (**Cameroon F European Legal Practice**).

Concerns of a social and psychological nature

Expressions of fears on this basis, concerning adaptation and acceptance were found in numerous questionnaires. Students mentioned fear of social exclusion "as an international student among European people", the impossibility of adapting and changing the way of life in a destination country and the anxiety of isolation: "The main fears were due to lack of international experience. That I will not integrate with people, that I will have no friends and that I will not be good enough for the Programme requirements" (**Macedonia 26 F Computational Logic**); "Become accustomed to the new environment, not only to deal with the course requirements, but also to adapt myself in the new life-style" (**Nicaragua M Rural Development**); "Being segregated or discriminated. To have problems to adapt with the teaching style, culture, acceptance of European people of third world country and language differences" (**Malaysia M 27 Rural Development**); "to have friends, to be in harmony with locals, not to be a stranger" (**Jordan Quaternary and Prehistory**); "I thought I would not adjust to European lifestyle and society and culture, I was afraid I would not have good contact with other European people" (**India 24 F Quaternary and Prehistory**). Fortunately many previous worries proved to be groundless and needless: "I was afraid to adjust and adapt with the European culture but it is fine now. I was scared of the life I would have with the people around my residence but the people are easily approachable" (**Ethiopia 24 M Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); "Main fears were that people would not be very sociable – this has turned out to be the opposite. Also, that I would have difficulties in understanding the lecturers when they speak – in fact, they are used to having students from all over the world and they speak slowly enough for everyone to understand" (**Ghana 27 M International Health**); "Nothing much except for the fact that my going to Eastern Germany may present me with the neo-Nazi protest but that never happened!" (**Malaysia 27 M Global Studies**).

A distinct category constitutes awareness of the possibility of going through homesickness and longing – very frequently observed prior to leaving the home country: "I worried if I would manage after having been out of the classroom for seven years. Leaving my family behind was also one of my worst nightmares" (**Swaziland F Special Education Needs**); "Whether it would be possible to live without my family and not knowing if there were students/residents from my country. Living in Tilburg. Whether I would have to share a house with uncompromising, aggressive, dominating people" (**Bangladesh F Special Education Needs**).

A Colombian student presented very personal fears – he was preoccupied with spending a long time alone and away from his home and his

nearest and dearest: “My main fears were/are not to be able to adapt, the need for daily household chores (such cooking); not to be able to follow the courses, or to pass the examinations; to loose the love of my life”. This student, asked about plans, maintained “going back home to the love of my life” (**Colombia 29 M Applied Ethics**).

There is a necessity to inform widely, properly and suitably about conditions of living and studying in the European Union as Mundus Masters Courses’ students. This will make candidates’ fears less stressful and more related to what they really can expect, or to fear.

7. PLANS AND IMAGES OF THE FUTURE AFTER COMPLETING STUDIES IN EUROPE

While exploring answers to two questions: *What are you planning to do after obtaining a European Masters degree?* and *How do you think the European Masters degree will help you in your further career?* symptoms of massive optimism were noted as well as a strong belief in the positive effect of having an education and a diploma of the provenance of the EU. Some students, mostly of younger, expressed a nearly euphoric, or at least a very bright view of their future in terms of professional development and general capacity to face life challenges: “The programme opens many doors... I feel that I am a good candidate for anything I might want to do” (**United States 22 F Global Studies**); “It will open up opportunities for a good career anywhere in the world. European degrees offer lucrative job opportunities everywhere in the world” (**Bangladesh 43 F Special Education Needs**); “My Mundus diploma will be very beneficial for me. When I started to contact many universities for Ph.D. and when I told them that I am studying at Masters Erasmus Mundus I felt they care about me” (**Jordan 23 M Quaternary and Prehistory**); “There are many research institutes and universities here that can employ us for further research” (**Bangladesh 27 M Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion**); “Definitely, it is a very strong programme, not only for Europe but all over the world” (**Mexico 25 F Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); “The academic knowledge in this course and also the European Masters degree will support me in finding a Ph.D. scholarship” (**Vietnam 25 M Computational Logic**); “I plan to find a very good and challenging consultancy job, which of course is very likely upon completion of the course” (**Lesotho M 33 Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); “I feel more tough. I face a lot of problems (language, studying or personal life). I think, when I graduate, I am ready to face everything” (**Thailand 24 F Masters in Strategic Project Management**).

Transfer of knowledge gained in Europe to developing countries

When elaborating research material the researchers were positively surprised at finding out how many students declared to “take various methods and strategies back to your home country”; establish “research centres”; influence home policy and undertake other knowledge based actions in order to “overcome poverty and inequality” and “contribute somehow to society” of their homelands or “work as a pioneer for the future of the world”. One group that can be highlighted proclaimed coming back to their country, the other – represented also by students from the developed regions – was ready to go anywhere to an underdeveloped country. The plans of those students who want to contribute to the development of their countries are presented here: “I would like to pursue my Ph.D. research and would like to focus on bioethical issues of my country, practices followed in clinical and research medicine. I would like to create pressure on the government to include bioethical laws in the legal framework of the country. I will try my best to introduce this subject at graduate and undergraduate levels and also in medical institutions. I have been teaching in a college for the last eleven years. This degree will help in my profession. I will be able to introduce this subject at graduate and undergraduate level. I am also a member of the board of studies so I think I will be able to make these changes in the education system of my country. I will also promote self-initiated study method in my educational institutions” (**Pakistan F Applied Ethics**); “I will go back home and continue my job. My main aim after completing this course is to stimulate, at a certain level, Indonesian societies to be more aware to attitudes ethically both locally and globally” (**Indonesia 41 M Applied Ethics**); “Once I complete the course, I will be prepared enough in order to face different situations in development issues, in this way I could help to design and apply accurate policy instruments, aims to overcome poverty and inequality” (**Nicaragua M Rural Development**); “I plan to go back home to the Philippines and contribute somehow to society with the things I learned here in Europe during my Erasmus Mundus years” (**the Philippines F Global Studies**); “After going back to my country I will present a proposal to make adaptations in teacher training programmes and in the tutoring practice of my own university” (**Pakistan M Special Education Needs**); “My plan is to produce a data base system and a research centre for the different historical sites, reconstruct the ancient culture, belief, practices and history of our ancestors or ancient people, and preserve in a museum” (**Ethiopia M Quaternary and Prehistory**); “After my degree I will go back to Cambodia and teach and research in prehistory because in Cambodia a lot of work has to be done in prehistory” (**Cambodia Quaternary and Prehistory**); “My career goal is to improve primary healthcare where most needed. This Masters programme will equip me with the knowledge and the ability to pursue my goal” (**China F International Health**).

Food and health care know-how and infrastructure are most urgently needed in the Third World and some Mundus specialists are ready to join organisations and individuals “of good will” anywhere in the developing world: “I want to be a key player in practical projects in impoverished nations in Africa, Asia, and South America. The expertise in the field reached here in Europe, from my view, is achievable also in these poor nations if systematically followed in all honesty” (**Nigeria Rural Development**); “Basically at present I am getting international exposure. Apart from this I am learning so many new techniques and methods in my field. So I hope at the end of this programme I will be moulded as a ‘knowledge-bowl’ in my field (food processing). So that I can work as a pioneer for the future of the world” (**India M 26 Agris Mundus**); “I would like to work in rural development and education in a developing country. Hopefully the academic work and professional contacts I make during the Masters will prepare me for this and open the door to relevant job opportunities in this field” (**USA 24 M Agris Mundus**); “My greatest ambition is to get a job with an international organisation that works in a developing country. I would be happy to return home and work but I am also happy about working in another developing country (**Ghana 27 M International Health**).

Continuing training at Ph.D. level

Many students aim to continue training at doctoral level. Two students in this large group of those who plan Ph.D. studies after completing Mundus Masters, had already fixed such a path of scientific development – one in the EU, one in his home country: “I am about to start a Ph.D. at Nancy in France. I was awarded with an INRIA scholarship for this. My European Masters degree helped me to obtain the scholarship offered by the French government. And, I hope, the experience obtained during the Programme will help me to complete my Ph.D. successfully” (**Argentina 27 F Computational Logic**); “I plan to go back to China to finish my Ph.D. course” (**China 28 F Quaternary and Prehistory, Ph.D. candidate in Lanzhou University**).

From some questionnaires it was difficult to ascertain where actually (in the EU or in their home country) the respondents would like to enrol at a Ph.D. programme: “It’s my first step, after that I can go on with my Ph.D. study, and after that I can do research work in the future, which is my career goal” (**China M Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “I am thinking of looking for a PH.D. in my field. This degree will, in fact, prepare me with all necessary skills required for the professional practice in my field. I think it will be a turning point in my career” (**Pakistan M 26 Computational Logic**) whereas others clearly specified the desired locations. Some of them, for various reasons, hope for continuing with granted Ph.D. studies in the European Union countries: “I would like to be enrolled in a second course, at Ph.D.. level, then I would like to go back to my country in order to

apply the knowledge I get here” (**Nicaragua M Rural Development**); “If it is possible, after obtaining a European Masters degree, I will continue to study for my Doctors degree in Europe, then I will go back to China and teach my students European law” (**China M 35 European Legal Practice**); “If it’s possible I want to go to another European country, for example France to study or apply for a doctor degree in Germany” (**China F 25 European Legal Practice**); “I’m planning to do a Ph.D. in Europe or in the U.S. As my undergraduate degree course is not related to literature (graduated in Social Communication/ Cinema Studies) and I want to follow a career in Literature, I think it would be the best Masters I could find to get prepared to change my field of studies” (**Brazil F Crossways in European Humanities**); “I plan to apply for a Ph.D. degree in Europe, since my overall impression of European education and people is good” (**China M Global Studies**); “I will be grateful to go home with a Ph.D. or have a job anywhere in the world. One can never know what will happen tomorrow but I always feel there will be a problem when I go home with a certificate entitled Masters Degree in ‘European’ Forestry” (**Cameroon European Forestry**).

Numerous students declared starting doctoral programmes at their home countries, considering European studies a strong base for research and implementation there: “I have to go back to my country and I have to join my profession, I am a junior university teacher in our country and I am obliged to join. I believe that after completing this degree successfully I will be more competent than other students, because this degree is a combination of so many subjects, from different famous institutions and, after all, this is the degree from a European developed country. Always students of developing countries try to pursue higher studies in a developed country, so, I think, I will have more chance to get Ph.D. studies/scholarship/fellowship for development of my career at home. I will study at Ph.D. programme to acquire in-depth knowledge in my field of interest. I am hopeful that if I complete European Masters degree successfully then it will be helpful to get a chance of higher studies” (**Bangladesh M Rural Development**); “I will go back home and get some experience before being able to engage myself into possibilities for further study (Ph.D.). The courses and practical examples I am getting here will assist me to critically look at the issues that are contributing to resources degradation and economic development in my country” (**Malawi M 27 Agris Mundus**). A plan to carry out research is declared by a fifty-eight year old Indian teacher: “The course definitely has improved my knowledge. I am confident that I can conduct research on going back to my country – especially Action Research which is very rare in my country” (**India 58 F Special Education Needs**). Her colleague by profession also plans to go back home to continue research with the option of a Ph.D.: “I plan to go back home and implement some of the things I learnt during the course i.e. reflective practice. I wish to continue doing research on special education issues in

my country and to write and publish papers, make use of the networks established in through this programme” (...) The dissertation is going to be my starting point for further research in my country and most probably for a Ph.D. programme. I hope after some time I can come back as a scholar in this programme” (**Swaziland F Special Education Needs**).

A Russian IT specialist considers three options: “I’d like to do a Ph.D. or to join the industry in a European country if it became possible and no family problems will force me return to Moscow. In the latter case I plan to apply my skills in industry in Russia” (**Russia 25 M Computational Logic**). Taking into consideration further study in other locations, aiming usually at other developed countries, was less common: “I’m thinking about applying for a Ph.D. here in Europe or in the USA. I want to do research. So far I haven’t been able to do any research but mainly because I wanted to give myself a semester to get used to how life and studies are here in Europe. But, I’m sure that next semester I’ll get involved with some research group” (**Mexico M 24 Nanoscience and Nanotechnology**); “I will go back to China and find a job or I will try to apply for a place of doctor’s degree in U.S” (**China M 24 European Legal Practice**); “Go to Japan for my Ph.D. if possible. If I really have a European Masters degree and a Japanese Ph.D., I hope I would have a good choice in the institutions which have too many graduates from American universities” (**Taiwan M Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies**).

Working in the UE or at the home country

Completion of studying was declared by one of the Chinese students: “I want to find a good job. Two Masters degrees are enough for me” (**China F 24 Agris Mundus**). She introduces the next group of those students whose idea is to start work after obtaining the European EM Masters degree. The division by their target proposed below – work in the EU or at home country – will enlighten some Mundus international fellows’ professional plans.

Some of the representatives of the first category specified the profile of a job or employer they aim at: “I want to get a position in the R&D of an international company headquartered in Germany” (**Russia M Materials Science**); “I wish I could continue in the research for the Fusion plant of the European Commission as that is my primary demand” (**Ethiopia 24 M Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**); “After this course I want to work with some European forestry organisation or obtain practical knowledge (if possible) and continue further study” (**Nepal 35 M European Forestry**); “Work in an international organisation or in the European council. Or some creative job related to communications and media. Or working in the Macedonian diplomacy and become one day ambassador of Macedonia in Paris or Lisbon or Rome” (**Macedonia 27 F Crossways in European Humanities**) – while others did not specify their preferences: “I’m planning to make my PH.D. in Russia and I’ll try to find a job somewhere

here in Europe (**Russia F Materials Science**) or “I will search for jobs in Europe” (**Malaysia 24 M Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management University of Newcastle**); “I want to remain in Europe to work. I hope that Mundus degree facilitates entrance to work activities” (**Colombia 26 F Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology**); “It will be great to find a job in Europe, in an international (European) organisation or in an organisation which deals with Russia. I would like to use my knowledge of European law and foreign languages” (**Russia F 23 European Legal Practice**). A Malaysian student sees mutual benefits after her entering the European labour market: “If given the opportunity, I would like to have experience in working within any European country to learn and experience working life in Europe. Also, it is a chance to contribute, from Asian perspectives, to the European job market. This would be a lifetime experience” (**Malaysia 28 F Strategic Project Management**).

Two students see bright possibilities for work both in Europe and in their home countries after completing their Masters: “I think that I will be able to obtain a job, possibly both in Europe and in South Africa, so that I will not only be restricted to applying for certain posts in South Africa but will be able to compete internationally on the job market” (**South Africa F Global Studies**); “I am planning to follow a career on cultural exchange programmes to promote the culture of my country abroad. I would also like to continue my career on academic research, either in my country or abroad. I think my Masters degree will open a number of opportunities in the field of diplomacy and cultural exchange, as well as in an academic field related to the study of human studies and languages. This is important and useful for me, since I am pursuing a career on cultural exchange and promotion, and I believe that a European Masters degree achieved in three universities will give me access to cultural instances in Europe” (**Mexico F Crossways in European Humanities**). A Chinese student also thinks of working in France “for some cultural institutions (China-France or China-Europe)”, but at the same time she doubts the positive influence of an EM degree on her future career: “That’s what I have doubts about. I really hope that it will work in my job exploration! Anyway the main advantage is that I will have got ideas of the different cultures in the countries that I’ve stayed in. Except for this, personally I quite appreciate it because it enlarges the vision towards the “Mundus”, which is quite important nowadays” (**China F Crossways in European Humanities**). A frequently preferred solution was working for some time in one of the European Union countries to get practical experience and then returning to the students’ homeland: “If I get a chance I would like to work for a couple of years and go to my motherland and share my knowledge with them and do my duty towards them” (**Sri Lanka 25 M Aeronautics and Space Technology**); “My plan is to work in Europe for some years for experience but I want to return to my country” (**Lebanon M Vin-**

tage); “I am planning to work in Europe for a few years if I get a good job” (**India 22 F Economics And Management of Network Industries**); “I prefer to get an interesting job in Europe according to the specialisation at least for some time to apply my knowledge and to get more experience” (**Russia M 23 Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**). One of the Russian students put such a question as a comment: “Why do you provide such high scholarships for Masters students and no way to get a permanent permit of stay and work?” and clearly declared his disappointment, plans to find a job in the US: “ (...) because of the latter reason I’m not planning to stay in the EU. I’m planning go to Canada/US, get citizenship and work there” (**Russia Computational Logic**). An answer to the questions: *What are you planning to do after obtaining European Masters degree?* which reveals a kind of determination to stay in Europe, was given by an Indian possessor of Bachelor of Commerce and Masters of Forest Management: “Anything (legal) that can give me an earning opportunity” (**India 27 M European Forestry**).

Opting for work at home – the other alternative – was determined by various factors. In the case of Japanese and Australian women enrolled at EMMCs we can see how different are the consequences that a EU Masters degree can bring for individual career according to the system of employment and promotion practiced in a particular country. “I wanted to start work in my country” – writes a Japanese student cited also above – she had to go back to a Japanese university for more than one year if she would like to start work in Japan. As a result, asked “*how do you think the European Masters degree will help you in your further career?*” she asserted: “To work in Europe, surely yes. But I do not think the degree itself helps so much in my country compared to the local degree. However, the experience and skills obtained from the course surely broaden the possibility. If somebody wants to work abroad (especially in Europe), work in foreign companies or would like to have a chance to study abroad – yes. It is quite a rare chance to study in so many countries with so many different foreign students. However, if somebody would like to be the young elite in Japan – I am not sure” (**Japan 24 F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**). An Australian sees quite different perspectives: “In Australia, not so many people have Masters degrees as in Europe or the US, so I presume it will give me an edge over other graduates. Also, it allows me to specialise in the area I wish, and with the extra qualification I imagine that companies would be more likely to use me in this area” (**Australia 23 F Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology**).

Contribution of the joint European Masters degree to students’ future career

Answers to the question: *What are you planning to do after obtaining European Masters degree?* like these given by two African students – bring

to light explicit plans to find a job in the domestic labour market and contribute to the development of the home country: "When I finish I want to work for the Namibian government" (**Namibia F Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management**); "My main goal was to study and see what can I learn from the culture. I have a greater understanding of what a developed country is like and how they got there. This will be useful when I go back home. I plan to go back to Uganda and get a job with an NGO or set up a consultancy. My course is very applicable in Uganda and I now have a wide range of fields to choose from. I also feel that I have the potential to make a difference in Uganda" (**Uganda F 26 Rural Development**). Students believe that Erasmus Mundus diploma will facilitate their careers' beginning or continuation: "Certainly it will help. I will join my post in the government service because I am with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education. If opportunities arise I shall apply to UNESCO or UNICEF country office in my country or any UN organisation abroad" (**Bangladesh F Special Education Needs**); "The most important companies in Argentina are European or from the United States and they prefer not to work with local professionals, so I think that studying in European institutions will help me to find a good job" (**Argentina F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); "I am a forest research officer in Nepal. This degree will broaden my vision and open up the way to further study too" (**Nepal 29 M European Forestry**); "A Masters degree will help me to be in a better position – at the level of the Ministry, to influence the policy as far as Special Educational Needs are concerned. And to share my experience with my teacher-colleagues" (**Senegal M Special Education Needs**).

Apart from the generally formulated benefits like this that the EM degree is "a combination of so many subjects, from different famous institutions" or that "experience and skills obtained from the course" will be helpful in her future career, one of the Tunisian students wants "to work for an international organisation with the purpose of developing agriculture globally" and sees contribution to her career development "through the additionally acquired languages, through international seminars we will be participating in e.g. the envisaged seminar in ICARDA, Syria next year January 2007" (**Tunisia 25 F Agris Mundus**). After completing MSc a Namibian student sees "better articulations at job level as a result of improved knowledge and skills". He thinks that he will be "in a better position to identify problems facing the agricultural sector as well as providing appropriate responses from even a scientific perspective/approach" (**Namibia 30 M Agris Mundus**).

Not explicit or unique plans after completing of Mundus studies

Some students had not yet decided what would do after completing their EMMCs and took into account various options: "I am planning to go to Indonesia, look for a job connected with prehistoric archaeology (both at the state enterprise or at the private one). But, also, if there's possibility to look

for a job or obtain more experience in Europe, I will take that prospect. If I come back to my country, it will be easier for me to look for a job related to my interest. Nevertheless, the training of Mundus Masters gave us skills and enlarged our point of view as researchers” (**Indonesia F Quaternary and Prehistory**); “After obtaining my Masters degree I am hoping to return to the classroom, either back in Canada or at an International School in Europe to teach. I would eventually like to do my principal qualifications after a few more years of experience” (**Canada 26 F Special Education Needs**); “I want to be a professor in any university in my country or maybe, if I have a chance, to work in the EU :)” (**Sudan 26 F Computational Logic**); “I will study Ph.D. in Europe if I get the grant. Or teach. Or Maybe go home and work on the farm” (**the Philippines M Vintage**); “I don’t have plans, but I think I would like not to go back immediately to my country, I would like to stay a little longer in Europe. I think it will help me, when I get back to Argentina, to find a good job” (**Argentina F Advanced Materials Science and Engineering**); “There are three main options: apply for some job in Ukraine, apply for some job in EU, apply for Ph.D. in Europe” (**Ukraine 24 M Computational Logic**); “I primarily wish I could go for Ph.D., if an opportunity prevails. Otherwise, work for life” (**Namibia 30 M Agris Mundus**). One Nepalese student already holding an Australian bachelor in medical radiations astonished the researchers with his answers. Responding to the question “*How do you think the European Masters degree will help you in your further career?*” he wrote: “you have to tell me because I don’t know where and how to use my degree” (**Nepal M 28 Nuclear Fusion Science and Engineering Physics**). To the question: *What are you planning to do after obtaining European Masters degree?* his answer was: ‘why are you asking this? I thought you were providing us with jobs after graduation’. It expresses some students disappointment of job opportunities for international students in Europe. Many suggestions concerning the future of Mundus alumni can be found in the last section of Chapter II.

A Turkish student had rather imprecisely formulated plans: “Turning back to Turkey and try to make something new, maybe politics. It is a field that is very shallow in Turkey. So that I think I can start something new... Besides the cultural and educational facts, the stability of the governments in the EU is a must to analyse for someone who is coming from a less stable country” (**Turkey 25 M Computational Logic**). His peer and fellow student from Mexico took a decision “to become a priest”. He studies at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and Technical University of Vienna and his background is computer science (he holds a Masters degree in computer science with a speciality in computer systems engineering). He included into his on-line answers quite long passages showing his engagement with religion. Here is one of them: “Those who engage in scientific and technological research admit as the premise of its progress, that the world is not

a chaos but a „cosmos” – that is to say, that there exist order and natural laws which can be grasped and examined, and which, for this reason, have a certain affinity with the spirit. Einstein used to say: ‘What is eternally incomprehensible in the world is that it is comprehensible’. This intelligibility, attested to by the marvellous discoveries of science and technology, leads us, in the last analysis, to that transcendent and primordial Thought imprinted on all things. By this reason it is very important to have complementary lectures about ethics, morality and make a connection between Faith and Reasoning or more strongly, between the horizontal and vertical ways of development” **(Mexico 25 M Computational Logic)**.

Completing this section and the whole Chapter, devoted to the description of Mundus students' experience, it is worth asserting that knowing Mundus students plans and visions of the future after completing Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses is crucial for setting Mundus but also wider – EU higher education – policy. This issue should be investigated more deeply through empirical research, both of a quantitative and qualitative nature. The will to transfer to home countries the knowledge and skill gained during studies in Europe, frequently mentioned in students' answers to questions about their plans, forms the most constructive and significant *Mundus impact*. There is a need to promote portrayals of those Mundus alumni who came back after studies to their home countries and worked for their development, taking advantage of education gained in the European Union in their professional accomplishments.

