



Green Erasmus: How do you improve the environmental sustainability of the Erasmus+ program?

DAAD Workshop
November 4, 2021



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The Green Erasmus Project: Who are we?

- ✓ Erasmus Student Network / Belgium
- ✓ European University Foundation / Luxembourg
- ✓ Students Organizing for Sustainability UK (SOS) / United Kingdom
- ✓ Université Libre de Bruxelles / Belgium
- ✓ European Students' Union / Belgium
- ✓ TH Köln / Germany



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Agenda: What we would like to do today...

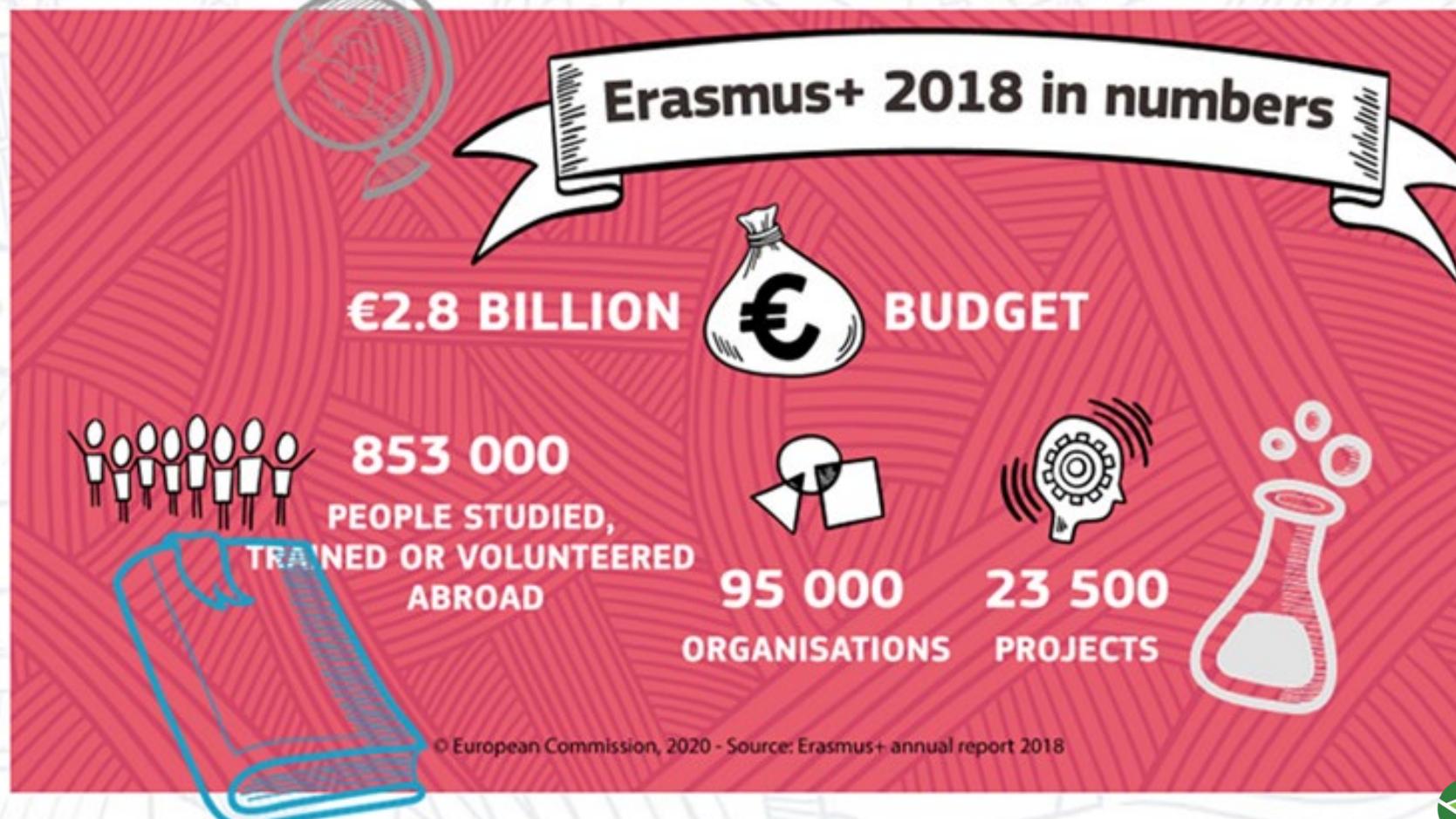
- 1.Brief introduction to the Green Erasmus project
- 2.Green Erasmus: Presentation of initial findings & results
- 3.Your take on sustainability & green mobility in international higher education
- 4.What's next? The future of Green Erasmus



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Background: What are we talking about



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Key Objectives

- To decrease the negative impact of the Erasmus+ Programme on environmental sustainability
- To raise awareness across the European higher education sector about the importance of sustainable internationalisation
- To empower student organizations to be the agents of change, pushing for improvements on the topic of environmental sustainability.



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Desired results

- Students use more sustainable modes of transport before, during and after their mobilities.
- Students become more responsible consumers during their exchange abroad.
- University staff support a “sustainable Erasmus” as a carrier for environmental sustainability.
- Sustainability is at the heart of activities organized by students.



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The Green Erasmus Research Part I focusing on students

Researching habits, attitudes and beliefs of Erasmus students
&
Mapping their environmental behaviour.



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Rationale of the



research

Literature has given substantial attention to international student mobility in higher education (economics, cultural exchange, education etc..)

Numerous studies on the integration of sustainability issues in HEI (particularly in the US)

There has been a significant number of studies into the external determinants of sustainability behaviours in general (and within HEI)

However, with minimal consideration of its environmental impact or sustainability (Shields, 2019:596)

However with little focus on the students' perspectives and consumption patterns of students and mobilities

However with little focus on the academic mobility (travel patterns from a different perspective than education and knowledge)



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The research aims to investigate

online survey at
European level
(March-June 2021):

1. The Habits of international students. The research aims to map the *travel habits* of the students during their period abroad, including both their travels to their Erasmus destination, but also their travel behaviour during their Erasmus+ mobility.

2. The Challenges to sustainable behaviour abroad: It is important to map the **barriers** students perceive in order to **travel and live in a more sustainable way**, in order to tackle these challenges in a comprehensive way.

3. The Beliefs on climate change: Furthermore, we want to research the **value system** connected to the topic of *climate change* and their mobility



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Structure and content



- At Home: Habits (Commuting, Consumer Habits) and Tourism Practices.
- Erasmus Destination: Reasons for choosing the Mobility Destination, Travelling to and from Mobility Destination.
- On Mobility: Habits (Commuting, Consumer Habits) and Tourism (Travelling Patterns while on Mobility).
- University Contribution to Environmental Awareness.
- Climate Transition (Attitudes, Beliefs, Norms) .



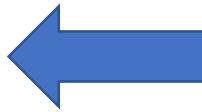
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Respondents

Outgoing students



10.707 full responses

Incoming students



More than 40
countries
indicated



Top 5 Out:
Germany, Spain,
Italy, France,
Portugal



Top 5 In:
Spain, Germany,
Italy, United
Kingdom,
Portugal



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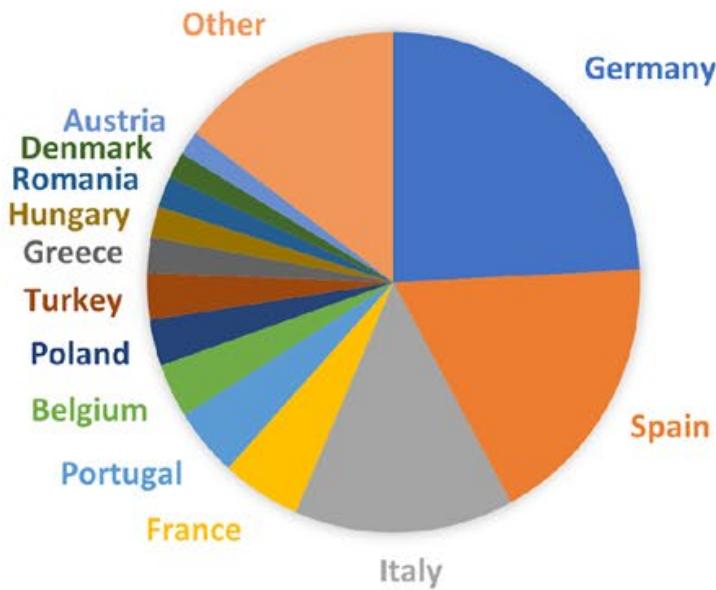


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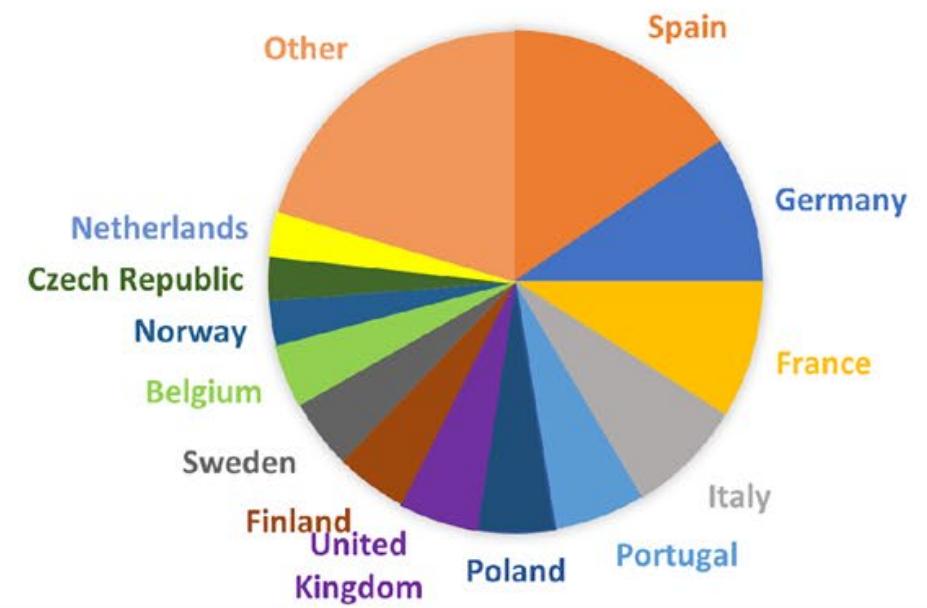
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Country of sending & hosting university

COUNTRY OF SENDING UNIVERSITY



COUNTRY OF HOSTING UNIVERSITY



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Some preliminary findings

Total counted responses
(after data clearance): 7.776



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Travelling

Home



Plane 29.6%
Train 24.7%
Car 24.1%

Mobility



Train 28.3%
Coach/Bus 24.9%
Plane 22.3%



(Going to mobility destination) Plane
73.1%

(Returning from mobility destination)
Plane 69.8%



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Local transportation choices

At home

- Public transport 44.8%
- Walk 28.3%

On mobility

- Walk 43.2%
- Public transport 38%



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Consumer Habits: Most important Criteria

At home

On mobility

Quality 45.5%

Price 59.6%

Price 44.4%

Quality 32.7%

Origin 6.6%

Origin 4.8%

Package reusability
2.2%

Package reusability
1.8%



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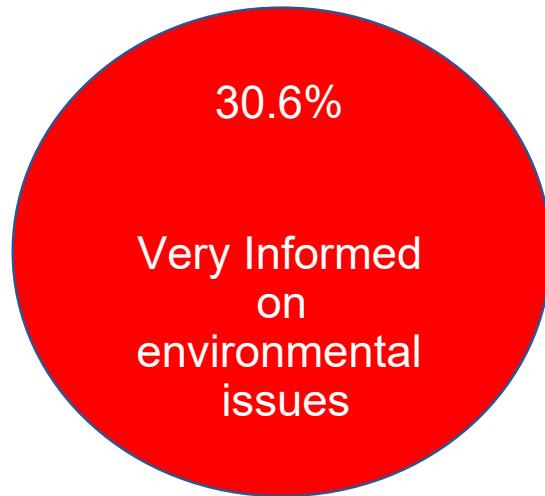
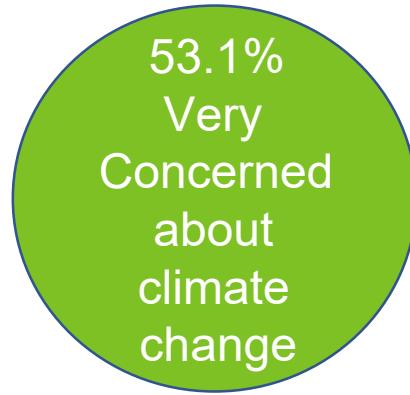
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Environmental Awareness & University



Source of Information

- Internet (86.5%)
- Social media (59.2%)
- University (35.5%)

Awareness on University based initiatives

- Home Uni. 83.6%
- Host Uni. 68.5%



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The Green Erasmus Research Part II focusing on HEIs

Researching the good practices of HEIs in the field of sustainable internationalisation

&

Mapping sustainable initiatives, designed to stimulate environmentally friendly behaviour patterns among local and international students.



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Structure and content of the questionnaire



- Attitudes and beliefs of HEIs staff members (Leadership, IROs, teachers/professors, others).
- Higher Education Institution's sustainability strategy
- Higher Education Institution's contribution to sustainable internationalisation
- Higher Education Institution's contribution to sustainable transportation
- Higher Education Institution's contribution to sustainable operations



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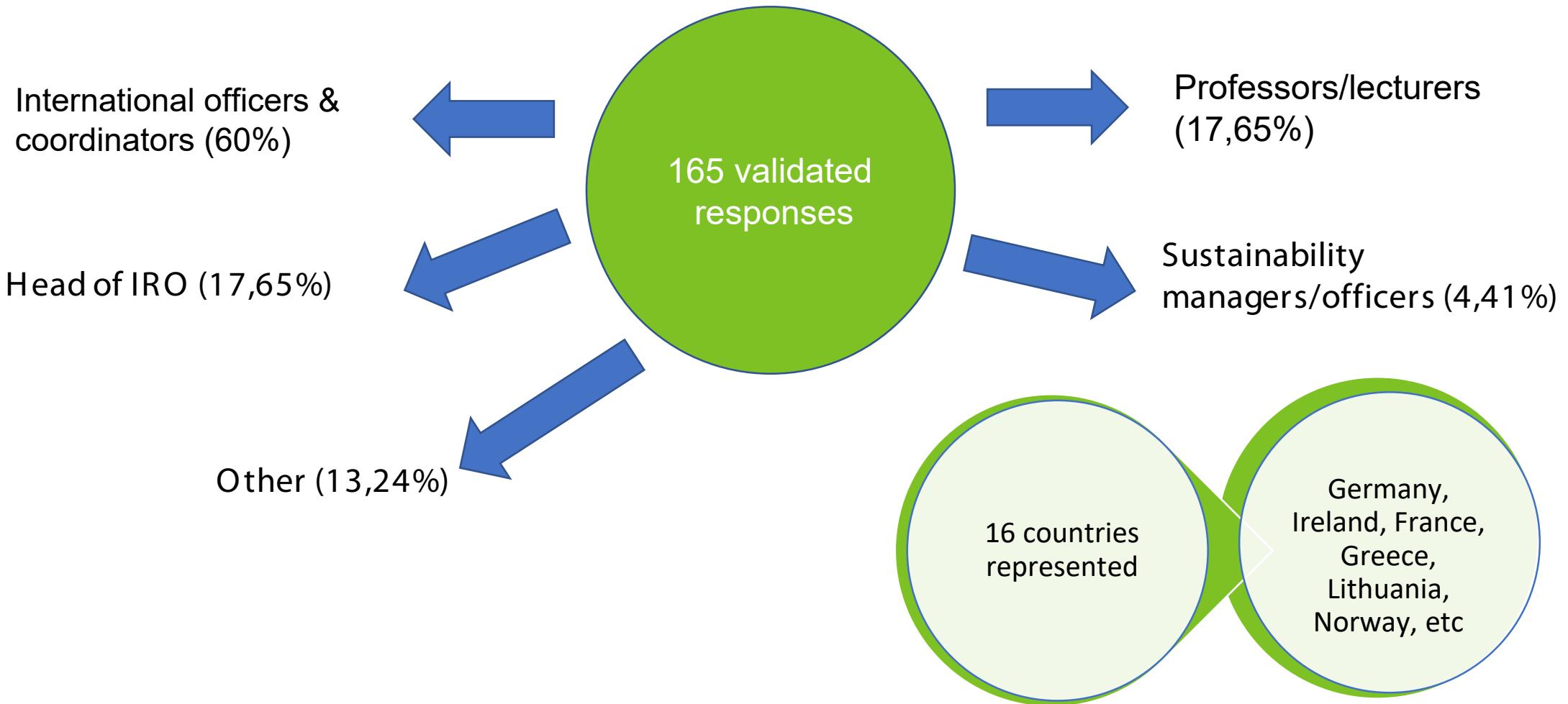


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Respondents



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Key findings

- The majority of the staff consider themselves **very/moderately informed about environmental issues** (17,5% / 38,33%)
- Most of the respondents mention the **need for funding** to promote a stronger commitment.
- The majority of the **HEIs have environmental strategy**, but most of the **staff don't know if it was implemented successfully**.
- The majority of the staff indicate **the leadership support** and **the financial support** as crucial for the **success** of the (international) environmental sustainability strategy.
- Almost half of the respondents say that no specific environmental actions for international students exist (49,35%)
- Sustainable internationalisation is most often implemented at HEIs' global strategy, rather than the internationalisation strategy.
- **1/3** of the respondents say that **IRO does collaborate** with the working group responsible for the **sustainable internationalisation strategy** at HEIs



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Examples of good practices in sustainable internationalisation

Development of educational projects aimed at educating local and mobile students

Promoting the use of sustainable means of transport (city bikes, electric scooters, public transport, etc.)

Promoting portals for measuring CO2

Organising events in an eco-responsible way

International staff member responsible for the sustainability

Promotion of multidisciplinary approaches to climate issues, campaigns and communication

Planting trees

Sustainable Development plans, strategies and guidelines

Promoting eco-friendly means of transport by paying grants to the students that use them



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Main barriers to implement sustainable internationalisation strategy

Need of better understanding and belief in sustainability

Lack of resources (funding, human resources)

Lack of understanding that faculties need to work together

Lack of communication between different units and levels

Lack of sufficient time

Support by the leadership

Other priorities (many undergoing changes which need to be tackled first)

Difficult to change mindsets – country and individual habits



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Main barriers while implementing sustainable internationalisation strategy

Need of better understanding and belief in sustainability

Physical and mental, (old buildings, old equipment, lack of understanding, habits etc.)

Short deadlines to implement strategy, causing lack of subsistent results

The difficulty is how to promote mobility without any physical mobility, as the blended or virtual is not always the answer

Getting staff committed to the issues

Failure to assign responsibility for the sustainability goals at top level. Failure to apply resources to implement them

Lack of enough resources to promote it well



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Success points



There is more and more awareness among staff and students



Approval by the leadership



Sustainability as THE leading topic within many institutions' strategies



The overall aim is for the universities to develop into a model institution for sustainable development



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Recommendations

- To analyse carefully the needs and ideas of the target groups (students/international students)
- To have more commitment and support to the strategies and respective projects by the leadership
- To find as many supporters, participants and multipliers as possible
- To decrease the funding of shortdistance flights and increase the funds for sustainable travel



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**What are potential solutions to this challenge?
Do you have any good examples from your institution
that you would like to share with us?**



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What's next? The future of



...



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What's next in our project:

- Workshops for sustainable internationalisation in early 2022 (more later)
- Handbook for sustainable internationalisation and policy recommendations (spring 2022)
- Online platform for sustainable semester abroad, containing educational material such as computer games (summer 2022)
- Online petition for sustainable student mobility (spring 2022)
- Toolkit for sustainable internationalisation for students (autumn 2022)
- Educational Framework for Environmental Sustainability (autumn 2022)
- Toolkit for environmental sustainable activity (winter 2022)

End of project: December 2022



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What we can do already:

- Participate in our petition & workshops
- Implement the Erasmus+ travel top-ups and finance travel days
- Raise awareness- inform not only students, but staff as well (collecting students' feedback on travel modes; having hints and tips @ hand)



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What we can do already:

- Actively support [Green Offices](#) at your university, to inform about & improve students' sustainable behaviour, such sharing goods when leaving
- Join [netzwerk N eV.](#) & [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltigkeit an HS](#) and connect with other universities
- Support [erasmusbytrain](#)

What do you already do?



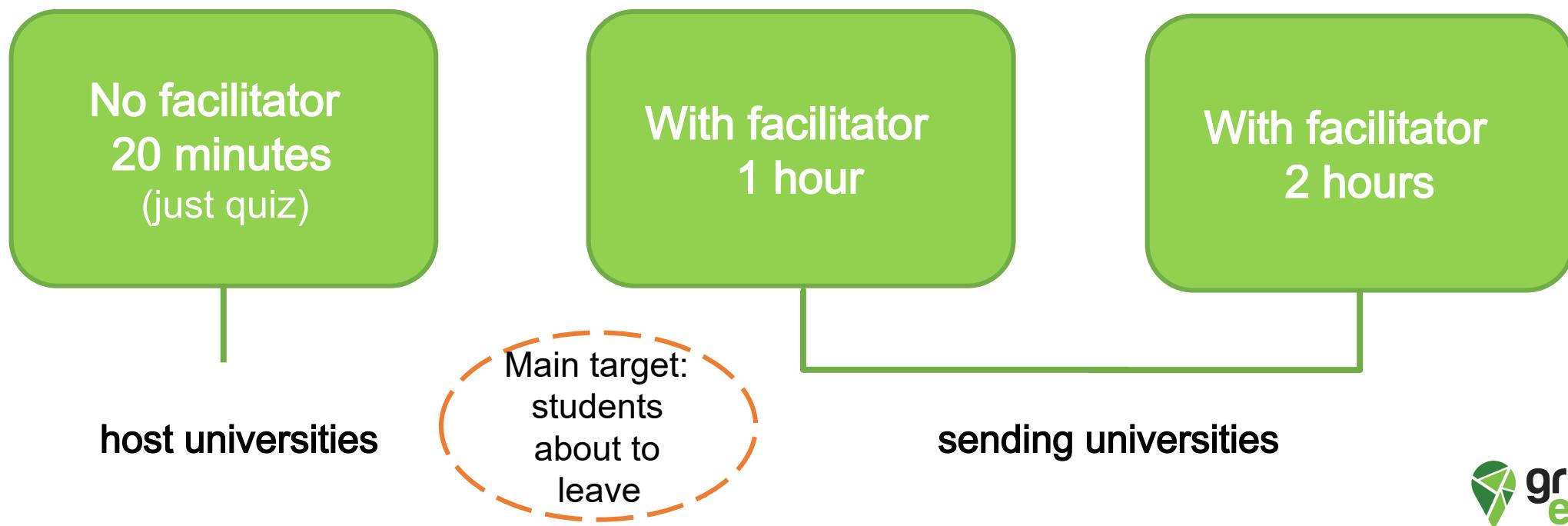
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Green Erasmusworkshops for sustainable internationalisation

IO2 - tools to support higher education staff in making internationalisation sustainable

Workshop manual to guide higher education institutions (HEIs) in the organisation of workshops for students going abroad



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Green Erasmusworkshops for sustainable internationalisation

Focus on learning outcomes

Interdisciplinarity

Interactivity

Modularity



Would it be
useful in your
opinion??

If yes, would you like to
join the test phase at the
beginning of next year?

Please contact us through our
website
<https://greenerasmus.org/>



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