

Student mobility in Italy

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Chapter VIII: Student mobility in Italy (IT)

Nicolai Netz and Dominic Orr

1 Student mobility data – sources, collectors, availability and quality

1.1 Official statistical sources

1.1.1 Collectors and collection procedures¹

In Italy, the official provider of administrative data on student mobility is the *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR)*. The MIUR's sphere of responsibility includes the competency to report mobility statistics to UOE on a regular basis. Since 1999, the MIUR collects data on *foreign students* in Italy and on *Italian students going abroad* for a short period, i.e. *outgoing credit mobile students*, in its annual surveys of Italian higher education institutions (*Indagine sull'Istruzione Universitaria* and *Rilevazione degli Iscritti al 31 Gennaio*). Previously, these surveys were carried out by the National Statistical Office (*Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, ISTAT*). Unlike other European countries, ISTAT is no longer involved in the collection of primary data on student mobility flows. The results of the surveys are presented in a yearly publication (*Università in cifre*), which contains a small section on *foreign students* in Italy.²

Further valuable data are published in a yearly report of the *Comitato Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Universitario (CNVSU)*, which was created as an organ of the MIUR in 1999.³ The CNVSU is – among other things – responsible for the evaluation of the data collected through the official survey mechanisms of the MIUR described above. It does so by drawing on the expertise of evaluation units – the *Nuclei di valutazione di Ateneo* – that have recently been installed at all Italian universities.⁴ The data cleared by the CNVSU are available on request via the Statistical Office of the MIUR. In addition, the annual *Rapporto sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario* contains a section on student mobility in the context of both European and Non-European mobility programmes.⁵

1.1.2 Quality of official mobility data

The data gathered by the Statistical Office of the MIUR and subsequently cleared by the CNVSU cover Italian and *foreign students* at both public and private universities and AFAM institutions. Students from other types of higher education institutions – with the exception of military academies – are not covered.⁶ In line with the UOE conventions, ERASMUS students are not

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² Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca: *Università in cifre 2008, 2009*.

³ The CNVSU is to be incorporated into the newly founded Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca (ANVUR).

⁴ Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca: Comitato nazionale per la valutazione del sistema universitario. Note tecniche su dati ed informazioni per la Rilevazione 'Nuclei 2009'.

⁵ Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca: *Decimo Rapporto sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario*, 2009.

⁶ The group of higher education institutions referred to as universities include primarily state universities (55 in the year 2009), but also non-state, legally-recognised universities (14), some technical universities (3) and special universities for foreigners (2) as well as universities specialised in postgraduate studies (3) (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca: *Higher Education in Italy*, retrieved from <http://www.miur.it/guida/guide.htm>, in Jan./Feb. 2010). The term AFAM stands for *Alta formazione artistica e musicale*. It is offered by Academies of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Drama,

included in the group of *foreign students* reported to EUROSTAT. In the MIUR data sets, it is possible to distinguish the bodies of Italian and *foreign students* inter alia by ISCED levels (5A, 5B and 6) as well as by field of study and gender. Moreover, *foreign students* can be differentiated by their countries of nationality (origin). In contrast, it is not possible to further subdivide *outgoing credit mobile students* by their countries of destination. The only official data source on *Italian study abroad students* by countries of destination is UOE.

The MIUR data cover reasonably well the group of *incoming* and *outgoing students* in the context of mobility programmes. Although these students make up only a fraction of *credit mobility* flows, the group of *programme mobile students* can be differentiated by a number of descriptors. Beyond the differentiation by ISCED levels, fields of study and gender, it is possible to determine both *incoming* and *outgoing students'* countries of origin and destination, respectively. What is more, students' levels of study (first-cycle bachelor level, second-cycle master level, single-cycle master level programmes) and their type of programmes (pre- and post-Bologna reform courses, i.e. according to *vecchio ordinamento* versus the *nuovo ordinamento*) are indicated. In this case, the restrictions of the data lie in the fact that only mobility in the context of programmes is captured, but not self-organised forms of *credit mobility*. Furthermore, the data on *programme mobility* are limited to universities. Finally, a minor shortcoming is that *outgoing students* are recorded only if they are enrolled according to the *nuovo ordinamento*. Since students can no longer enrol according to *vecchio ordinamento*, this limitation will disappear over time.

Analyses of mobility trends are made more complicated by the fact(that most national publications such as *Università in cifre* and the *Rapporti sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario* focus on university ISCED 5A students ⁷. In contrast, international publications usually cover *foreign* and *mobile students* enrolled at ISCED levels 5-6. What is more, all figures reported by the MIUR are based on students' *nationality* (i.e. on their country of citizenship/passport). With the exception of data on programme mobility, there are no official data on *genuine mobility* (i.e. on students' country of prior residence or education). This greatly impedes the assessment of mobility flows from and to the Italian higher education system.

1.2 Additional data sources

1.2.1 Collectors and collection procedures

The most valuable data among the non-administrative data sources are those collected by the Italian institution responsible for the ERASMUS Programme, the EUROSTUDENT project and the AlmaLaurea Inter-University Consortium.

Italian higher education institutions have taken part in the ERASMUS Programme from the outset, i.e. from the academic year 1987/88. As in other countries participating in ERASMUS, there is a national agency in Italy responsible for carrying out the programme on the ground and collecting data on *outgoing ERASMUS students*. In Italy, the institution in charge of this is the *Agenzia Scuola*. For each academic year, the *Agenzia Scuola* collects data on *outgoing ERASMUS students* from all Italian higher education institutions at ISCED levels 5-6, aggregates these data and delivers them to the European Commission. The set of variables considered in this process is described below.

Higher Institutes for Artistic Industries (ISIA), *Conservatoires*, the National Dance Academy and officially recognised music institutes. Together with other institutions such as Military Academies and Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences they form the non-university research system (EURYDICE Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency: *Organisation of the education system in Italy 2008/09*. Retrieved from the EURYBASE database <http://www.eurydice.org>). Apart from students at Military Academies enrolled in higher education programmes, students from other higher education institutions are not included in the MIUR data on students of higher education.

⁷ On request, however, it is possible to obtain data on (foreign) students in Italy differentiated by ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6.

The EUROSTUDENT project collects comparable data on the social and economic conditions of student life in Europe, including data on student mobility. The data presented in section 2 stem from the third cycle of the project, in which 23 countries conducted national surveys and analyses of their student populations between 2005 and 2007. In Italy, the responsible institution for the EUROSTUDENT project is the *Fondazione Rui*. Every three years it coordinates a survey of the Italian student population. The data used in this chapter were collected in 2006 by the *Istituto Doxa* via computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) and based on a standardised – and therefore internationally comparable – questionnaire. Whereas the ERASMUS data report the number of students who are mobile on an annual basis, the EUROSTUDENT III project captures the occurrence of study abroad over the course of study by asking surveyed students whether they had been internationally mobile during their studies. The survey thus captures retrospectively the event(s) of study abroad.

A similar enquiry is performed in Italy by the AlmaLaurea Inter-University Consortium, but mostly at the level of higher education graduates. AlmaLaurea has provided a variety of information on graduates of Italian higher education institutions and their employment conditions after graduation since 1994. Among other things, it records information on graduates' study related experiences abroad and estimates the returns of student mobility. In 2010, 60 Italian universities participated in the initiative. Taken together, their graduates accounted for 76% of all graduates in Italy.⁸ The AlmaLaurea data collection combines three different types of data: administrative data on students provided by universities; data collected through a survey of final-year students; data on graduates' employment conditions obtained through telephone and web-based interviews one, three and five years after graduation.⁹

1.2.2 Quality of additional data on mobility

Generally speaking, the non-official sources are not as comprehensive as the administrative data sources presented above, but provide valuable information on *genuine mobility* flows.

As stated before, the *Agenzia Scuola* gives information on *outgoing* flows of ERASMUS students enrolled at ISCED levels 5-6. The data of all National Agencies responsible for the implementation of this EU programme are then aggregated and published by the European Commission, allowing for an analysis of *incoming ERASMUS mobility flows* to Italy. The ERASMUS data differentiates between *incoming* and *outgoing students* by their countries of origin and destination, respectively. In addition, the data contain information on the number of ERASMUS students by field of study and on whether a student is mobile for study purposes or to complete an internship (i.e. a 'placement' in ERASMUS terminology). Still, the ERASMUS data are by definition restricted to *programme mobility*, being thus just a sub-type, a share of the total *credit mobility* to and from Italy. Since at the time of this study participation in ERASMUS was only open to the EU 27 member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey, the range of *mobile students'* target and source countries was limited to this group of countries.

The EUROSTUDENT III data focus on phases of mobility abroad of students enrolled at Italian higher education institutions. Unlike other data sources, they enable to distinguish between mobility for regular enrolment abroad, language courses, internships and other forms of mobility, such as summer schools. What is more, the countries of destination of *outgoing students* who were temporarily *mobile* are captured. A great advantage of the EUROSTUDENT III data is that they

⁸ AlmaLaurea website, <http://www.almalaurea.it/en/>. April 2010.

⁹ Cammelli, A.; Ghiselli, S.; Mignoli, G. P.: "Study Experience Abroad: Italian Graduate Characteristics and Employment Outcomes". In: Byram, M.; Dervin, F.: *Students, Staff and Academic Mobility in Higher Education*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. Details on the methodology and survey instruments used by AlmaLaurea can also be found in Antonelli, G.; Camillo, F.; Cammelli, A.; di Francia, A.; Ghiselli, S.; Sgarzi, M.: *Graduates' employment and employability after the "Bologna Process" reform. Evidence from the Italian experience and methodological issues*, presented at: International Conference – DECOWE (Development of Competencies in the World of Work and Education) September 24th-26th, 2009, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (<http://www.almalaurea.it/en/universita/altro/bolognaprocess2009/>)

allow for in-depth analyses of *temporary outgoing mobility* flows: in addition to information on the financing and the organisation of the stay abroad (i.e. in the context of a programme or self-organised), they inform about students' socio-economic background (as measured by their parents' educational attainment), their language skills, their future mobility plans and, finally, the perceived obstacles to mobility.

The Italian EUROSTUDENT III sample referred to in this study includes students from all study years at ISCED level 5A in the academic year 2005/06. It is restricted to students of Italian nationality and those having a permanent residence status. Students were only surveyed if they were enrolled in first-cycle bachelor level courses (*corsi di laurea triennale*) or single-cycle master level courses (*corsi di laurea specialistica a ciclo unico*). Students enrolled in second-cycle master level courses (*corsi di laurea specialistica*) were not included.¹⁰ Moreover, students having entered higher education before the academic year 2000/01 were not considered. Since because of these restrictions the majority of Italian second-cycle students were not included in the survey, the results are not representative for master level students.

Last but not least, AlmaLaurea concentrates on surveying final-year students and graduates of Italian universities at ISCED level 5A. The focus is on *temporary outgoing mobility* of graduates from Italian universities. Since only graduates from Italian institutions are considered, it is not possible to analyse *outgoing diploma mobility*, but merely *credit mobility* and other study-related activities. However, the forms of temporary mobility can be differentiated by the organisation of the stay abroad (i.e. via EU/other programmes or as self-organised mobility phases), by their duration and by students' countries of destination. Further examples of the variables included are fields of study, the home institutions and regions of enrolment of *outgoing students*, as well as students' socio-economic background.

2 Student mobility in Italy

2.1 Overview: key figures

Total enrolment and Italian students

Measured by the overall student population, Italy has the sixth largest higher education system of the Europe 32 countries. According to data provided by UOE, in the reference year of the study - 2006/07 - there were 2 033 642 students enrolled in higher education institutions in Italy (Table 1a). According to the same source, the large majority of these students - 97.5% - were enrolled at ISCED level 5A, while only 0.5% was enrolled at ISCED level 5B and only 2.0% were enrolled at ISCED level 6.

Over the years covered in Table 1a, the overall student population grew by 13.2%; since the academic year 1999/2000, this growth has been continuous. Interestingly, the body of students of Italian nationality grew at a slightly slower pace (only +11.4%) and even decreased in the year 2006/07. This implies that the increase in the overall student population was, to a significant extent, accounted for by a rise in the number of *foreign students* studying towards a degree in Italy.¹¹

¹⁰ A second-cycle master (*corso di laurea specialistica*) is a study programme that usually requires a candidate student to hold a first higher education degree at bachelor level (*corso di laurea triennale*). In line with the Bologna structure, second-cycle master typically last for one to two years. A single-cycle master (*laurea specialistica a ciclo unico*) is a programme that does not follow the Bologna study architecture. It is a single qualification lasting for about five years or more that leads to a graduation certificate equivalent to a second-cycle master.

¹¹ Looking at the publications based on MIUR data (e.g. *Università in cifre 2008*), these trends are generally confirmed. However, the absolute student numbers in these publications are lower than the numbers presented in Table 1a because they do not include students at ISCED level 5B and 6 (cf. subsection 1.1.1).

Foreign and study abroad students

The body of *foreign students* grew by 143.7% between 1998/99 and 2006/07 (UOE data). The strongest annual increase occurred only recently, between the years 2005/06 and 2006/07. It brought the number of *foreign students* to 57 271 and the share of *foreign students* to 2.8% of all students in the academic year 2006/07 (Tables 1a and 1b). However, this share is still low by European standards. The Europe 32 average was 6.9% in the same academic year (cf. Vol. I, Chapter I). The number and share of *foreign students* are expected to rise in the near future. This hypothesis is backed by MIUR data on new entrants. The share of new foreign entrants has constantly grown since 2001/02 and already reached 3.7% in the academic year 2007/08.¹²

Judging by the figures available from UOE, the changes in the number of *Italian students studying abroad* have not been as marked as in the case of *foreign students* in Italy. Although their absolute number increased by 4.1% between 1998/99 and 2006/07 (cf. data in Table 1a), the size of the group of *Italians studying abroad* has remained almost constant if compared to the body of *Italian students enrolled in Italy* (Tables 1b), at a rate of slightly above 0.020. The number of *Italian students studying in Italy* has therefore grown at a faster pace than that of *Italian students studying abroad*. Whereas in 1998/99 for every 1 000 Italian students enrolled in Italy there were 25 Italians studying abroad (ratio of 0.025), in 2006/07 the number of Italians abroad was just 2 students lower, at 23, for every 1 000 Italian students at home (ratio of 0.023). The Italian study abroad ratio is almost one third below the Europe 32 average. In 2006/07, there were 33 European students studying outside their country of origin for every 1 000 students enrolled in the latter (ratio of 0.033, cf. Vol. I, Chapter I) and this ratio had gone up from 1998/99.

Table 1a: Total numbers of all students, Italian students, foreign and incoming (genuinely mobile) students at Italian higher education institutions and of Italian students studying/going abroad, in 1998/99-2007/08

Year	Col.	Measurements for Italian students		Measurements for foreign and incoming students in Italy					Measurements for Italian study abroad and outgoing students		
		ALL Italian students at Italian HEIs	Italian non-mobile students at Italian HEIs (XXX)	ALL foreign students	Foreign non-mobile students (YXX)	ALL incoming students	Foreign incoming students (YYX)	Italian incoming students = returners (XXY)	ALL Italian study abroad students	Study abroad non-mobile students (XYX)	Outgoing students (XXY)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2007/08	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2006/07	2 033 642	1 976 371	*	57 271	*	*	*	*	45 044	*	*
2005/06	2 029 023	1 980 257	*	48 766	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
2004/05	2 014 998	1 970 077	*	44 921	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
2003/04	1 986 497	1 945 856	*	40 641	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
2002/03	1 913 352	1 877 215	*	36 137	*	*	*	*	43 092	*	*
2001/02	1 854 200	1 825 753	*	28 447	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2000/01	1 812 325	1 783 097	*	29 228	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1999/00	1 770 002	1 745 073	*	24 929	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1998/99	1 797 241	1 773 745	*	23 496	*	*	*	*	43 268	*	*

Legend for column descriptors: XXX refers to the route of study of the student, i.e. citizenship in country X, prior education in country X, and current studies in country X

Legend for data: * = no data; - = totals excluded because of mixed criteria in the UOE database (nationality and mobility)

Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

¹² Università in cifre 2008, op.cit., p.61.

Table 1b: Share of Italian and foreign students amongst all students at Italian higher education institutions and ratio of Italian study abroad students to all Italian students in Italy, in 1998/99-2007/08

Col.	Measurements for Italian students in Italy			Measurements for foreign and incoming students in Italy					Measurements for Italian study abroad and outgoing students		
	ALL students at Italian HEIs	ALL Italian students at Italian HEIs	Italian non-mobile students at Italian HEIs (XXX)	ALL foreign students	Foreign non-mobile students (YXX)	ALL incoming students	Foreign incoming students (YYX)	Italian incoming students = returners (XYX)	Ratio: Italian study abroad students : Italian students at home	Study abroad non-mobile students (XYX)	Outgoing students (XXY)
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2007/08	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2006/07	100%	97.2%	*	2.8%	*	*	*	*	0.023	*	*
2005/06	100%	97.6%	*	2.4%	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
2004/05	100%	97.8%	*	2.2%	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
2003/04	100%	98.0%	*	2.0%	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
2002/03	100%	98.1%	*	1.9%	*	*	*	*	0.023	*	*
2001/02	100%	98.5%	*	1.5%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2000/01	100%	98.4%	*	1.6%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1999/00	100%	98.6%	*	1.4%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1998/99	100%	98.7%	*	1.3%	*	*	*	*	0.025	*	*

Legend for column descriptors: XXX refers to the route of the student, i.e. citizenship in country X, prior education in country X, and current studies in country X
Legend for data:

* = no data;

- = totals excluded because of mixed criteria in the UOE database (nationality and mobility)

Sources: UOE, ISCED 5-6

Incoming and outgoing students

As can be seen in the two tables above, Italy is not (yet) able to provide administrative data on *incoming* or *outgoing students* that represent the overall student population. Therefore, a further analysis of *genuine mobility* is not possible here.

Mobility balance

Data on *genuine mobility* flows are not (yet) available in Italy, which makes it impossible to analyse the Italian balance of mobility flows. What is possible, though, is to make use of the less valuable yet useful proxy for mobility – the nationality criterion - and juxtapose the number of *foreign students* in Italy to the number of *students with Italian nationality abroad* (Table 2). During the time period in question, the ratio of *foreign* to *Italian study abroad students* changed significantly. While there were almost twice as many *Italian study abroad students* as *foreign students* in Italy in the late 1990s (ratio of 100:184, i.e. 100 foreign students for every 184 Italians abroad), *foreign students* had outnumbered *study abroad students* by the year 2006/07. There were only 100 foreign students in Italy in 2006/07 for every 79 Italians studying towards a degree abroad (ratio of 100:79).

Table 2: Ratio of foreign students in Italy to Italian study abroad students, and ratio of incoming students to Italian outgoing students, in 1998/99-2007/08

Year	Foreign students (X)	Italian study abroad students (Y)	Ratio (X:Y)	Incoming students (Z)	Outgoing students (W)	Ratio (Z:W)
	Abs.	Abs.		Abs.	Abs.	
2007/08	*	*	*	*	*	*
2006/07	57 271	45 044	100:79	*	*	*
2005/06	48 766	-	*	*	*	*
2004/05	44 921	-	*	*	*	*
2003/04	40 641	-	*	*	*	*
2002/03	36 137	43 092	100:119	*	*	*
2001/02	28 447	*	*	*	*	*
2000/01	29 228	*	*	*	*	*
1999/00	24 929	*	*	*	*	*
1998/99	23 496	43 268	100:184	*	*	*

Legend: - = totals excluded because of mixed criteria in the UOE database (nationality and mobility);
Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

2.2 Student mobility trends

2.2.1 Student inflows

Types of mobility (degree vs. credit)

In addition to the data on *foreign students* in Italy presented above, Italy also avails of data on *incoming students* through the ERASMUS Programme. Although this data set covers only part of *incoming credit mobile students* in Italy, it provides an interesting picture. Comparing the total number of *incoming ERASMUS students* to the number of all *foreign students* in Italy for the years 1998/99-2006/07 (the most recent year for which data on *foreign students* were available from UOE) provides a rough idea of the role which *incoming mobility* through the ERASMUS scheme plays for Italy. Between 1998/99 and 2006/07, the ratio of incoming ERASMUS to *foreign students* registered values between 26:100 and 35:100.¹³ This means that, in 2006/07, for every 100 *foreign students* there were 26 *incoming ERASMUS students* to Italy. The ERASMUS Programme was thus of significant importance in generating incoming mobility into Italian higher education. This is shown by the fact that 9.3% of all students in Europe participating in the ERASMUS Programme spent their stay abroad in Italian higher education institutions in 2006/07 (cf. Vol. I, Chapter II). It should be noted, though, that the body of ERASMUS students in Italy still accounts for less than 1% of the overall student population in the country. This picture is nevertheless consistent with that of most European countries participating in the programme.

¹³ The figures on *foreign students* in Italy, which are reported to UOE by the MIUR, do not include ERASMUS students.

Table 3: ERASMUS incoming students in relation to all students and to foreign students in Italy, in 1998/99-2008/09

Year	All students at Italian HEIs (X)	Foreign students in Italy (Y)	ERASMUS incoming students in Italy (Z)	ERASMUS incoming students as share of all students in Italy (%)	Ratio ERASMUS incoming students : foreign students in Italy (Z:Y)
2008/09	*	*	17 492 ¹⁴	*	*
2007/08	*	*	14 982	*	*
2006/07	2 033 642	57 271	14 779	0.7%	26:100
2005/06	2 029 023	48 766	14 591	0.7%	30:100
2004/05	2 014 998	44 921	13 370	0.6%	30:100
2003/04	1 986 497	40 641	12 704	0.6%	31:100
2002/03	1 913 352	36 137	10 968	0.5%	30:100
2001/02	1 854 200	28 447	9 862	0.5%	35:100
2000/01	1 812 325	29 228	8 737	0.4%	30:100
1999/00	1 770 002	24 929	8 030	0.4%	32:100
1998/99	1 797 241	23 496	6 886	0.0%	29:100

Source: UOE, European Commission, ISCED 5-6

Countries of origin

Table 4 gives an overview of *foreign students'* major countries of nationality. The totality of students from the top 10 countries of nationality amounts to 'only' 52.7%. This implies that the body of *foreign students* in Italy is rather heterogeneous, in that it is composed of many small groups of *foreign students* from a variety of countries. Within this general picture, however, a few phenomena deserve special attention.

To begin with, it stands out that, with the exception of Germany (3.6%) and Switzerland (2.4%), no Western European or G8 countries are represented in Table 4. Instead, the single largest group of *foreign students* in Italy is that of Albanian students (20.7%). Ranks 2 and 3 are occupied by Greek (8.8%) and Romanian students (4.3%). Thus, the top 3 countries of origin are all located in South-East Europe. Taken together, approximately 33.8% of *foreign students* in Italy are nationals of these countries.

¹⁴ The ERASMUS data for 2007/08 and 2008/09 include both mobility for studies (SMS) and mobility for placements (SMP).

Table 4: Major countries of nationality of foreign students in Italy (Top 10), in 2006/07

Rank	Country of nationality	Abs.	%
1	AL Albania	11 883	20.7%
2	GR Greece	5 054	8.8%
3	RO Romania	2 456	4.3%
4	DE Germany	2 067	3.6%
5	CN China	1 684	2.9%
6	CM Cameroon	1 614	2.8%
7	PL Poland	1 478	2.6%
8	CH Switzerland	1 371	2.4%
9	HR Croatia	1 353	2.4%
10	PE Peru	1 243	2.2%
	Top ten countries	30 203	52.7%
	Total foreign students	57 271	

Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

The number of students from South-East Europe increased markedly between 2002/03 and 2006/07 (UOE data).¹⁵ However, with regard to the individual countries, different developments can be observed (Table 5, figures for Albania not shown). While the number of Albanian and Romanian students increased strongly between 2002/03 and 2006/07 (+5 260 Albanian students in absolute terms, i.e. +79.4% in relative ones, and +1 548 Romanian students, i.e. +170.5%, respectively), the number of Greek students decreased significantly (-2 925 student, i.e. -36.7%).¹⁶

The dominant position of Albanian students (Table 4) within the group of *foreign students* is a rather recent phenomenon. In the academic year 1998/99, there were 'only' 1 539 Albanian students enrolled in Italy. At that time, they represented a 'mere' 6.6% of *foreign students*. In sharp contrast, the number of Greek students stood at 8 916, which corresponded to 37.9% of all *foreign students* enrolled in Italy in 1998/99 (UOE data). There are thus indications that the composition of *foreign students* in Italy has changed significantly in the past years and will continue to do so in the future.

In case it continues to grow at a similar rate as in recent years, one group that could assume a major role in the near future is Chinese students. Between 2002/03 and 2006/07, the group of Chinese students grew by 722.5% (1 474 students), thereby increasing more strongly in relative terms than any other group of students.¹⁷ This trend is also observed at the European level, where Chinese students saw the highest increase in relative terms among foreign students in the Europe 32 regions over the period 1998/99-2006/07 (cf. Vol. I, Chapter I).

¹⁵ The comparison concentrates on these two years and not on the academic year 1998/99 as a starting point because the breakdown by country of nationality of foreign students in Italy was not available for the year 1998/99.

¹⁶ Since the data presented in this section only go to the academic year 2006/07, the effect of Romania's accession to the EU in 2007 is not yet fully reflected. It will be interesting to observe whether the number of Romanian students enrolled in Italy will increase in the future. Looking at the MIUR data presented in *Università in cifre 2008*, this seems to be the case. For the year 2007/08, MIUR reports a number of 2 853 Romanian students, solely at ISCED level 5A. This figure is already higher than the number of Romanian students UOE reports for the year 2006/07 (cf. Table 5), although the latter includes students at ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6.

¹⁷ The MIUR data presented in *Università in cifre 2008* suggest that the number Chinese students continued to rise even after the academic year 2006/07. For the year 2007/08, MIUR reports 2 739 students enrolled in Italian universities (ISCED level 5A).

Table 5: Foreign students in Italy by country of nationality, in 2002/03 and 2006/07

Country of nationality \ Year	Year		Increase/decrease 2002/03-2006/07	
	2002/03	2006/07	Abs.	%
Europe 32 countries				
AT Austria	175	211	36	20.6%
BE Belgium	155	283	128	82.6%
BG Bulgaria	398	771	373	93.7%
CH Switzerland	946	1 371	425	44.9%
CY Cyprus	55	124	69	125.5%
CZ Czech Republic	136	175	39	28.7%
DE Germany	1 189	2 067	878	73.8%
DK Denmark	41	53	12	29.3%
EE Estonia	23	57	34	147.8%
ES Spain	298	519	221	74.2%
FI Finland	84	94	10	11.9%
FR France	651	1 083	432	66.4%
GR Greece	7 979	5 054	-2 925	-36.7%
HU Hungary	150	206	56	37.3%
IE Ireland	15	42	27	180.0%
IS Iceland	11	18	7	63.6%
IT Italy – host country				
LI Liechtenstein	1	1	0	0.0%
LT Lithuania	38	175	137	360.5%
LU Luxembourg	23	49	26	113.0%
LV Latvia	30	63	33	110.0%
MT Malta	30	44	14	46.7%
NL The Netherlands	100	114	14	14.0%
NO Norway	73	148	75	102.7%
PL Poland	786	1 478	692	88.0%
PT Portugal	71	121	50	70.4%
RO Romania	908	2 456	1 548	170.5%
SE Sweden	120	124	4	3.3%
SI Slovenia	223	387	164	73.5%
SK Slovakia	130	186	56	43.1%
TR Turkey	139	384	245	176.3%
UK United Kingdom	173	298	125	72.3%
Total Europe 32 countries	15 151	18 156	3 005	19.8%

Country of nationality	Year		Increase/decrease 2002/03-2006/07	
	2002/03	2006/07	Abs.	%
Other countries and regions				
Other European Countries	10 824	18 091	7 267	67.1%
... including Russian Federation	369	930	561	152.0%
Northern America	468	619	151	32.3%
... including United States of America	298	481	183	61.4%
Latin America and the Caribbean	2 539	5 217	2 678	105.5%
... including Mexico	125	262	137	109.6%
... including Brazil	471	1 087	616	130.8%
Africa	3 111	5 503	2 392	76.9%
Asia	3 834	7 445	3 611	94.2%
... including China	204	1 684	1 474	722.5%
... including India	228	589	361	158.3%
... including Japan	137	316	179	130.7%
Oceania	52	67	15	28.8%
Total other countries and regions	20 828	36 942	16 114	77.4%
Unknown	158	2 173	2 015	1 275.3%
Total foreign students	36 137	57 271	21 134	58.5%

Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

The major countries of origin of *incoming mobile ERASMUS students* differ rather strongly from those of *foreign students* both in the reference year for the *foreign students* data - 2006/07 - and in the most recent year for the ERASMUS Programme data - 2008/09 (Table 6). The most significant share of ERASMUS students came to Italy from Spain (35% in 2006/07 and 37% in 2008/09). In 2008/09, notable shares of ERASMUS students also came from France (10%), Germany (10%), Poland (7%) and Portugal (5%). Taken together, these five countries account for close to two thirds of all ERASMUS students in Italy. It is interesting to note that although France and Germany remain among the top three countries of origin of ERASMUS students in Italy, their share of all ERASMUS students in the country decreased over time, while Spanish ERASMUS students have become more frequent in Italian higher education institutions over the same period.

Between 1998/99 and 2008/09, the total number of incoming ERASMUS students more than doubled (Table 6). The increases in the number of Spanish and Polish students are responsible for about half of this growth in absolute numbers. It should also be specified that as from the academic year 2007/08 the ERASMUS Programme also covers placement mobility, which was previously funded through the LEONARDO da VINCI Programme. In 2008/09, out of the 17 492 incoming ERASMUS students to Italy, 1 962 (11%) completed placements. ERASMUS placements also mainly account for the growth in sheer numbers observed in Table 5 between the years 2006/07 and 2008/09. In terms of top three countries of origin of ERASMUS students in Italy completing practical training, Spain (732), followed at some distance by Germany (201) and France (200), are in the lead in the academic year 2008/09.

In comparing data in Table 5 with data in Table 6 we observe another interesting phenomenon. From the two data sets it seems that Spanish students largely prefer Italy for temporary study (5 124 Spanish ERASMUS *incoming students* vs. 519 *Spanish degree-seeking students* in Italy in the academic year 2006/07), whereas Greek, Romanian, and Polish students target Italy to obtain full degrees (the foreign students in Italy with these three nationalities by far outnumber the *ERASMUS incoming students* from these countries in the same reference year).

Table 6: Incoming ERASMUS students in Italy in 1998/99, 2002/03, 2006/07, and 2008/09 by country of home institution

Year	1998/99		2002/03		2006/07		2008/09 ¹⁸		Increase/decrease 1998/99 - 2008/09	
	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	%
AT Austria	320	5%	399	4%	437	3%	415	2%	95	30%
BE Belgium	345	5%	424	4%	487	3%	482	3%	137	40%
BG Bulgaria	0	0%	45	0%	69	0%	97	1%	97	*
CY Cyprus	3	0%	2	0%	12	0%	8	0%	5	167%
CZ Czech Republic	29	0%	148	1%	210	1%	256	1%	227	783%
DE Germany	1 142	17%	1 494	14%	1 824	12%	1 750	10%	608	53%
DK Denmark	87	1%	101	1%	87	1%	90	1%	3	3%
EE Estonia	0	0%	24	0%	50	0%	63	0%	63	*
ES Spain	1 968	29%	3 493	32%	5 124	35%	6 532	37%	4 564	232%
FI Finland	153	2%	136	1%	158	1%	180	1%	27	18%
FR France	870	13%	1 415	13%	1 638	11%	1 789	10%	919	106%
GR Greece	171	2%	226	2%	258	2%	284	2%	113	66%
HU Hungary	50	1%	208	2%	275	2%	328	2%	278	556%
IE Ireland	63	1%	103	1%	94	1%	84	0%	21	33%
IS Iceland	10	0%	11	0%	15	0%	12	0%	2	20%
IT Italy - host country										
LI Liechtenstein		0%	0	0%	2	0%	1	0%	1	*
LT Lithuania	0	0%	55	1%	137	1%	170	1%	170	*
LU Luxembourg	0	0%	0	0%	6	0%	9	0%	9	*
LV Latvia	0	0%	11	0%	35	0%	76	0%	76	*
MT Malta	0	0%	38	0%	36	0%	37	0%	37	*
NL The Netherlands	168	2%	267	2%	269	2%	379	2%	211	126%
NO Norway	52	1%	60	1%	75	1%	77	0%	25	48%
PL Poland	71	1%	403	4%	881	6%	1 149	7%	1 078	1
PT Portugal	280	4%	593	5%	753	5%	888	5%	608	217%
RO Romania	132	2%	385	4%	512	3%	423	2%	291	220%
SE Sweden	105	2%	105	1%	154	1%	148	1%	43	41%
SI Slovenia	0	0%	46	0%	70	0%	59	0%	59	*
SK Slovakia	5	0%	43	0%	89	1%	110	1%	105	2
TR Turkey	0	0%	0	0%	368	2%	787	4%	787	*
UK United Kingdom	862	13%	733	7%	654	4%	809	5%	- 53	-6%
TOTAL	6 886	100%	10 968	100%	14 779	100%	17 492	100%	10 606	154%

Source: European Commission, ISCED 5-6

¹⁸ The ERASMUS data for 2008/09 include both mobility for studies (SMS) and mobility for placements (SMP).

Regions

Two national data sources provide information on the regional spread of *incoming temporarily mobile* students within Italy: (i) the *Decimo Rapporto sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario* published by the MIUR and (ii) the ERASMUS figures published by the *Agenzia Scuola*. Both are limited to programme mobility and do not capture self-organised mobility. They differ in that the *Decimo Rapporto* looks at geographical regions, while the ERASMUS data are provided for individual institutions.

The data from the *Decimo Rapporto* reveal that there was a growth in the number of *incoming programme mobile students* between 2005/06 and 2007/08, especially in the regions of Northwest and Central Italy (Table 6). In fact, the increase in Northwest Italy was so strong (+23.6%) that this region outstripped the Centre in merely two years, which so far had been the preferred region of *programme mobile students*.

Table 7: Distribution of incoming students in the context of mobility programmes across geographical regions in Italy, in 2005/06-2007/08

Region	Year						Increase/decrease 2005/06-2007/08	
	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08			
	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%
Northwest	4 788	27.9%	5 349	30.1%	5 918	31.6%	1 130	23.6%
Northeast	4 873	28.4%	4 842	27.2%	4 965	26.5%	92	1.9%
Centre	5 229	30.5%	5 271	29.6%	5 533	29.6%	304	5.8%
South and Islands	2 262	13.2%	2 321	13.1%	2 302	12.3%	40	1.8%

Source: MIUR, ISCED 5A

Overall, the ERASMUS data for 2008/09 confirm that institutions in Northwest and Central Italy are most popular among *incoming programme mobile students*.¹⁹

Fields of study

Table 8 shows that *foreign students* in Italy have clear preferences for certain fields of study. In 2006/07, 86.6% were enrolled in the following four disciplines: social sciences, business and law (31.8%); health and welfare (20.4%); humanities and arts (19.9%); engineering, manufacturing and construction (14.5%). While *foreign students* are less frequently enrolled in the social sciences, business and law and especially in teacher training and education science than national students, they are disproportionately strongly represented in the fields of health and welfare as well as humanities and arts. However, due to the relatively small size of the body of *foreign students*, the distribution of all students across study fields in Italy is not greatly influenced by the specific distribution of *foreign students*.

¹⁹ Although the role of individual institutions is not the focus of this chapter, it is interesting to note that 44 of the top 500 European institutions receiving ERASMUS students for studies are located in Italy. The *Università di Bologna* and the *Università degli Studi di Firenze* are the only two institutions represented in the top ten list of receiving ERASMUS institutions that are not based in Spain. European Commission:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/studentin0809.pdf>

Table 8: Distribution of all students, Italian students and foreign students in Italy across fields of study, in 2006/07

Rank	Field of study	All students at Italian HEIs (N=2 033 642)	All Italian students at Italian HEIs (N=1 976 371)	Foreign students (N=57 271)
1	Social sciences, business and law	35.6%	35.7%	31.8%
2	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	15.6%	15.6%	14.5%
3	Humanities and arts	15.3%	15.2%	19.9%
4	Health and welfare	12.9%	12.7%	20.4%
5	Science, mathematics and computing	7.9%	7.9%	6.6%
6	Teacher training and education	7.3%	7.5%	2.3%
7	Services	2.7%	2.7%	1.7%
8	Agriculture and veterinary	2.3%	2.3%	2.0%
9	Unknown or not specified	0.4%	0.4%	0.8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

There are two further national data sources on the distribution of *foreign students* and *incoming students* through mobility programmes across fields of study. It is important to note that both aggregate the fields of study at a lower level and include only students at ISCED level 5A. Therefore, these data cannot be easily compared to the UOE data. However, once the figures of *foreign students* in Italy published by the MIUR²⁰ are aggregated to the fields of study used by UOE, there are only minor deviations (reference year 2007/08). A much stronger difference is visible in the data published in the *Decimo Rapporto sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario*, since the latter reflects only *incoming mobility* in the context of mobility programmes. *Incoming* programme mobile students enrol to a lesser extent in humanities and arts, and much less frequently in health and welfare studies (reference year 2007/08).

Types of higher education institutions

Table 9 shows the distribution of Italian students compared to *foreign students* across two different types of higher education institutions in Italy (MIUR data, reference year 2007/08, ISCED 5-6). One can see that the large majority (98.1%) of students in Italian higher education is enrolled in universities. The difference between national and *foreign students* is that the latter tend to be more frequently enrolled in AFAM institutions. Still, with 4.9%, only every twentieth *foreign student* decides to enrol in an AFAM institution.

²⁰ Università in cifre 2008, p.61

Table 9: Distribution of Italian and foreign students in Italy across types of higher education institutions, in 2007/08

Type of institution	All students at Italian HEIs (N=2 013 856)	Italian students at Italian HEIs (N=1 952 241)	Foreign students (N=61 615)
University	98.1%	98.2%	95.1%
AFAM	1.9%	1.8%	4.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: MIUR, ISCED 5-6

Levels of study

Table 10 provides information on the distribution of all, Italian and *foreign students* across different levels of programme (MIUR data, reference year 2007/08, ISCED 5-6). Overall, the distribution of students belonging to the three groups is quite similar. Minor differences between national and *foreign students* are that the latter tend to be enrolled more frequently in bachelor and PhD programmes. Italian students, in contrast, are enrolled more frequently into second-cycle master and other (single-cycle master level) programmes.

Table 10: Distribution of all students, Italian students and foreign students in Italy across levels of study, in 2007/08

Level of study	All students at Italian HEIs (N=2 013 856)	Italian students at Italian HEIs (N=1 953 408) ¹	Foreign students (N=60 448) ¹
Bachelor	56.4%	56.4%	57.8%
Master	12.8%	12.9%	10.5%
PhD	2.0%	1.9%	4.6%
Other ²	28.8%	28.8%	27.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

¹ In this table, the total numbers of national and foreign students differ from the figures presented in the previous tables. The MIUR classified some foreign students as national students in the data on the levels of programme.

² Other programmes include single-cycle master level degrees as well as tertiary education programmes lasting up to two years.

Source: MIUR, ISCED 5-6

2.2.2 Student outflows

Types of mobility (degree vs. credit)

In addition to data on *Italian students studying abroad* for full degrees available from UOE and analysed in section 2.1 above, the Italian institutions also collect data on *outgoing students* through the ERASMUS Programme. By juxtaposing the number of *outgoing ERASMUS students* and that of *Italian students studying abroad* we get a more complete picture of mobility outflows from Italy. In the reference year 2006/07, the most recent year for which the two data sets were available, for every 100 Italian students enrolled abroad there were 38 Italians going abroad on the ERASMUS Programme (i.e. a ratio of 38:100, Table 11). Assuming that the figures on *Italian study abroad students* reflect to a certain extent the outgoing mobility flows of Italian students, this implies that the ERASMUS Programme is of significant importance for Italian higher education in terms of promoting outgoing mobility. This is also illustrated by the fact that students from higher education institutions in Italy account for 10.8% of all students in Europe participating in the ERASMUS

Programme.²¹ The programme thus plays an important role in supporting *outgoing credit mobility* in Italy, generating close to one third of all Italian outflows in 2006/07. In 2007/08 and 2008/09 the number of *outgoing ERASMUS students* further increased, but the lack of data for *Italians studying abroad* in the same years prevents further comparisons for the time being. Nevertheless, still less than 1% of all Italian students go abroad with the ERASMUS Programme, though the share has constantly increased over the years.

Table 11: ERASMUS outgoing students in relation to all Italian students in Italy and to Italian students studying abroad, in 1998/99-2008/09

Year	All Italian students at Italian HEIs (X)	Italian study abroad students (Y)	ERASMUS outgoing students from Italy (Z)	Share of outgoing ERASMUS students of all Italians enrolled at Italian HEIs	Ratio ERASMUS outgoing : Italians studying abroad (Z:Y)
2008/09	*	*	19 376 ²²	*	*
2007/08	*	*	17 562	*	*
2006/07	1 976 371	45 044	17 195	0.9%	38:100
2005/06	1 980 257	-	16 389	0.8%	*
2004/05	1 970 077	-	16 419	0.8%	*
2003/04	1 945 856	-	16 809	0.9%	*
2002/03	1 877 215	43 092	15 215	0.8%	35:100
2001/02	1 825 753	*	13 951	0.8%	*
2000/01	1 783 097	*	13 237	0.7%	*
1999/00	1 745 073	*	12 407	0.7%	*
1998/99	1 773 745	43 268	10 868	0.6%	0.25

Source: UOE, European Commission, ISCED 5-6

Countries of destination

Table 12 lists the major countries of destination of *Italian study abroad students*. As can be seen, the preferred country of destination is the United Kingdom (21.5%). The top 5 countries are all in Western Europe. Almost three quarters (72.7%) of *Italian study abroad students* enrol in these countries alone. The only country outside Europe appearing in the top 10 destinations is the United States (7.6%).

Study abroad students' major countries of destination (Table 12) and *foreign students'* major countries of nationality (Table 4) differ rather strongly: with the exception of Germany and Switzerland, which appear in both lists of countries, there are no congruencies.²³ Another difference is that *study abroad students* enrol in a rather small group of countries: 95.5% of all *Italian study abroad students* are enrolled in just 10 countries. As pointed out above, the body of

²¹ The ERASMUS data capture temporary enrolment periods as well as internships abroad. They do not capture other study-related activities. The latter are included in the data collected through the EUROSTUDENT project. The EUROSTUDENT data show that Italian students are as actively realising enrolment periods and internships abroad (3.4% taken together) as they are engaging in language courses, summer academies, study visits and other study-related activities abroad (3.5% taken together). Overall, however, the Italian *temporary mobility* rate is relatively low in a European comparison (EUROSTUDENT data, reference year 2005/06).

²² The ERASMUS data for 2007/08 and 2008/09 include both mobility for studies (SMS) and mobility for placements (SMP).

²³ However, the number of Italian students enrolled in Germany and Switzerland is much higher than the number of German and Swiss students enrolled in Italy (UOE data, reference year 2006/07).

foreign students in Italy is composed of many small groups from a variety of countries and a larger group from a few South-East European countries.

Overall, the mobility balance of students - as estimated according to their nationality - can be sketched as follows: The Italian higher education system attracts *foreign students* from a large variety of countries, but especially from South-East Europe, while the majority of *Italian study abroad students* is enrolled in Western European countries and the United States.

Table 12: Major countries of destination of Italian study abroad students (Top 10), in 2006/07

Rank	Country of destination	Abs.	%
1	UK United Kingdom	9 691	21.5%
2	DE Germany	7 457	16.6%
3	AT Austria	6 209	13.8%
4	FR France	4 790	10.6%
5	CH Switzerland	4 598	10.2%
6	US United States	3 416	7.6%
7	ES Spain	3 226	7.2%
8	BE Belgium	2 219	4.9%
9	SE Sweden	826	1.8%
10	NL The Netherlands	584	1.3%
	Top ten countries	43 016	95.5%
	Total study abroad students	45 044	

Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

As Table 13 shows, the overall number of *Italian study abroad students* rose by 4.5% between 2002/03 and 2006/07²⁴. This increase mainly resulted from a strong growth in the number of students enrolled in the United Kingdom (+71.9% or 4 053 students). At a much lower level in terms of absolute numbers, The Netherlands became more popular as a country of destination (+82.5% or 264 students). Moreover, the number of Italian students increased markedly in all Northern European countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden). In contrast, the number of Italian students studying in Spain decreased significantly (-48.9% or -3 088 students). Similarly – but again to a lesser degree – the number of Italian students in Germany fell (-6.8% or -546 students) as well.²⁵

²⁴ The distribution of Italian study abroad students by country of destination was not immediately retrievable for the purpose of this study, and as a result the change is observed only for the years 2002/03 and 2006/07.

²⁵ The changes in the number of *study abroad students* over time should be read with caution. The criteria and methodology according to which data on *foreign students* – and thus data on *study abroad students* – are collected by UOE have been revised repeatedly in recent years. For instance, some countries have adopted the UOE data collection convention to not include students staying in the country for less than one year in the groups of *foreign* and *incoming students*. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that e.g. the sharp fall in the number of Italian students registered in Spain partly results from the fact that the large number of Italian students going to Spain with ERASMUS were suddenly no longer included in the UOE statistics (cf. country chapter on Spain in this publication).

Table 13: Italian study abroad students by country of destination, in 2002/03 and 2006/07

Country of destination	Year		Increase/decrease 2002/03-2006/07	
	2002/03	2006/07	Abs.	%
Europe 32 countries				
AT Austria	6 149	6 209	60	1.0%
BE Belgium	2 185	2 219	34	1.6%
BG Bulgaria	10	13	3	30.0%
CH Switzerland	4 448	4 598	150	3.4%
CY Cyprus	5	9	4	80.0%
CZ Czech Republic	4	33	29	725.0%
DE Germany	8 003	7 457	-546	-6.8%
DK Denmark	115	185	70	60.9%
EE Estonia	5	6	1	20.0%
ES Spain	6 314	3 226	-3 088	-48.9%
FI Finland	107	159	52	48.6%
FR France	4 740	4 790	50	1.1%
UK United Kingdom	5 638	9 691	4 053	71.9%
GR Greece	25	81	56	224.0%
HU Hungary	12	36	24	200.0%
IE Ireland	154	278	124	80.5%
IS Iceland	21	34	13	61.9%
IT Italy – home country				
LI Liechtenstein	*	2	*	
LT Lithuania	19	50	31	163.2%
LU Luxembourg	*	*	*	
LV Latvia	15	5	-10	-66.7%
MT Malta	4	9	5	125.0%
NL The Netherlands	320	584	264	82.5%
NO Norway	61	95	34	55.7%
PL Poland	20	48	28	140.0%
PT Portugal	167	240	73	43.7%
RO Romania	44	134	90	204.5%
SE Sweden	686	826	140	20.4%
SI Slovenia	70	104	34	48.6%
SK Slovakia	1	8	7	700.0%
TR Turkey	11	15	4	36.4%
Total Europe 32 countries	39 353	41 144	1 791	4.6%

Country of destination	Year		Increase/decrease 2002/03-2006/07	
	2002/03	2006/07	Abs.	%
Other countries and regions				
Other European Countries	2	9	7	350.0%
... including Russian Federation	0	2	2	
Northern America	3 287	3 416	129	3.9%
... including United States of America	3 287	3 416	129	3.9%
Latin America and the Caribbean	60	29	-31	-51.7%
... including Mexico	0	0	0	
... including Brazil	8	0	-8	-100.0%
Africa	1	0	-1	-100.0%
Asia	94	135	41	43.6%
... including China	0	0	0	
... including India	0	0	0	
... including Japan	67	122	55	82.1%
Oceania	295	287	-8	-2.7%
Total other countries and regions	3 739	3 876	137	3.7%
Unknown	*	24	*	
Total study abroad students	43 092	45 044	1 952	4.5%

Source: UOE, ISCED 5-6

Although the ERASMUS data cover only *programme mobility*, they give a partial picture of the directions of *outgoing credit mobility* from Italy. Table 14 shows a larger presence of ERASMUS students from Italy in Romance-language countries, and among them especially Spain, both for the reference year of the study – 2006/07 – and the most recent year available for the ERASMUS Programme – 2008/09. In 2008/09, over one third of the students (36%) went to Spain and, in second place, about one sixth of students to France. Thereby, the country pattern of outgoing ERASMUS mobility flows differs from the list of preferred countries of destination of *Italian study abroad students* (Tables 13 and 14).

Table 14: Italian students going abroad through the ERASMUS Programme in 1998/99, 2002/03, 2006/07, and 2008/09

Year	1998/99		2002/03		2006/07		2008/09 ²⁶		Increase/ decrease 1998/99 - 2008/09	
	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	% of all	Abs.	%
AT Austria	329	3%	335	2%	266	2%	292	2%	- 37	-11%
BE Belgium	500	5%	576	4%	600	3%	712	4%	212	42%
BG Bulgaria	0	0%	11	0%	13	0%	18	0%	18	*
CY Cyprus	1	0%	6	0%	13	0%	23	0%	22	2 200%
CZ Czech Republic	11	0%	75	0%	126	1%	178	1%	167	1 518%
DE Germany	1 629	15%	1 895	12%	1 708	10%	1 836	9%	207	13%
DK Denmark	219	2%	305	2%	363	2%	402	2%	183	84%
EE Estonia	0	0%	18	0%	54	0%	55	0%	55	*
ES Spain	2 611	24%	4 821	32%	6 350	37%	7 044	36%	4 433	170%
FI Finland	241	2%	352	2%	392	2%	436	2%	195	81%
FR France	1 927	18%	2 664	18%	2 687	16%	3 004	16%	1 077	56%
GR Greece	131	1%	168	1%	139	1%	136	1%	5	4%
HU Hungary	30	0%	131	1%	137	1%	159	1%	129	430%
IE Ireland	161	1%	236	2%	261	2%	359	2%	198	123%
IS Iceland	11	0%	26	0%	22	0%	35	0%	24	218%
IT Italy - home country										
LI Liechtenstein	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	*
LT Lithuania	0	0%	22	0%	50	0%	72	0%	72	*
LU Luxembourg	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	0%	4	*
LV Latvia	0	0%	2	0%	8	0%	26	0%	26	*
MT Malta	0	0%	42	0%	89	1%	90	0%	90	*
NL The Netherlands	523	5%	527	3%	630	4%	671	3%	148	28%
NO Norway	108	1%	135	1%	190	1%	226	1%	118	109%
PL Poland	11	0%	123	1%	269	2%	307	2%	296	2 691%
PT Portugal	299	3%	620	4%	789	5%	853	4%	554	185%
RO Romania	25	0%	89	1%	142	1%	149	1%	124	496%
SE Sweden	333	3%	386	3%	468	3%	514	3%	181	54%
SI Slovenia	0	0%	17	0%	23	0%	32	0%	32	*
SK Slovakia	0	0%	32	0%	25	0%	21	0%	21	*
TR Turkey	0	0%	0	0%	55	0%	118	1%	118	*
UK United Kingdom	1 768	16%	1 601	11%	1 326	8%	1 604	8%	- 164	-9%
TOTAL	10 868	100%	15 215	100%	17 195	100%	19 376	100%	8 508	78%

Source: European Commission, ISCED 5-6

²⁶ The ERASMUS data for 2008/09 include both mobility for studies (SMS) and mobility for placements (SMP).

Over the period 1998/99-2008/09, the number of Italian students going abroad through the ERASMUS Programme almost doubled (growth rate of +78%), the highest increases in absolute numbers being observed in students going to the two Romance-language countries Spain and France. As in the case of incoming students, it is interesting to observe that more Italian students prefer Spain for temporary mobility rather than for full degree studies (Tables 13 and 14), whereas the number of Italian degree-seeking students in the UK, Germany and Austria greatly outnumber the outgoing ERASMUS Italian students in these countries. As mentioned above, the 2008/09 ERASMUS data include placement mobility (1 622 or 8%) in addition to student mobility for studies, being responsible for part of the growth rate mentioned above. The top 3 destinations of Italian students going abroad for this type of practical training in 2008/09 were Spain (496), the UK (292) and Germany (156).

Regions

In addition to the data sources that were used to analyse *incoming mobility flows* by regions (MIUR and ERASMUS data), a third source is available for the analysis of *outgoing flows* by regions: the AlmaLaurea graduate surveys.

The MIUR data presented in Table 15 show that the number of students from Italian universities participating in mobility programmes increased in all regions between 2005/06 and 2007/08. The largest increase by far – both in absolute and relative terms – was observed for institutions in Northwest Italy, which, already in 2005/06, was the region with most *outgoing credit mobile students*. Interestingly, there was also a considerable increase of *outgoing students* in Southern Italy and the Islands (+20.4% between the years under study). Thus, while institutions from Southern Italy and the Islands have difficulty in attracting *programme mobile students* from other countries, they seem to have made progress in enabling their students to spend a study-related stay abroad.

Table 15: Distribution of outgoing students in the context of mobility programmes across geographical regions in 2005/06-2007/08

Region	Year						Increase/decrease 2005/06-2007/08	
	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		Abs.	%
	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%		
Northwest	5 890	31.2%	6 897	32.8%	7 694	34.1%	1 804	30.6%
Northeast	4 837	25.6%	4 992	23.7%	5 238	23.2%	401	8.3%
Centre	4 806	25.4%	5 326	25.3%	5 584	24.7%	778	16.2%
South and Islands	3 371	17.8%	3 819	18.2%	4 058	18.0%	687	20.4%

Source: MIUR, ISCED 5A

The ERASMUS data for 2008/09 generally confirm the picture in Table 14. However, most ERASMUS mobile students were enrolled in institutions in Central Italy and not in Northwest Italy prior to their temporary stay abroad.²⁷

²⁷ In the case of *outgoing ERASMUS students*, a look at the institutional level is useful. In 2008/09, 46 of the top 500 European institutions sending ERASMUS students abroad were based in Italy. With 1 469 students, the *Università di Bologna* was number two in Europe in terms of sending students abroad via the ERASMUS Programme. The *Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza'* occupied the 7th rank (1 108 students). At the same time, more than half of all Italian higher education was either not at all or only very marginally engaged in sending students abroad with ERASMUS. (European Commission: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/studiesout0809.pdf>).

It is important to note that the MIUR data inform on the spread of *outgoing students* in the context of mobility programmes across regions. However, they do not tell us anything about the likelihood of students from a certain region undertaking a study-related stay abroad, since they are not compared to the total number of students studying in a certain region. This information can be retrieved from the AlmaLaurea graduate surveys. However, as with any graduate survey restricted to one country, they do not contain information on *outgoing students* who went abroad but did not return to their home institutions.

Table 16 presents data from the 2008 AlmaLaurea graduate survey. It can be seen that the likelihood of having studied abroad with ERASMUS or another EU programme is highest in Northeast Italy (7.7%). In contrast, graduates are more likely to have been abroad for another foreign study experience in Northwest Italy (7.6%). Graduates are least likely to have been abroad if they were enrolled in institutions in Southern Italy and the Islands during their studies (4.0% of graduates went abroad with ERASMUS or another EU programme and 3.5% went abroad for another foreign study experience).

Table 16: Italian graduates according to the geographical location of their university and the type of study abroad experience, 2008 (line percentages)¹

Region	ERASMUS or other EU programmes	Other foreign study abroad experiences	No foreign study experience	Not specified
Northwest	6.3%	7.6%	85.7%	0.3%
Northeast	7.7%	6.4%	85.6%	0.3%
Centre	6.1%	5.8%	87.7%	0.4%
South and Islands	4.0%	3.5%	91.8%	0.6%
Total	6.1%	5.6%	87.9%	0.4%

¹including various types of temporary programme and self-organised mobility, from regular enrolment to other study-related experiences

Source: AlmaLaurea, ISCED 5A

Fields of study

In Italy, two national and one international data sources provide information on the fields of study of *Italians temporarily studying abroad*.

The MIUR published data on the spread of *outgoing programme mobile students* in the *Decimo Rapporto sullo Stato del Sistema Universitario*. The classifications used in this publication can be aggregated approximately to the study fields used by UOE; the result is shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Outgoing programme mobile students from Italy by fields of study, in 2007/08

Rank	Field of study	Abs.	%
1	Social sciences, business and law	7 949	35.2%
2	Humanities and arts	6 695	29.7%
3	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	3 836	17.0%
4	Health and welfare	1 735	7.7%
5	Science, mathematics and computing	1 448	6.4%
6	Teacher training and education science	355	1.6%
7	Agriculture and veterinary	326	1.4%
8	Services ¹	*	*
9	Unknown or not specified	227	1.0%
	Total	22 574	100 0%

¹ None of the fields of study used in the MIUR data corresponded to the subjects belonging to services according to UOE.
Source: MIUR, ISCED 5A

As Table 17 illustrates, the largest group of *outgoing programme mobile students* was enrolled in the field of social sciences, business and law (35.2%) at their home institution in 2007/08, followed by students of humanities and arts (29.7%) and engineering, manufacturing and construction (17.0%). Unfortunately, these groups of students cannot be compared to the number of national students at home institutions, as the *Decimo rapporto* does not provide these figures and as MIUR uses yet another classification for the fields of study in its publication *Università in cifre 2008*.

However, two other data sources (EUROSTUDENT III and AlmaLaurea) allow us to examine the mobility rates of students by fields of study. Instead of showing the distribution of *programme mobile students* by fields of study, Table 18 illustrates how many students of a certain discipline had study-related experiences abroad²⁸ during their studies (reference year 2005/06).

Table 18: Study-related experiences abroad by fields of study, in 2005/06

Field of study	% of all students in field
Humanities and Arts	14.3%
Agriculture	7.9%
Social Sciences business and law	5.2%
Engineering manufacturing construction	5.1%
(Natural) Science	3.5%
Education	3.2%
Services	2.0%
Health and Welfare	1.9%

Source: EUROSTUDENT III, ISCED 5A

Italian students in humanities and arts are most likely to leave their home institution for a study-related experience abroad (14.3%). Interestingly, students in Agriculture have the second highest outgoing mobility rate (7.9%). This is likely to be related to field trips abroad, which are integrated in the home curriculum or coursework, but are not supported through mobility programmes (and are

²⁸ In the EUROSTUDENT III data, study-related experiences include temporary enrolment periods abroad, internships, language courses, summer academies, study visits and other study-related activities abroad.

thus not counted in the MIUR data presented above). According to EUROSTUDENT III data, only 5.2% of students in Social sciences, business and law have study-related experiences abroad.²⁹

Levels of study

As the AlmaLaurea graduate survey data in Table 19 illustrate, the share of single-cycle master level students with a study-related experience abroad was higher in recent years than the share of bachelor students with similar experiences. However, the highest mobility rates are observed for second-cycle master level students.

Table 19: Share of graduates having been abroad during their studies by level of study, in 2006-2008¹

Level of study at the time of going abroad	Share of graduates 2006 (N=185 361)	Share of graduates 2007 (N=184 669)	Share of graduates 2008 (N=187 359)
First-cycle Bachelor level (<i>laurea triennale</i>)	8.6%	10.6%	10.5%
Second-cycle Master (<i>laurea specialistica</i>)	15.1%	14.8%	14.7%
Single-cycle Master level (<i>laurea specialistica</i>)	11.1%	14.0%	14.6%

¹Including various types of temporary programme and self-organised mobility from regular enrolment to other study-related experiences
Source: AlmaLaurea. ISCED 5A

This seems to be related to the higher participation rates of master level students in EU mobility programmes. While 8.5% of the 2008 graduates from both single-cycle and second-cycle master level programmes took part in ERASMUS or other EU mobility programmes during their studies, the share of bachelor students stood at 'only' 5.3% in the same year (AlmaLaurea data, reference year 2008). With regard to study-related experiences other than enrolment abroad, bachelor students are only slightly less mobile than single-cycle and second-cycle master level students (5.2% compared to 6.1% and 6.2%, respectively).³⁰ Nevertheless, the share of mobility should be considered across the two levels taken together for any comparison with mobility levels in the pre-Bologna study programmes to be meaningful.

Characteristics of students

One of the focuses for the analysis of *credit mobility* is the students' socio-economic background. Several studies have shown that in most European countries students from upper social backgrounds are more likely to spend periods abroad than students from lower social backgrounds.³¹ In this respect, Italy is no exception. As the AlmaLaurea data presented in Table 20 show, the educational attainment of students' parents significantly influences the likelihood of students being temporarily mobile during their studies. One fifth of students with both parents holding a higher education degree were mobile during their studies. In contrast, only 5.7% of students whose parents went to primary school or had no qualification had study-related experiences abroad. The higher the educational attainment of the students' parents, the higher the

²⁹ The AlmaLaurea data for the last years – although aggregated to different fields of study than the EUROSTUDENT data – generally confirm the finding that students in humanities and arts and – to a lesser extent – students in agriculture show high mobility rates. AlmaLaurea finds slightly higher mobility rates for students in social sciences, business and law than EUROSTUDENT III. In line with EUROSTUDENT III data, AlmaLaurea data include temporary enrolment periods abroad as well as other study-related activities, both in the context of mobility programmes and self-organised ones.

³⁰ Overall, these findings are evidence in favour of the hypothesis that mobility tends to take place at later stages of studies (cf. Orr, D.; Schnitzer, K.; Frackmann, E.: *Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe. Synopsis of Indicators*, 2008).

³¹ cf. Orr, Schnitzer, Frackmann, 2008, op.cit. and Di Pietro, G; Page, L.: "Who Studies Abroad? Evidence from France and Italy". *European Journal of Education*, 43 (3), 389-398.

likelihood that a student will spend a period abroad whilst studying. This does not only apply to what is labelled here as other study abroad experiences – i.e. self-organised mobility – but also to ERASMUS and other EU programmes.

Table 20: Graduates according to their parents' educational qualifications and type of study abroad experience, in 2008 (line percentages)

Parents' educational background	ERASMUS or other EU programmes	Other study abroad experiences	No study abroad experience	Not specified
Both parents with higher education degree (N=16 534)	10.4%	8.9%	80.4%	0.2%
Only one parent with higher education degree (N=26 749)	8.1%	6.9%	84.8%	0.2%
High school diploma (N=74 930)	5.8%	5.4%	88.5%	0.2%
Middle schooling (N=36 732)	4.4%	4.1%	91.3%	0.3%
Primary school or no qualification (N=10 421)	2.5%	3.2%	93.9%	0.4%

Source: AlmaLaurea. ISCED 5A

Interestingly, the educational background of the students' parents seems to play a more crucial role for temporary enrolment periods abroad – e.g. via ERASMUS or other EU programmes – than for other study abroad experiences. Students whose parents hold a higher education degree are 4.2 times more likely to be temporarily enrolled abroad than students whose parents went to primary school or have no qualification. In contrast, they are 'only' 2.8 times more likely to spend periods devoted to other activities abroad.³²

Another important aspect in the context of analysing student mobility is the range of obstacles to mobility phases that students perceive. Information on the hindrances to mobility can be retrieved from the EUROSTUDENT III data. The two greatest perceived obstacles for both *mobile* and *non-mobile Italian students* seem to be financial insecurities and the insufficiency of support offered by Italian institutions (Table 21). Financial insecurities are mentioned more often by *non-mobile* than by *mobile students* (26.9% as opposed to 20.9%). As can be seen in Table 21, 36.2% of students from less educated backgrounds compared to 'only' 16.3% of students whose parents hold a higher education degree perceive financial insecurities as a barrier to mobility.

The fact that *non-mobile students* consider financial insecurities as the strongest barrier to mobility could imply that additional resources for mobility programmes may be needed if an increase in the temporary mobility of Italian students is to remain a political goal.

³² Further evidence on this phenomenon can be found in the Italian EUROSTUDENT III data set (reference year 2005/06).

Table 21: Shares of mobile and non-mobile students considering certain factors to be a (very) great barrier to mobility, in 2005/06¹

Types of obstacles	Students who have been abroad	Students who have not been abroad by parental education		
	Total	Total	Up to lower secondary education	Higher education
	(very) strong barrier	(very) strong barrier	(very) strong barrier	(very) strong barrier
Lack of individual motivation	5.3%	16.3%	16.4%	14.4%
Financial insecurities	20.9%	26.9%	36.2%	16.3%
Insufficient support of mobility in guest country	20.1%	15.7%	19.5%	13.4%
Insufficient support of mobility in home country	32.7%	24.1%	30.6%	17.8%
Lack of language competency	10.6%	11.2%	13.0%	9.3%

¹As multiple answers were possible, the columns do not add up to 100%.

Source: EUROSTUDENT III, ISCED 5A

3 Summary assessment of student mobility in Italy

In Italy, various data sources allow us to analyse student mobility flows into and especially out of the country. If taken together, they cover a broad range of aspects that are relevant for the analysis of student mobility. However, the explanatory power of these data is limited in several respects. On the one hand, the administrative data covering the entire student population are not (yet) collected according to students' countries of prior residence or education, but to the nationality of students. This makes it impossible to separate students with a migration background from *genuinely mobile students*. On the other hand, the data sources that do capture *genuine mobility* flows are all restricted to periods of *temporary mobility*. Among these, the programme statistics (MIUR, ERASMUS) are confined to organised forms of mobility, while the student and graduate survey data (EUROSTUDENT III, AlmaLaurea) are limited to outgoing mobility, with no information on inflows. Since all these data sources refer to different groups of students and since different methodologies were used to obtain them, they are hardly comparable. In order to obtain a clear and coherent picture of student mobility flows into and out of the country, more comprehensive and methodologically standardised data are needed.

- The analysis has shown that in recent years, there has been a very strong rise in the number of *foreign students* enrolled in Italian higher education. As the number of *Italian study abroad students* has increased only slightly, there are more *foreign students* in Italy now than *Italian students abroad*. Looking at the most recent data available it can be estimated that both the numbers of *foreign* and *study abroad students* will continue to grow in the next few years. At present, however, their absolute numbers remain rather low by European standards.
- Beyond the trends that are visible at the highest aggregate level, there are interesting differences between *foreign* and *study abroad students* as well as between *incoming* and *outgoing programme mobile students* with respect to specific descriptors. In the case of Italy, student mobility concentrates on the European area both with regard to *inflows* and

outflows. While *foreign students* in Italy tend to be from a variety of countries, but especially from Albania and other South-East European countries, *Italian study abroad students* prefer to enrol in a limited number of Western European countries, above all in the United Kingdom. *Credit mobility* flows via ERASMUS are to a much greater extent focused on two Romance-language countries: Spain and – to a much lesser degree – France.

- For historical reasons, the analysis of differences between individual regions of the country plays an important role in Italy. As shown above, Northwest Italy has surpassed the Centre regarding the number of *incoming programme mobile students* in the last few years. Similarly, it has consolidated its top position in terms of sending *outgoing programme mobile students* abroad. Interestingly, students from this region spend study periods abroad more frequently outside of the ERASMUS Programme and engage more often in other study-related experiences abroad than their fellows from other regions. Further studies could examine whether this has to do with the initiatives of institutions in this region or with students' background, e.g. their language skills or their financial situation.
- Regarding the fields of study in which *foreign* and *study abroad students* are enrolled, the different data sources do not always provide consistent evidence. Still, it seems safe to conclude that both *incoming* and *outgoing students* in humanities and arts, and above all in languages, are among the most mobile groups of students, both with regard to *credit mobility* and other study-related activities. A particularly interesting phenomenon is the high share of *foreign students* in Italy enrolled in health and welfare studies.
- With regard to *temporary outgoing mobility*, the available data provide us with a good idea of the patterns of social selectivity and factors that inhibit students to be mobile. The likelihood of students spending a study-related stay abroad rises with the educational qualifications of their' parents. In this respect, the parents' educational background seems to play an even more crucial role for temporary enrolment periods abroad than for other study-related experiences.