

II. SOURCES AND METHOD

Information on national policies and perspectives has been compiled from published sources together with background papers submitted by country representatives to the OECD, and kindly made available by the latter. This was supplemented by direct consultation with Government officials and representatives of educational organisations in EC capitals. Visits were made to Brussels, Paris, Bonn and the Hague, in the course of which nine extended interviews were conducted. Further consultations were held by telephone with officials in Rome, Copenhagen and Dublin. We are grateful to those consulted for their generous help, and for comments and corrections to relevant sections of this report in draft. Attempts to elicit information by direct contact in Greece, Portugal and Spain were unsuccessful, although in the case of Greece we have been able to extract some data from the country report submitted to the OECD. A full list is given at the end of this report of those to whom acknowledgment is due.

Statistical tables have been constructed by calculation from UNESCO and national sources, showing numbers of students from abroad in full-time 3rd-level study in the EC for the latest years for which comparable figures are available. Composite tables A-D show the pattern of student mobility within the EC (Table A), total numbers of foreign students in each EC country by continent of origin (Table B), student flow into EC member states from each country of the Commonwealth (Table C), and the top 10 sending countries to each EC member state in rank order (Table D). More detailed intake figures showing student flow into nine EC countries (excluding Greece, Luxembourg and Spain) are also given. The notes of explanation to the Tables give some indication of the problems encountered by lack of consistency in data-gathering systems across the EC.

III. NATIONAL POLICY

IIIA. Policy Overview

This section gives a comparative summary of the current policy concerns in relation to foreign students of EC host countries for which information could be assembled: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. It was not possible to obtain parallel information for Luxembourg, Portugal or Spain.

Numbers and distribution

Foreign student numbers as a proportion of total enrolment vary from approximately 3% to 12.5%. Comparison is made difficult by varying definitions of 'foreign student' status by nationality, domicile, nature of pre-entry qualification or (in the case of Greece) descent. Few of the receiving countries have a declared national policy on foreign student numbers *per se*; although where differential fee revenue is a factor in institutional funding (Belgium, Ireland, UK) there is a clear financial incentive to expand recruitment. Nonetheless, 'open door' policies and even commitment to raise foreign-student numbers are found in France, Germany and Italy, where there is no revenue incentive (indeed a substantial taxpayer subsidy on tuition) and heavy pressure on absorption of domestic students into the tertiary system. For purposes of social absorption of students into the surrounding communities some countries (France, Italy) have attempted to spread intake across institutions and cities, but with limited success.

Admission

Host countries vary considerably in degree of centralisation of the admissions process. Denmark, Greece and Italy have highly centralised admissions procedures; France and Germany set common minimal entry standards with decisions on admission made by institutions; while the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Ireland place responsibility for both entry standards and actual admission at the level of institutions.

Although information on area of study is not available for all countries, the past few years have seen a broad trend towards applied and technical disciplines such as science and engineering, administration