

# Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index 2017

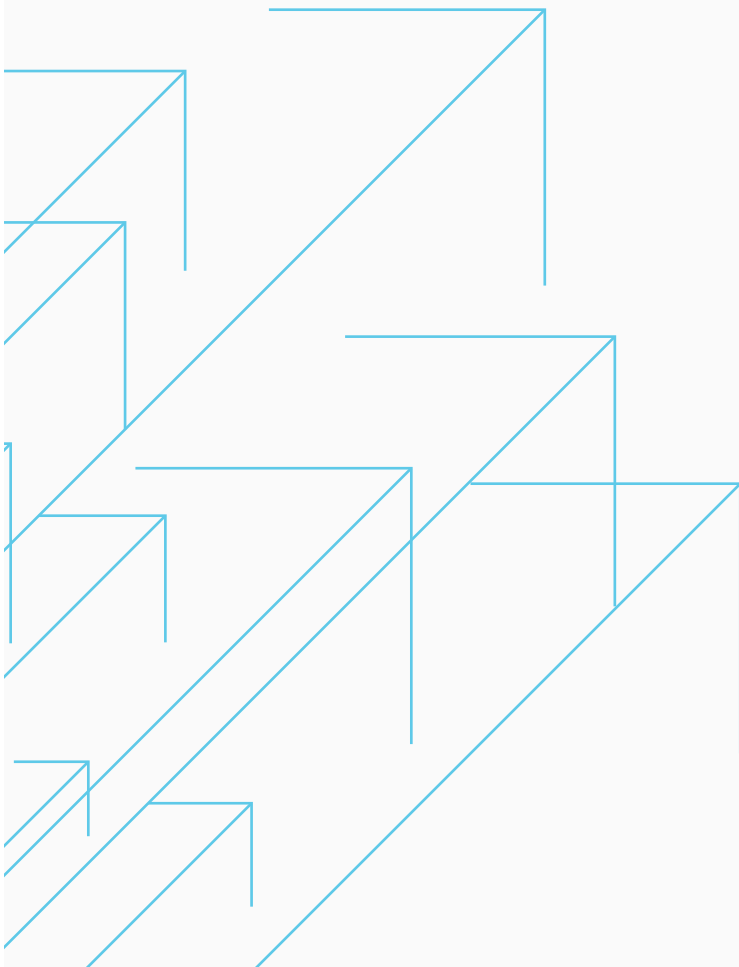


# Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index 2017

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Pursuit of higher education is becoming an element of the lives of more and more young people around the world. The increasing opportunities with regard to unrestricted communication and fast and inexpensive movement mean that young people are more and more likely to decide to attend studies in far-flung corners of the world. The process of globalisation of education has led to the emergence of a specific kind of market for education services and forced institutions of higher education around the world to compete for applicants. There are an **estimated 20 thousand institutions of higher education** around the world. Institutions of higher education are finding that they have to conduct promotional drives in a particular country and globally, and more attention is also being paid to immigration policy with regard to study. At the same time, increasing the quality of instruction and studies means there are greater opportunities for institutions of higher education to operate on an international level.

The turn of the XXI century brought with it the emergence of a kind of global race to find the best students. Promoting mobility among students and young academic staff is one of the EU's key measures in education and employment. It is also among the proposals put forward for reform of higher education in Poland. The architects of the reform point out the need for institutions of higher education to be open to foreign students. Education migration will become more important in the coming years and will significantly alter the global migration map.



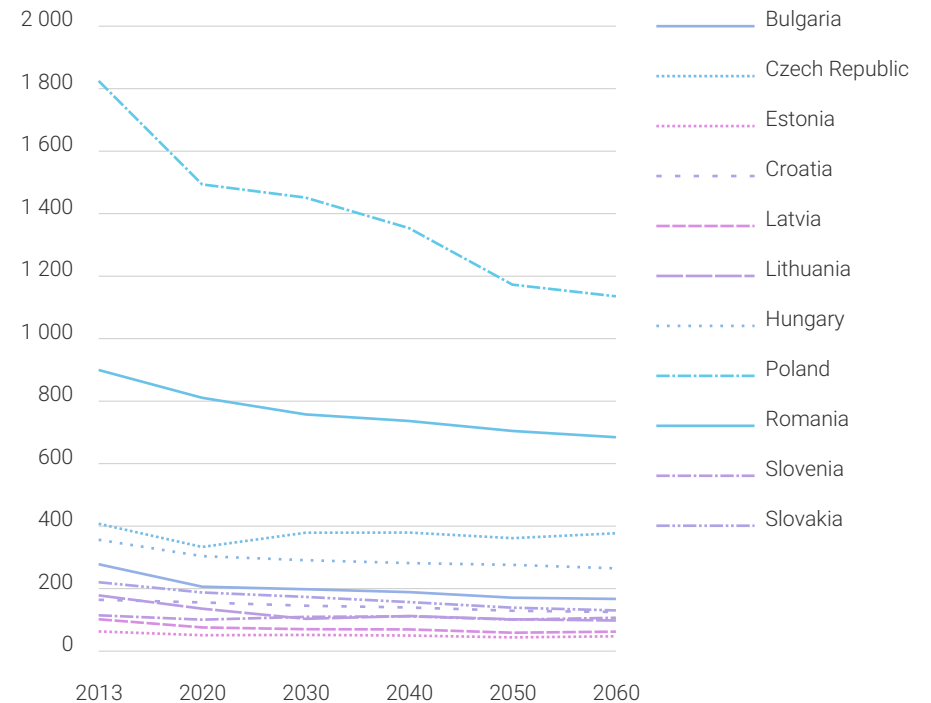
**Finding foreign students is becoming a key measure in higher education for a number of reasons:**

- 1) the presence of students and young academic researchers of diverse cultural origin gives institutions of higher education new methods and means of instruction and conducting research, and creates more favourable conditions for collaboration on research projects;
- 2) academic mobility and education at a foreign institution of higher education constitutes major experience which is highly valued by employers, while from the point of view of institutions of higher education it presents an opportunity to expand the number of potential students in the future, when a graduate takes the knowledge they have attained and fond memories of their studies at a particular institution of higher education to their country of origin;
- 3) developed countries are experiencing processes of aging and population decrease, which is reducing the population of potential students.

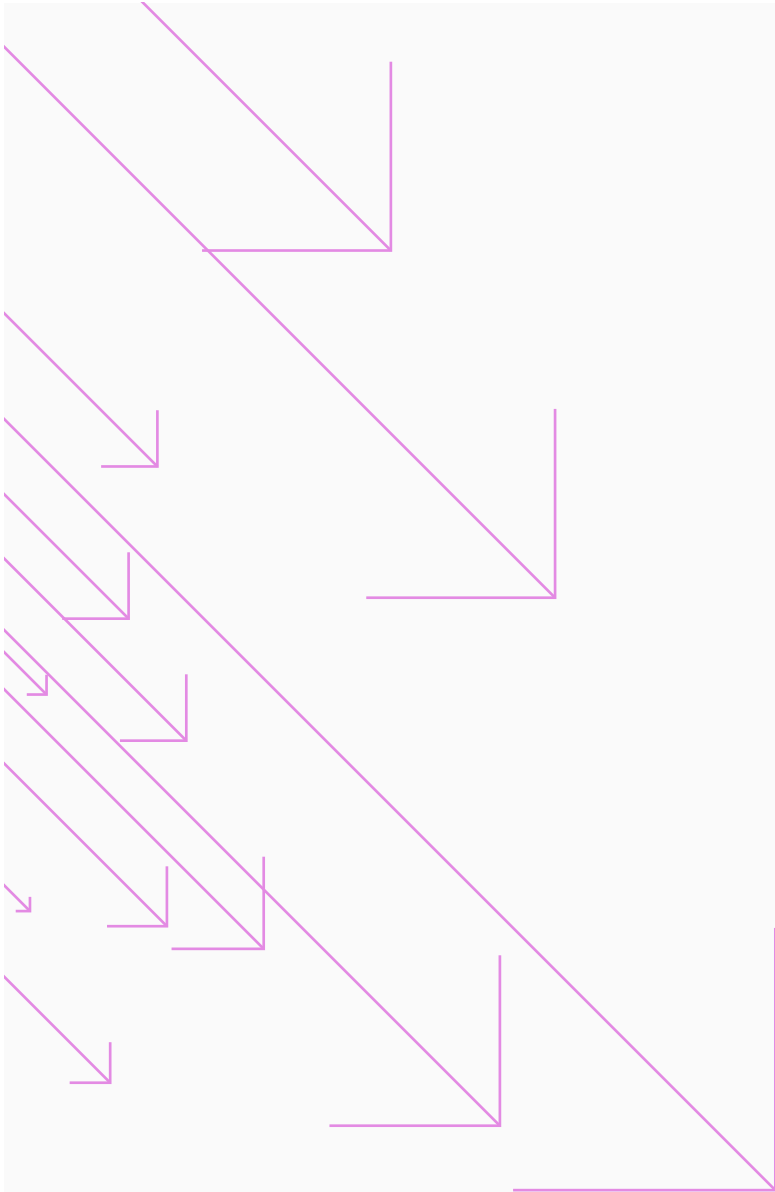
Particularly noteworthy is the demographic decline, which is one of the greatest dangers facing CEE countries. The reduction in the number of students is being felt more and more by institutions of higher education. According to EC forecasts, **the student population is expected to decline in all 11 countries in the region by 2060<sup>1</sup>**. The greatest decline will be seen in institutions of higher education in Poland, as the number of students will go down by nearly 700 000 (a drop of 38%). Poland and Germany are expected to see the largest drop in the number of their own citizens studying out of all of the EU Member States. This might mean that some institutions of higher education have to close down (in particular those that are small and those that are private), academic staff will lose their jobs, and the revenue generated by this sector will decrease.

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/european\\_economy/2015/pdf/ee3\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2015/pdf/ee3_en.pdf)

**Diagram 1**  
The number of students in CEE countries in the years 2013-2060



Source: own research on the basis of the 2015 Ageing Report. Economic and budgetary projections for 28 Member States (2013-2060), European Commission.

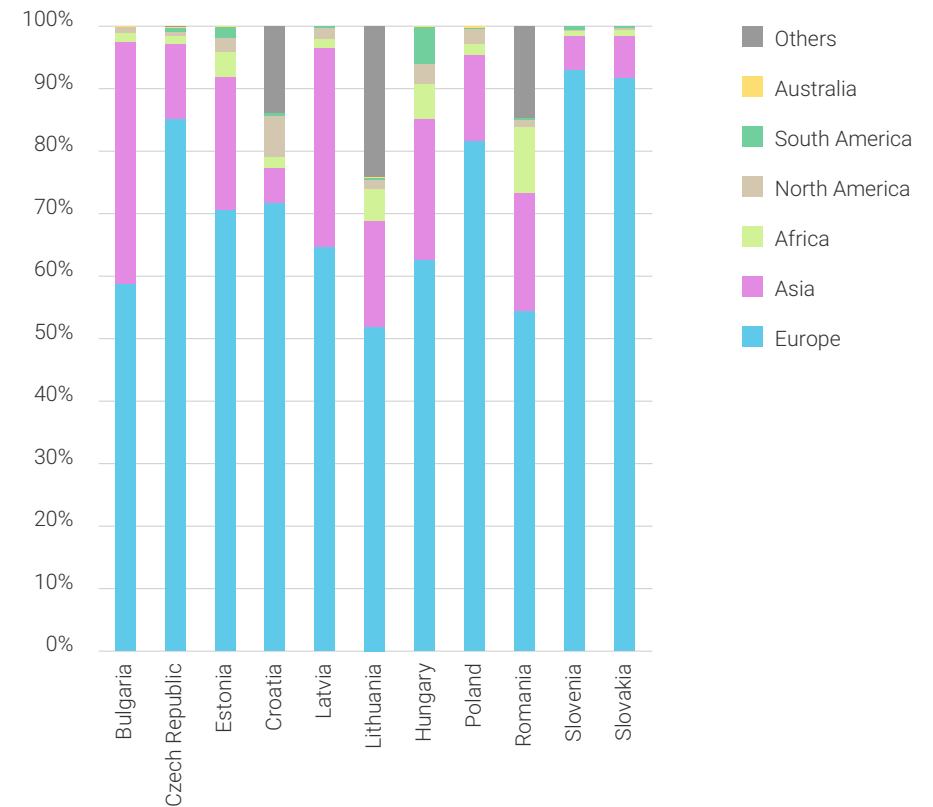


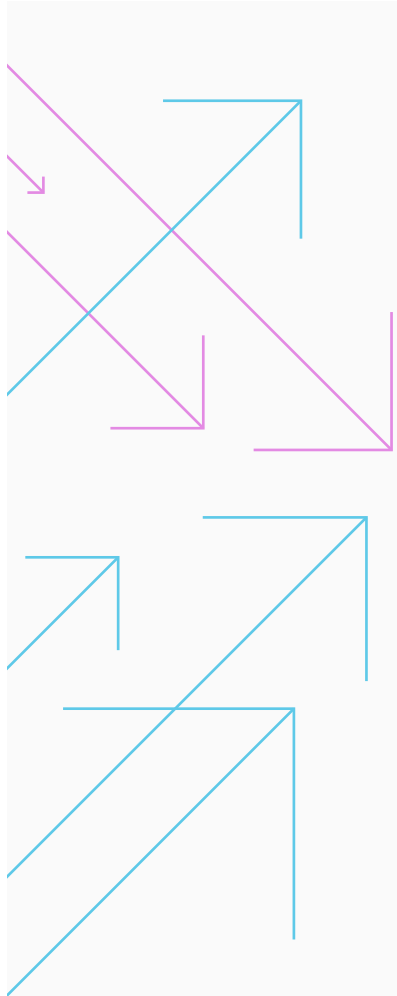
The latest OECD figures show that in 2014 the number of so-called education immigrants was **approximately 5 million**. This figure is projected to increase systematically on a global scale and could reach **8 million** by 2025<sup>2</sup>. EU countries are one of the principal destinations for education migration, but there is significant differentiation between the so-called old fifteen and the members that joined the EU from 2004 onwards. The level of operation on an international level in higher education in CEE countries is low, and this can be seen from the comparative data provided by Eurostat. The total foreign student population in 2015 in the 11 countries was just over 173 000. This was significantly less than in the **United Kingdom (431 000), in France (240 000) or for instance Germany (229 000), which are the most popular education migration destinations**. The percentage of foreign students at institutions of higher education in CEE countries varied, and in 2015 it ranged from 0.5 % in Croatia to 10.5% in the Czech Republic. **According to the latest figures, in Poland (academic year 2016/2017) the number of foreign students exceeded 65 000, which means that more than 3% of students in Poland are foreigners**. Figures for recent years show a growing trend of pursuit of studies in CEE countries, but difficulties can still be seen in overcoming competition from institutions of higher education in Western European countries.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>

Students who decide to study in a CEE country originate mainly from Europe. These are mostly immigrants from **Ukraine, Russia, or for example the Balkans**. To a lesser extent, they are EU citizens. In particular, there is a visible tendency to take up studies in a country of close geographical proximity and which is culturally and historical alike. Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Ukraine are excellent examples. The other major source of foreign students are Asian countries, the principal one of which is China. **The percentage of students from Asia in 2015 in CEE countries was between 5% and almost 39% of the total number of foreign students.** The number of immigrants from Africa, the Americas, and Australia is negligible. **Institutions of higher education in this region of Europe should aim to be more open to all nationalities.** According to forecasts, one of the largest groups of students on a global scale will be people of African or Asian origin, due to the population increase in those regions and greater interest in education services in developed countries.

**Diagram 2**  
**Origins of foreign students in CEE countries in 2015**





Specialist institutions and agencies in a particular country play a key role in increasing the level of operation on an international level in higher education. The most effective and recognisable institutions in Europe include the **German DAAD** (German Academic Exchange Service), the **French CampusFrance**, or for example the **Dutch EP-Nuffic**. Numerous EU countries have developed nationwide strategies for expanding the international scope of higher education, which are strategic in nature and define the areas in which measures in higher education are to be taken. The most interesting examples include the strategies in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. It is also worth noting that services are available in various languages and that information is localised. The best example is the website of the above-mentioned DAAD<sup>3</sup>, which can be accessed in a dozen or more languages. CEE countries do not take promotional and informational measures of this kind.

The examples of countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, or for example Germany reveal that finding foreign students can be a highly lucrative business. **In Australia alone, in the years 2014-2015, revenue generated by studies and the presence of foreign students was estimated to be 16.9 billion dollars**, which also led to the creation of almost 130 000 jobs<sup>4</sup>. **The financial benefits of having foreign students at institutions of higher education can be seen in most countries.** Finding students is becoming a more and more important way of supplementing the budgets of institutions of higher education, which are struggling to overcome among other things the decline in the number of domestic students. It also means that greater funds can be designated for research, innovation, and investment in the institution's infrastructure.

The uneven development of higher education in the EU means that there is a growing disparity between individual Member States. This is particularly noticeable in the case of innovation, education spending, the quality of instruction, and academic staff. It would therefore seem **that within the EU there is a significant disproportion in the attractiveness of higher education systems from country to country for prospective students.** At the same time, there is a tendency to perceive the attractiveness of a particular country (and particular cities and towns) according to how institutions of higher education rate in global rankings. For many years, the institutions of higher education which come top in these rankings, in particular those which for example employ the highest number of Nobel Prize winners, have been the most popular. This seems to be an approach which is however too simplistic when assessing the attractiveness of a particular country as a place to study. Assessment in this way does not take into account other factors that affect migration decision-making.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.daad.de/en/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/research-papers/Documents/ValueInternationalEd.pdf>  
(access: 03.06.2017).

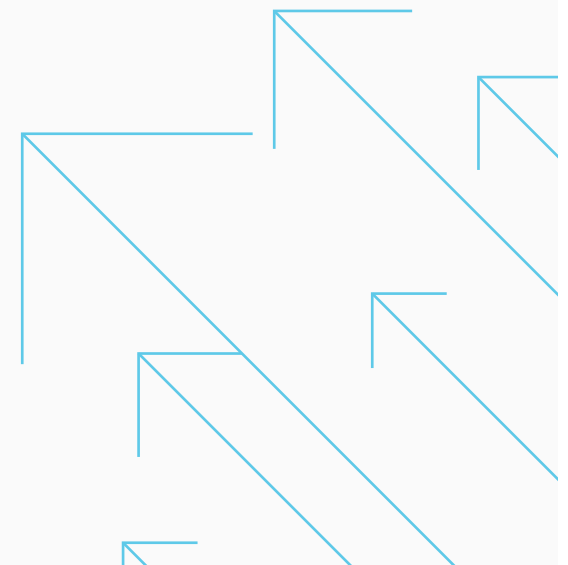
**According to analyses carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)<sup>5</sup>, the most important factors considered when choosing a particular country as a place to attend higher education the most are:**

1. The immigration policy in the destination country;
2. The opportunities for finding employment in the host country;
3. Recognition of foreign qualifications and skills in the country of origin;
4. The cost of living (according to student conditions);
5. The reputation of the institution of higher education and the academic community (compared to the country of origin);
6. Whether there is a network of students or graduates from the country of origin;
7. Language (language of instruction, ability to speak the languages of the destination country);
8. Standard of living;
9. Geographical and cultural proximity and common historical ties with the country of origin;
10. Infrastructure and the benefits and services available to students.

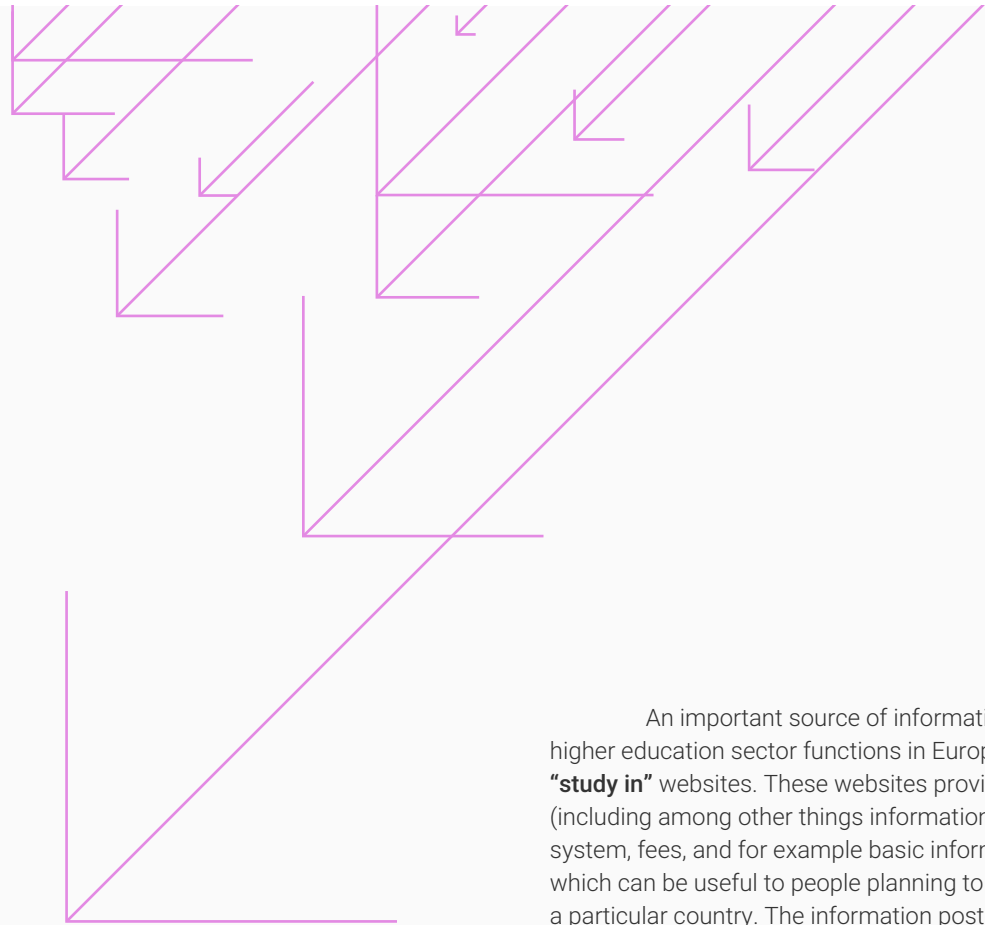
It is precisely a range of so-called attractive factors that ultimately determines which countries are the most attractive to foreigners when it comes to studying. It would also be an oversimplification to judge attractiveness according to the overall number of foreign students and the percentage of students in the overall population, because this only provides information about the level of activity on an international level. The purpose of the Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index is to show, in the form of a brief numerical breakdown of the **28 EU states**, the most attractive study migration destinations.

The indices applied are an attempt to quantify those factors which are the greatest determinants for the choice of a particular country to study in. Particular attention will be paid to the level of attractiveness of CEE countries and to the factors that might provide the competitive edge in European rivalry for foreign students. The Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index **is also a useful element of the discussion on strategy for increased activeness of higher education on an international level, solving demographic problems, and promoting mobility of young people.** A breakdown of various kinds of data can be a useful guide for anyone deciding to study abroad as to which country might be the best choice both from a financial and social point of view as well as from the point of view of the way in which higher education functions.

Guides (and indices) are the best means of representing the factors that might affect the decision to study in a particular country. Not all of the factors that affect the attractiveness of a particular region or country can be quantified. Diversity in immigration policy systems, or for instance cultural proximity, cannot be measured. Another obstacle is the fact that there is no comparable data and that data is out of date. The Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index seeks to address the issue of which factors might affect the choice of country, and furthermore the institution of higher education, and in what way various countries can be compared. It also presents a catalogue of the most recent figures used repeatedly in discussions on education systems or the migration attractiveness of a particular country. The inspiration for creating a ranking providing the broadest possible picture of attractiveness of a particular country as a place for studying was the Education Migration Attractiveness Index 2017.



<sup>5</sup> <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2008-managing-labour-mobility-evolving-global-economy>



An important source of information about how the higher education sector functions in Europe are the domestic “**study in**” websites. These websites provide practical information (including among other things information about the grant system, fees, and for example basic information about a country), which can be useful to people planning to commence studies in a particular country. The information posted on individual websites was used to prepare the **Study.EU Country Ranking 2017 for International Students**. The attractiveness of a particular country as a destination for education migration depends on factors such as the quality of instruction, cost of living, and career opportunities. This index provides results for 30 European countries, but the 10 most attractive migration destinations are ranked. There is also no access to the indices used to create the index.

The Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index was created from the point of view of a young person looking for a study course in a country other than their country of origin. This person intends to take a course for a first, second, or third cycle degree. Persons planning to move for one or two semesters as part of an Erasmus+ student exchange scheme were deliberately not taken into account. People who decide to migrate for education purposes also consider the opportunities with regard to employment when studying, and the level of safety in the community. In the context of education migration, attractiveness means choosing a country which at the same time has a broad range of internationally recognised institutions of higher education and high quality instruction, in which the cost of living while studying is relatively low, and which invests in innovation and research.

When the Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index was being created, the research methodology used was similar to that used in the construction of the Migration Attractiveness Index. **Ten different** indices were used. The value of indices such as the number of ranked institutions of higher education in the QS World University Ranking and the monthly consumer index were assumed to be vital when making migration decisions, and for this reason their weighting was doubled.

A ranking method was used when creating the index, i.e. points (weightings) were given for certain index values. The lowest value for a particular index earned **1 point**, while the highest value earned **28 points** (with respect to indices in which a multiple was applied, the lowest number of points was 2 and the highest was 56). Once all of the partial results were added together, the education migration attractiveness ranking was formulated.



## List of indices used in the research:

1. **Institutions of higher education featured in the QS World University Ranking** – the total number of institutions of higher education ranked out of a possible 1000, in brackets the highest position of one or two institutions of higher education was considered, [www.topuniversities.com](http://www.topuniversities.com) 2017.
2. **Spending on institutions of higher education** – calculated per student, in PPS, given year on year, Eurostat 2014.
3. **Value of the consumer shopping basket** – the author's own estimation of monthly spending on basic groceries, meals at a restaurant, public transport fares, cinema tickets, and Internet charges, in EUR, [numbeo.com](http://numbeo.com) 2017.
4. **Average annual income** – in PPS, Eurostat 2016.
5. **Unemployment rate** – among people aged 20-29, Eurostat 2016.
6. **Foreign Direct Investment** – year on year, in million USD, CIA The World Factbook 2016.
7. **R+D spending** – as percentage of GDP, Eurostat 2016.
8. **European Innovation Scoreboard** – index made up of a dozen or more indices, EC 2017.
9. **Community safety** – index of a number of indices, one of the components of the Global Peace Index 2017.
10. **Number of faculties in English** – sum of the faculties operated in a particular country in English, <http://www.mastersportal.eu/>, 2017.

● – highest value  
● – lowest value

\* – 2005 (no current data available)  
\*\* – 2013  
\*\*\* – 2014

Place	Score	Institutions of higher education featured in the QS WUR	Spending on institutions of higher education	Value of the consumer shopping basket	Average annual income	Unemployment rate	Foreign Direct Investment	R+D spending	European Innovation Scoreboard	Community safety	Number of faculties in English
1 Germany	273	43 (60, 68)	12 639,0	414,02	29 991	4,3	1 442 000	2,87	0,63155	1,646	801
2 United Kingdom	248	71 (4, 6)	18 093,1	479,97	28 256	7,2	1 453 000	1,70	0,60177	1,864	9 233+
3 The Netherlands	245	13 (57, 62)	14 040,8	469,11	26 926	6,6	561 400	2,01	0,6315	1,545	1 030
4 Sweden	236	8 (73, 97)	17 568,1	512,17	26 199	9,7	432 000	3,26	0,70398	1,373	567
5 Austria	233	7 (155, 183)	12 406,8	422,83	30 439	8,1	327 900	3,07	0,59111	1,390	151
6 France	216	39 (33, 53)	12 012,8	472,79	28 454	18,5	1 124 000	2,23	0,56844	1,934	366
7 Denmark	215	5 (68, 109)	ok. 27 500**	543,58	27 221	8,5	145 100	3,03	0,70027	1,347	338
8 Finland	213	10 (91, 133)	13 065,0	503,66	27 306	13,2	139 700	2,90	0,6494	1,468	240
9 Belgium	209	8 (79, 131)	12 055,1	476,96	27 924	13,7	1 240 000	2,45	0,60211	1,844	192
10 Czech Republic	197	5 (302, 501-550)	7 638,9	243,18	18 039	5,7	147 600	1,95	0,43361	1,651	49
11 Ireland	194	8 (98, 176)	10 535,8	581,52	25 907	14,0	878 100	1,51***	0,60854	1,604	597+
12 Spain	184	21 (160, 203)	9 247,2	366,62	22 809	31,3	746 800	1,22	0,36122	1,834	180
13 Hungary	178	6 (501-550)	6 398,5	248,39	12 931	7,6	119 800	1,38	0,35458	1,743	219
14 Poland	177	6 (366, 431-440)	7 213,4	238,15	16 782	11,9	287 300	1,00	0,29175	1,948	214

● – highest value  
● – lowest value

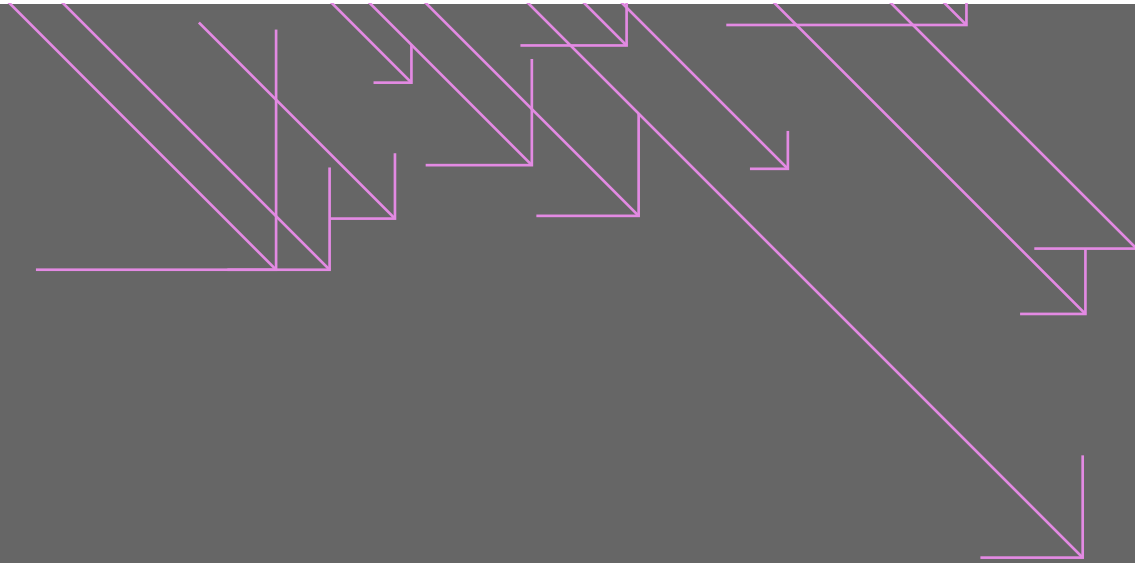
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Place	Score	Institutions of higher education featured in the QS WUR	Spending on institutions of higher education	Value of the consumer shopping basket	Average annual income	Unemployment rate	Foreign Direct Investment	R+D spending	European Innovation Scoreboard	Community safety	Number of faculties in English
15 Luxembourg	176	1 (178)	34 209,1	492,21	43 580	10,7	24 596	1,31	0,59824	1,341	3
16 Portugal	170	5 (323, 330)	8 757,4	304,53	19 786	19,0	169 100	1,28	0,41866	1,431	101
17 Italy	170	28 (183, 208)	8 409,7	427,42	24 055	25,8	505 000	1,33	0,43246	2,166	293
18 Slovenia	156	2 (601-650)	8 814,8	325,01	20 907	13,3	15 830	2,21	0,48469	1,411	25
19 Estonia	149	2 (347, 601-650)	8 985,5	320,12	17 344	9,1	26 340	1,50	0,44793	2,036	53
20 Malta	135	0	11 332,5	394,66	28 764	3,6	164 400	0,77	0,43724	-	3
21 Lithuania	130	4 (481-490)	7 362,2	293,85	15 700	12,3	17 100	1,04	0,28215	2,012	45
22 Romania	123	4 (701+)	4 179,6	206,99	8 392	12,8	76 120	0,49	0,17961	1,923	24
23 Slovakia	120	1 (651-700)	ok. 4 500*	259,88	13 337	13,0	63 270	1,18	0,35010	1,848	19
24 Cyprus	118	2 (351, 401)	9 584,1	379,28	25 471	24,3	60 350	0,46	0,45133	2,333	43
25 Bulgaria	115	1 (651-700)	4 844,4	215,59	14 255	10,2	54 980	0,96	0,24154	2,098	5
26 Greece	113	6 (395, 491-500)	ok. 5 500*	361,24	14 093	37,9	31 240	0,96	0,36421	2,072	87
27 Croatia	98	1 (651-700)	7 978,6	309,20	14 180	22,1	42 000	0,85	0,28042	1,855	3
28 Latvia	96	1 (651-700)	6 588,1	303,84	14 531	14,4	17 450	0,63	0,28142	2,011	18

## Conclusions:

- **The most attractive education migration destination in the EU is Germany.** In this country there are as many as 43 institutions of higher education in a global ranking of one thousand best institutions of higher education in the world. More than 800 faculties are available in English. Also, this country has very good macroeconomic conditions (low unemployment, high annual income and foreign investment). This country is also one of the most innovative in the EU, and designates a large amount of funds for higher education and the R+D sector.
- The **United Kingdom** is in second place. It has the largest number of institutions of higher education of worldwide renown (such as the University of Cambridge – 4th place, or for instance the University of Oxford – 6th place). The higher education system in the United Kingdom also has one of the highest rates of spending on students. English is also one of the major factors affecting the possibility of attending higher education in that country.
- The Netherlands is in third place. **It offers more than 1000 faculties in English.**
- Sweden, which came fourth, is the leader among the 28 EU countries as regards spending in the R+D sector and innovation. The conditions for studying in the Scandinavian countries are among the best among all of the EU countries.
- The first 9 places in the Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index are occupied by countries which are universally recognised as the wealthiest and most socially and economically developed. **A considerable difference can be seen in the level of attractiveness of the EU 15 and the EU 11. The Czech Republic (10th place) is the most attractive of the CEE countries.** The most important factors that make it attractive as a country for studying are the low cost of living and low unemployment among young people.
- **Poland came 14th**, just below Hungary. The reason for selecting Poland as a place for studying might be for instance **the relatively high number of institutions of higher education featured in the global ranking, and one of the lowest rates of the monthly cost of living.** Institutions of higher education in Poland offer more than 200 faculties in English, which might be an important incentive for inhabitants of Asian countries.
- Luxembourg, which came below Poland in the ranking, has one of the most interesting situations in the EU. It is a country which has the highest percentage of immigrants in society (more than 40%) and foreign students (46%). Also, the country has a number of institutions of higher education, but the most important is only the University of Luxembourg, which was founded in 2003. At this university half of the students are immigrants.
- CEE countries are attractive primarily due to **the low cost of living and geographical location.** The biggest problem in these countries is the lack of institutions of higher education recognised around the world, as well as relatively low spending on students and the R+D sector. Among the institutions of higher education the leaders are the **University of Warsaw** and the **Charles University Prague.**
- The least attractive study destination in the EU is **Latvia.** This country has only one institution of higher education in the global ranking, which was positioned 651-700. In addition, this country is also not very attractive for foreign investors, it has a low level of innovation, and is underfunded with regard to R+D.

- CEE countries need to formulate, and institutions in the education sector should play a part in this, cohesive **strategies for making higher education operational on an international level**. Countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, or Sweden can serve as a model. Promotional campaigns for institutions of higher education in this region, and in countries far away from Europe, seem to be key.
- The creation in Poland of the **National Academic Exchange Service**, which has the task of making Polish higher education operate on an international level, is a positive step.
- Migration to other countries to study could be an excellent opportunity for students from CEE countries. They can then transfer the experience gained, contacts, and models for instruction to their own countries. Promoting mobility among young people is already occurring, while in an **era of growing demographic challenges** it is vital to find incentives to return to the country of origin upon completion of education.



**Professor Cezary Żołędowski,**

Institute of Social Policy, University of Warsaw:

“Drawing up an Education Migration Destination Attractiveness Index is a very good idea – for two fundamental reasons. Firstly for research purposes (academic purposes) an index of this kind makes it significantly easier to perform in-depth comparative studies of the education migration trend, with regard to the ability of national states to take foreign students. Secondly, potentially it is highly useful for the activities of various entities involved in regulation of the higher education system, particularly as regards operation on an international level. From the point of view of the functioning of this segment of education, the significant importance of increasing the percentage of foreign students should be treated today as self-evident. It seems that no proof is needed of the fact that foreign students bring considerable financial benefits for institutions of higher education and the local community, as well as – while this is more difficult to quantify but nevertheless important – better promotion and improved image for the host country. Also, the importance of education migration will increase, and in the coming years and decades it will be a factor which is more and more important in stabilising the situation of institutions of higher education – those able to cope with the increasing competition. Faced with a growing decline in applicants for studies due to demographic reasons, and the increasing number of Poles who are getting an education abroad, for Polish institutions of higher education, gaining foreign students seems to be one of the few options for improving their situation or – at least – preventing it from deteriorating. Any views to the contrary are short-sighted and an attempt to preserve one’s own comfortable situation, and will have severe consequences.”

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