

REAL AND POTENTIAL EMIGRATION OF FORMER ERASMUS STUDENTS FROM SLOVENIA

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Extended abstract

This paper is based on the **research project** “Migration in Slovenia as a development factor for the country and its regions”, which was carried out in 2010-2013 by the Institute for Economic Research in Ljubljana. Project was financed by the Slovene research agency and by the Institute of Macroeconomic analysis and development.

The paper develops a systematic analysis of the size and characteristics of both real and potential emigration among one segment of Slovene youth (former Erasmus students) during a time of deep economic crisis in the country. This analysis is based on a **survey** of former Erasmus students of generations 2005-2010, carried out at year-end 2011 and in early 2012. It also contains a comparison of results for former Erasmus students of 1999-2004, obtained in a similar survey carried out in 2004. In 2011/2012, 5,171 persons were surveyed (81 % of total Erasmus population in the statistical sense) with 2,763 (53 %) responding. In 2004, 1,100 persons were surveyed (69 % of population) with 423 (38 %) responding.

The paper is **structured** as follows: First we present the main characteristics of the “Erasmus student mobility program”, the methodology of the analysis, and a comparison of population, sample and respondents. There then follows an analysis of the responses of surveyed former Erasmus students to particular questions in the questionnaire, which also contains comparisons with the survey results of 2004. The fifth and sixth chapters are the core of the paper. The fifth chapter contains an extensive analysis of potential emigration of Erasmus students of 2005-2010 related to employment issues (work migration). The sixth chapter deals with the total stock of emigrants over the survey period 2011/2012 – total real emigration related to employment or other reasons. For real and potential emigration the size of the phenomenon is presented and characteristics of migrant groups are compared to the same for non-migrants; the size of emigration is also estimated for the total population of former Erasmus students analysed. The paper closes with conclusions, which also contains the proposals for further research and policy.

Structure of the paper:

1. Introduction
2. Broader context
3. Methodology and comparison of population, sample and respondents

4. Characteristics of Erasmus students of 2005-2010 compared to Erasmus students 1999-2004
5. Results: potential employment emigration
6. Results: stock of emigrants (real emigration)
7. Conclusions

Results: There was a higher percentage of potential work emigrants, job seekers and recipients of job offers abroad among Erasmus students of 2005-2010 compared to those of 1999-2004. In the realised sample of Erasmus students of 2005-2010 (2,763 persons) the following *size of emigration* was recorded: 1,515 (55 %) potential work emigrants and 469 persons (17 %), who were, at the time of the survey, abroad for employment or other reasons (the stock of total real emigration). Long-term emigrants (abroad for more than three years) comprise 44 % of the total in the first group, and marginally less than one-third in the second group. The estimated number of emigrants in the total population of participants of one type of 2005-2010 Erasmus mobility (study or practice, 6,743 persons in total) amounts to 3,780 for potential and 1,453 for real emigrants.

We observed many statistically significant differences among the groups of former Erasmus students of 2005-2010 related to employment emigration and total emigration (migrants and non-migrants). The following *characteristics* of migrants and non-migrants were surveyed: socio-economic, locational (statistical region of permanent residence), former experiences in the international environment, professional characteristics, characteristics of former Erasmus mobility, factors of probability of employment abroad, decisive factors in the choice of the place (town, country) of work/stay (residence).

- The main characteristics of former Erasmus students with the *highest propensity for potential work emigration* (considering the “index of migration selectivity”) are: they are from three less developed statistical regions (Podravska, Koroška or Savinjska), their parents gained secondary education, they participated in Erasmus mobility for two semesters in 2010, and come from the following two broad study fields: ‘services’, and ‘social sciences, business and law’.
- Long-term emigration represents a real danger of permanent loss for Slovenia. The characteristics of *potential work emigrants with the highest propensity to such (long-term) emigration* are as follows: men from three less developed statistical regions (Zasavska, Pomurska or Podravska), from the following two broad study fields: ‘agriculture’ and ‘engineering, manufacturing and construction’.
- Persons with the *highest propensity to long-term emigration among those former Erasmus students of 2005-2010, who in 2011/2012 were abroad for employment or other reasons*, displayed the following characteristics: men, from four less developed regions (Koroška, Zasavska, Spodnjeposavska or Podravska), from the following three study fields – ‘health and welfare’, ‘science’ and ‘engineering, manufacturing and construction’.

The main conclusion from the analysis of *emigration by regions* is that certain important dimensions of emigration (size of emigration, propensity to emigrate – especially propensity to long-term emigration) of former Erasmus students of 2005-2010 are more dependent on regional unemployment rate than on attained level of economic development.

Main conclusion: Emigration (real and potential) among Slovene former Erasmus students of 2005-2010, who represent just 1% of total tertiary education students in the period observed, is high and worrisome. A similar analysis would also be required for all students in tertiary education and for graduates of secondary education.