



**ACADEMIC
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Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries.

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Before I begin...(1)

	Europe (Eurodata Region)	United States	Australia
Total Enrolment	19 430 382	12 853 627	1 012 210
Total Foreign Students	1 117 735	583 323	179 619
% Foreign of all Students	5.8	4.6	17.7

Foreign Tertiary Students and Total Enrolment by Host Region (non-EURODATA origins only) – 2002/03

Sources: UNESCO/IIE (Open Doors)/EURODATA/Perceptions

Before I begin... (2)

- **So Europe is in fine shape? It has more than 1.1 million foreign students. The US has only 573 000. Is that the whole story?**
- **Not quite. About half of Europe's foreign enrolment, 650 000, is from outside of Europe. Only the rest is intra-European mobility.**
- **This brings Europe very close to US figures.**

Before I begin...(3)

Country	Population in million	Number foreign students	% foreign students
DE	82	241 000	10.7
TR	70	16 000	1.3
UK	60	255 000	11.2
FR	60	222 000	10.5
IT	60	36 000	1.9
ES	40	54 000	2.9
PL	38	8 000	0.4

The Perceptions study (1)

- Why the “Perceptions study”?
- Three reasons:
 - An insight: Europe is attractive to foreign students, but there is scope for improvement. One measure to improve could be marketing.
 - An experience at my wedding: Iceland does not exist.
 - A basic truth about marketing: they might love you for something else than you think.

The “Perceptions study” (2)



- Carried out by the **Academic Cooperation Association** (ACA) between November 2004 and December 2005
- For the Directorate General Education and Culture of the **European Commission**
- **Two overriding aims:**
 - Acquire an in-depth understanding of the **perception of European higher education** in “third countries”
 - Advise the European Commission on **possible promotional activities for European higher education**, inclusive of the creation of a **European higher education brand**

Methodology



- **Main instruments:** standardised, closed questionnaires, online and hard copy:
 - **Six main target countries:** China, India, Mexico, Brazil, Russia, and Thailand
 - **Online** questionnaire open to students **world-wide**
 - **International students in the US** (control group; separate questionnaire)
- **Over 20 000 responses**

What did we ask?



Four "sets" of questions:

- **Does Europe exist on the mental map of foreign students?**
- **European higher education's relative attractiveness (compared to major competitors, mainly US, AUS)**
- **Foreign students' criteria for destination choice**
- **Foreign students' sources of information**

Does Europe 'exist'?



- **Yes and no.**
- Europe is perceived as one single entity in **economic and political terms**, but only as a range of individual countries when it comes to **higher education**
- **Dominance** of a **few** (larger) European **countries**
- Perceived **differences**: cost-related issues, student support, quality

Where Europe stands (1)

Europe tops the US in

- **Culture**
- **Tradition and History**
- **(easy) Access**
- **Safety**
- **'Elegance' (!!!)**

Where Europe stands (2)

The US tops Europe in

- **Quality of education**
- **Reputation (institutions/degrees)**
- **Innovative force and dynamism**
- **Infrastructure and equipment**
- **Employability**

Where Europe stands (3)



- So **Europe looks alright**. In some respects it leads the US (and other competitors), in others the US lead Europe.
- **Not quite**: it is exactly on the issues where the US leads Europe that students base their destination choice. Culture, history and elegance are fine, but decisions are made on **prestige, perceived quality, and 'employability'** .
- Moreover, the **US is generally viewed more positively in Asia**. Europe leads elsewhere.
- Europe's single major disadvantage in Asia: "**English is not the language of instruction**".

Where to find 'Perceptions'



"Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries"

full study:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/acareport.pdf>

summary:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/acasummary.pdf>