

is conceived as a long-term investment for society rather than as a burden on public finances. It points out that while funding sources must be diversified, cost-sharing with students has social and political limits, and it warns against excessive commercialization of higher education. UNESCO stresses that given higher education's status as a public good, no substitute will be found in the future for government funding of higher education, and it disapproves of using a limited concept of rates of return to basic and higher education as a guide for funding policies. Therefore, it calls for increased public and private investment that would allow for a renewal of enrollment growth.

A lesson of experience for UNESCO is the significance of institutional diversity for the health of academic communities, for knowledge development, and the preservation of national and local cultural identity. In its experience, the uncritical adoption of models is harmful for higher education, which must strike a balance between the universality of knowledge and the specificity of local needs.

Conclusion

Both these approaches call for an important role for government. In its defense of the long-term role of the state, the World Bank is even more forceful and specific than UNESCO. They concur on the importance of building a policy consensus among the various stakeholders in higher education. Both emphasize the need for institutional reform in higher education, and they agree that autonomy and decentralization are key elements in reform. The question now is not so much "reducing the state and expanding the market" as it is a question of building a *more capable state*.²

Another shared issue is change at the institutional level. Decentralization, autonomy, and effective management are stressed as essential ingredients of higher education reform. The need to develop more competent and legitimate public institutions in general has been pointed out as intimately connected with economic reform in less developed countries.³

Notes:

1. Except for countries such as Korea and Taiwan.
2. Merilee Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Harvard Institute for International Development, Cambridge, 1993.
3. Naím Moisés, "Latin America: the Morning After," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1995): 45–61.

European Internationalization Programs

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In March 1995, the European Parliament approved a new action program in the field of education called SOCRATES. This program incorporates and builds on the well-known program "European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students," ERASMUS, that has been in place since 1987 and has made possible an exchange of more than 200,000 students and 15,000 faculty between institutions of higher education in the European Union, including Scandinavia and Austria. The rationale behind ERASMUS at the time of its creation was primarily political and economic—to stimulate a European identity and to develop international competitiveness through education. The creation of the program was a logical addition to the research and development programs launched by the European Commission to keep up with Japan and the United States in the technological race. ERASMUS was followed by similar programs in the area of languages, LINGUA, and in the area of industry-education cooperation, COMETT.

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Under ERASMUS, more than 1,500 institutions have worked together in more than 2,500 so-called "Interuniversity Cooperation Programs," or ICPS. Students have come to see ERASMUS as a provider of funding for spending a semester or year at another European institution. A European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has been developed to integrate the study abroad experience into the home study program. Given the strong emphasis on equal distribution of the program among the member states of the European Union, universities in Southern Europe—historically isolated and not seen as academic equals by their Northern counterparts—have, thanks to ERASMUS, become part of the European academic circle, and have been able to prove that many of the prejudices from the North were lacking a solid basis.

ERASMUS has become the key motor for internationalization of higher education in the European Union, and has recently been complemented by similar programs on a global scale: the TEMPUS program for cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe; the MEDCAMPUS program for cooperation among the Mediterranean countries; the ALFA program for cooperation with Latin America; and other smaller programs for cooperation with the United States and Canada.

But at the same time, ERASMUS is also, to a certain extent, a victim of its own success. More and more institutions of higher education have presented proposals for ICPS, creating networks that in themselves became bigger and bigger. The expectations created by the programs became too high for them to continue to be subsidized on the same scale as in the past. At the same time, an increasing number of institutions of higher education created international offices, at the central and/or departmental level; they developed their own policies and strategies for internationalization, and created their own budgets, independent of Brussels.

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The Maastricht Treaty, for the first time, gave the European Union a direct role in education, and the Commission started to make an internal assessment of its programs and to develop a new strategy. The SOCRATES program arose out of this program assessment and strategic planning. The objectives of SOCRATES include the following: to develop the European dimension in education; to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement of general understanding of issues relating to the European Union; to promote wide-ranging and intensive cooperation among institutions in the member states at all levels of education; to encourage the mobility of teachers and students; to encourage the mutual recognition of diplomas, periods of study, and other qualifications; to encourage open and distance education; and to foster exchanges of information on education systems and policy.

One of the most striking differences in this new policy in comparison to the ERASMUS program is the expansion of the program from higher education to all levels of educa-

tion. In addition to the continuing ERASMUS program for higher education, a second program for primary and secondary education has been created, called COMENIUS.

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Extra attention is given to teaching staff mobility. New elements are:

- teaching staff mobility fellowships for short one-to-eight week visits, in particular to stimulate the creation of new teaching material;
- ERASMUS teaching fellowships of medium duration (two-to-six months) to support academics with exceptional abilities as teachers in developing a European dimension in their field; and
- SOCRATES Guest Lectures, public lectures to be held at a number of European universities by a very limited number (15–20) of senior, top-level and internationally known scholars selected by the European Commission.

A budget of 850 million ECU has been set aside for the new SOCRATES program, of which 55 percent goes to the ERASMUS program for higher education, 10 percent for COMENIUS, and 25 percent for other activities, such as the promotion of language learning; open and distance learning; and exchange of information and experience.

The SOCRATES program was scheduled to start in the academic year 1996–1997, but was delayed for one year due to disagreement between the member states. It will begin in the academic year 1997–1998, and institutions must present proposals to participate in the program before the end of the academic year 1995–1996. Although it is generally agreed within the higher education community in the European Union that change is needed and that more institutional commitment is necessary, there are continuing concerns that the new structure leaves many uncertainties, particularly regarding the role of the faculty in the process of coordination, information, and quality control of the program.
