

forum to discuss GATS, and that the global market of higher education can coexist with a more state-driven sector.

Romania also backed the United States, arguing that Romanians have already liberalized higher education using GATS. As a consequence, Romanians felt that it would be unreasonable to accept the content of this paragraph when their behavior in the context of the WTO/GATS is the opposite. After a long and normative discussion on whether education should or should not be considered a commodity, Brazil and Venezuela, surprisingly, accepted the deletion of the paragraph in its entirety. As a result, the final communiqué contains no mention of GATS.

The result of these tensions for the World Conference on Higher Education was a protracted yet fragmented communiqué that, in our opinion, does not transmit a clear and coherent message to the higher education international community.

Worldwide university rankings. The initial draft stated: “Globalization has also increased the pressure to make comparisons between higher education institutions, resulting in the emergence of international rankings. Such comparisons should promote institutional diversity by including a range of criteria that reflect the variety of goals and purposes of different systems, institutions, and institution types. . . .” By the second draft, the paragraph had been revised to read: “Comparisons, in order to be useful, must be based on quality data and appropriate analysis reflecting the diversity of systems and institutional missions.” The word “ranking” had disappeared from this draft and was never included again. The Indian representative strongly and repeatedly requested elimination of the ranking concept from the communiqué. Never clear were the objections on the use of this term. The main debates involved the “solution” based on rather erasing the topics that had strong opposition than continuing to discuss them.

FINAL RESULTS

The final draft needed to be approved by the third day. Time pressures, exhaustion, and last-minute negotiations in the corridors had a combined effect in reaching this objective. As a consequence, certain contentious topics were resolved (or “unresolved”) by simply deleting them from the document (i.e., discussions involving GATS and rankings). Another factor induced countries to reach consensus: No one wanted to stall the drafting process and, as a consequence, be singled out as being responsible for the failure of the conference.

In total, six drafts were necessary to compose the final communiqué and a lot of negotiations and frame-bridging to satisfy all the interests and ideas involved, which included progres-

sive demands (represented by the Latin American countries) and strong promarket statements (specifically pushed by the United States). In the Latin American case, this position finds an explanation in the current wave of left-wing governments in the region that push for a bigger presence of the state in the provision of a range of public services—higher education among them. In the US case, the influence of the new administration has not been reflected in changes on the traditional country's positions in UNESCO. The result of these tensions for the World Conference on Higher Education was a protracted yet fragmented communiqué that, in our opinion, does not transmit a clear and coherent message to the higher education international community. It is still too soon, however, to judge its political relevance. In the meantime, we hope that these insider notes contribute to explaining the form and the content, but especially, the omissions pertaining to the 2009 final communiqué. ■

The Future of International Postsecondary Student Enrollments

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According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, there were an estimated 2.8 million internationally mobile students worldwide, up from 1.8 million in 1999. UNESCO defines an international student as one who crossed his or her national border to pursue an education and excludes students who are in a program for less than one year.

Governments and higher education institutions support the recruitment and enrollment of international students for a variety of reasons, including income generation, cultural diplomacy, promoting innovation and productivity by gaining access to talent, and promoting campus internationalization. Although the number of students seeking education abroad is growing and is likely to continue doing so, the competition for international students is fierce.

We examine international student enrollments in postsecondary education in the top-five receiving countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Australia—summarizing the efforts of these nations to attract these students and the factors that will influence future trends.

THE TOP-FIVE RECEIVING COUNTRIES

In 2006/07, the United States had the largest number (595,874) and share (20%) of international students. (The UNESCO count differs from the commonly cited Institute of International Education figures because of definitional differences.) The United Kingdom hosted 351,470, or 13 percent, of all international students. France and Germany each hosted 246,612 and 206,875 students, respectively, or about 8 percent. Australia enrolled 211,526 international students, or 7 percent.

This snapshot, however, tells only part of the story. Australia's international students comprise 17 percent of total Australian enrollments, compared to 3 percent in the United States. Additionally, Australia's 2007 international student enrollment grew by 15 percent from the previous year and constitutes the country's third-largest export industry. Foreign enrollments constitute 14 percent of the UK student population and about 11 percent in France and Germany. When international students are viewed as proportion of total student enrollment in the country, their impact becomes evident.

RECRUITING STRATEGIES

All of the countries except the United States have launched national recruiting campaigns; all host central Web sites. They brand their efforts with slogans such as "Choose France," Australia's "Live, Learn and Grow," the United Kingdom's "Innovative, Individual, Inspirational," and Germany's "Land of Ideas." Each country has a governmental or quasi-governmental organization that provides information and varying levels of marketing activities. Germany's DAAD (German

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Academic Exchange Service), an intermediary organization between higher education institutions and government, has 64 offices worldwide. The UK government has set national targets for international student enrollments, and the British Council, with offices in more than 100 countries, plays a marketing role. CampusFrance, launched in 2006 to replace EduFrance, has 100 offices in 75 countries. Australia has recently launched a A\$2.8 million drive to support international education, focusing on six major Asian target countries. Australia Education International—the international arm of the government's Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations—has 25 offices in 17 countries. The United States lacks a coordinated national strategy; individual institutions bear the major responsibility for recruitment. The US Department of State maintains a Web site and provides outreach through its 450 advising centers in US embassies.

VISA POLICIES

The ease and expense of obtaining a visa are important factors in a country's ability to attract international students. US international student enrollments dropped after the events of September 11, 2001. Students experienced delays in obtaining visas in the immediate aftermath, and the requirement for a personal interview at the embassy adds time and expense to the application process. In 2009, the United Kingdom instituted a new points-based system; implementation problems have been cited in the press. Australia has made it possible for students to work for up to 20 hours per week under their student visa but, at the same time, have tightened policies enabling students to become permanent residents after their studies. Australia and the United States have the highest entry/visa fees—US\$427 and A\$331, respectively. Germany and France have the lowest, at US\$86 and US\$70, with France charging an extra fee for a residence permit.

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are new competitors on the horizon—including China, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, the Gulf States, countries seeking to become centers of excellence and regional hubs.

All five countries offer scholarships for international students. Available information suggests that Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France are making considerable investments relative to the size of their higher education systems. The largest US effort, the Fulbright Foreign Student programs provide 3,200 scholarships (US\$95 million.) The United Kingdom offers 1,885 Chevening scholarships (US\$48 million). Australia's largest program provides 1,000 Development Scholarships (US\$85 million). France and Germany each provide a total of approximately EUR 100 million (US\$150 million) in scholarships.

CONCLUSION

Many factors will shape the future distribution of internationally mobile students, including the attractiveness and quality of the educational opportunities in the receiving country, the success of a coordinated national strategy to recruit international students, and the relative ease of applying to institutions and of obtaining a visa. Additionally, there are new competitors on the horizon—including China, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, the Gulf States, countries seeking to become centers of excellence and regional hubs. The growing trend of offshore education enables students to stay in their home countries or regions and receive a foreign education. This option may become increasingly attractive in light of greatly reduced costs to students and the attractiveness to governments that wish to avoid brain drain. It is not at all evident that the past will predict the future.