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Digitalization of E+ Student Grant Distribution: Results from the MEGA Project

Lukáš Kala, Mendel University in Brno Tereza Formáčková, Mendel University in Brno



Digitalization of E+ Student Grant Distribution:

Results from the MEGA Project

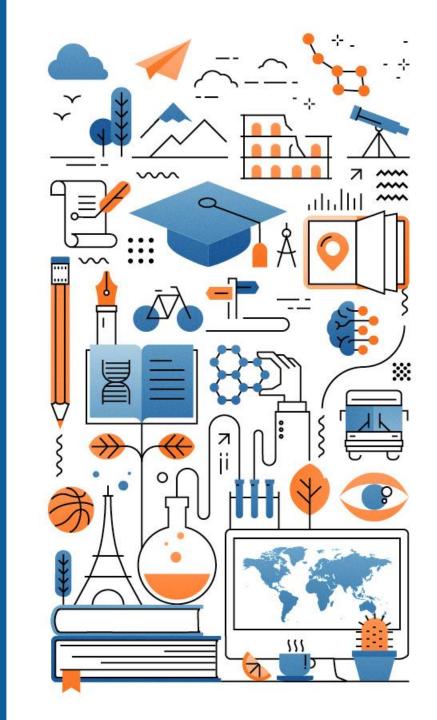
Mgr. Lukáš Kala, Ph.D. Mgr. Tereza Formáčková





Outline

- About MEGA
- Aims of MEGA
- Outcomes of MEGA
- Milestones
- Activities
- Results of PR1





About MEGA

Duration: 2/1/2022 – 2/1/2025 Coordinator: Université de Lorraine <u>Partner organizations:</u>

- EUF
- Mendel University in Brno
- Selcuk University
- Western Norway University of Applied Sciences
- Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra
- Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Politécnico de Coimbra

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Western Norway University of Applied Sciences









- Create and develop a digital tool that will simplify the management of Erasmus+ mobility grants at university level.
- Secure the payment of grants to the students concerned, both in terms of accuracy and calendar.
- Promoting innovation, efficiency and economies of scale in the management of Erasmus grants.
- Reducing the average time or complexity of the payment procedure.
- Help to promote equal opportunities for the beneficiaries by facilitating and securing the procedures that support students' mobility





The Outcomes of MEGA

RESEARCH

- How Erasmus grants are managed in different HEIs and European countries.
- Eliciting quantitative data on average delays or other relevant indicators.
- Highlighting the trigger points delaying the payments.

DEVELOP

 PoC of a digital platform for grant management, which would work in synergy with other existing tools (EWP, OLA, Erasmus APP, European student card initiative).





The Outcomes of MEGA II

PUBLISH

Policy recommendations on the findings of the project, to feed them into the midterm review of the programme.

ESTABLISH

A dialogue with stakeholders regarding the deployment of a more efficient Erasmus grant system.





Stages of Project:

<u>PR1</u>

- Maping the situation by exploring through a survey the topic of grants management.
- Grant procedure in different HEIs from various European countries.
- Collect relevant insights in order to fill the gap in the existing procedures.
- Collect the feedback of National Agencies.

<u>PR2</u>

 Building a digital solution developing a functional proof of concept (PoC) to reduce delays in the Erasmus grant payments process.





<u>PR3</u>

- Verify and investigate whether the PoC built within Project Result 2 answers the different issues raised by all the stakeholders within PRs.
- Study different scenarios of grant management.

<u>PR4</u>

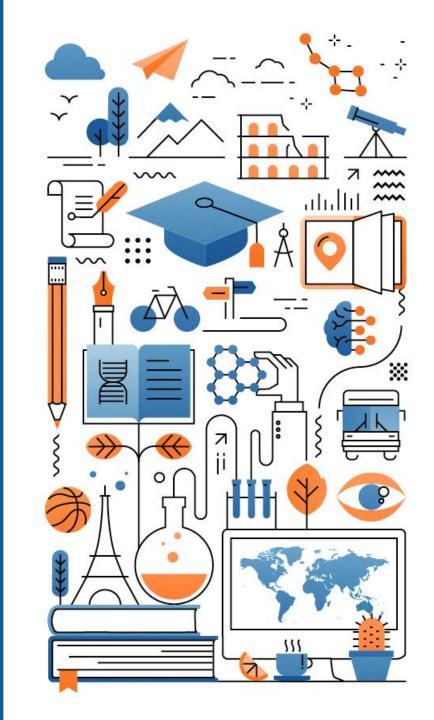
Policy recommendations to the European institutions, based on the findings of the project.





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- Design and spread surveys to address to NAs, HEIs and students to collect information about the problems in grant management (PR1).
- Analysis and translation of results in specific requirements for a digital prototype (PR1).
 - Design, prototype and test a proof of concept of the new tool (PR2).





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- Another survey whether the prototype allows a smoother grant management for all stakeholders (IROs and financial offices, beneficiaries).
- Alternative scenarios and use of the prototype interviews and research work (PR3).
 - Translation into policy recommendations to be addressed to the European Commission.





Results of PR1

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Student Survey Analysis
- IRO Survey Analysis
- Summary of interviews with NAs
- Conclusion and recommendation





Introduction

Data and previous study review

Procedure

- Research question
- Literature review
- Hypothesis generation
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Drawing conclusions





Methodology

<u>3 levels of research</u>

<u>NAs</u>

- Rules and regulations for grant payments, grant agreements
- Preferences on times of grant payments

<u>IROs</u>

- Responsibilities and procedures
- Involvement of economic departments

Students

• Experiences regarding to grant payments





6 months

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- **3.874 individuals from 33 countries**
- Most represented countries Italy (34.29%), Norway (18.83%), Germany (5.69%)
- Most represented field of study Business and Administration and Law (18.54%)
- Majority with bachelor degree (63.84%)
- Majority of respondents have not participated in Erasmus+ mobility programs





Did you know what amount of money you were going to receive before your E+ application?

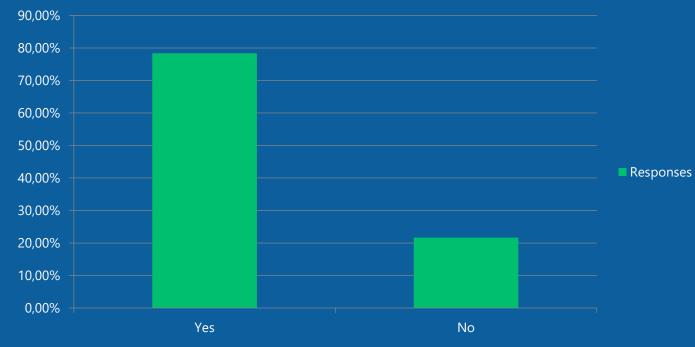
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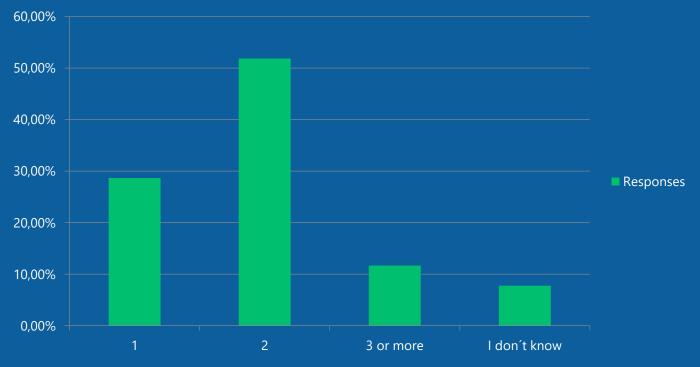
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In how many instalments did you receive Erasmus+ grant?

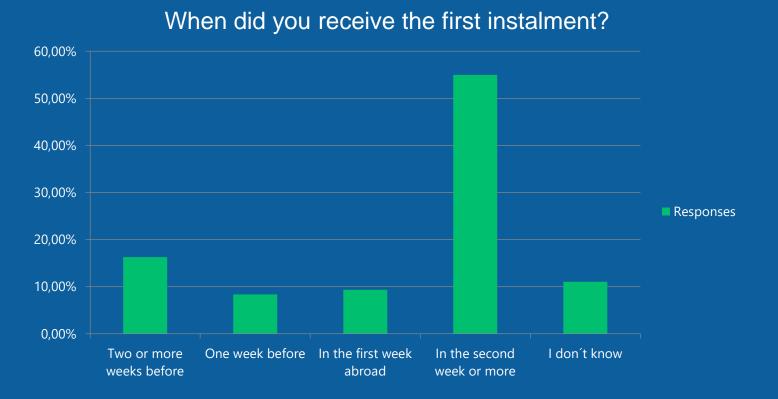






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Student Survey Analysis







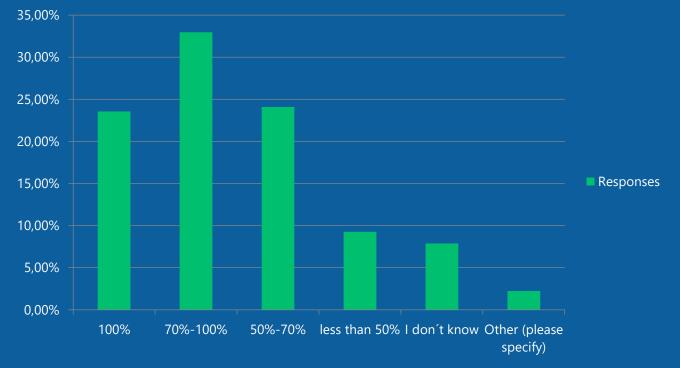
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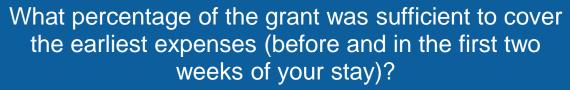
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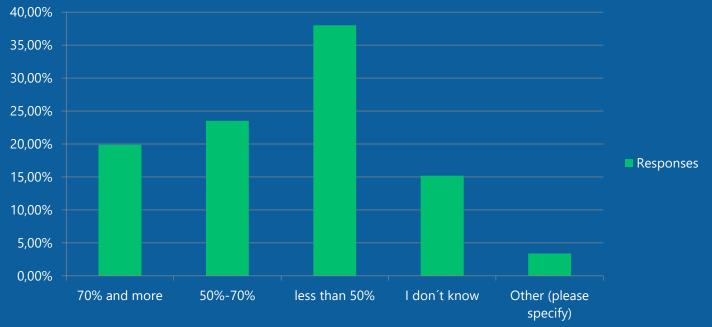
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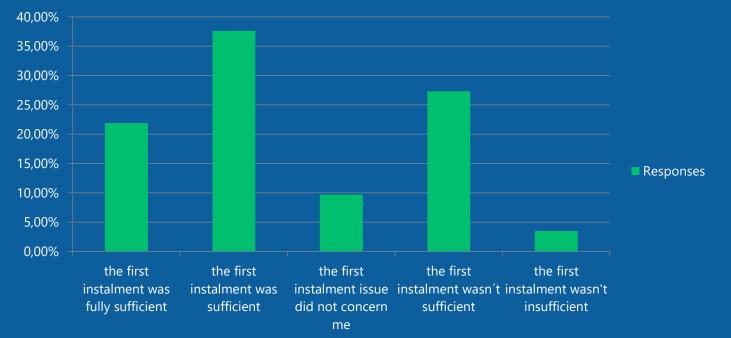
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Do you think that the first instalment was sufficient to cover the earliest expenses?

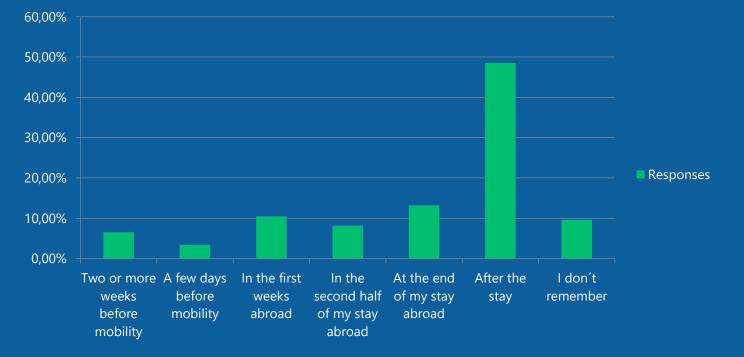






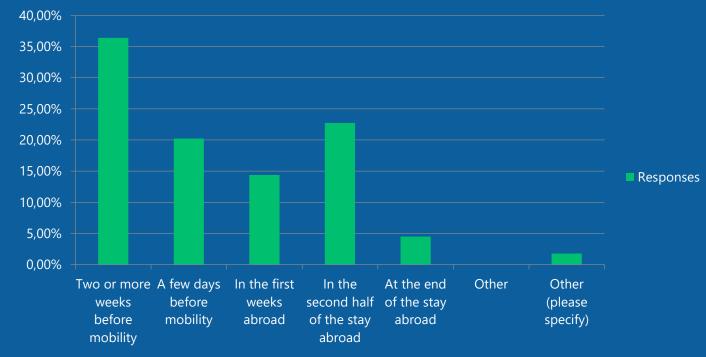


When did you receive the full grant (respectively when the last instalment came)?





When do you think is the best time for the full grant to be paid?

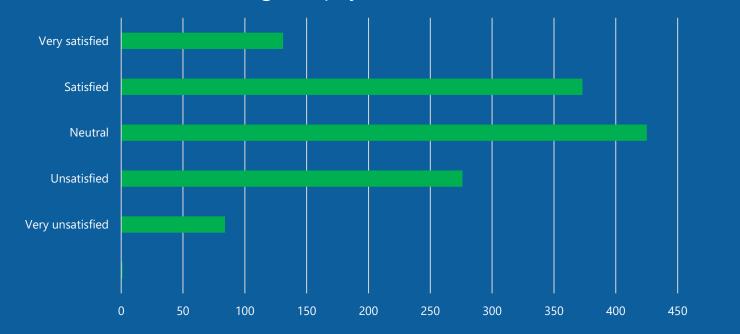








How satisfied were you with the timing of the grant payment?





Could the delay of scholarship payment be an obstacle that influences student's decisions to go abroad?

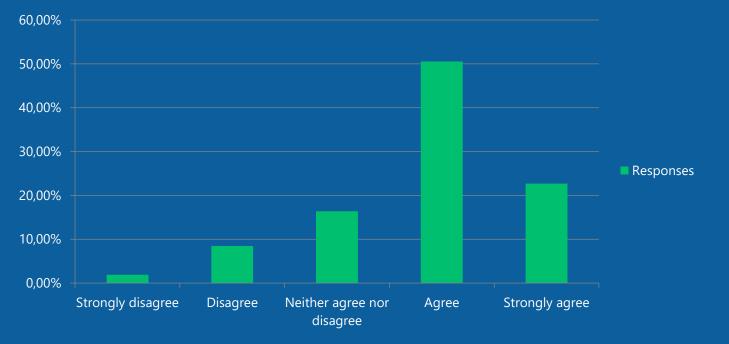
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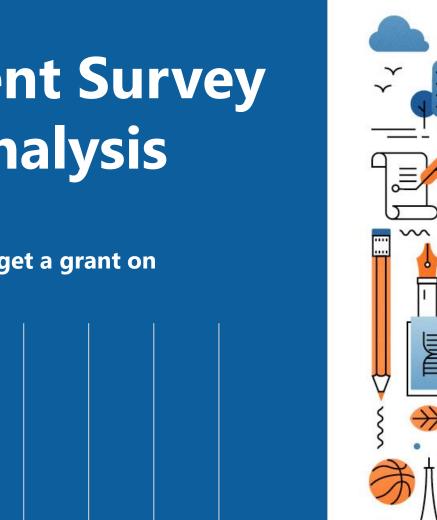
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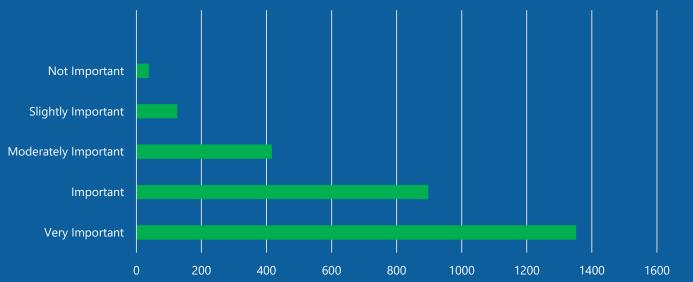
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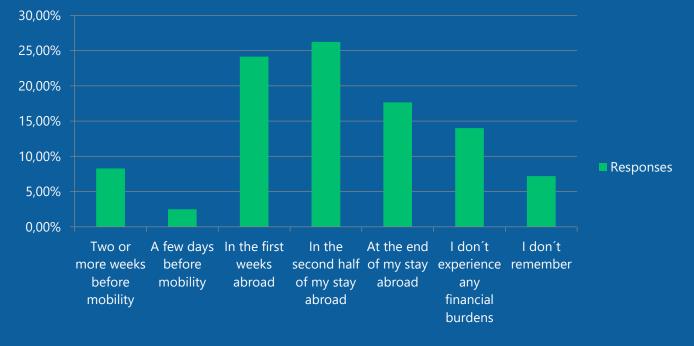
How important is it for you to get a grant on time?







In what period of your mobility period did you experience financial burdens the most?

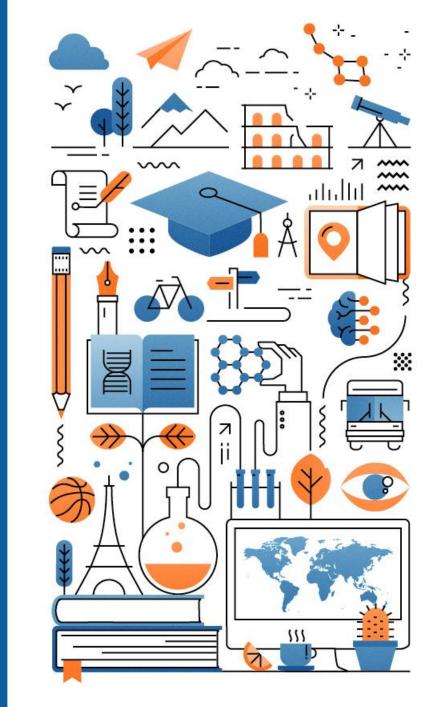






- Amount of funding
- Simplifying of process
- Timing of payments
- Number of instalments
- Standardization
- Accountability
- Communication
- Equity
- Ideal process should be quick and easy, transparent and efficient.

Student Survey Analysis How the grant process could be improved?





- 107 employees from 32 countries
 - Mostly Erasmus+ coordinators (central level)





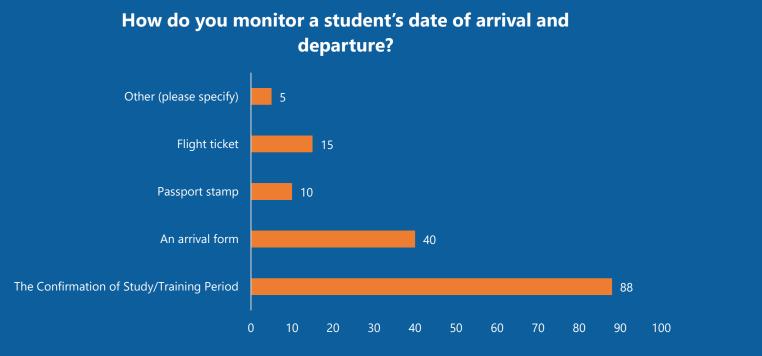








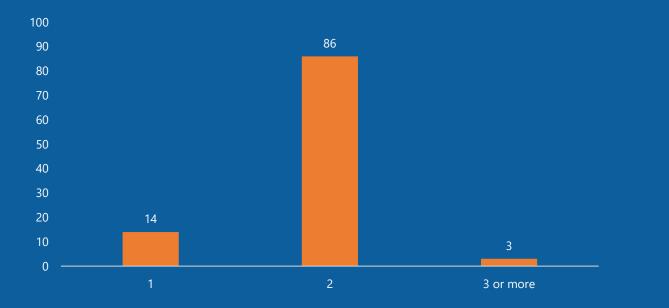








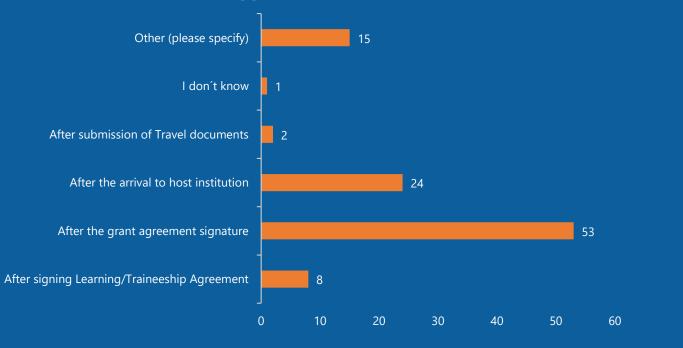
In how many instalments do you distribute Erasmus+ grant?







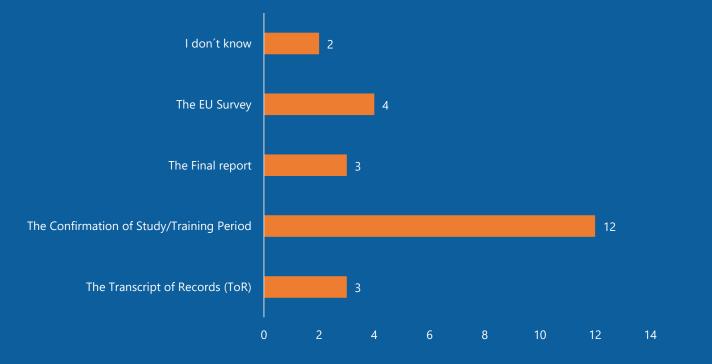
What are the trigger points of the first instalment?







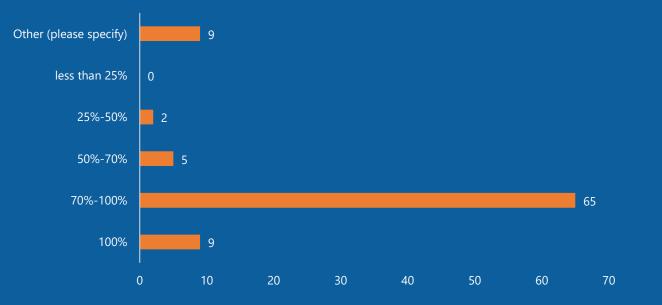
What are the trigger points of the last instalment?







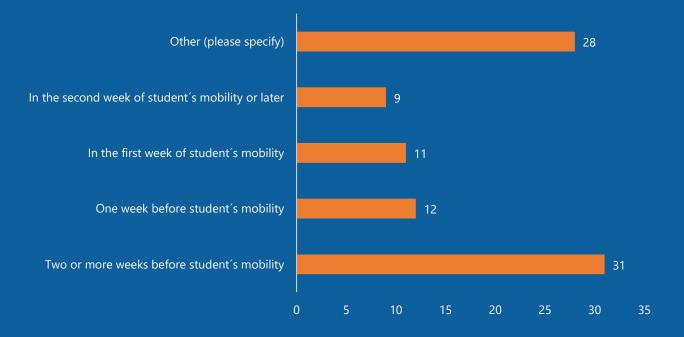
What percentage of the final grant do you provide in first instalment?







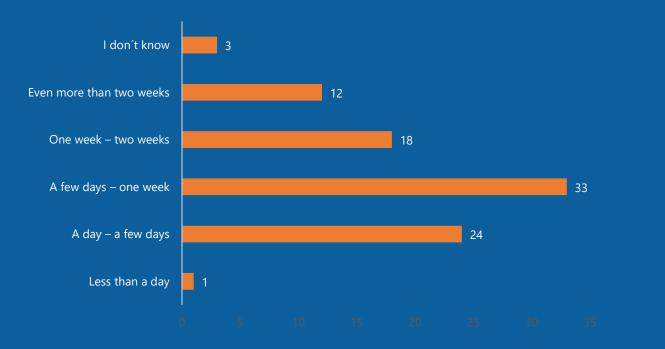
When do you send the first grant instalment?







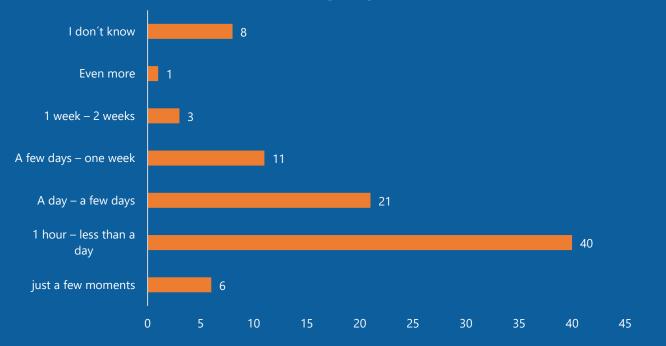
How long does the payment process take?







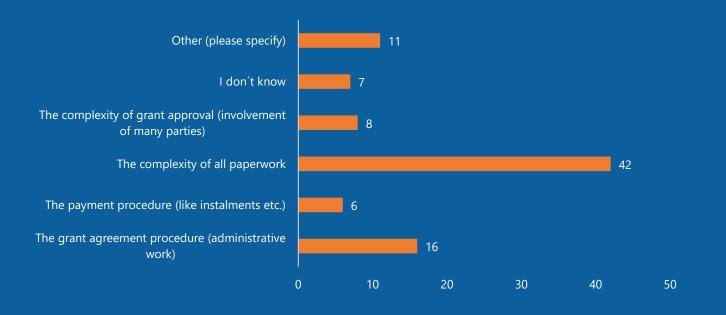
How much time approx. do you spend on paperwork with one out-going student?







What needs to be changed in the grant management system of Erasmus+ ?





Summary of interviews with NAs

- Grant payment not managed centrally by NAs
- No official procedure for managing the grant payment
- Grant divided among universities by the NA based on algorithm that considers many factors
- Number of instalments decision of each university
- Timing of payment checked during the desk check
- Overall not perceiving of any systematic





Conclusion and recommendations

- Simplify the process, reduce paperwork, clear instructions
- Individual support for students
- Reconsider the amount of grants
- Ensure equal access to the grant
- Loans or other financial support for students
- Online platform and/or video tutorials for students
- Provide flexibility student will decide when the grant





Thank you for your attention!

