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Abstract

The ERASMUS exchange program is considered an important contributor to the tourism industry and higher education within and beyond the European Union (EU). However, the questions arise: (1) Why do participants elect to go on a study exchange? (2) Why do participants opt to study in a particular location? Identified international mobility motives reflect students' needs for professional and personal growth, but evidence also suggests some leisure travel motives. In line with such conceptualization, the present paper identifies the mobility and destination choice motives of 360 ERASMUS students from 26 European countries. One mobility motive (professional and personal growth) and two destination choice motives (infrastructure and image, and lifestyle and commercialization) emerged and are discussed in light of students' personal and situational characteristics. Conclusions are that international study mobility is driven by students' desire to grow personally and professionally while studying abroad, but students' choice of a destination depends on the destinations' general as well as touristic factors. Both mobility and destination choice motivations

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depend on students' personal and situational characteristics. As the student and educational tourism market is growing steadily, the EU is recommended to build on this market via ERASMUS and international student mobility to boost its weakening economy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Lesjak, Miha, E-Mail: miha.lesjak@fts.upr.si