

*MPC Report Series*



**GLOBALISATION,  
INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION AND TURKEY'S INWARD  
STUDENT MOBILITY**

A Concise Review of Current Policies and Trends

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## Abbreviations

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of South East Asia Nations
<b>BMS</b>	Branding & Marketing Strategies
<b>CoHE</b>	The Council of Higher Education
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer System
<b>EHEA</b>	European Higher Education Area
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GATS</b>	General Agreement on Trade in Services
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HEIs</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>IoHE</b>	Internationalisation of Higher Education
<b>ITRU</b>	Internationalization of Turkish Research Universities Group
<b>LDC</b>	The Least Developed Countries
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MEP</b>	Mevlana Exchange Program
<b>OECD</b>	the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>TIKA</b>	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
<b>TS</b>	Turkiye Scholarships
<b>TUBITAK</b>	Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
<b>YTB</b>	the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

## Summary of the Report

This report examines student mobility from various countries and regions to Turkey with regard to the trends, rationales, policies implemented by Turkey's higher education institutions (HEIs) and the outcomes of the scheme.

The report addresses the representatives of Turkey's higher education (HE) and stakeholders in HEIs to propose measures to increase Turkey's attractiveness as a destination country. It may also benefit governments, education institutions, students and families in source countries from which international students hail to receive education in Turkey. The report is based on the review of the literature and research on globalisation, internationalisation of higher education (IoHE) and student mobility vis-à-vis the implications of these processes for Turkey. Besides these sources, the policy recommendations presented in the final section of the report are formulated from the author's three-month long ethnographic research which has included observations at various HEIs, field notes across social and academic spaces where international student are engaged, interviews conducted with international as well as local students, institutional stakeholders, state officials and the representatives of non-governmental organizations, and the analysis of relevant documents.

The Introduction part introduces the definition of the key terminology employed in the report. It also captures the link between globalization, internationalization of higher education (IoHE) and inward student mobility. The second part titled *Globalisation and Reconfiguration of Policies* tackles with the impact of globalization that has led Turkey to implement major changes in higher education policies and practices, which has eventually paved way to an increasing internationalization trend and student mobility. Next section, *Rationales for Inward Student Mobility*, explains Turkey's expectations from incoming students and the political, economic and cultural diplomacy advantages it brings. It also introduces key institutions involved and their function and role in student recruitment strategies. The fourth part focusing on *Trends: Student Mobility from Strategic Regions* introduces which countries and regions Turkey attracts highest number of students and why. It also explains on Turkey's focus on strategic regions such as Africa, Balkans and Middle East with their specific dynamics and meanings. Finally, *Looking into Future and Areas for Improvement* presents a number of suggestions for policymakers and higher education institutions.

# 1 Introduction

Higher Education implies a macro-structure embedded in the common frameworks based on societal expectations, national regulations, cooperative and competitive linkages (Teichler, 2006). Considering that nations and institutions are both positioned according to their geographies, economies and cultures and engage in position-taking based on their global capacity, networks and strategic options (Marginson, 2010), governments and HEIs are required to operate as agents of change in global, national and local level. To achieve that, they need to maximize their capacity and improve their performance by exploiting the benefits of international flow of academic human and intellectual resources, by optimizing not only their local but also cross-border operations via a thorough understanding of global landscape and an active global engagement. Survival and success of HEIs depend on how well they can adapt to the growing complexity of underlying forces such as the nation-state and institutions, and developments in local, national and global sites of change.

IoHE as a result and response to these changes is defined as the implementation of specific measures to cope with the impacts of globalisation and the process of re-orientation to engage in global context (Doiz et al., 2012). IoHE also implies improving academic quality and cooperation, economic rationales of profit from tuition, social rationales of increasing intercultural awareness, and political objectives to promote foreign policy (Knight and de Wit, 1999). This process can mean many different things to different stakeholders, individuals, institutions and organizations (Knight, 2012). While it may refer to a series of international activities such as academic mobility of students and faculty as well as exchange of ideas (de Jong and Teekens, 2003), some may consider it as a business based on the delivery of education to other countries (Guo and Chase, 2011) through the process of planning and implementing products and services to match the conditions and to meet the needs of the local context (Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). At the national, sector and institutional levels, IoHe means “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global

dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2004, p.11). Therefore, internationalization process is content and context-specific and shaped by a range of rationales, providers, stakeholders and activities across various contexts and domains of HE, because it functions as an agent of change to bring about new models of organization, and a driving force behind dynamism and sustainability of 21st century HE systems and institutions (Rumbley et al., 2012).

Based on these definitions, it is important to consider the strong link between global, national as well as institutional dimensions of internationalization. In that regard, as a response to a range of processes and changes in the mechanisms and discourses at global level, Turkey’s HEIs are urged to engage in a rapid internationalization process. Emergence of the global market economy, subsequent changes to nation-states, commodification of HE and fierce worldwide competition among HEIs to attract more international students as well as prestigious faculty (hence capital and strong contributions to their academic contexts) are the key elements shaping Turkey’s HE trajectory. These major transformations have significant implications at institutional and classroom levels, leading to further repercussions in the trajectories of institutions as well as the academic and social experiences of international students, which will be explored in the following section.

## 2 Globalisation and Reconfiguration of Policies

The terms globalisation and internationalization are frequently used interchangeably when analyzing international activities in HE due to similar social dynamics they derive from (Van Der Wende, 2001), they ‘exhibit opposite and contradictory tendencies’ (Gacel-Avila, 2005, p.124). Globalisation indicates modularization of production, standardization across cultures, process and impacts of worldwide communication thanks to information technologies - all of which has resulted in fast-moving economy, growing interdependency of world financial sys-

tems, an unrivalled amount of and access to knowledge, and the transformation of the local (Armstrong, 2007; Grünzweig and Rinehart, 2002; McCabe, 2001). It is also defined as ‘a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions-assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact-generating transcontinental or regional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power’ (Held and McGrew, 2000, p.55).

Despite their common connotations of cross-national exchange of ideas and the like, globalisation and internationalization should be perceived as two distinct concepts (Bassett, 2006) with a positive dynamic interconnection (Agoston and Dima, 2012). Before mentioning the stark contrasts, I will briefly elaborate on the link between the two. While globalisation can be assumed as a catalyst for the process of internationalization of HE, this process signifies a response to the impacts of globalisation (Altbach and Knight, 2007; De Wit, 2009; Knight, 2004). Knight (2008) adds that such a response usually entails a recognition and respect for the individuality of a nation and its education system. Thus, globalisation’s impact on each country would depend on its history, culture and traditions. Scott (2005 cited in Agoston and Dima, 2012) further explains the dialectical relationship between the concepts by arguing that globalisation represents an extended and more intensive form of internationalization. He also describes a linear relation, which assumes a direct link between internationalization of HE and the diplomatic, cultural and economic objectives of a state shaping the academic goals of universities as well their curricula, student diversification and topics of research projects.

Keeping this link in mind, globalisation can be assumed as a catalyst for the process of internationalisation of HE. Such a response usually entails a recognition and respect for the individuality of a nation and its education system. Thus, globalisation’s impact on each country would depend on its history, culture and traditions. At this point, internationalization differs from globalisation:

[Internationalization refers to] the relationship between nation-states, which promotes

recognition of and respect for their own differences and traditions. By contrast ... globalisation does not tend to respect differences and borders ... In this sense, internationalization can be understood as complementary or compensatory to globalizing tendencies, given that it allows for a resistance to the latter’s denationalizing and homogenizing effects (Gacel-Avila, 2005: 124).

In other words, while internationalization recognizes physical borders and promotes cross-border activities, globalisation breaks down the national boundaries for economic purposes so as to reduce national power, and to achieve an interdependency between states and a convergence on various levels (Agoston and Dima, 2012; Teichler, 2009). As a result of the disruption of national structures, globalisation aims to dissolve the differences between societies into a universal culture which strongly promotes concepts such as competitiveness, efficiency and professionalized management in HE field (Bostrom, 2010). In contrast, internationalization assumes the unique characteristics of societies and cultures and it depends on national funds and bureaucratic support for the process of cooperation and strategic relationship between states (Enders, 2004). Despite the external macro socio-economic process of globalisation, internationalization is regarded as an internal response shaped at national and institutional level. However, due to decreasing national public funding of HE and increasing institutional autonomy, entrepreneurialism and cross-border marketing, HEIs may easily engage in globalisation trends (Van Der Wende, 2001), which is further encouraged by market economy reorganizing nation states and deeming quite limited control for them over the policies regarding their HE systems.

This brings us to a second difference between internationalization and globalisation: cooperation versus competition. Van Vught et al. explain this contrast as such:

Internationalization is closer to the well-established tradition of international cooperation and mobility and to the core academic values of quality and excellence,

whereas globalisation refers more to competition, pushing the concept of higher education as a tradable commodity and challenging the concept of higher education as a public good (Van Vught et al., 2002, p.117)

As globalisation is highly influenced by worldwide economic developments, it requires HEIs to compete globally for the first league of reputational hierarchy. Ross et al. (2014) point out to the repetitive use of world-class in HE discourse to highlight the phenomenon's impact, global-brand culture, and the competition students, academics and staff are compelled to join. Bologna Declaration, which influences processes beyond the borders of European Union (EU), also explicitly calls for an increased international competition in European HE, constructing it as a driving force behind internationalization policies (Langberg and Schmidt, 2017). As a result, over the years, the emphasis in HE sector moved almost solely on vertical differences, i.e. rankings of institutions and units within them. Thus, since the early years of 21st century, policy discourses have been largely influenced by the concept of 'excellence' and world university ranking lists. HEIs worldwide now tend to prioritize market-oriented research over discipline-based education, shift from direct government control and gain more of a corporate nature. The research performance of HEIs is assumed to be more relevant for society, knowledge economy and instrumental for attracting highest talents of academics and students from all around the world, all of which simultaneously counts toward supra-national concept of 'world-class university'.

Overall, the challenge globalisation presents to internationalization is that it not only extends beyond a mere interconnectedness between nation states, but also decreases significance and the autonomy of local institutions and individuals, and functions as a peculiar interplay between the local and the global (Beck, 2012). Hence, global and local are no longer separate entities and they bear porous boundaries that makes them impossible to exist on their own, which implies that it is indeed a multi-flow and diverse interplay with a range of elements of cultural, social, political and economic dimensions. Therefore, national pol-

icy makers and administrators of HEIs face quite a complex task for strategy making.

The repercussions of globalisation on Turkey's HE has been therefore multifold and brought about major transformations in the national HE market and introduction of new policies and practices into Turkey's HE sector. However, these implementations are not only due to the developments on a global scale, but also because of the gradual neoliberalisation of Turkey's economy which is linked to international market. Hence, the steps taken by the state institutions, public and private HEIs in Turkey reflect both national and global transformations.

Considering the above mentioned impacts of globalisation and the introduction of neoliberalism into the economy, this report focuses on IoHE process in Turkey over the past thirty years. The formulation and implementation of Turkey's IoHE policies can be traced back to the Council of Higher Education's (CoHE) initial engagement with the agreements signed with international organizations. To start with, adopting administration strategies from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Turkey signed General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) Treaty in 1995 and The Council of Higher Education received loans from World Bank to align with the global market, which set off privatization and commercialization of HE. During neoliberalisation process, state support for HE decreased and the World Bank suggested introduction of tuition fees, entrepreneurial universities, and vocational technical education (for turning low-income students into skilled labor). Thus, with the guidance and incentive from international financial organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation, 1990s witnessed an escalating neoliberalisation in Turkey's academia reflecting the global market capitalism.

In 2001, Turkey signed Bologna Declaration to integrate into European Higher Education Area (EHEA) for easing the mobility of students and academics and for increasing its competitiveness in global HE market. In order to ensure that knowledge and skills gained in higher education are relevant for employment and for producing competitive research and innovation, as a signatory country, Turkey agreed

to three priorities: “to introduce a system of degree programs consisting of three cycles (bachelor, master and doctoral), where completion of each cycle would qualify graduates to enter the next cycle; to cooperate in working out common or comparable standards for quality assurance; to agree to recognise one another’s degrees, diplomas and studies, for which they would develop common instruments, namely the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement” (Visakorpi et al., 2008, p.23). Implementing standardization measures through quality assurance processes, accreditation mechanism and ECTS, Turkey has aimed to establish solid cooperation, compatibility, advanced research and innovation to better utilize market mechanism, as well as (regarding its economic and political dimension) gaining soft power via internationalization (Ministry of Development, 2015) to foster sustainable cooperation not only with Europe, but also multi-ethnic and multinational regions such as Balkans.

Among CoHE’s (2015a) strategic aims, the first and foremost has been the qualitative and quantitative adaptation of Turkish HE into international standards. While dealing with the qualitative adaptation within EHEA framework, Turkey has adopted an expansion strategy which has yielded a massified system including 129 public and 77 foundation universities as of 2018. However, without due attention to quality and effectiveness of the HEIs and programs, simply the substantial quantitative increase have not yet generated a broader sense of university as a national and global actor in socio-economic development and currently only a few HEIs stand out in excellence and attract top students and academic staff.

For improving cooperation with industry, developing research and development as well as technology transfer centers, the Council of Higher Education also intends to require engineering students to address industrial problems in their projects and theses, to develop patent, internship and thematic industrial master’s programs with scholarship (CoHE, 2015b). Despite these efforts, above mentioned processes have brought about some issues in the following aspects of Turkey’s HE:

- Combined together, population increase (i.e. 79.8 million with 18.9 million under 15 (TUIK, 2016)) and the growing demand for HE (2.2 million applicants for university placement examination (OSYM, 2017)) fueled CoHE’s expansion strategies and the number of HEIs rose sharply.
- Equity problems still remain: while wealthier students tend to enter private HEIs with elitist education or state universities receiving higher per-student subsidies from government, low-income students face fierce competition to receive funding from private universities or access to a top state university (Caner and Okten, 2013; Hatakenaka, 2006).
- For financing the expansion, neoliberal policies such as privatization and market-oriented deregulation were adopted (Habibi, 2017), while state support for public HEIs decreased, industry catered for their financial needs in exchange for products/services (Hiz, 2010).
- Thus, research has further adapted to national and international market mechanisms and industry-oriented research and international research funds have mostly framed publications (Polat, 2013).
- Rapid enrolment growth has led to faculty shortage and student-faculty ratio rose which causes a decrease in the quality of teaching and research (Habibi, 2017).
- Regarding publications and impact, Scimago indicates that Turkey ranks 20th in h-index in 2018. Also, according to 2017-2018 Global Competitiveness Index published by World Economic Forum, although its overall ranking is 53 out of 138 countries, Turkey ranked 101th in the quality of higher education system, and the inadequately educated workforce (cf. Erkoç, 2015) is stated as the third most problematic factor for business.
- Internationalization of HE lacks necessary cooperation between public institutions, policies and strategies, while issues regarding English

Medium Instruction and publishing in English are still persistent (Çetinsaya, 2014; Ministry of Development, 2015; Tremblay, 2014).

Overall, while Turkish HE has remarkably changed since 1990s, it still copes with issues such as ever-increasing demand for HE and the outcomes of global trends such as commercialization and competition—all of which influence internationalization policies and practices to be discussed in following sections.

### 3 Rationales for Inward Student Mobility

Turkey currently has 1% share in international students worldwide (OECD, 2016), and aims to increase the rate to 1.5% (Ministry of Development, 2015) and to host 200 thousand inbound students by 2023 (ICEF Monitor, 2016). Latest CoHE figures show that the number has increased from 16 thousand in 2007 to 125 thousand in 2018 with enrollments predominantly for Bachelor's degree. An opposite global trend is stated in OECD (2016) report indicating that the proportion of international students is higher at the most advanced levels of education, 12% and 27% in master's and doctorate level respectively. While the US hosts 26% of all students enrolled in master's/doctorate level, followed by the UK (15%), France (11%), Germany (10%) and Australia (8%).

Turkey's rationale to increase the number of international students can be analyzed in five dimensions:

#### 3.1 Strategic Partnership

By internationalization of HE, countries with strategic importance across a region can cooperate to achieve goals and implement practices such as high-quality teaching, institutional modernization, innovative approaches, and business-HE integration. For that purpose, circulation of knowledge and partnership is aided by supra-national organizations and convergence model of systems in HE (Kerr, 1990) such as Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations under EHEA policies. By joining Bologna Process, Turkey has

been adapting its HE system to benefit from partnership, improve its HE system and develop projects with HEIs in Europe. Via regional partnerships in the Balkans, Arab world and Africa, Turkey aims to expand its scope of influence and cooperation. CoHE (2015a) 2016-2020 strategic plan aims to establish partnership with fifteen countries by 2019 and increase its EHEA rating from 3/5 to 4/5 by 2018.

#### 3.2 Commercial Concerns

For furthering their national and international engagement in global economy, growing prestige, improving institutions and promoting intercultural competence for business, countries need skilled labour force or human capital that is quite mobile exploiting latest communication technologies and transportation means which puts a pressure on the HEIs to boost their exchange and production of knowledge through international hubs (Gornitzka and Gulbrandsen, 2008). Therefore, universities seize the opportunity to create income by exporting education through franchising and establishing campuses abroad and modifying internationalization policies with the help of organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and EHEA. To form a competitive knowledge-economy, Turkey's CoHE has devised an action plan in 2015 to attract highly-qualified human resources (i.e. academics, students and professionals) to teach at universities and to contribute to the advancement of the industry. However, there have not been any updates or evaluation of the progress published on that matter yet.

#### 3.3 National/Institutional Benefits

As they might be considered as instruments for economic, scientific and military competition among nations, HEIs are expected to serve national interests by achieving following outcomes:

- More and better research to help industry,
- More emphasis on schools of business administration with an increasing international component,

- Better language training (especially in English),
- Area studies,
- Intellectual contact with other nations (Kerr, 1990, p.9,10).

For these purposes, Turkey puts a great emphasis on IoHE to improve its institutions' capacity and efficiency as well as understanding the global dynamics. To illustrate, under "Turkiye Scholarships" provider the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) encourages students to join post-graduate degree programmes in area studies. With regard to Africa, for instance, YTB indicates its rationale and motivations as such:

...the understanding of the African countries' inner politics and relationship with the other countries should be non-ignorable aspect of the serious perspective regarding world politics. The acquisition of this academic perspective could just be possible in a country that achieved constructing strong relationships with African area, that have history and, economic and social connections with the African countries and in such an atmosphere that includes academicians who knows the area and the languages in this area well. ...It is apparent that healthy, serious and academic approaches to Africa would come true in institutional bases processing healthily, seriously and academically towards African area beyond the professional and personal interests of some academicians. In MA programs adopting an interdisciplinary approach, it is possible to take courses in several areas ranging from the studies of African countries' daily life to African art and literature, from African economic structure and the regional organizations African countries is the member of to African languages instead of focusing just African politics. These programs providing various academic opportunities on Africa also provide an opportunity to construct a

direct relation with the area by the conferences, conversations and other academic activities given by the academicians of related countries (YTB, 2018).

Besides encouraging incoming students to study on their region of origin, institutional stakeholders increasingly encourage their own faculty and researchers to produce internationally co-authored publications. To support these activities, incentives and policies regarding visa, marketing HE, employment opportunities have been introduced by the government in recent years so as to attract students, faculty, resources and expertise from other countries.

### 3.4 Political Rationales

Internationalization of HE functions as a diplomatic investment by establishing relations and mutual exchange of students, academics and information (Kireççi et al., 2016). Considering Turkey's position as "a plausible yet volatile actor on the edge of the subsystems of continental Europe and the Middle East" (Robins, 2013, p.382), HE means one of the key instruments for policymaking with other regional powers and building intimate relationship with EU which provides majority of direct investments to Turkey and which could help it become an attractive 'center' country (Robins, 2013). Turkey has been tackling wide and thorny issues in its foreign policy, therefore HE is expected even greater role in repairing ties with previous allies and creating links with new regions such as Africa.

### 3.5 Social/Cultural Development and Mutual Understanding

Through internationalization, if homogenizing effect of globalisation minimized, countries can preserve and spread their national values and promote world peace by breaking down stereotypes and building cultural understanding (Knight, 1997). Conforming to this, we observe that Turkey's earlier bilateral international HE agreements were shaped by social and cultural rationales (Ozoglu et al., 2015). For example, during 1990s, Turkey's Grand Student Project

targeted Turkic Republics and Turkish communities in the former Soviet Union and Eurasia to promote Turkish language and culture as well as rebuilding links to revive traditions (Kavak and Baskan, 2001). Also, under current *Turkiye* Scholarship, “*Turkish Studies Program*” requires international students to study Turkey’s history, art, culture, politics and society to disseminate their specialized interdisciplinary research worldwide (*Turkiye Scholarships Website*, 2017). Lastly, as a regional hub for periphery countries, IoHE is expected to serve intercultural learning and cross-cultural understanding (Kondakci, 2011).

While these five dimensions of internationalization motivates Turkey, students’ pre-departure rationales explain the factors that attract them and post-departure rationales describe how and why students sustain their studies in the host country.

Overall, Turkey’s HEIs are expected to fully engage in IoHE activities and promote student mobility to increase the quality of research through collaborating with other researchers all around the world, to exchange knowledge and experience to improve the quality of education, to help students think globally and reflect upon their progress by making international comparisons. With regard to economy, IoHE is a vital element to attain and achieve innovation, technologies, economic growth and well-equipped domestic labour capacity as it prepares students and researchers for local as well as global labour market, helps them acquire intercultural understanding and international perspective as global citizens and future makers. On a political note, Turkey assumes that IoHE and student mobility will support bilateral relationships, science diplomacy and yield improved cooperation with the EU as well as other regions that are strategic to Turkey’s long-term goals. IoHE is also considered essential for the construction of knowledge intensive society and national sustainable development, while it is also a means to spread knowledge and values from Turkey to other parts in the world.

In addition to abovementioned political, cultural and academic rationales, increasingly predominant economic reasons behind internationalization fuel international competition in global HE (Van Der Wende, 2001). In order to increase the coop-

eration between HEIs in Turkey and in various parts of the world, Turkey has been engaged in two short-term mobility programs. The first one is bilateral Erasmus Exchange Program which was founded in 1987 and joined by Turkey in 2003 as a part of Bologna Process. Thanks to Erasmus scheme, Turkey has been sending students and faculty to EU countries to promote mobility and academic collaboration. While being involved in bilateral relations with EU countries via Erasmus Program, CoHE initiated Mevlana Exchange Program (MEP) in 2011 to join up with various HEIs in the world regardless of their region (CoHE, 2018). The data shows that despite fluctuating figures, Erasmus is more popular among Turkish students and mobility rates are higher than MEP. However, CoHE’s 2015b strategic plan targets a twofold increase in academic staff and student mobility via MEP, for which it needs to develop policies to boost MEP’s popularity among the potential participants.

Concerning these targets and plans, countries including Turkey use branding & marketing strategies (BMS) and scholarship programs to attract more students. BMS (i.e. corporate branding techniques) have significant implications for 21st century HEIs for securing their share in expanding HE industry (Marginson, 2006), their continuation and supremacy by establishing an image of prestige and quality (Chapleo, 2007) which determines the rates of student enrolment and the funding institutions receive. Products and services offered as well as communication/PR alter perceptions about HEIs’ brand image, thus influence their competitiveness in the marketplace (Parameswaran, 1995). For Turkish HEIs, decreasing state funding, increasing number of universities, commercialization of HE services, expanding internationalization, and escalation in transnational campuses in Turkey (Garipağaoğlu and Çağla, 2016) are key factors pushing them to invest in BMS to finance their activities and earn an international reputation.

State departments such as Ministry of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Defense are involved in BMS to establish more flexible immigration policies to attract skilled and qualified migrants, employment opportunities and smooth

security check processes. Also, centralized services play a crucial role in BMS. For example, Canadian MoNE has developed an “Imagine education au/in Canada” campaign under Edu-Canada brand, while UK-based HEIs reach their international prospective students through government-sponsored institutions such as British Council and UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and manage brand images via organisations such as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) running conforming to corporate values and agenda.

Against such major players in global HE arena, Turkey seeks to develop policies regarding its brand and opportunities by involving quite a number of ministries and organisations that operate or support promotion activities worldwide. These organisations include Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Ministry of European Union Affairs, Center for EU Education and Youth Programmes, General Directorate of Security Affairs, Social Security Institution, the Turkish Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Development, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), and Yunus Emre Institute. Launching the ‘Study in Turkey’ website in 2013, Turkey stepped into online BMS to reach a wider audience. In addition, considering the importance of rankings and metrics, Turkey’s HEIs develop their own BMS engaged in active PR; as the degrees they grant are usually worth only as much as their brand (Naidoo et al., 2014). Because acquiring prestige requires time (i.e. institutional age), older universities have positional value by relying on their reputational heritage (Marginson, 2006); hence, since the majority of Turkey’s HEIs are quite young, to prove as credible and convincing, they have to and do invest BMS heavily to align with their vision and brand promises citing phrases such as ‘globally competitive, universal values, research at international standards’ (Garipağaoğlu and Çağla, 2016; Vural Yilmaz, 2016).

## 3.6 Scholarship Programs

As a strong pull factor, funding opportunities decisively influence students’ choice. Besides the scholarships offered by private universities, institutions (e.g. NGOs and foundations) and public universities, there are two government-sponsored scholarships available:

### 3.6.1 Turkiye Scholarships

The scholarship programme originally started in 1992 as Grand Student Project and it was launched after the collapse of the Soviet Union so as to help the Turkic Countries to improve their human resources and increase their skilled/qualified workforce, as well as building better and permanent relations with these countries with the aim of creating an umbrella organisation/union. Initially, it covered Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. By 2008 it spread into 57 countries and provided scholarships for 27.112 students (Vural and Alkan, 2009). In 2012, it was renamed as Turkiye Scholarships (TS) and restructured with the initiatives of Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). When TS was first launched, it received eight thousand applications from fifty countries. Upon employing highly improved BMS, it now reaches out to 175 countries with 122 thousand applications, as a result of which Turkey’s international student number more than tripled from 24 thousand in 2012 to 90 thousand in 2016. TS awards undergraduate, graduate and short-term scholarships to 5 thousand students each year who disseminate information about Turkey’s HEIs to their local network and help Turkey attract more students. Regardless of their medium-of-instruction at university, one-year-long free Turkish language training is compulsory for all students before they start their degree and they are expected to reach C1 level in Turkish and are given a certificate at the end of the program.

### 3.6.2 TUBITAK Scholarships

Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) funds international researchers, undergraduate and graduate students. Especially

focusing on graduate students from the least developed countries (LDC) in science and education fields, it aims to establish closer relations between Turkey and LDCs. Also, to attract highly-successful undergraduates, TUBITAK grants scholarships to medal winners at International Science Olympiads such as International Mathematical Olympiad, International Physics Olympiad, International Chemistry Olympiad, International Biology Olympiad, and International Olympiad in Informatics.

## 4 Trends: Student Mobility from Strategic Regions

As the universities and their research centres gain more prominence and reputation, their attractiveness in international arena increases. International recognition stimulates student mobility towards the country the HEI is located in, which in return contributes to national benefits and to a certain extent prompts a structural convergence of HE systems of a number of countries in the same region (Teichler, 2006). In that regard, regionalisation is defined as the impact of regionalism on HE, collaboration among HE actors and systems, a means for regional integration, and inter-regional cooperation (Knight, 2012). Harmonization, convergence, coherence, partnership, and alignment are the most commonly used terms to define regionalization strategies and processes which are through key processes that involve activities, organisational bodies and policies.

Internationalization and regionalisation can be both complementary and competitive: considering regions as key political areas, HE issues are tackled at regional scales which steer internationalization (Plannells, 2011), while (in inter-regional interactions) it fuels competition among member countries against external dynamics (Yang, 2012). Reasons such as region specific strategies to attract students, historical and cultural proximity, and low travel costs created various countries as regional hubs (Kondakci et al., 2016) such as Qatar, Dubai, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong which were previously source countries/regions, but now receiving a high number of stu-

dents. Thus, traditional international student flow from the south to the north is altering with recent trends showing more complex mobility patterns with the emergence of regional hubs (Knight and Morshidi, 2011; Rumbley et al., 2012).

As a part of regionalisation policies based on broader diplomatic and geostrategic interests of nations (Nelson, 2013), many countries are involved in partnership programs and regional agreements of which EU's initiatives such as Bologna Process promoting inter-regional mobility (i.e. EHEA), policy dialogues and networks serve as models to other regionalisation efforts. Similarly, a key player in Asia, Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) has established ASEAN University Network (AUN) developing thematic networks and projects. Another region with "a privileged geographic location with access to large markets; a young and increasingly educated population; and comparative advantages in several sectors such as manufacturing, renewable energies and tourism" (OECD, 2018) is Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The region has been affected by economic and political transformations, and it relies heavily on "both deepening and expanding partnerships with national, regional, and global actors, especially the United Nations (UN) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)" (World Bank, 2018). Therefore it holds immense potential for growth which Turkey may contribute and benefit through cooperation in various fields including higher education.

Despite being predominantly engaged in EHEA region and Bologna Process, Turkey's CoHE and HEIs have been increasingly networking with HEIs from the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia, and Africa to enhance Turkey's impact as a regional hub. For instance, in 2017 CoHE organized a conference "to improve the relations between Turkey and African countries, strengthen the existing cooperation and share information about the Turkish education system, would contribute greatly to further develop the relations" (CoHE, 2017) (CoHE, 2017). Rectors from eleven African countries attended the conference titled "Forming a Higher Education Area among the Islamic Countries" and subsequently released the Ankara Declaration. In his welcome ad-

dress, CoHE President Prof. Dr. Yekta Sarac uttered the following words which encompass Turkey's rationale and motivations for regional cooperation in the field of HE vis-à-vis its economic, political and diplomatic configurations:

The relations between Turkey and African countries have developed in every field over the last fifteen years. After the declaration of the year 2005 as the "Year of Africa" by the Turkish government, the "Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit" was organized in 2008. Our relations have evolved into a process that can be named as "Turkey-Africa Partnership" with the introduction of the "Africa Strategy Document" which was adopted in 2010. As the new CoHE administration, we launched the "Expansion Program for Africa" in 2015. The aim of this program is to share the opportunities we have in the field of higher education in Turkey with the African countries and train academics, administrative and technical staff in Turkish universities that will take part in the development of the African countries. We signed memorandums of understandings and cooperation agreements with the ministers responsible for higher education of nine African countries including Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Djibouti, Sudan and Rwanda to develop cooperation in higher education and scientific research in the last two years. We have identified our priority fields in our cooperation with some countries and matched the universities that could cooperate in these fields. We are very pleased to see that the initiatives of the new CoHE have already started to yield positive results (CoHE, 2017).

In such regional cooperation meetings and promotional activities, Turkey highlights its geopolitical position, socio-cultural proximity and diversity, and Muslim-majority identity. NGOs and state institutions such as CoHE, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Yunus Emre Institute, Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (YTB) are key institutions involved in this process and they promote regionalization activities via inter- and intra-regional agreements. In addition to these, there are initiatives of local institutions. One of them is The Internationalization of Turkish Research Universities (ITRU) Group comprised of

the International Offices of five of Turkey's public and non-profit research intensive universities which are Bilkent University, Bogazici University, Koç University, Middle East Technical University and Sabanci University. ITRU claims to "to bring together their expertise to create new synergies and strengths and in the long term contribute to further improve the quality of The Turkish Higher Education System in the area of internationalization" as well as "to find solutions to common problems in the process of internationalisation of teaching, learning, research and campus management activities" so as to help "Turkey achieve its goal of becoming a global education hub" (ITRU, 2018).

So far, Turkey's efforts to foster internationalization and regionalization of HE has yielded a substantial progress. However, there are quite a number of steps to be taken immediately to facilitate the implementation of policies and to bring about concrete results that can have positive impact on actual classroom settings as well as students' and faculty members' lives. Next section will dwell on these and put forward several suggestions for the institutional stakeholders.

## 5 Looking into Future and Areas for Improvement

IoHE requires a focus on the purpose and functions of HEIs and the delivery of education. In that regard, the report has thus far attempted to display the efforts HEIs, policymakers and stakeholders have put to accelerate and support IoHE process taking global and local dynamics into consideration. Overall, it can be claimed that compared to its previous profile as a student-sending country, Turkey's recent policies and practices in HE arena have yielded a substantial transformation of its character which assumes a student-receiving role to a large extent. The recent period has witnessed an escalation of applications to Turkish HEIs for undergraduate and graduate studies as well as cooperation between HEIs in Turkey and various corners of the world. However, there are still quite a good number of issues that needs

to be addressed to improve the conditions and performance with regard to internationalization and mobility. Following suggestions are categorized into two areas. The first part deals with Turkey’s national strategy for internationalization and proposes areas and points for reconsideration and for taking action. The second part studies meso- and micro-level implications of IoHE and inward student mobility with regard to institutional practices and actual classroom settings. Both parts are based on the outcomes and evaluations of the author’s research into relevant literature and institutional, classroom and social spaces international students are engaged with.

### 5.1 Suggestions for State Institutions

Though it has been stated multiple times in CoHE’s strategic plans as a means to sustainable development, IoHE has been portrayed with vague terms and it lacks an indication of a direction for IoHE activities at various levels referring to areas such as trade, development, migration and diplomacy. Following suggestions aim to cater for these fields:

- Given the nature of global HE market with rapid developments and ever-changing dynamics, CoHE’s IoHE strategy should be re-evaluated and revised regularly and more frequently to ensure the strategies are relevant and provides effective solutions to emerging issues.
- Instead of providing sweeping remarks about Turkey’s progress and goals regarding IoHE, CoHE should conduct and publish separate evaluations for each category.
- HEIs’ performance vis-à-vis internationalization and mobility should be regularly assessed, rated and (if required) encouraged to seek certification from national or international organisations.
- State institutions and HEIs should work together to facilitate the migration process for incoming students, researchers and teaching staff to eliminate inefficient bureaucratic procedures.
- Government agencies should build and promote

inter-sectoral coordination related to internationalization of HEIs.

- HEIs should be encouraged to partner with other foreign institutions, businesses and organisations to increase research activities.
- Regional cooperation schemes should be further supported in order to fortify Turkey’s position, to take joint initiatives and to reach more collaborative partners.
- Cooperation between state institutions, HEIs and society should be established so as to welcome international students, researchers and faculty members, to help them settle and to maintain their long-term relations with Turkey.
- Strong areas of study in Turkey’s HEIs such as engineering and medical sciences should be highlighted and effectively marketed in global HE arena.
- CoHE and relevant state institutions should work towards establishing an international understanding and intercultural competence through their policies and encourage HEIs to bring them to the fore in their activities.
- Financial and training support should be provided to foster HEIs’ integration into digital partnerships and virtual mobility schemes.
- In order to reach out to gifted, smart and promising students and researchers in underdeveloped countries and disadvantaged backgrounds, local and international NGOs should be involved in recruitment process.

### 5.2 Suggestions for Higher Education Institutions

This parts presents suggestions with regard to various aspects HEIs bear.

### 5.2.1 Online Presence, Guidance and Marketing

- HEIs should adopt a template that runs consistently in different parts of their websites. Fonts, logos and styles that are totally different from each other in each section signals a downmarket brand image.
- Departments should provide English versions of their webpages and CVs of their faculty members.
- HEIs should publish a Prospective Students Webpage including information about the institution, degrees and courses available, application and entry, studentships, open days and events, fees and finance, useful contacts, and registering interest.
- HEIs should also provide guidance about accommodation, institutional residences available and how to apply to them. Practical tips about living in Turkey and the city HEI is located will also prove useful.
- For international students, HEIs should publish separate information by country, summer schools, immigration and visas, degree preparation courses, and Turkish or English language requirements.
- For facilitating their settling, international students, researchers and faculty should be able to find information on the HEI's website about the campus (with a virtual tour if possible), maps and buildings, faculties and departments, student union and societies to widen their participation.

### 5.2.2 Campus Grounds

- Signs in the campus should include both Turkish and English versions.
- The staff working in various areas of the campus should be given English language training to be able to communicate with international students, faculty, visitors, and researchers.

- Cafeterias should cater different types of food besides local varieties.
- To help branding of the institution beyond the campus spaces, a shop should be available selling mugs, keep cups, textile, stationary etc. with English prints.

### 5.2.3 Societies and Clubs

- For the families of students, researchers, faculty members and visiting scholars, a Newcomers' Club run by local volunteers should be established to help and support them, to create an international community to eliminate their isolation and the feeling of loneliness, to introduce Turkish culture, and to integrate local and international members of the HEI with various activities.
- Societies should encourage international students to join and if their focus is not solely national, they should be able to deliver at least some of their events in English.
- Each HEI should have an International Students' Club. The administrative staff should keep in touch with the club's committee to receive feedback about the needs and concerns of international students.

### 5.2.4 Classroom Settings

- Classrooms should be equipped with mobile furniture to support group and peer work.
- The layout of the classroom should not promote teacher-centred teaching, instead it should promote communicative and collaborative learning during which the local students will need to practice their productive skills in English.

### 5.2.5 Administration

- The administration of the HEIs should work towards increasing participation to mobility programs.

- In cooperation with international office, administrators should develop a clear, precise and feasible policies to attract more students and cater for their needs.
- HEIs should shift their focus on mere quantitative development to qualitative progress.
- HEIs should provide a pre-arrival orientation program, a thorough orientation upon arrival and a guidebook to international students, researchers and faculty for introducing aspects such as intercultural elements, bureaucratic processes as well as maintaining their everyday lives.
- The administration of HEIs should establish an Equality and Diversity Unit for meeting international students' demands, needs and discussing issues related to age, gender, race, disability, religion and belief.

### 5.2.6 Teaching Staff

- There is clearly a need for intercultural training for the members of teaching staff so as to introduce issues such as sensitive topics.
- Teaching staff needs a training on IoHE, their institution's internationalisation process, student mobility, students' backgrounds, issues, and how to deal with them.
- There needs to be educational technologies training for teaching staff and training into an online learning management system such as Moodle.
- In contexts where the medium of instruction is English, support should be available for teaching staff regarding areas such as English for Special Purposes.
- Adequate incentives should be offered to teaching staff for mobility programs.

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