INTRODUCTION *to the concept of* *MOBILITY WINDOWS (MWs)*

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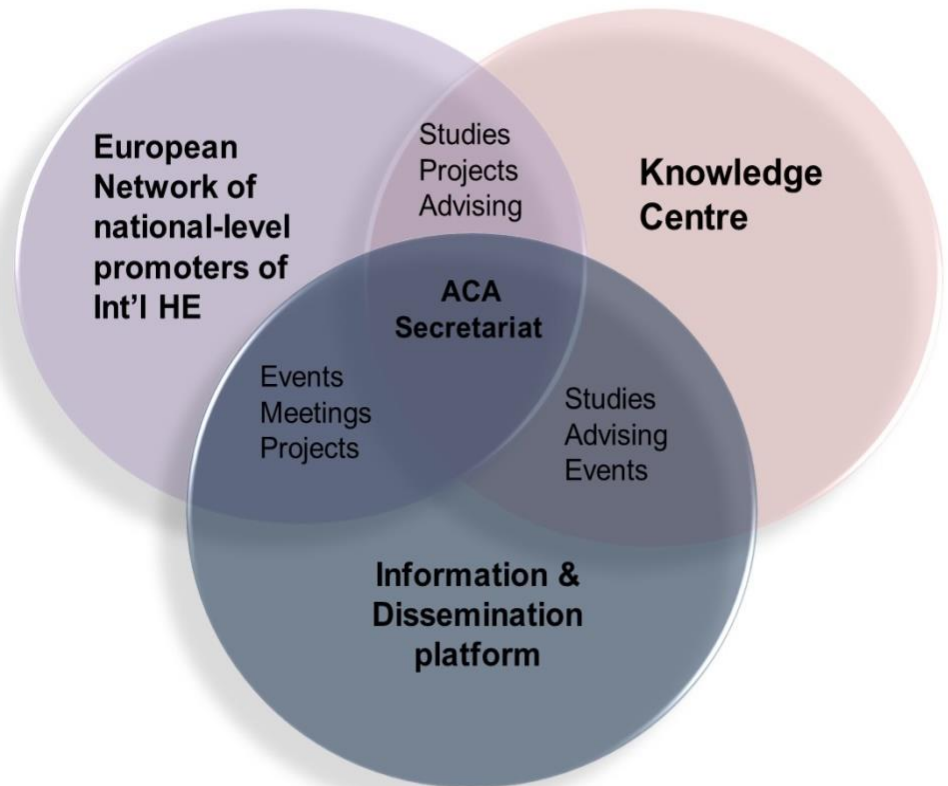
Academic Cooperation Association – ACA

"The European voice of national organisations for the internationalisation of HE"

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- **Knowledge centre** – studies, evaluations, advocacy.

- **Information and dissemination platform** - international events, collaborative projects, networking, etc.

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Presentation based on:

1. *ACA-led study on mobility windows (2011– 2013) & ensuing publication: "Mobility windows. From Concept to Practice".*

2. *Subsequent policy developments in a number of European countries.*

- *Primarily a macro-level perspective.*

In the next 2 hours:

1. Policy context – why "mobility windows" in 2011?
2. Mobility windows – a definition
3. Mobility windows – a new phenomenon?
4. A typology of mobility windows
5. Characteristics of mobility windows – MWs in real life
6. Impact and recommendations (2013)
7. Ensuing policy developments & debates in Europe

8. Mobility Windows from an Estonian perspective

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„Mobility Windows' Seminar"
22 November 2017, Tallinn, Archimedes Foundation

1. Policy context – why "mobility windows" in 2011?

- Student mobility was (is) high on the European higher education policy agenda – continuous push to increase mobile student numbers:
  - EU and Bologna Process 20% benchmarks
  - Even more ambitious national or regional goals (50% - AT & DE; 33% Flanders; EE – 4-5% every year in exchange programmes)

- "Mobility windows" – in Brussels-circles, often quoted as a solution to overcome mobility obstacles

- BUT, highly unclear what "mobility windows" were precisely – lack of precision, user-driven definition(s) → need for some clarity and for a rational discourse

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1. Policy context – why "mobility windows" in 2011?

- *MOWIN Project: Mapping "mobility windows" in European higher education. Examples from selected countries*

- Duration: October 2011 – September 2013
- Co-funded by the EU (ERASMUS Multilateral Projects)

- Aimed to:
    1) propose a clear **definition of mobility windows**;
    2) create a **typology of mobility windows** that reflects the variety of practices and models in Europe;
    3) investigate **how** the **different types** are **implemented** (programme visits at HEIs in five countries – Germany, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania – and interviews with staff and students in programmes with mobility windows).

2. Mobility windows – a definition

- BIG assumption – consensus on the definition would emerge from the field/from practice.

- Survey of HEIs – mobility windows as 'everything under the sun', from free-mover mobility to mobility exclusively facilitated via joint degree programmes.

- Practice drove definitions – need to come to a joint understanding.

- Developed and proposed a definition after further surveys and a consultation with experts in international HE.

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2. Mobility windows – a definition

*A mobility window is a period of time **reserved** for international student mobility that is **embedded** into the curriculum of a study programme.*

- "Curricular embeddedness" =

    - The mobility period is an **explicit part of the home curriculum, the study plan and the study programme**.

    - The home curriculum and study plan create **transparency about the possibility of recognising the stay abroad** (full recognition).

Do you have, in any of your study programmes, mobility arrangements that would fit the MWs definition?

2. Mobility windows – a definition

- Mobility windows – a paradigm shift → looking at international student mobility from the programme perspective:
  - Why does the programme 'want' international mobility?
  - What does this mean for the home curriculum?
  - Mobility impact beyond the mobile student, at programme and institutional level.

Mobility windows vs. other arrangements for facilitating mobility
  - Beyond the 'standard ERASMUS mobility'
  - Physical, international mobility
  - MOWIN: visited programmes with mobility windows with min. 'duration' of 3 months (15 ECTS)
  - Project focus: OUTGOING mobility (but incoming implicit)

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2. Mobility windows – a definition

(1) conference, workshop, seminar
(2) summer school
(3) internship

(4) temporary enrolment abroad
(5) joint/double degree
(6) entire degree abroad

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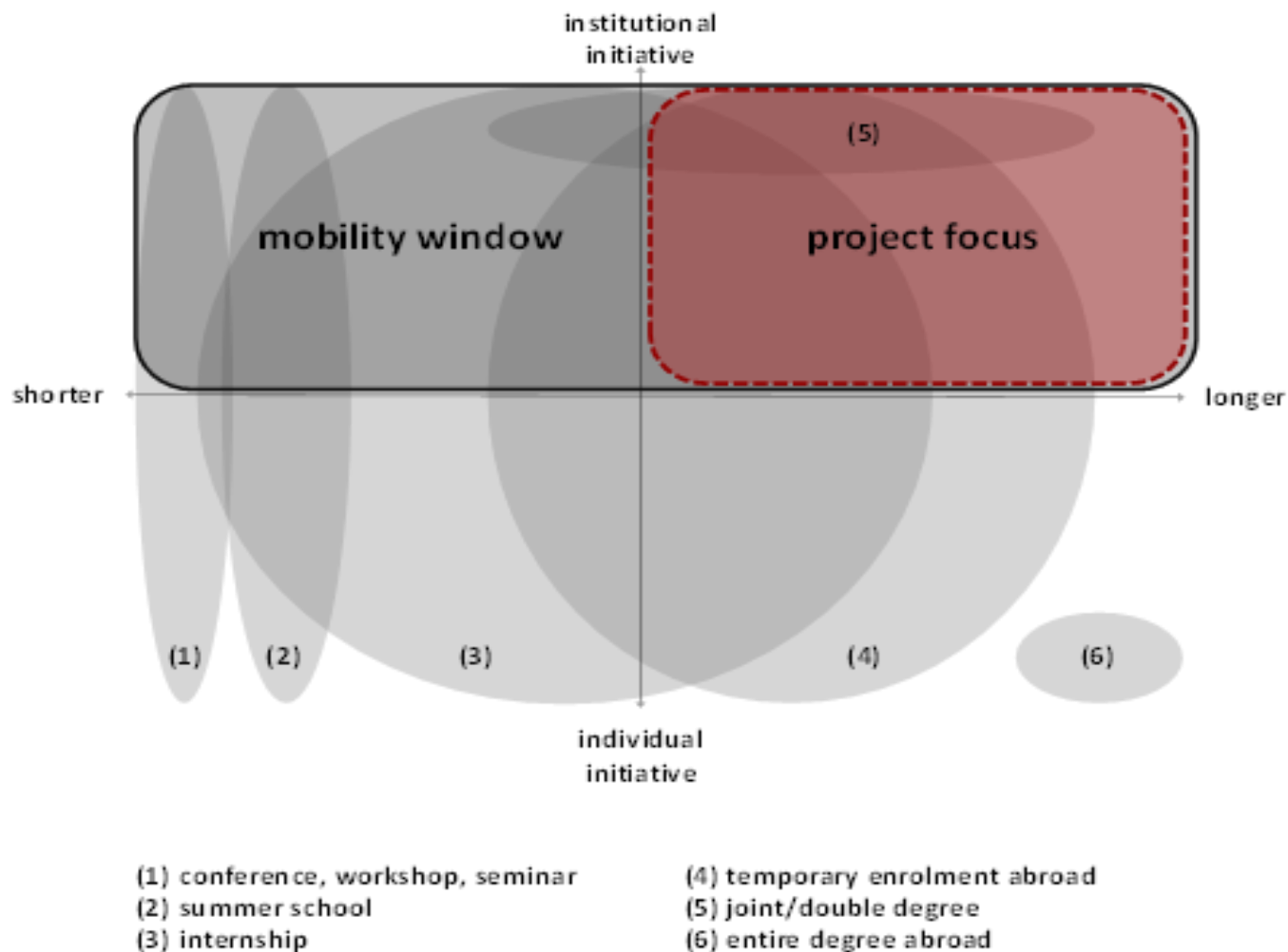
3. Mobility windows – a new phenomenon?

- Old model (structured, integrated mobility), new label

- "Mobility windows" – name traced back to mid-2000s

- Linked to the new degree architecture introduced by the Bologna Process – assumption that the Bachelor is too short for international mobility and 'mobility time' needs to be built within.

- Some examples
  - CRUS (2004)
  - DAAD national conference – "Mobiliteit Fenster" (2005)
  - EU level – Jan Figel (2008) as a "*remedy […] for the overloaded study programmes*" created through the Bologna reforms.
  - LERU paper (2013) – windows used to describe „networked mobility"
  - 2013 – regional level discussion in Flanders, Belgium, on mobility windows

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4. A typology of mobility windows

- Easier said than done – initially approx. 40 types ⚡☐

- Typology generated by crossing **2 main characteristics of mobility windows**:
  - (a) the **status of a mobility window** within the study programme: mandatory or optional, and
  - (b) the **content of the window** – **degree of curricular standardisation** of the mobility experience facilitated during the window: highly-prescribed curriculum abroad or loosely-prescribed curriculum abroaad.

- **Other characteristics**, e.g.:
  - purpose of mobility (e.g. study vs. internship),
  - number of partners,
  - types of degree: traditional vs. joint or double,
  - funding arrangements, etc.

deemed of secondary importance for the definition, but explored in the **How?** part.

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4. A typology of mobility windows
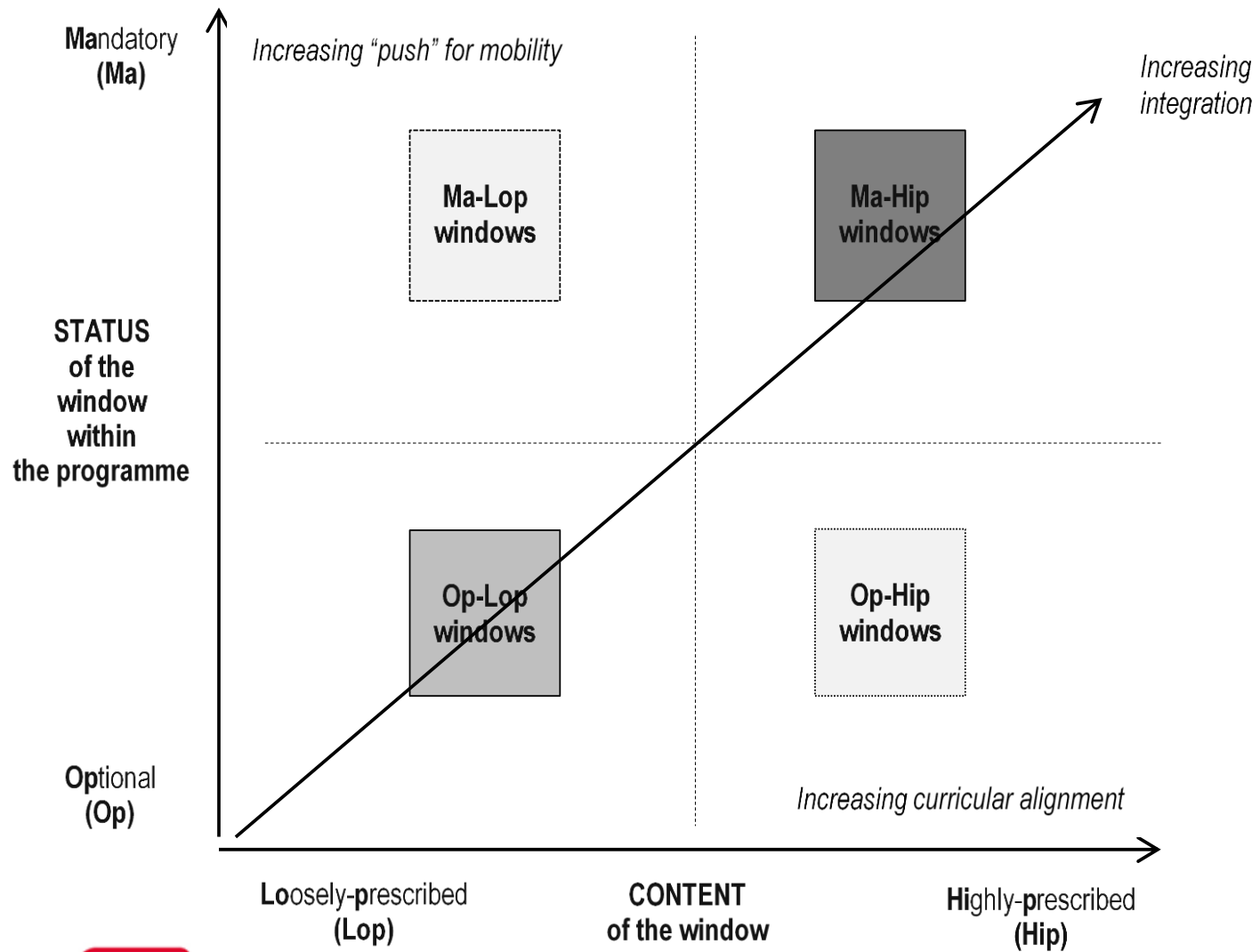
4. A typology of mobility windows

Ma-Lop windows	Ma-Hip windows
• are a hybrid type of mobility window, combining flexible and more rigid elements;	• are the most structured type of mobility window;
• the window is a *mandatory* compo- nent of the study programme; and	• the window is a *mandatory* compo- nent of the study programme; and
• what students study or undertake while abroad is *loosely-prescribed*.	• students have very limited choice, if any, over what to study/do when abroad – the academic content of the
• are the most flexible type of mobility window (coming very close to ERAS- MUS mobility);	• are a hybrid type of mobility windows, combining flexible and more rigid elements;
• the window is an *optional* part of the study programme (the mobility win- dow route); and	• the window is an *optional* part of the study programme (the mobility window route); and
• what students study or undertake while abroad is *loosely-prescribed*.	• students have very limited choice, if any, over what to study/do when abroad – the academic content of the window is *highly-prescribed*.

In your own study programmes, which types do you have, if any, or which types would you more easily envisage?

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4. A typology of mobility windows

- Incidence of the 4 types amongst the study programmes visited in the MOWIN project: 32 study programmes with 42 MWs.

Dimensions			2. Degree of standardisation of window's (academic) content	
			Loosely-prescribed (Lop)	Highly-prescribed (Hip)
			Ma-Lop	**Ma-Hip**
1. Status of the window in the study programme	Mandatory (Ma)		**5a[1], 11a, 11b, 14, 16, 29a**	**7, 8, 15a, 17, 24, 26a, 27a, 28a**
			Op-Lop	**Op-Hip**
	Optional (Op)		**1, 2, 3, 4, 5b, 6, 9, 10, 15b, 23, 25, 26b, 27c, 28c, 29b, 29c**	**12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27b, 28b, 30, 31, 32**

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5. Characteristics of mobility windows – MWs in real life

- Number of MWs per study programme:
  - Usually **one** MW per programme (25 programmes)
  - Very few with 2 or 3 MWs – usually one more structured (Ma-Hip) followed by one or two 'looser' MWs types (Op-Lop or Op-Hip)

- Types of programmes incorporating MWs:
  - **Both** 'traditional' degrees (18)
  - And double/joint degree programmes (14)

- Type of mobility (purpose of mobility) facilitated through MWs
  - Typically: for studies mobility (enrolment abroad)
  - Much rarer for internships, especially the more structured types (Ma-Hip and Op-Hip)

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5. Characteristics of mobility windows – MWs in real life

Dimensions				2. Degree of standardisation of window's (academic) content	
				Loosely-prescribed (Lop)	Highly-prescribed (Hip)
				Ma-Lop	**Ma-Hip**
1. Status of the window in the study programme	Mandatory (Ma)	For study		5a, 11a, 11b, 14, 16	7, 8, 15a, 17, 24, 26a, 27a, 28a
		For internship		29a	
		Mixed or either/or			
				Op-Lop	**Op-Hip**
	Optional (Op)	For study		5b, 6, 9, 10, 23, 25, 26b	12, 13, 19, 21, 27b, 28b, 31, 32
		For internship		27c, 28c	30
		Mixed or either/or		1, 2, 3, 4, 15b, 29b, 29c	18, 20, 22

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5. Characteristics of mobility windows – MWs in real life

Full programme name / field of study	**Bachelor in Tourism Management** (Saxion University of Applied Sciences)
Duration of the programme	4 years
Number of mobility windows	3
Type and purpose of mobility window	1. 'Mandatory window-Highly prescribed content' (**Ma-Hip**) for internship – year 2 2. 'Optional window – Loosely prescribed content' (**Op-Lop**) for study and/or internship – year 3 or 4 3. 'Optional window-Loosely prescribed content' (**Op-Lop**) for study and/or internship – year 4
Length	5 months for each
Number of foreign partners	About 30 institutions for study abroad and 300 companies for internships abroad

5. Characteristics of mobility windows – MWs in real life

- **Number of partners and directions of mobility** in MWs

One way, bilateral, one destination: A→B A sends to B	Reciprocal, bilateral, one destination: A←→ B A exchanges with B
One way, bilateral, several destinations: A → B, A→C, A→ D A sends to several institutions B, C, D	Reciprocal, bilateral, several destinations: A ←→ B, A←→ C, A←→D A exchanges with several institutions B, C, D
Reciprocal, multilateral, one destination ("mobility circle"): A→B, B→C, C→A	Reciprocal, multilateral, several destinations ("consortium model"): A←→B, B←→C, C←→A Institutions A, B, C exchange students

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5. Characteristics of mobility windows – MWs in real life

Implementation **highlights**

- **Setting-up MWs**: very resource-intensive (for 'Hip' cases, can take up to 2-3 years and requires very committed academics – most typically built on personal contacts).

- **Curricular alignment**: specialisation abroad or electives vs. curriculum abroad mirroring fully the home curriculum.

- **When?**: Bachelor – 5th or/and 6th semester; Master – 3rd semester.

- **Funding**: essential, but rarely an institutional support framework and policy; most often organised on a voluntary basis, with Erasmus or other grants used to finance the mobility period.

- **Typical duration**: one semester abroad.

- **Students' expectations**: full support and planning essential for some, but not all.

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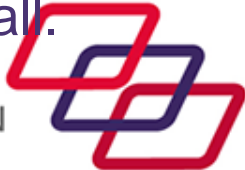
6. <u>Impact</u> and recommendations (2013)

1) *Do many programmes and institutions implement mobility windows?*

- Not as many as expected (not a very frequently-used model so far)
- 'Not for the faint-hearted', as they require commitment and work, but ensure programme impact of mobility.

2) *Do the windows support the mobility of most or just a minority of students?*

- Approx. 10-20% of all enrolled students in programmes with 'Op' MWs (except programmes with mandatory windows, where all students go abroad).
- But, better quality mobility.

6. <u>Impact</u> and recommendations (2013)

- The benefits not fully window-specific (mix-up between benefits of mobility in general and benefits of MWs), but multiple

    - For the programme/institution:
        - multiplication,
        - quality boost,
        - reputation enhancement,
        - internal change,
        - staff mobility,
        - programme-level impact,
        - better graduates.

    - For the students: same as for other forms of mobility (but seem essential for students less likely to go abroad)

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6. Impact and recommendations (2013)

1) Discuss the **proposed definition** and typology of mobility windows.

2) HEIs to develop **institutional approaches** to and intra-institutional partnerships for window mobility and curricular internationalisation in general.

3) HEIs are encouraged to **explore the benefits of different types of mobility windows and develop comprehensive internationalisation policies**, of which outbound credit mobility in general, and window mobility in particular, should be key instruments – but by no means the only ones.

4) Ways to **ensure sustainability of mobility windows** should be explored at the institutional, national and European levels.

5) Continue to **work on the removal of obstacles to student mobility**, because the quantitative contribution of window mobility might be limited.

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7. Ensuing policy developments & debates in Europe

Following a period of 'no impact', **revived interest in the concept of Mobility Windows**, because of:

- Focus on 'learning mobility' and 'better quality mobility' – more preparation needed
- Strategic partnerships – curricular embeddedness of mobility periods a must
- Decreasing interest in study abroad in some countries – more structured approaches needed
- Or the opposite – world citizens, so everybody should do it – standard part of study programmes

……...

National debates on mobility windows:

- Hungary – MWs requirement put into the national HE law for all new study programmes
- Austria – national-level debate
- Norway – national-level debate

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8. Mobility Windows from an Estonian perspective

- **Why MWs at this time and place? What purpose could MWs serve in Estonia?**

- **Which types would seem most feasible and why?**

- **What have the experiences been so far in Estonia – national level exchange of experiences?**

Thank you for your attention!

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Mobility Windows. From concept to practice:

http://www.aca-secretariat.be/fileadmin/aca_docs/images/members/ACA_2013_Mobility_windows.pdf

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