

Cross-border student survey at Hochschule Niederrhein and Fontys Venlo.

ERSA Congress 2021, Bozen

27th August 2021 | Christina Masch, Lilia Gutenberg & Janina Ulrich

Agenda

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2. **Research design**
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4. **Attractiveness of Higher Education Institutions in Border Regions**
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 - d. **Conclusion**

1. Project „euregio campus – Limburg/Niederrhein“

1. Project „euregio campus – Limburg/Niederrhein“

- the student survey was conducted within the framework of this INTERREG-project
- cross-border project with Dutch and German partners:
 - Hochschule Niederrhein (HSNR)
 - Fontys International Business School in Venlo (Fontys)
 - Cities of Venlo, Moenchengladbach and Krefeld
 - Business development agencies of Moenchengladbach and Krefeld
- Duration of the project: 30th June 2022
- Aim: increase the perception of the euregio rhine-meuse-north as an attractive region to study, work and live

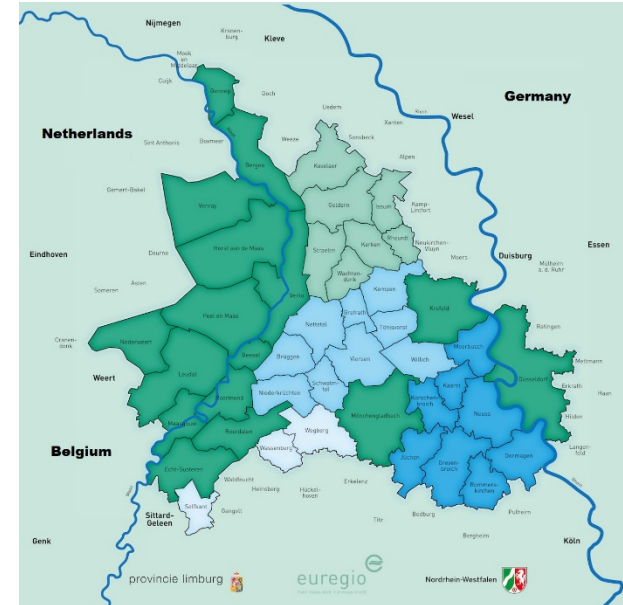
1. Project „euregio campus – Limburg/Niederrhein“

euregio rhine-meuse-north

- Dutch-German border region located between the Rhine and Meuse rivers
- metropolitan fringe region
- characterized by many SME

Challenges

- mega trends (demographic change, lack of skilled workers, generational shift etc.)
- barrier effect of the border:
 - cultural differences lead to different ways of thinking and working within the border region
 - different languages



Source: euregio rhein-maas-nord 2020

2. Research Design

2. Research design

- online survey of students of Fontys Venlo and HSNR in fall/winter 2019
- using the university e-mail distribution list, students from all faculties of Fontys Venlo and HSNR have been contacted by e-mail
 - approx. 4,000 Fontys students and approx. 14,000 HSNR students
- The student survey was designed to provide insights into the following questions:
 - Why did the students choose the university and the university location?
 - What do they like and dislike about the university and university location?
 - What preferences do they have when choosing an employer?
- 27 questions in five thematic blocks: general questions, living situation, university location, university, choice of employer

2. Research design

Sample		HSNR	Fontys
Participants (n)		1,157	449
Bachelor or Masterprogram	Bachelor	82.1 %	96.9 %
	Master	17.9 %	3.1 %
Study location	Mönchengladbach	62.2 %	100.0 %
	Krefeld	37.8 %	
	Venlo		
Gender	Female	61.2 %	43.9 %
	Male	38.5 %	55.2 %
	Diverse	0.3 %	0.9 %

3. Student Preferences in Job Search – An Analysis for the euregio rhine-meuse-north

Christina Masch & Janina Ulrich

3. Student Preferences in Job Search

a. Theory

In addition to the increased demand of skilled professionals caused by demographic changes, the euregio also faces a brain drain:

- former studies on the migration behaviour of Fontys and HSNR graduates show that an above-average proportion of the graduates leaves the euregio¹
- most important determinants of the migration decision:¹
 - family and friends
 - adequate job offering
- possible reason: students of both universities lack sufficient information regarding the regional companies²

3. Student Preferences in Job Search

a. Theory

Results of an 2014 study on HSNR students' preferences when choosing an employer:

- **good working atmosphere, adequate salary and good training and development opportunities were most important factors¹**
- **size of the company does not play a major role in the choice of a future employer¹**
- **students preferred to take up a job in the rest of North Rhine-Westphalia or in the rest of Germany¹**

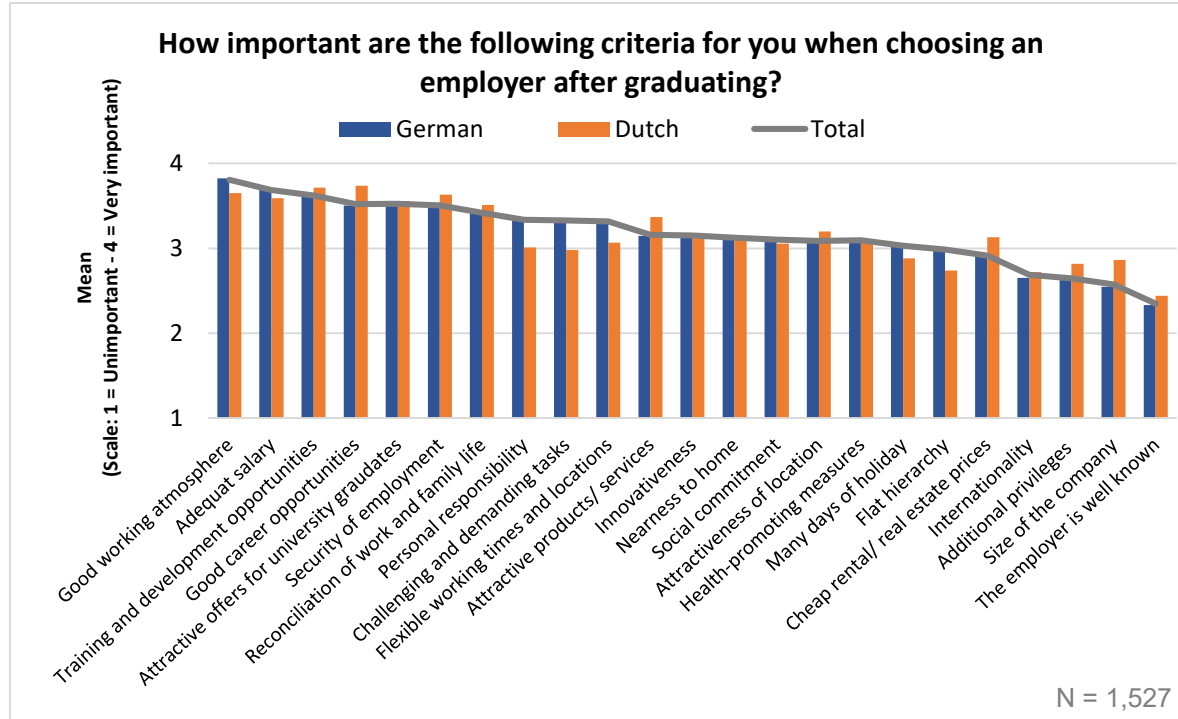
3. Student Preferences in Job Search

b. Research questions

- **What are the main attractiveness factors for students when choosing an employer?**
- **Are there differences in preferences according to origin (differences between the 1,432 German and the 95 Dutch students)?**
- **Which company size do students prefer for their future employer?**
- **Which locations do students in the euregio prefer for their first employment after graduation?**
- **How well do the students know the euregional business landscape?**

3. Student Preferences in Job Search

c. Results



Factors significant more important for Germans:

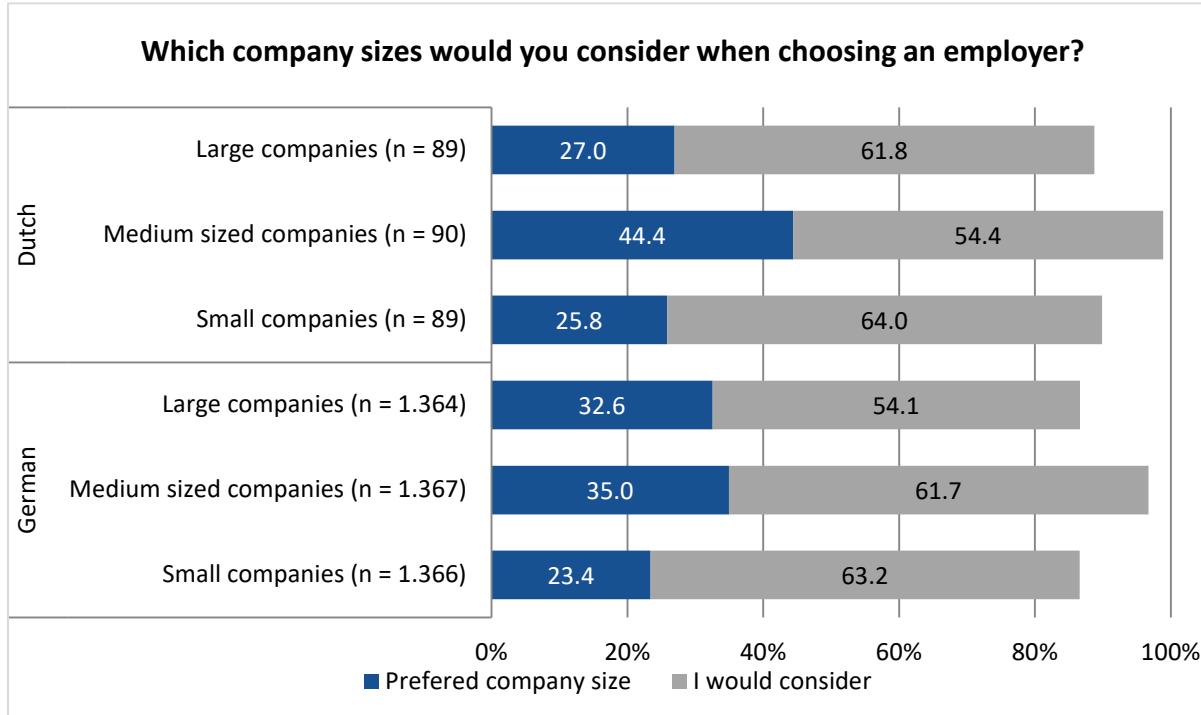
- personal responsibility
- challenging and demanding tasks
- good working atmosphere
- many days of holidays
- flexible working times/locations
- flat hierarchies

Factors significant more important for Dutch:

- attractive products and services
- good career opportunities
- cheap rental or real estate prices
- additional privileges
- company size

3. Student Preferences in Job Search

c. Results



- majority of students would consider all company sizes
- most students can imagine to work in a medium sized company

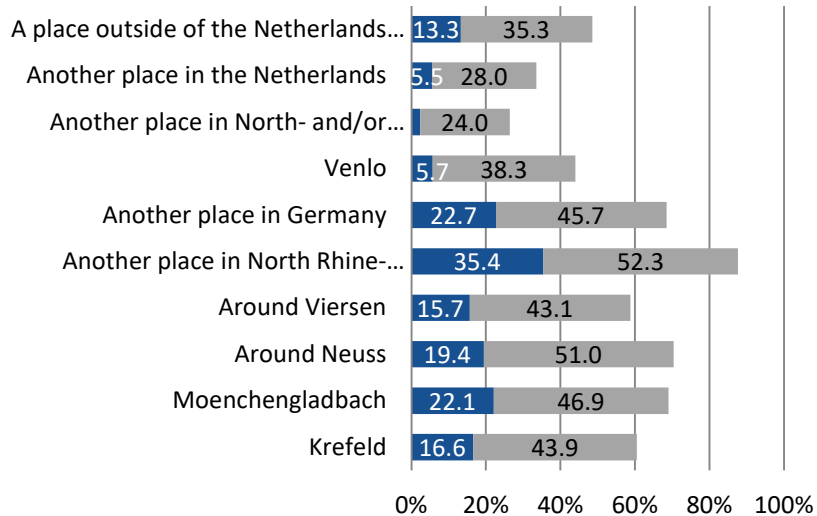
3. Student Preferences in Job Search

c. Results

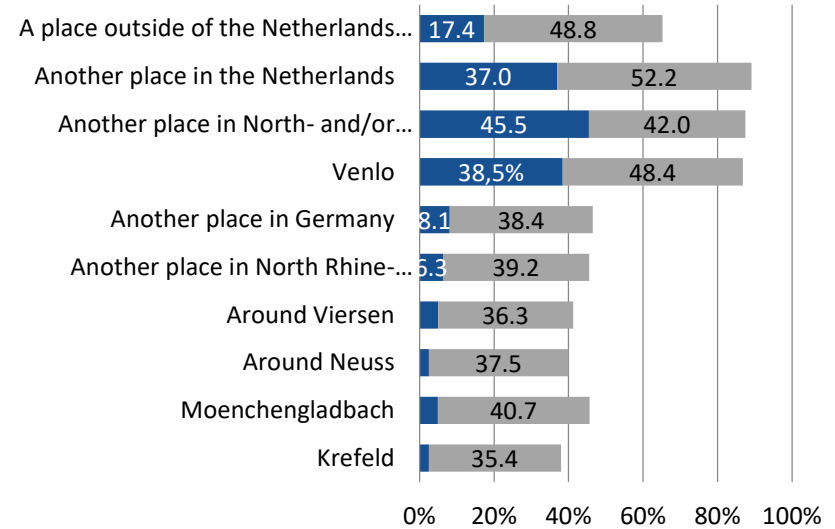
Which location would you consider when choosing a first employer right after graduating?

■ Preferred location ■ I would consider

GERMAN

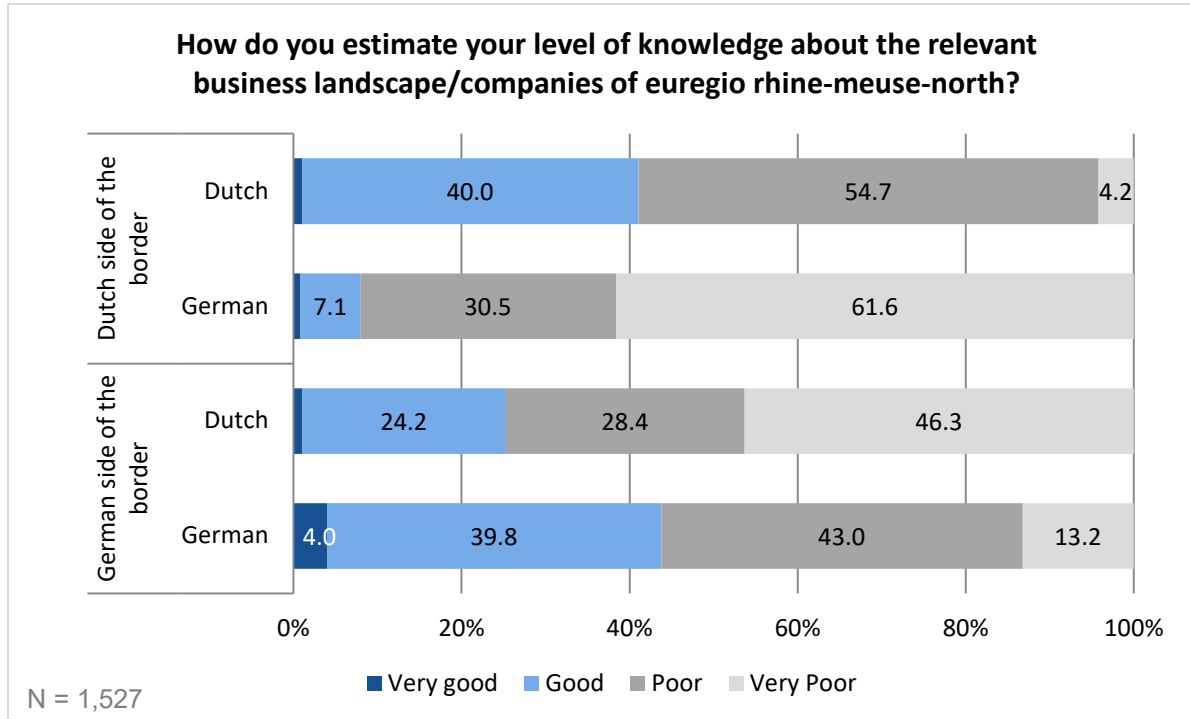


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3. Student Preferences in Job Search

c. Results



- many students are already unfamiliar with the domestic companies in the area surrounding their university
- and even fewer dare to look across the border
- this result illustrates that the barrier effect of the border is still existing

3. Student Preferences in Job Search

d. Conclusions

- **students place particular value on a good working atmosphere, an adequate salary, training and development opportunities as well as good career opportunities and attractive offers for university graduates**
- **the results show that German students in particular are more likely to work outside the euregio**
- **in contrast, many Dutch students can imagine working in the Dutch part of the euregio**
- **the knowledge of the euregional companies is still expandable for most students (especially on the other side of the border)**

3. Student Preferences in Job Search

d. Conclusions

- **SMEs should take these results into account in their employer branding strategy and highlight the advantages of SMEs, such as a good, family-like working atmosphere or responsible and varied tasks**
- **In order to increase the willingness of students to stay in the euregio, it would be important to bring students even more into contact with regional companies**
- **In order to increase the willingness to cross borders, it would be important that students also get to know companies on the other side**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

4. Exploring the Attractiveness of Higher Education Institutions in Border Regions

Lilia Gutenberg & Christina Masch

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

a. Theory

- **Universities play an important role in supplying their region with highly skilled graduates (Valero & van Reenen, 2019)**
- **Theoretical aspects: Migration in order to attend a university is part of a more general migration process (see also, Sa et al. (2004))**
 - **Investment motives: guided by better education, better job opportunities and/or greater future income**
 - **Consumption motives: guided by the amenities of the study location, a better quality of life and leisure facilities (e.g. Florida, 2004, 2005)**

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

a. Theory

- Empirical literature regarding cross border student mobility are scarce
- In general, the factors influencing the choice of university can be broadly classified in two categories:
 - Educational institution: study program, image of educational institution, proximity, abroad
 - the city where the educational institution is located: job opportunities, accommodation, transport, culture, sports, outdoor activities, image of study location
- Some studies examine the question of whether the attractiveness of the university location and the quality of life expected there, are among the most important decision factors (e.g. Wesselmann and Hallenberg, 2018; Insch and Sun, 2013)

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

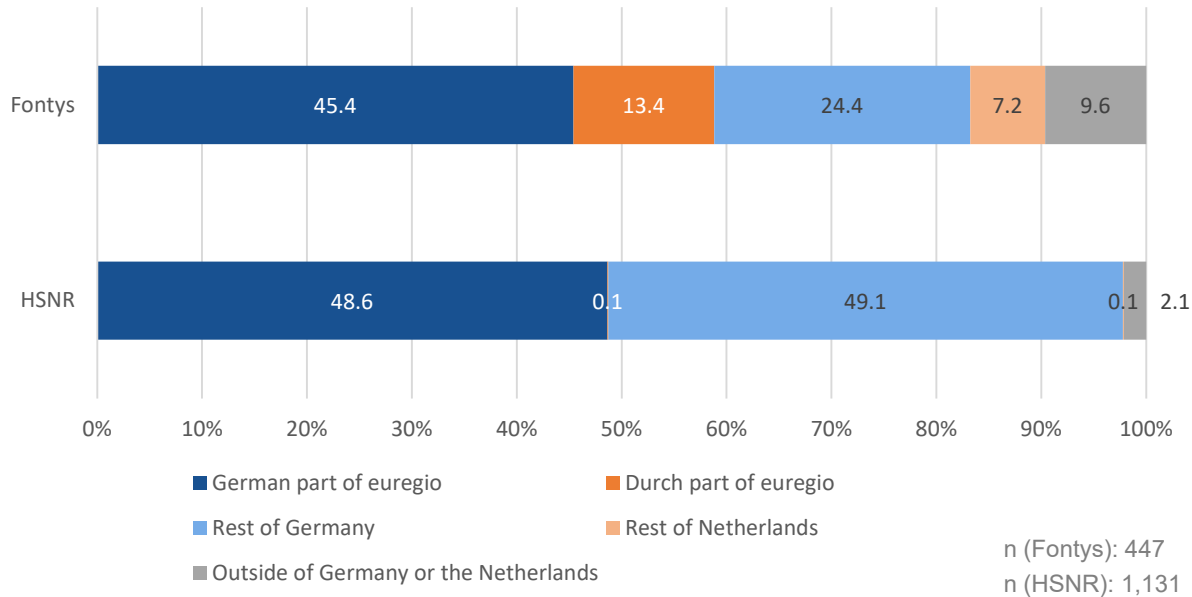
b. Research questions

- Where do the students of the euregional universities come from?
- What were the reasons for choosing the university and what role does the university location (proximity to the border) play?
 - Are there similarities and differences between the euregional universities or locations?
- Are cross-border offers interesting for students and could they represent a unique selling point for a border region?
- Which offers do they use and how satisfied are they with them?

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results

Where did you obtain your university entrance qualification?



HSNR:

- nearly all students of HSNR received it within Germany
- 48.6 % in the euregio

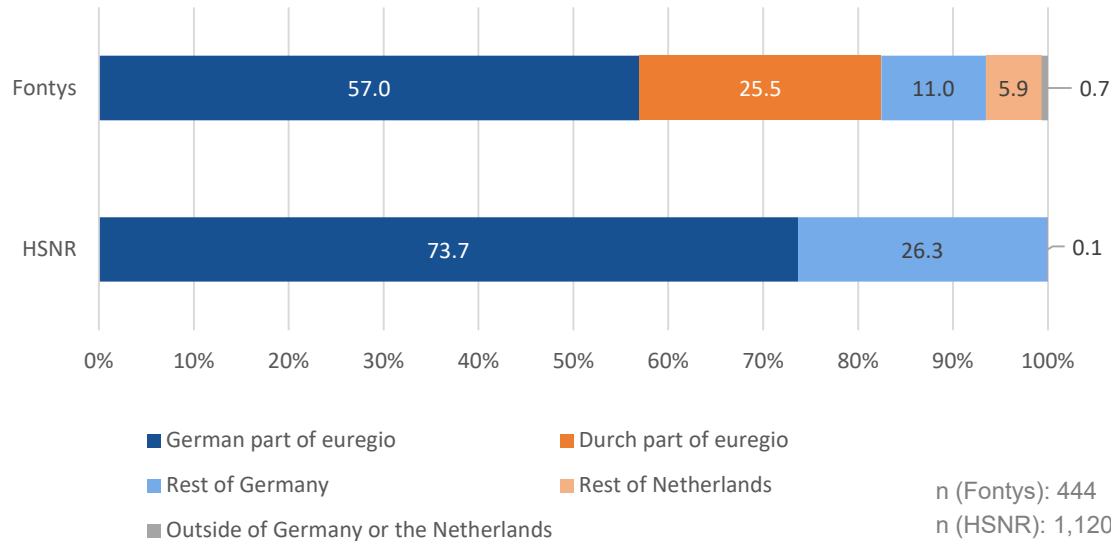
Fontys:

- only 20 % obtained it in the Netherlands
- 60 % in the euregio
- most students come from Germany

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results

Where do you live during your studies?



HSNR:

- 73.7 % live in the German part of the euregio

Fontys:

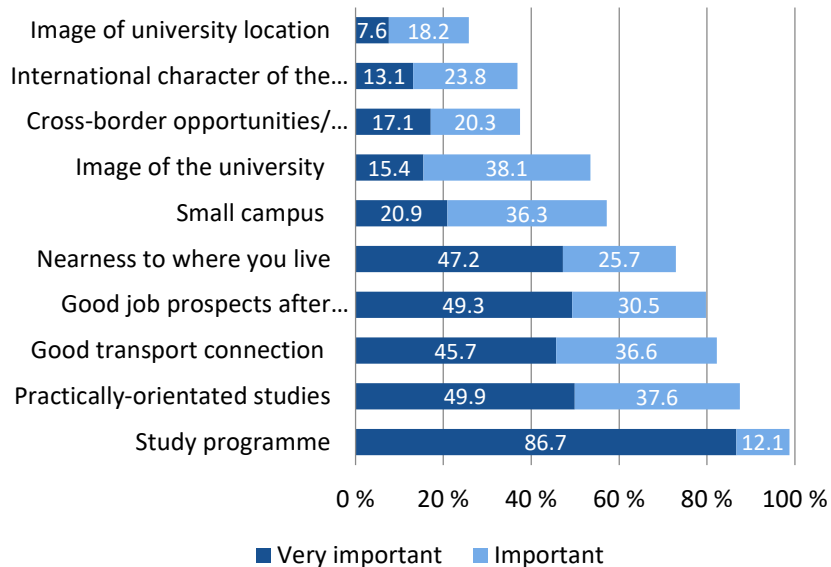
- 57 % live in the German part and 25.5 % in the Dutch part of the euregio

➤ **Approx. 25 % moved to the euregio**

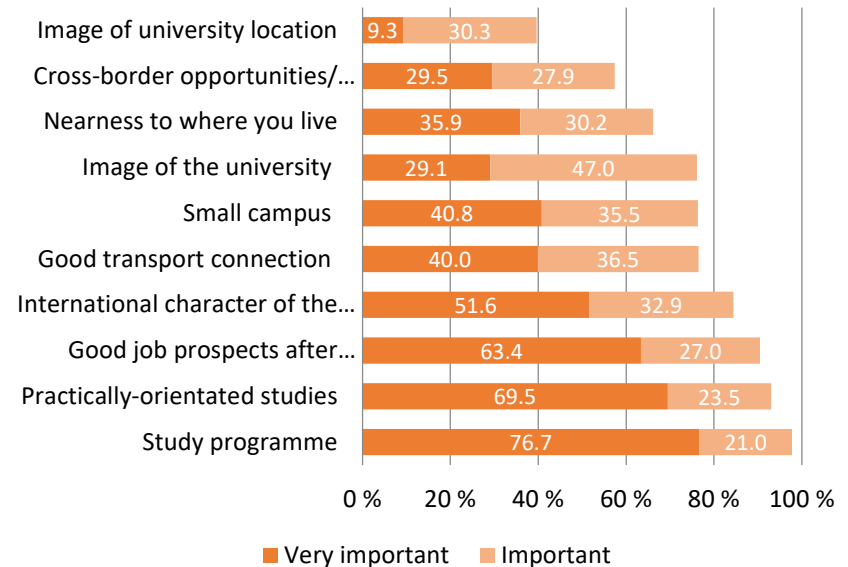
4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results

Important aspects for deciding for an university
(HSNR)?



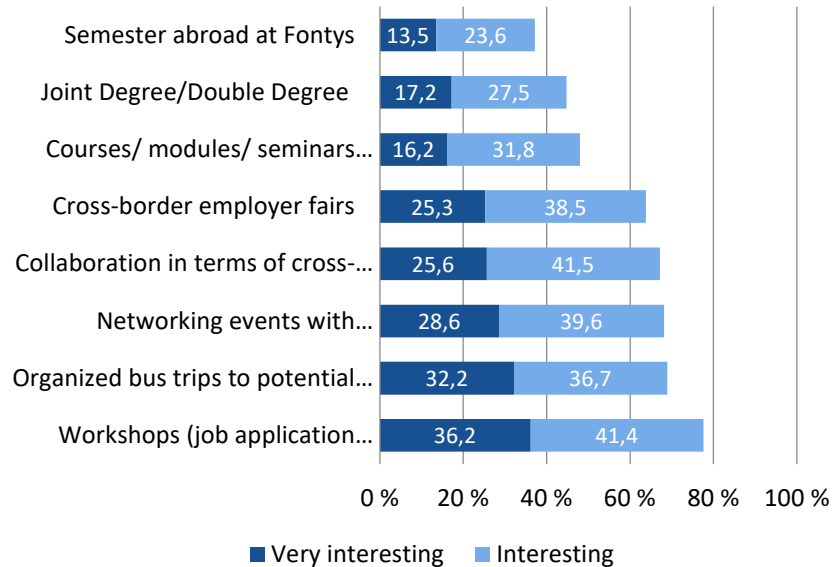
Important aspects for deciding for an university
(Fontys Venlo)?



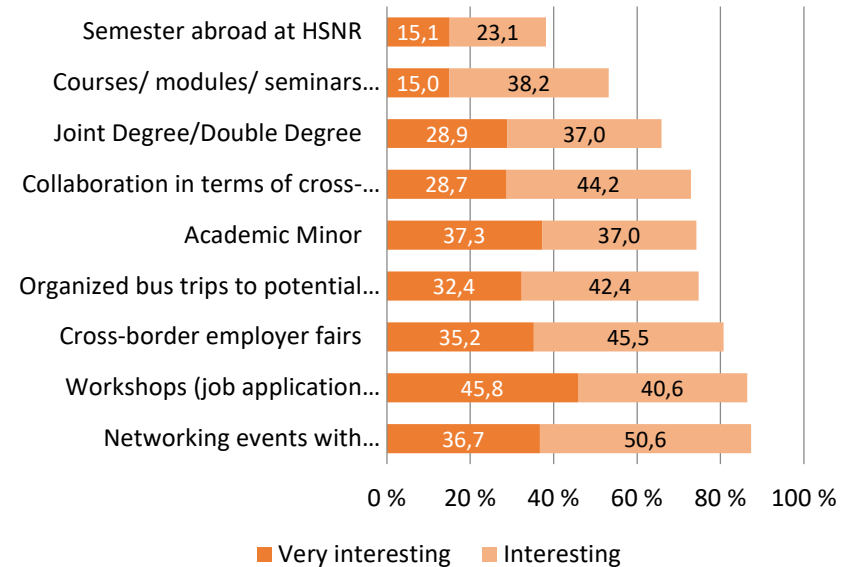
4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results

How interesting are the following cross-border offers for you (HSNR)?



How interesting are the following cross-border offers for you (Fontys Venlo)?



4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results

Use of offerings at study location:

HSNR

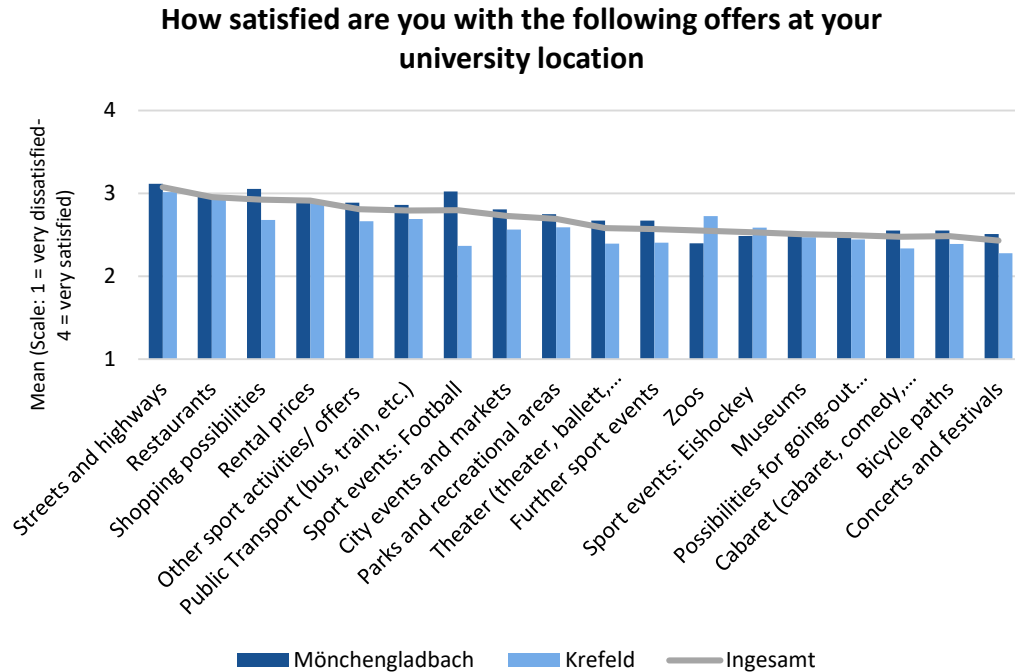
- most students use at least occasionally the public transport and streets and highways followed by restaurants and shopping possibilities
- more than half of the students never uses the cultural and sporting activities

Fontys

- the most students use at least occasionally the streets and highways followed by restaurants, possibilities to go out and shopping possibilities
- more than half of the students never uses the cultural and sporting activities

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

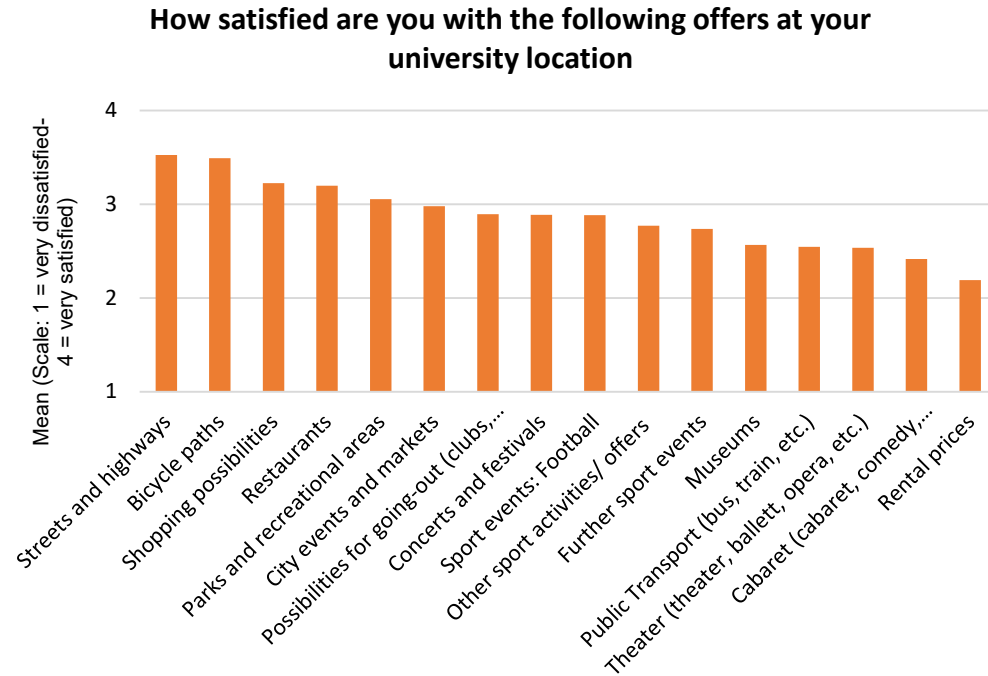
c. Results



- students are most satisfied with roads/highways, restaurants, shopping and rents
- in general, the students in MG seem to be more satisfied with many conditions

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results



- Students are most satisfied with the roads/highways, cycle paths, shopping facilities and restaurants
- students seem to be less satisfied in particular with rents, public transport and cultural offerings

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

c. Results

- half of the students come from the euregio; the german part of the euregio seems to be more attractive to live in (barrier effects)
- attractiveness factors for a study location:
 - study program (e.g. practical oriented)
 - good job prospects
 - good transport connection
- cross-border opportunities are less important for the majority of students
- nevertheless, many students are interested in cross-border offerings, especially in workshops and networking events

4. Attractiveness of Universities in Border Regions

d. Conclusions

- **study opportunities at HSNR are probably not perceived by young Dutch students**
- **Overall, cross border opportunities does not yet play a major role in the considerations of students so far**
 - **advantages of the border region could be better communicated**
 - **more cross-border offers could be created for students**
- **Diverse cultural activities are not used by almost all students, they are less satisfied with the cultural offer**
- **Image of the study location is the least important factor for all students**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
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